



The panther marks, 25 years later...¹

As marcas da pantera, 25 anos depois...

Las marcas de la pantera, 25 años después...

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Abstract

25 years after the publication of the article "The Panther Marks: Michel Foucault in the Brazilian Historiography", Foucault keeps surprising us with his daring reflections. Recently published, the book *The confessions of the flesh* completes his genealogy of the modern man, pointing out the dimensions deeply rooted in our psyche. His archeo-genealogical history about the real regimes that run our lives is extended while reaching the early years of Christianity and revealing the debt it maintains with Stoicism. In his courses, Foucault brings forceful reflections about the migration of confession and pastoral power outside the church walls and its incorporation into the modern State, until nowadays, marked by the neoliberalism. How the notion of one's self and self-government problematizes new technologies of power while the "counter-conducts" remit to how freedom practices are experienced in the face of Christian or neoliberal governmentality.

Keywords: Foucault. Governmentality. Counter-conducts.

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Resumo

25 anos após a publicação do artigo “As Marcas da Pantera: Michel Foucault na Historiografia Brasileira”, Foucault continua a nos surpreender com suas ousadas reflexões. Recentemente publicado, o livro *As confissões da carne* completa sua genealogia do sujeito moderno, apontando para dimensões profundamente enraizadas em nossa psique. Sua pesquisa arqueogenealógica sobre os regimes de verdade que regem nossas vidas, amplia-se ao abranger os primeiros anos do cristianismo e ao revelar a dívida que este mantém com o estoicismo. Em seus cursos, Foucault traz contundentes reflexões sobre a migração da confissão e do poder pastoral para fora dos muros da igreja e para sua incorporação no Estado moderno, chegando aos nossos dias, marcados pelo neoliberalismo. Com a noção de governo de si e do outro, problematiza novas tecnologias do poder, enquanto as “contracondutas” remetem à maneira pela qual as práticas da liberdade são experimentadas frente à governamentalidade cristã ou neoliberal.

Palavras-chave: Foucault. Governamentalidade. Contracondutas.

Resumen

Pasados 25 años de la publicación del artículo “As Marcas da Pantera: Michel Foucault na Historiografia Brasileira”, Foucault sigue sorprendiéndonos con sus osadas reflexiones. Recién publicado, el libro *As confissões da carne* completa su genealogía del sujeto moderno, con apuntes a dimensiones profundamente difundidas en nuestra psique. Su investigación arqueológica sobre los regímenes de verdad que rigen nuestras vidas, se amplía al abarcar los primeros años del cristianismo y a la deuda que este mantiene con el estoicismo. En sus cursos, Foucault trae contundentes reflexiones sobre la migración de la confesión y del poder pastoral a fuera de los muros de la iglesia y para su incorporación en el Estado moderno, llegando a nuestros días, marcados por el neoliberalismo. Con la noción de gobierno de si y del otro, problematiza las nuevas tecnologías del poder, mientras las “contraconductas” remiten a la manera por la cual las prácticas de la libertad son experimentadas frente a la gobernabilidad cristiana o neoliberal.

Palabras-clave: Foucault. Gobernabilidad. Contraconductas.

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What, in history, escapes history is not the universal, the immobile, what everybody can always think, say or want. What escapes history is the moment, the fracture, the tear, the interruption.

Michel Foucault

A Challenge to History

Many decades ago, Michel Foucault radically challenged the production of historical knowledge by substantively criticizing its methods and the categories from which hegemonic historical narratives were produced. Even before feminist studies and post-colonial studies questioned the masculine, white and centric discourses that served as points of departure for the production of readings of the past, the French philosopher proposed a genealogical reading in the footsteps of Nietzsche, highlighting that historical objects were not pre-discursive material realities but, on the contrary, engendered by the discourses themselves that claimed to represent them. Against the “theory of reflection” predominant in the seventies, discourse was thus thought of as materiality, as a “discursive practice” that establishes the reality of which it speaks. Foucault introduced a new mode of thinking and writing history, as I sought to show in an article published in 1993 that I want to revisit at this moment, namely “Panther Marks: Foucault for Historians.”

Twenty-five years later, one can judge with confidence that Foucauldian propositions yielded extremely rich effects in the production of historical knowledge and reverberated just as powerfully in a lot of other areas of knowledge, since the philosopher himself questioned the traditional divisions of academic disciplines. Today, we wonder what history would be without geography, architecture, medicine, psychology, psychoanalysis, literature, visual arts, journalism, and a whole series of knowledges that allow us to affirm the importance of transversality and the necessity of dialogue between modes of knowing. And, inversely, what would all of these knowledges be without a new concept of history?

Foucault’s contributions to history were immense but it is worth noting that they coincided with innumerable provocations and contributions from other well-known philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida and other fields of knowledge in a context of deep political, social, and cultural transformations. The world had changed since the mid-1960s and it demanded new approaches, other modes of thinking and more humanized forms of existence, as demonstrated by counter-cultural movements, feminism, the hippy movement, American student movements informed by the New Left, and especially the impactful civil rights movement. In 1967, the year in which Foucault opened spaces with his notion of “heterotopias” in a talk to French architects, Caetano Veloso performed “Alegria, Alegria,” inaugurating Tropicalismo in Brazil.

With regard to Foucault specifically, the conviction that the urgent task of the intellectual engaged with her time is the critique of the present, a “historical ontology of ourselves” was eye-opening. It must be understood that a “diagnostic of our present” such as he affirms in his famous 1984 article titled “What is Enlightenment?” could not be realized without a historical critique of the past, without a historicization of the forms known as late, reflexive modernity or post-modernism constitutive of our time as well as the rationalities that preside over, naturalize and legitimate them.

To understand who we are and how we came to be who we are, it would be necessary then to “render visible what is visible,” as the philosopher-historian says in relation to the function of the intellectual.² It would also be necessary to summon historical knowledge in another direction capable of demonstrating the origins of games of power in the conflicts of argument of different actors and regimes of truth, providing visibility to conflicting and original wounds that became deep scars constantly reopened and disturbed by violence that sharpens itself in the innumerable racial, sexual, class and generational modes of exclusion and humiliation. As Foucault says, “The genealogist needs history to dispel the chimeras of the origin” (1977b: 144).

We live in a world in which entrepreneurial capitalism dramatically enhanced and refined its modes of control and government of the population and individuals, to the point of targeting the personal genetic constitution of each individual in an even more detailed, delicate, and scientific way. In other words, taking up what we learned from Foucault twenty-five years ago, it is no longer possible to think of “noble beginnings” from which lines of continuity attesting to our steady progress derive. We should “laugh at origins” by starting from “ignoble beginnings,” as Nietzsche said and Foucault’s genealogy proposes. As Paul Veyne noted a while ago, Foucault continues to revolutionize history.

But are history and the tasks of the historian the same today as in the 1980s and 1990s? Certainly, the production of historical knowledge changed tremendously, opening itself to unimaginable themes under the pressure of the movement of the innumerable actors – the excluded, women, feminists, blacks, the indigenous, poor workers, the mad, prisoners, and “abnormals” – that demanded and demand the visibility of their social empowerment, which includes treating the violence of which they were (or still are) the victims over time. History stopped being a mere report of past events in order to work critically on contemporary problems that demand urgent clarifications, readings, interpretations and responses. History also ceased to aim for the production of a totalizing narrative that points toward a utopian future viewed as an ineluctable necessity of the development of productive forces.

Moreover, a new type of intellectual that Foucault called the “specific intellectual” entered the scene, refusing the position of the truth keeper, the guide of the masses and universal bearer of revolution. At the same time, historical genealogy revealed the provenance of the “universal intellectual,” a descendant of the Christian pastor. As Priscila Piazzentini Vieira discusses in her book *A coragem da verdade e a ética do intelectual em Michel Foucault* (2015), the emergence of the figure of the “specific intellectual” supposes a new relation to truth and life and implies a critical attitude and the practice of *parrhesia* (or the courage of truth) in the face of the exclusionary, hierarchical, and dissociating modes that prevail in our world and corrode our lives.

Yet, more than the individuals and collectivities that demanded recognition, a lot of previously naturalized themes were deconstructed and incorporated into the production of historical knowledge. If since the middle of the 1970s we have come to recognize the histories of the body, sexuality and subjectivity through Foucault’s own work in *Vigiar e punir: Nascimento da prisão* (1977a) and *História da sexualidade I: A vontade de saber* (2007), many other domains entered into the field of history, going beyond the traditional hierarchical divisions between the public and private, reason and emotion, culture and nature.

² “The intellectual today seems to me to not really have the role of telling truths, of telling prophetic truths for the future . . . By the small gesture that consists in shifting our gaze, he renders visible what is visible, makes appear what is so close, so immediate, so intimately tied to us that for this reason we do not see it” (FOUCAULT 2001: 594).

By way of an example inspired by Foucault, Alain Corbin gave us, among other studies, a history of smell in *Le miasme et la jonquille: L'odorat et l'imaginaire social, XVIIIe-XIXe siècles* (1986), translated in Brazil as *Saberes e odores: O olfato e o imaginário social nos séculos XIII e XIX* (1987). Recently, he published a history of the relationship we have with the tree as a source of emotions from Antiquity to our days titled *La douceur de l'ombre* (2013) as well as *Histoire du silence: De la Renaissance à nos jours* (2016).

Undoing binary oppositions that separate the public and private, to which the feminist studies informed by the philosophy of difference also contributed a great deal, Michelle Perrot brought us *Histoire des chambres* (2009), published in Brazil as *História dos quartos* (2013). It broadened her enormous contribution to *História da vida privada*, edited in France by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby. It is worth noting that in the “Introduction” of this new book, the famous historian highlights the reference to Foucault in proposing a history of spaces and questioning the notion that history should deal with time while geography would turn to space. In constructing new representations of time and space and addressing their inevitable crosscutting through his notions of “heterotopia” and “heterochrony,” Foucault would suggest the following: “A history of spaces should be written. It would be at the same time a history of power from the grand strategies of geopolitics to the small tactics of habitat” (FOUCAULT *apud* PERROT, 2011: 16). Michelle Perrot’s response did not take long to arrive.

New Themes, New Attitudes

In the nineties, a lot of the courses by Foucault, who passed away in 1984, had not yet been published. It was only in the 21st century that we got to know, among others, *A hermenêutica do sujeito* (2004), *Em defesa da sociedade* (2005), *O poder psiquiátrico* (2006), *Nascimento da biopolítica* (2008), *Segurança, território e população* (2008), *A coragem da verdade* (2011a), *Mal faire, Dire vrai* (2012), *Do governos dos vivos* (2014), and *Dits e écrits* (1994) in four volumes in French and in ten volumes in the Brazilian translation. In 2018, *Histoire de la sexualité. 4. Les confessions de la chair*,³ which is in the process of being translated into Portuguese, and *La sexualité: Discours sur la sexualité* were issued.

Now, this concerns an elaborately detailed production we did not know twenty-five years ago and obviously alters our reading of Foucault’s work, beyond equipping us with new concepts and other problematizations to think the present critically. In relation to the first point, one can say that a lot of what we believed was confirmed and beyond that his political engagement with our present became clearer. In this sense, it is worth saying that for Foucault it was not simply about proposing an “analytic of power,” seeing power in its positivity, showing its differences as disciplinary power, biopower, biopolitics and governmentality. That was really a great innovation even for political science, accustomed as it was to thinking the state and political regimes but not the forms of power and control operationalized on the bodies of the governed. However, contrary to the claim of Foucault’s hasty critics that he only cared about power, he brought forth other possibilities to think “practices of freedom,” since power and freedom participate in relational games in his analyses. His explanation that “where there is power, there is resistance” and that “if there were no resistance, there would be no power relations” became famous (FOUCAULT, 2004b: 268; GRABOIS, 2011).

³ See Alessandro Francisco, “As confissões da carne,” review of *Histoire de la sexualité. 4. Les confessions de la chair*, by Michel Foucault, *ecopolítica*, no. 21 (2018): 75-99, <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/ecopolitica/article/view/40055>.

Obviously for this critic of the “organic intellectual” it was not about proposing a way out for the masses and showing how a new society would organize itself but about perceiving forms of power, the manner in which they function, how they affect our bodies, and how they produce subjectivities beyond social relations of production so that they can be circumvented, disobeyed, nullified. At any rate, the major point was that of opening the doors to a thought of difference capable of engaging in a diagnostic of the present and of perceiving other possibilities for the creation of existence, including subjective and psychic ones.

This point was very poorly understood decades ago since at the same time that Foucault pointed to the subject in its dimension of *sujet* (subject in French) to emphasize that the subject was also but not only an effect of power, Marxist historiography retrieved those silenced in history as protagonists, as free agents understood as builders of their own history. The terms obviously did not convey the same thing. For some, “subject” was synonymous with individual liberty. It existed before and above history. Indeed, it was from the “subject” that action and thought were discussed. For others, “subject” was inscribed in the field of force relations, in games of power and resistance that were produced but also produced.

What became clear in any case is that Foucault did not care about power or sexuality as an obsession, personal limitation or incapacity to think freedom. He cared about themes such as power and sexuality that are privileged in our world and part of the central focus and investment of bourgeois society. The philosopher put a very irritating mirror in front of us and displeased those who did not want to see what was visible, namely, that modern society cares above all about the development of innumerable technologies of power, government and control of individuals and populations, and that even sexual practices transformed into “apparatuses of sexuality” as one more step in this obsessive investment of the control of bodies and the production of a “subject of desire.”

Foucault had already shown in volumes two and three of *História da Sexualidade* that the ancient Greeks and Romans related differently to sex and, contrary to what we thought, did not even have the term “sexuality,” which appeared at the beginning of the 19th century along with a *scientia sexualis* (FOUCAULT, 1984: 9). There was not the centrality of sex that was established in the bourgeois imaginary. For the ancient Greeks, the equivalent term would be *aphrodisia*, which referred to another nucleus of questions and experiences. Marking the difference between the ancients and moderns in the relation of the self to the self, Foucault observes:

It will be one of the characteristic traits of the Christian experience of the ‘flesh,’ and later of ‘sexuality,’ that the subject is expected to exercise suspicion often, to be able to recognize from afar the manifestations of a stealthy, resourceful, and dreadful power. Reading these signs will be all the more important as this power has the ability to cloak itself in many forms other than sexual acts. There is no similar suspicion inhabiting the experience of *aphrodisia*. (FOUCAULT, 1990: 41).

Today, we have various history books that show when the partition between heterosexuality and homosexuality was born, such as Jonathan Ned Katz’s *A invenção da heterossexualidade* or David Halperin’s *Saint Foucault* and numerous histories of the medicalization of society and the pathologization of homosexuals and other figures deemed

“abnormal.” Among these, let us highlight the histories of “sexual perversion” as a notion invented by the German psychiatrist Richard Krafft Ebbing in 1886 or even those of onanists as the object of Thomas Laqueur’s *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (2003). Laqueur had already given us his important work *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1992), which was translated in 2001. Stephen Greenblatt’s admiration for the work of Laqueur is obvious in his review of the former book:

Laqueur’s most recent book, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation*, shares with *Making Sex* the same startling initial premise: that something we take for granted, something that goes without saying, something that simply seems part of being human has in fact a history, and a fascinating, conflicted, momentous history at that (GREENBLATT, 2004).

The father of criminal anthropology, the Italian Cesare Lombroso, became known outside the walls of conservative law schools in the eighties. He was studied in histories of the body, sexuality, and women and even transformed into the name of a shopping center located in the heart of São Paulo on the street that bears his own name.

In providing a “history of difference” aimed at discontinuities and ruptures that allow for “delegitimizing the present” or freeing it and showing that what is does not result from a historical necessity inscribed in the natural order of the world or derive from a historical evolution considered progressive (as even traditional Marxism had taught), Foucault reveals that power was not only not the central focus of all societies, but also that in our own Western tradition we could encounter examples of other modes of life, other conceptions of citizenship and the production of subjectivity as well as sociability which did not aim to discipline bodies and conduct conducts. Without turning to the indigenous or non-Westerners, Foucault forced us to look inside ourselves. His genealogical proposal led us to understand not only where everything had started, where rationality and contemporary forms of power had engendered themselves but it also pointed to possible ways out in pluralizing modes of life that constitute our tradition and are guided by ethical values. To ask why we do not incorporate what is offered to us that is the best in our own tradition was unavoidable.

Now, to look another way at our own past with a view to transform the present implied using other concepts capable of constructing other historical narratives and rendering visible determinate practices. And it is here that I turn to the second point announced above. This was the case with the notion of “disciplines” from *Vigiar e punir*, which is crucial to constructing a history of prisons and disciplinary societies. It was also the case afterwards with a lot of other terms, such as biopolitics, spirituality, governmentality, or “conduct of conduct” and counter-conducts, which are indispensable to thinking neoliberalism and resistances, as Maurício Pelegrini (2018) shows.

To speak of liberty then, Foucault began using the notion of “practices of freedom” that appears at various moments in his work, such as the two 1984 volumes of *História da sexualidade*. After all, the formation of the citizen in classical Antiquity supposes the constitution of a temperate, balanced figure capable of freely practicing an “aesthetics of existence” and the “care of the self” to reach a dominion over the self, which was far from

signifying a mortification of the “I” and the renunciation of the self preached by Christianity afterwards. The “stultus” condemned himself as someone who did not know the self, who allowed himself to be carried wildly by the wind without his own will. In “Self Writing,” Foucault observes the following with reference to Seneca:

Stultitia is defined by mental agitation, distraction, changes of opinions and wishes, and consequently weakness in the face of all the events that may occur; it is also characterized by the fact that it turns the mind toward the future, makes it interested in novel ideas, and prevents it from providing a fixed point for itself in the possession of an acquired truth (FOUCAULT, 1997, 211-212).

In the pagan world, as we learned from Foucault’s various courses, there was not space for Tertullian and Augustine nor for pastoral power, since the individual was formed believing that the truth resided in its own being and that consequently it did not need the figure of the pastor to purify it and guide it to salvation. The “athlete of ancient spirituality,” Foucault says, sought to work and prepare himself for events that could occur in the future to become stronger and wiser, in contrast to the “Christian athlete” who will have a constant enemy to defeat in the very self. Foucault explains, “The ancient athlete is an athlete of the event. The Christian athlete is an athlete of himself” (FOUCAULT, 2005: 322). The idea that the devil inhabits the body of each of us had not yet been born.

Minutely analyzing these displacements in the forms of the constitution of the self between the Greek, Hellenistic and Christian worlds, Thiago Calçado demonstrates from his reading of Foucault how the care with life, the body and sex bound up with citizenship in the fourth century AC transformed into an internally-oriented care of the self. Already with Christianity asceticism transformed into a relation of passivity and the formation of a guilty conscience. In Calçado’s words:

The sexual pathos that the Greeks saw in the order of a disposition with their surroundings and with life itself in view of the art of governing others is submerged in the interiority of Christian being. It changes into a pathetic subject, marked definitively by concupiscence (CALÇADO, 2018: 197).

Perhaps it is worth insisting on the theme of freedom in Foucault’s thought, keeping in mind that in the recent years various works have been published, such as Margret McLaren’s *Foucault, feminismo e subjetividade* (2013), Sílvia Gallo and Margareth Rago’s edited volume *Foucault e as insurreições: É inútil revoltar-se?* (2017), and Pedro Maurício Garcia Dotto’s *Usos da liberdade e agonismo em Michel Foucault* (2018), which find in the philosopher what John Rajchman pointed out in *Foucault: A liberdade da filosofia* (1985).

However, even if we were to limit ourselves to investigate the moments of his work in which he speaks literally of freedom, which is not the case here, would it be difficult to understand that an author who wrote about the history of madness or the history of sexuality in a period in which it was thought that madness and sexuality had no history because they

would be inscribed in a field of nature was practicing his own form of freedom? Would it be difficult to understand that to open countless research themes and bring about other modes of thinking and problematizing our present (and therefore the whole tradition that we inherit), the power of flight, daring and an impressive radicality are necessary, as Foucault's productions attest? Against his time, this philosopher questioned the traditional themes that concerned critical intellectuality and opened countless others to reflection and knowledge through his own example, simultaneously creating new concepts and crossing disciplinary limits from the history of medicine to psychology, literature, and cultural history. Foucault clinched our forms of thinking, "shook up the evidence," found strange what was familiar, allowing for a contact with buried pasts inexistent up until then in our own history, which he considered crucial for the transformation of conditions in our present.

Let us take, for instance, the difficult notion of "political spirituality" that Foucault introduces in the article "À quoi rêvent les Iraniens?" (1994c), in which he sought to understand the mobilizations in Iran in the final years of the seventies from which he produced some reports. Understood critically as the "opiate of the people," spirituality was mischaracterized as alienation and rendered incompatible with any form of political motivation. Against this reading, Maurício Pelegrini in his master's thesis titled "Michel Foucault and the Iranian Revolution" (2015) addresses the notion of "political spirituality" as one of the principal innovations introduced in the corpus of this philosopher. Contrary to the hasty claim among Foucault's critics that he defended the dictatorial regime of Khomeini, Pelegrini highlights the freedom and hard work of the theoretical operation of the philosopher in the effort to understand that certain movements of struggle for new forms of existence bear spiritual demands that transcend the strict sphere of politics. For him, it was therefore about opening a spiritual dimension in politics and thereby undoing crystallized binary oppositions that made what was happening in that context impossible to understand.

Neoliberalism and Subjectivity

When Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher rose to power at the end of the 1970s, Foucault presented an analysis of neoliberalism that only became known in 2004 as his courses were being published in French. It was translated in Brazil as *Nascimento da biopolítica* in 2008. Against Marxist studies of neoliberalism that privileged the economic dimension, productive reconstruction, privatization and the loss of human rights, which do not cease to be important, it is worth recalling that Foucault proposes another reading of neoliberalism as a neoliberal governmentality. Creating the concept of 'governmentality' or "conduct of conduct," as an updated pastoral power, Foucault highlights the manner in which neoliberal rationality spreads throughout the social, aiming at a generalization of the economic form of the market for the whole social body and resulting in what Wendy Brown (2015) calls the "economization of the social."

In this way, all the spheres of life in society, even relations bound to family life and intimacy become thought through the optics of the market, through mechanisms of competition. In this sense, it is the production of subjectivity itself that is found at the center of this form of government, since the individual should be thought as an "entrepreneur of the self" and assume all of the risks to make this social enterprise exist. Foucault says:

I think this multiplication of the ‘enterprise’ form within the social body is what is at stake in neo-liberal policy. It is a matter of making the market, competition, and so the enterprise, into what could be called the formative power of society (FOUCAULT, 2008c: 148).

In analyzing North American neoliberalism, Foucault highlights the “theory of human capital” formulated by the US economist and 1992 Nobel Prize winner in Economics Gary Becker. It focuses on the production of a new form of entrepreneurial and competitive subjectivity, “the entrepreneur of the self,” “being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings” (FOUCAULT, 2008c: 226). Becker’s minute analysis reveals the epistemological changes proposed by neoliberal theory. It transforms the worker into an “active economic subject” (and so) the producer of its own income, the consumer into a “producer of its own satisfaction,” reaching the relations of the married couple and the mother with its baby responsible for the formational and educational investment in the human capital of their children.

Following this path directly, Christian Laval and Pierre Dardot in *A razão do mundo* (2016) show that neoliberal governmentality aims to produce a “neo-subject” or the “entrepreneur of the self” involved in investments in its human capital, that is, in its subjectivity, body, life to derive an income in the competitive game created artificially by the state. And they point to “counter-conducts” as possibilities for escaping these new forms of control.

The genealogy of the modern subject developed by Foucault over the course of his works finds itself further enriched with the publication of *Histoire de la sexualité. 4. Les confessions de la chair*. In this work, Foucault points to dimensions deeply rooted in our psyche. After all, it is about the origins of who we are, of the Christian narratives that constituted the history of the West from the first man and woman as well as original sin by Tertullian and Augustine, as Stephen Greenblatt brilliantly historicizes in *Ascensão e queda de Adão e Eva* (2018).

Foucault’s archaeo-genealogical research on regimes of truth that rule our lives expands considerably by covering the first years of Christianity and revealing the divide that it maintains with Stoicism, where morals are found that were not aimed at subjecting the individual, making him renounce himself (as Christianity preached) and submitting him to supposedly universal norms, laws, codes and rules imposed on all in the name of the common good. In that world, styles of life and what Foucault translates as “aesthetics of existence” were emphasized in which the major concern is with the ethical order of freedom and not that of obedience and submission. As Tony Hara demonstrates in his ongoing post-doctoral research “The Art of Living in the Philosophy of Free Spirits of F. Nietzsche and in the Aesthetics of Existence of M. Foucault,” these philosophers were strongly affected by the ethopoetic of writings produced in the philosophical schools of classical antiquity. This essentially practical knowledge was directed toward the construction of a mode of ethical life, calling the individual to concern himself with the small things in life. In studying the Cynical school so admired by Foucault Tony Hara affirms:

The renunciation of life, either through the edge of the dagger or through the escape to a Paradise of any afterlife, is not an option for the Cynics. The Cynic refuses to participate in the festival of suicides of those who renounce life, the self and the world in the name of an imaginary world anointed, as Michel Onfray says, ‘with all of the qualities of purity and perfection, disqualifying the immediate and immanent world, then considered as impure and degraded (HARA, 2017: 192).

In this direction, Foucault offers thought-provoking reflections on the shifts of ancient ascesis to Christian ascesis and reveals the migration of confession seen as a technology of power (since it implies submission to the eye of the other) and pastoral power outside the walls of churches and toward their incorporation in the modern state even in our days of neoliberalism. In his words:

We can see the state as a modern matrix of individualization, or a new form of pastoral power. [Pastoral power] suddenly spread out into the whole social body. It found support in a multitude of institutions (FOUCAULT, 2000: 334, 335).

In this way, Foucault establishes a bridge of continuity between liberalism and Christianity in spite of discontinuities. As the psychoanalyst Aldo Ambrózio observes in studying the management of life and the production of subjectivity in neoliberalism:

Ironies aside, such a process of the entrepreneurship of the self seems to us to resemble, in at least one regard, the principle of the Christian pastorate in the way the subjects captured through it have conducted their daily lives at the moment of neoliberal governmentality: a total and blind obedience to the principles of competition announced by the *Deus ex machina* of the market created and protected by a rigid and continuous intervention of contemporary states. It does not seem to be a coincidence that this new type of religious belief has raged in this period of neoliberal governmentality (AMBRÓZIO, 2011: 117).

Feminism and Counter-Conducts

Foucault’s philosophy made important contributions to feminist studies to deepen its critique of the present by denouncing patriarchy and masculine and misogynist rationalities. Mainly from the nineties, when the category of gender is introduced in Brazil and feminist studies opens itself to the philosophy of difference, an enormous range of works is produced in which the critiques of feminists such as Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti, Elisabeth Grosz, Johanna Oksala, Tania Navarro Swain, Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, Norma Telles, Rita Segato, Dora Barrancos, among others, become known. For the purposes of this article, I refer readers to a journal with a post-structuralist and Foucauldian orientation, *Labrys, Estudos*

Feministas, but also to other journals that attest to the quality of the feminist critique in Brazil and abroad.

Taking into consideration Brazilian feminist historiography inspired by Foucault, I would highlight some works that show how feminist disobedience and lack of submission have affected, destabilized and transformed masculine culture in the Western world. Drawing on the notion of “counter-conducts,” among others, these studies show how women have produced ruptures in socially and culturally hegemonic forms and in the very manner of constituting themselves subjectively. After all, at least in the last fifty years, feminisms produced new modes of subjectivation, opened other modes of existence, proposed new interpretations through their substantive critiques of masculine culture and dominant misogyny and brought about modes of inclusion in the public or private sphere guided by values of social justice, freedom, respect for dignity and solidarity.

I would highlight Marilda Ionta’s book *As cores da amizade: cartas de Anita Malfatti Oneyda Alvarenga, Henriqueta Lisboa e Mário de Andrade* (2007), which points to another conception of friendship and friendship between women beyond restrictive references to the private inherited from Christianity, which preclude notions of solidarity in public. Ana Carolina Arruda de Toledo Murgel in her doctoral thesis titled “Navalhanaliga: a poética feminista de Alice Ruiz” (2010) examines how the construction of the subjectivity of this composer and poet takes place on the basis of her experiences and aesthetic practices. That feminist author also has countless articles in which she introduces us to the musical production of Brazilian composers in general silenced or depreciated in the histories of popular music written mainly by men.

For her part, Luana Saturnino Tvardovskas in the book *Dramatização dos corpos: arte contemporânea de mulheres no Brasil e Argentina* (2013), works with the visual poetics of the Brazilian artists Ana Miguel, Rosana Paulino and Cristina Salgado as well as the Argentines Silvia Gai, Claudia Contreras and Nicola Constantino to show that their works of art undertake a critical discourse of material and symbolic gender violence through images of the body. Referring to Foucauldian concepts and the feminist perspective highlights how these artists made use of transfigurations, dramatizations and manipulations of the corporal image as transgressive and resistant maneuvers that destabilize crystallized representations in the social imaginary.

In my case, Foucault’s critique of confessional narrative and the differentiated notion of “self-writing” that he introduces when discussing the ancient Greeks were crucial for the production of *A aventura de contar-se: feminismos, escrita de si e invenções da subjetividade* (2013). Through recourse to autobiographies written or orally produced in interviews with seven well-known feminists I sought to show how they survived in the struggle against an unequal, misogynist and exclusionary world either when they were imprisoned or exiled in the seventies or when they pursued other trajectories by disobeying and subverting rules and escaping normative impositions. I asked how they were able to reinvent themselves subjectively by providing ethical, aesthetic and political outlets for their own lives that demonstrated a Cynical courage of truth. I concluded in this research that the “care of the self” they exercised on the basis of “practices of freedom” carried out over the course of decades was crucial for the care with the other, with the other and with the city, as they practice them to this day. In this sense, Foucauldian concepts were crucial to providing

visibility to that which, in my view, demands to be named and historicized. At the same, my research echoed Foucault's affirmation that if Cynical philosophy had been forgotten by history of philosophy books it would have reached the revolutionary movements of which we are the inheritors. According to him:

Cynicism, the idea of a mode of life as the irruptive, violent, scandalous manifestation of the truth is and was part of revolutionary practice and of the forms taken by revolutionary movements throughout the nineteenth century. Revolution in the modern European world . . . was not just a political project; it was also a form of life. Or, more precisely, it functioned as a principle defining a certain mode of life (FOUCAULT, 2011d: 183-184).

More recently, Marilea de Almeida defended her doctoral thesis titled "Território de afetos: Práticas femininas antirracistas nos quilombos contemporâneos do Rio de Janeiro" (2018). It was heavily informed by Foucault's reflections and one of his most distinguished readers in our present, Achille Mbembe, the author of *Crítica da razão negra* and *Necropolítica*, which were translated in Brazil in 2018. Almeida's research undertaken in various quilombos of Rio de Janeiro reveals how the demonization of woman since Eve, who was considered responsible for the fall by the Christian fathers, extends to blacks and above all black women radically excluded from all forms of humanity in Western thought. On the other hand, the Foucauldian notion of "counter-conducts" allows Almeida to underscore that feminine creations of women from the quilombos since the 1980s involve other modes of doing politics, especially in its dimension of struggle against the "apparatuses of racialization" in diverse fronts, such as education, religion and political formation.

Concluding: Panther Marks Amplify and Spread

Twenty-five years later, Foucault continues to surprise us with his bold reflections which are still being discovered. But the researchers who have produced admirable books, articles and essays using the toolbox that this philosopher made available also continue to surprise us. Contrary to what happened a decade ago, the philosopher no longer annoys through irony and provocations; on the contrary, he is welcome with his tools and problematizations that give us instruments to confront a much more complex and difficult world.

Access to Foucault's new works in the twenty-first century confirms that "panther marks" are here to stay and that, in fact, the panther is really more powerful, critical, questioning, and subversive than we thought. Moreover, it would not be earth-shattering to observe that the panther produced offspring and that his marks themselves innovated and pluralized, attesting to an enormous vigor and felicitous explosion of creativity, especially in the generations that succeeded us. Here is the Foucault who gives us, in the words of Gilberto Gil, a "ruler and compass," that warm embrace (*aquele abraço*)...

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