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PREFACE  
FOUCAULT IN BRAZIL

*Carceral Notebooks XIII*

Michel Foucault's 1973 Rio lectures, *Truth and Juridical Form*, delivered at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, are among the most significant political theoretic contributions that Foucault made in his lifetime. The Rio lectures crystallized the turn in Foucault's thought toward one of his most influential theories: knowledge/power, and, eventually, regimes of truth. The Rio lectures demonstrate the illusion of pristine knowledge—of objective, neutral knowledge purportedly free of power or politics—and urged us, in the most compelling terms, following Nietzsche, to “liquidate” that myth. The lectures underscored the primacy of law and juridical form in the production of truth—and, more broadly, the primary role of law in his overarching research project. Together with his 1981 Louvain lectures, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, the Rio lectures provide a full historical arc—from the ancients to the 1970s—to critique the existing social and political order, and the ways in which we ourselves participate in the construction of that social order.

I had always been curious about what it must have been like for Foucault to travel to Rio and live there under a military dictatorship. How did it affect his thinking? How did his intellectual trajectory at the time shape his understanding of the

political situation in Brazil, and through it, in France? Until now, those key questions could only be asked. It was when I read Marcelo Hoffman's brilliant review essay of Heliana de Barros Conde Rodrigues's book *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil: Presença, efeitos, ressonâncias* (*Michel Foucault in Brazil: Presence, Effects, Resonances*) in the journal *Theory, Culture & Society*, that I realized how important the answers might be. I began to see the significance of Foucault's experience in Brazil to his intellectual trajectory. I immediately reached out to Marcelo Hoffman to curate a volume on Foucault in Brazil. This outstanding collection is the product. I am deeply indebted to Marcelo Hoffman.

In this Volume XIII of the *Carceral Notebooks*, Marcelo Hoffman, a brilliant political theorist and the author of *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power* (Bloomsbury Academic 2014) and *Militant Acts: The Role of Investigations in Radical Political Struggles* (State University of New York Press 2019), has brought together the leading thinkers in Brazil on Foucault and his interactions with the intellectuals and the public sphere in Brazil. Their contributions offer insights into the ways in which Foucault's visits to Brazil and exchanges while there both influenced and were shaped by his intellectual trajectory at the time, as well as offering reflections on how Foucault's writings and praxis can infuse political resistance in Brazil today. With the forthcoming publication of Foucault's first set of lectures from 1965 delivered at the University of São Paulo in Brazil on the topic of his then-recently published book, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, in the new collection of *Cours et travaux de Michel Foucault avant le Collège de France*

(Gallimard/Seuil; English edition by Columbia University Press), this volume could not be more timely.

Foucault ultimately broke silence. While in Brazil during his fourth trip in 1975, Foucault suspended his lectures in protest of the Brazilian dictatorship. He joined in student protests, in late October 1975, and delivered a short manifesto declaring that “A university that is not fully free is nothing more than a business of servility. You can’t teach under boot heels; you can’t speak in the face of the walls of prisons; you can’t study when arms threaten.” Those words, given the military dictatorship, displayed a courage of truth. Two years earlier, in the discussion and debate that followed *Truth and Juridical Form*, Foucault recognized well that “To speak is to exercise a power, to speak is to risk your power, it is to risk succeeding or losing everything.”

This volume is published in honor of that courage to break silence and to speak out, with the hope that it will enrich and encourage resistance and praxis both here in the United States and in Brazil, and in countries across the globe that are engaged in similar struggles against increasingly autocratic political leadership.

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