

C. E. Reagan 'Review', *Choice*, April 2006.

O'Farrell, Clare. **Michel Foucault**. Sage Publications, CA, 2005. 184p  
bibl index ISBN [0-7619-6163-1](#), \$99.95; ISBN [076196164x](#) pbk, \$34.95.

**Outstanding Title!**

O'Farrell (Queensland Univ. of Technology) offers *the* best introduction to Foucault's philosophy. She first locates Foucault in today's intellectual landscape and gives synopses of his major works. She then isolates in Foucault's "tool box" five basic principles, providing a clear account of each, with plenty of examples carefully referenced to specific texts. The first principle is Foucault's fascination with order and disorder. The second is called "history" to emphasize that every schema or order has a history that permits alternative histories. Foucault calls his search for origins and tracing of layers "archeology." He centers his historical analyses on discontinuities, rejecting the idea of a single, progressive, universal history. The third guiding principle is "truth." Each area has rules, categories, and methods of making truth-claims. The fourth principle is the role of "power" in Foucault's various analyses, especially of a disciplinary society best described in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1977). The fifth principle is "ethics," or the search for social justice. Foucault's constant valorizing of marginal, rejected, mad, and imprisoned persons aims to liberate them from oppressive, unjust social structures by showing their arbitrariness. Superb glossary of major technical terms; excellent bibliography and chronology.

**Summing Up:** Essential. Upper-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers.