

LANGUAGE AND FASCISM: CONFIGURATIONS OF THE BARTHESIAN LOOK

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- **ABSTRACT:** Based on Barthes' statement, stating that language is fascist, this opinion article establishes a relationship between the political-ideological models of the Nazifascist movements and the characteristics of the concept of the Barthesian language. The analyses go through the field of philosophy of language and metaphorize the spaces of the reader, author, text and context in order to bring a provocative reflection on the historical moments and political frameworks of the last 80 years. For this examination, theorists in the field of language are taken into account, such as Rodman & Fromklin (1993), Rajagopalan (2003), Fiorin (2008); in the sphere of historiography, it dialogues with Casara (2017), Woolf (1974), Trevor-Roper (1974), in addition to other authors who surround this investigation in a relevant way. As we reflect on the reasons for totalitarian thoughts and see their approximation with the authoritarian language envisioned by Barthes, we can more easily understand how human relationships often need to be humanized. As a result of this study, it can be considered that discursive spaces are capable of generating imprisonment or freedom, they can propose fascism or democracy through literature, and such analyses need to be considered.
- **KEYWORDS:** Fascism. Nazifascism. Language. Barthes. Philosophy of Language.

Introduction

The bitch of fascism is always in heat.
Bertold Brecht

In their book *Conversas com linguistas* (2003), the authors Xavier and Cortez interviewed 18 renowned Brazilian language researchers; among the various questions asked, we highlight one that is fundamental: *What is language?* The linguists' responses gained several diffuse reactions, as each interviewee pointed to a different idea of the Language phenomenon. This result does not in any way mean that the respondents do not know the subject (after all, they are all professors), nor does it mean that the area

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of linguistic studies has been dispersed and lost in an unending branch with no purpose and functionality. It suffices to consider, primarily, that Language is an element of study as controversial and multiple as is the study of culture or psychology; defining it is not an easy task and implies above all adopting a theoretical-philosophical understanding to which the concept of language is harmoniously aligned.

Thus, language can be described as something communicational, expressive, interactive, discriminating, codable, decodable, political, idiomatic, anything anatomical, among many other concepts.

Roland Barthes makes a statement about language that transports us to a sphere between the political and the structural, between human relations and the tactical morphosyntactic system; forcing us to get into an uncomfortable language philosophy. Barthes confidently says: “But language [...] is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascist; for fascism does not prevent speech, it compels speech.”¹ (BARTHES, 1992, p.14, emphasis added).

Throughout this reflection, I will confront the reasons that associate language – in Barthes’ perspective - with the features of the fascist movements present in the last one hundred years. The connections will be clearly shown and it will be seen that fascism, as a movement of obligation and obedience, fits perfectly with the judgment made by this post-structuralist thinker about language. Following this work of bibliographical research and opinion, I will present the Barthesian proposal of escape from prison to freedom, from a literary point of view. Therefore, it aims to: i) describe a brief history of the fascist phenomenon; ii) to establish comparisons between the features of the phenomenon of fascism with the Barthesian language, in this investment the form of an opinion article manifests itself, since the comparisons that will be made derive from our entire theoretical speculation; iii) present this author’s idea of freedom in writing.

Barthes declares that language is fascist, as we saw in this presentation, but he did not explain in greater detail and categories the reasons for this comparison, and at this point this article proposes to give an opinion and promotes this metaphor more widely.

The fascism gene seemed (or was shown) cadaverous at the end of the 20th century, but the winds of the beginning of the new millennium robustly spread new (old) discursive seeds that quickly renewed their voices all over the world. This surprising ideological resurrection needs to be observed carefully and deserves more careful investigations.

Nothing seems more conducive than an expert like Roland Barthes to chase and hunt down a blunder from the dormant past.

¹ Mas a língua, [...] não é nem reacionária, nem progressista; ela é simplesmente: *fascista*; pois o *fascismo* não é impedir de dizer, é obrigar a dizer” (BARTHES, 1992, p.14).

Historical fascism

Like the concept of language, fascism (Nazifascism or Nazism)² is a vast idea and an obscure definition. George Orwell, in his essay *What is fascism?* (1944), wrote about the great difficulty of giving meaning to the term, to the point where the fascist mask becomes a kind of *hot potato*; each political-philosophical group wanting to put the fascist facet on the other. Simply saying the phrase: *Go away, fascists!* does not consistently define whom it is talking about. This can be seen in the following excerpt from Trevor-Roper (1974, p. 51-52, our translation):

Fascism may be limited in time and space, it may have had a clear beginning and a clear end in public history; it can seem easily definable. But this unity, this definition had been artificially imposed on him. Behind a single name there are a hundred different forms.³

The multiple forms of its manifestation make it difficult to establish a ready-made pattern. A biased newspaper, an arbitrary politician, an abusive law or an authoritarian soldier, any sign of *non-dialogue* can be an act labeled as fascist. In this way, a leftist, a right-wing, an anarchic or monarchical government can be classified as such.

Classically this movement became known by Hitler's government (in Germany) and Mussolini's government (Italy), and these were characterized by several features such as persecution and extermination of minority groups (Jews, gypsies, blacks, disabled), extreme nationalism, warlike power for world domination, among others. It is certain that the actions of these statesmen symbolized the idea of fascism to the world.

Even knowing the popular representations of these movements, it is possible to draw common characteristics and recognize that there are clearly detectable patterns in totalitarian governments. These traits, which will be referenced in the following subsections, can notably bring up a boundary between the dialogic and authoritarian governments, and it is these traits that we want to list in order to establish a parallel with language conceptualized in the Barthesian view.

Language in Barthes' thought

Conceptualizing language is a task that depends on, in addition to formulating a phrasal explanation, taking a philosophical and theoretical position regarding the

² Fascism, Nazifascism, Nazism: we will treat each one as one concept, although slight differences of these terms can be found in the writings of historians and sociologists. It is popularly accepted that fascism is the Italian face of German Nazism.

³ Original: "*O fascismo pode ser limitado no tempo e no espaço, pode ter tido um claro princípio e um claro fim na história pública; pode parecer facilmente definível. Mas esta unidade, esta definição fora-lhe artificialmente imposta. Por detrás de um só nome há cem formas distintas.*" (TREVOR-ROPER, 1974, p. 51-52).

phenomenon of language. Barthes does this, he sees language as the dominant structure of the subject, so it is not the being who dominates language, but the individual is subjected to it. In any text, the voice that speaks is not that of the author or that of the writer, but that of language itself.

Therefore, although Barthes struggles in his theory to move away from the post-structural path, his concept of language is essentially Saussurian. Language is the structure that is placed at the center of all communicative construction; the author and the reader are subjected to it. In this progression, Barthes proposes the death of the author and promises the birth of the reader, the latter finding himself in a survival that is asphyxiated by the sovereign aspect of the structure of language. Comparing language to fascism is the ideal symbology for the concept of constructed language.

In Barthes, language gains a dominance over the other elements belonging to the interaction, and this control of language as it structures it condemns the subject's body that speaks to express solely the language it knows. That is, if someone wants to say something, he is limited to saying it in the parameters that his language allows him to say it, nothing can be said outside the language. Language is the composite of the possible limits of meaning. Hence the excerpt is explained, language "[...] is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascist; for fascism does not prevent speech, it compels speech" (BARTHES, 1992, p. 14). The author rejects the link between language and images of bipolarized politics: reactionary versus progressive. This can be verified by analyzing historically the political movements of the 20th century, when there was an option for fascism between wars:

Neither a socialist society nor a capitalist society regenerated from its ills, none of this had ended the world conflict. Why not, in this case, believe in the possibility of a "third solution"? Neither capitalist nor Bolshevik? That is where National Socialism is located, not just German, but that which integrates all fascist movements.⁴ (CALAZANS FALCON, 1974, p. 28-29, our translation).

For Barthes, language is in another modulation of the analytical hue. It is not about right *versus* left, capitalism *versus* communism. It is not a question of linguistic progress or setbacks, it is a matter of the subject's belonging to a structure that does not release him, that even prevents him from being silent, that compels him to say the obligatory greeting: *Heil, Hitler!* Thus, it would be entirely inappropriate to label language without observing its *unfailing* structural tentacles.

⁴ Original: "*Nem uma sociedade socialista, nem uma sociedade capitalista regenerada de seus males, nada disso viera a findar o conflito mundial. Por que nesse caso não acreditar na possibilidade de uma "terceira solução"? Nem capitalista nem bolchevista? É aí que se situa o nacional-socialismo, não apenas o alemão, mas aquele que integra todos os movimentos fascistas.*" (CALAZANS FALCON, 1974, p. 28-29).

Social crisis

Fascism, as a political-ideological movement, always arises when a society is in crisis and discredited by economic models. The social crisis is the ideal scenario for the emergence of the *third solution*, even if the world is already vigorously diversified in opinions.

In the 20th century, it was necessary for two poles to be entrenched face to face so that a third margin would appear in the precise space/time and dress in solution uniforms, as shown in the excerpt: “[...] there are characteristics common to the historical appearance of fascist movements, [...] a *situation in crisis*, both at the economic, political and ideological levels.”⁵ (CALAZANS FALCON, 1974, p. 18, emphasis added, our translation).

Even when there are not only two sides, it is necessary to make it appear that there is a war between two opportunistic opposites, so that the exit comes from a *new* way of seeing the world, a renewal in the midst of the crisis. The crisis can be, as Calazans Falcon observed, of any nature – economic, political, ideological – Italy and Germany were going through convulsions on the verge of collapse, a favorable environment for them to put their faith in the Nazifascist parties.

Language also goes through moments of changes and metamorphoses, although linguistic changes are natural in the history of languages, there are always control agents who fight to safeguard language of human interaction from the changes generated by speech itself.

Language, monitored by the *joysticks* of the controlling grammarians, reacts very strongly against changes and the purists always see any change as new crisis situations, providing a productive ground for the action of the grammar police:

There seems to have been, in all periods of the past, as now, a clear apprehension in the minds of many people who are honored about the state of almost imminent collapse of the language [...] about the need to constantly develop strenuous efforts to save it of destruction.⁶ (RODMAN; FROMKLIN, 1993, p. 15, our translation).

Language, in fact, is never in crisis; it follows its natural course of changes due to the uses and work of its speakers, but some *want to make it appear* that it is lost and deficient. As Mattos e Silva pointed out: “The Portuguese language in its Brazilian variety is not in crisis, nor is it drifting, as many would like, but it follows its drift,

⁵ Original: “[...] existem características comuns ao aparecimento histórico dos movimentos fascistas, [...] conjuntura em crise, quer no nível econômico, quer no nível político, quer no nível ideológico” (CALAZANS FALCON, 1974, p. 18).

⁶ Original: “Parece ter existido, em todos os períodos do passado, tal como agora, uma nítida apreensão no espírito de muitas pessoas honradas quanto ao estado de quase colapso iminente da língua [...] quanto a necessidade de constantemente se desenvolverem esforços árduos que a salvem da destruição.” (RODMAN; FROMKLIN, 1993, p. 15).

or its drifts [...] to characterize the course of the historical changes of the language”⁷ (MATTOS E SILVA, 2004, p. 72, our translation).

Natural languages are always changing through a number of proven processes. Some linguistic phenomena specific to all languages operate these changes (CARVALHO, 2009), such as: neologisms, foreigners, affixes, grammaticalization, monotongations, improper derivations, contacts between different languages, variations and many other factors (although not consensual) cause a very rough linguistic history. However, none of these language-modifying elements establish a pernicious crisis, they are natural means for the historical path of any language, but language purists point out the changes as something evil and pathological of a possible crisis. For these conspirators, it is necessary to recognize an anomaly and make it believed.

Without the crisis, there is no fascism. In the midst of the crisis, between variation and change... tradition is chosen.

Segregationism

In the representation of Nazifascism emerging in the 20th century, the discourse in defense of a supposed Aryan and unique race erupts, mystically vested with sovereign rights over other races. Clearly racism is not a phenomenon that was born within fascism, as racism is an age-old mentality with worldwide dimension, but Hitler and Mussolini’s deadly attacks on Jews, blacks, gypsies and any other non-Caucasian ethnicity were justified by the system of ideas and objectives of a pure race:

[...] We must fight for the existence and *proliferation of our race*, of the people, for the subsistence of their children and maintenance of our actions *against racial mixing*, for the freedom and independence of the homeland, so that our people can be stimulated to fulfill the mission assigned to him by the Creator⁸. (HITLER, 1976 [1925], p. 202, our translation).

There is a kind of devotion in Hitler’s doctrine that goes beyond the threshold of the political and the social, the obstinacy of the immaculate race seems to make any penalty worthwhile, in such a way that the search for racial purism is a type of priestly ministry; it is like a mission bestowed by the Creator God. Part of the world saw this conception as an unhealthy thought, but another part found its identification in the segregationist, racial and fascist discourses.

⁷ Original: “*A língua portuguesa na sua variedade brasileira não está em crise, nem à deriva, como querem muitos, mas segue a sua deriva, ou as suas derivas [...] para caracterizar o curso das mudanças históricas da língua*”. (MATTOS E SILVA, 2004, p. 72).

⁸ Original: “[...] *Temos de lutar pela existência e a proliferação de nossa raça, das pessoas, pela subsistência de seus filhos e manutenção de nossas ações contra a mistura racial, pela liberdade e independência da pátria, para que nosso povo possa ser estimulado a cumprir a missão que lhe foi atribuída pelo Criador*”. (HITLER, 1976 [1925], p. 202).

The existence of neo-Nazi groups around of the world today corroborates that this discourse still co-opts many. For Arendt, Nazi racism was much stronger than French racism, which until then was the most consolidated: “[...] until the time when *the Nazis [...] frankly admitted their contempt for all peoples*, [...] French racism was the most consistent”⁹. (ARENDR, 2000 [1949], p. 195-204, emphasis added, our translation).

Similar to Hitler’s Caesarism, language is, by its nature, segregationist. Lexicon is loaded with separatist and defamatory entries. Taking the Portuguese language as an example, where there are many words and linguistic expressions strongly marked by their defamatory etymology, we have terms like *mulato* (black) which comes from the word *mule*, *denegrir* (denigrate) from *negro*, *doméstica* (maid) from *domesticate*, *aluno* (student) comes from non-illuminated, *judiar* (banish) from *Jew*, and countless other terms widely used in clear or disguised segregationist contexts. Fiorin, reflecting about the politically correct language, while caring about the functioning of language in freedom of expression, also points to the need to check the linguistic aspects that foster prejudice and discrimination:

[...] it is not enough to change language for discrimination to cease to exist. However, as negative connotation is a matter of degree, it is not irrelevant to stop using the terms most strongly identified with racist, sexist attitudes etc.¹⁰ (FIORIN, 2008, p.1, our translation).

It would be necessary to observe in what language really insists on blemishing the *other person* so that the offensive term stops being used, which does not happen in all cases of injurious etymology; in some cases, the original meaning no longer conveys prejudice.

Nevertheless, language is historically separatist in its internal constitution and it is often necessary to update the politically correct use of the language, as the structure records new and constant forms of racism, segregation and discrimination.

Nationalism

One of the strongest characteristics of fascist movements is extravagant patriotic pride. Hitler alarmed his most attractive *slogans* to seduce the German masses by instigating the idea that the nation’s supremacy must know no limits: “I had sung *Deutschland über alles* (‘Germany above all’) so many times”¹¹ (HITLER, 1976 [1925],

⁹ Original: “[...] até a época em que os nazistas [...] admitiram com franqueza o seu desprezo por todos os povos, [...] o racismo francês foi o mais consistente”. (ARENDR, 2000 [1949], p. 195-204).

¹⁰ Original: “não basta mudar a linguagem para que a discriminação deixe de existir. Entretanto, como a conotação negativa é uma questão de grau, não é irrelevante deixar de usar os termos mais fortemente identificados com atitudes racistas, machistas etc.” (FIORIN, 2008, p.1)

¹¹ Original: “Eu tinha tantas vezes cantado *Deutschland über alles* (‘Alemanha acima de tudo’)” (HITLER, 1976 [1925], p. 154).

p. 154, our translation). This was the *Führer's* ideological foundation; the nation was above *all*, including over other nations. With the phenomenon of discursive memory, these discourses span generations and ensure their long existence in other places and at other times, placing the same statement in new utterances, the same voice in new mouths:

[...] speeches that originate a certain number of new acts, words that retake them, transform them or speak about them, in short, the speeches that indefinitely, in addition to their formation, are said, remain said and are yet to be said¹². (FOUCAULT, 2014 [1971], p. 24, our translation).

Not only the nationalist trait, but the whole fascist mentality, is recomposed in *new* acts and *new* words, with deserved ironic highlights for the adjectives.

On the history of totalitarian governments, Woolf comments that: “Fascism was overwhelmingly *nationalist*, and firmly rooted in the historical development of each country”¹³. (WOOLF, 1974, p. 39, emphasis added, our translation). After all, there seems to be no doubt that nationalism was (is) a *sine qua non* condition for the subsistence of totalitarian governments.

Another confirming episode: under the slogan of *Work, family and country*, Phillippe Pétain, French Head of State (1940-1944), collaborated with German Nazism in the implantation of Hitler's ideals when he invaded France (MANDEL, 1995). The *slogan* is yet another indication of the nationalism present in the project to *Germanize* the world.

Patriotism is also alive in the reality of language, as the phenomenon of language surrounds and excludes in a protectionist attitude, although language cuts out what belongs to itself and excludes what belongs to another system. It is not about foreignism, because as we have seen, language embraces and covers foreign words and expressions - especially Anglicisms are well accepted in Brazil - it is an identity that (even if it is folkloric) establishes linguistic nationalism: “Language is much more than a simple code or a communication tool. It is, first of all, one of the main marks of the identity of a nation, a people. It is a political flag”¹⁴ (RAJAGOPALAN, 2003, p. 93, our translation).

Far from discussions about the existence or not of a national linguistic unit, there are reasons to agree with Rajagopalan on the identities of nationality constructed by the limits of language. There are undeniably languages that enjoy privileges over others, and this is due to reasons that go beyond the borders of language; these are social, political and economic causes that make English the language of prestige in the world; however, language is the receptacle for this load of international stigmatization.

¹² Original: “[...] discursos que originam um certo número de novos atos, de palavras que os retomam, os transformam ou falam deles, enfim, os discursos que indefinidamente, para além de sua formação, são ditos, permanecem ditos e estão ainda por dizer”. (FOUCAULT, 2014 [1971], p. 24).

¹³ Original: “O fascismo foi preponderantemente nacionalista, e firmemente arraigado ao desenvolvimento histórico de cada país”. (WOOLF, 1974, p. 39).

¹⁴ Original: “A língua é muito mais que um simples código ou um instrumento de comunicação. Ela é, antes de qualquer outra coisa, uma das principais marcas da identidade de uma nação, um povo. Ela é uma bandeira política.”(RAJAGOPALAN, 2003, p. 93).

This facet is not new. Since time immemorial, languages have been parameters to legitimize or discredit ancient peoples and nations: “It is, once again, the attitude that led the Greeks to call barbarians all those who did not speak the Greek language and which consists of declassifying the other, declassifying their language”¹⁵. (ILARI; BASSO, 2006, p. 195). Therefore, language is nationally schismatic since long before fascism was ever established as a political-ideological movement.

Authoritarianism

In a totalitarian state, authoritarianism is applauded and celebrated as a necessary archetype for national development, the democratic sense is relegated only at the sensory level and on the threshold of the sermon. In practice, popular participation does not exist. One must believe in the figure of a savior, a leading messiah who created the *third solution* or even *the final solution*. To this individual it is offered the faculty and the belief in resolution; authoritarianism is believed when pseudo-democracy fails.

Arendt¹⁶ considers that authoritarianism is a form of act of the totalitarian government, this engaging act conjoins the feeling of violence and generates its climb:

Behind the liberal identification of totalitarianism with authoritarianism, and the concomitant inclination to see “totalitarian” tendencies in every authoritarian limitation, lies an older confusion of *authority with tyranny and legitimate power with violence*¹⁷. (ARENDR, 2016 [1954], p. 134, emphasis added, our translation).

Authoritarianism restricts freedom, so it is a strong arm of totalitarian governments; but this control is established between confusion of licitudes, that is, tyranny and violence find their way without anyone knowing for sure who or what legitimizes their uncompromising practices.

Barthes points to the control of language over the subject, the centering of the structure authoritatively regulates the existence of *language* relations: language in the Barthesian perspective is a place of full control since within the limits of language there is no space for the subject, the reader or the author, because language is the one who speaks, language is totalitarian:

¹⁵ Original: “É, mais uma vez, a atitude que levou os gregos a chamar de bárbaros todos aqueles que não falavam grego e que consiste em desclassificar o outro, desclassificando sua língua”. (ILARI; BASSO, 2006, p. 195).

¹⁶ Arendt differentiates between tyrannies, authoritarian government and totalitarianism, but it is not relevant to explore his thesis in this work. It is only necessary to understand that authoritarianism is a tool to impose totalitarian reasons.

¹⁷ Original: “Por detrás da identificação liberal do totalitarismo com o autoritarismo, e da concomitante inclinação a ver tendências “totalitárias” em toda limitação autoritária, jaz uma confusão mais antiga de autoridade com tirania e de poder legítimo com violência”. (ARENDR, 2016 [1954], p. 134).

In the language, therefore, servitude and power are ineluctably confused. If we call freedom not only the power to withdraw from power, but also and above all that of not submitting anyone, there can be no freedom except outside language. Unfortunately, human language is without exterior: it is a closed place. You can only get out of it for the price of the impossible¹⁸. (BARTHES, 1992, p. 15-16, our translation).

Author and reader take turns in places and positions, both being captive in the authoritarianism of the language, from which one cannot escape because there is nothing outside it. The decentralization of the subject is significant, while the structure holds the center, the authority.

Religiousness

Finally, religious devotion is a peculiar and indispensable feature of autocratic governments, even when leftist, when the state becomes the religion of the masses. This is one of the crucial points (among other also important ones) to ensure that Hitler did not run a socialist government in any aspect - although his party was called National Socialist Party - since the tradition of socialist doctrines distance from religious causes. Nazifascism has a predominance of strongly Christianized traits in its principles, has very well allied political-religious coalitions and supports highly spiritualized discourses, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

[...] in both Italy and Germany, the fascist party came to power through a similar door, a door that was opened by the Catholic Church. Naturally, the Catholic Church was not the ones only responsible. In this, the Church acted as a representative of the conservative society.¹⁹ (TREVOR-ROPER, 1974, p. 61, our translation).

And yet: “Therefore, I now believe that I act according to the *prescriptions of the Almighty Creator*. Fighting against Judaism, *I am doing God’s work*”²⁰ (HITLER, 1976 [1925], p. 64, emphasis added, our translation). Faith becomes a foundation for the consolidation of political forces that intend to come to power and establish a totalitarian

¹⁸ Original: “Na língua, portanto, servidão e poder se confundem inelutavelmente. Se chamamos de liberdade não só a potência de subtrair-se ao poder, mas também e sobretudo a de não submeter ninguém, não pode haver liberdade senão fora da linguagem. Infelizmente, a linguagem humana é sem exterior: é um lugar fechado. Só se pode sair dela pelo preço do impossível”. (BARTHES, 1989, p. 15-16).

¹⁹ Original: “[...] tanto na Itália quanto na Alemanha, o partido fascista chegou ao poder por uma porta similar, porta que foi aberta pela Igreja Católica. Naturalmente não foi só a Igreja Católica a responsável. A Igreja, nisso, atuou como representante da sociedade conservadora.” (TREVOR-ROPER, 1974, p. 61)

²⁰ Original: “Por isso, acredito agora que ajo de acordo com as prescrições do Criador Onipotente. Lutando contra o judaísmo, estou realizando a obra de Deus” (HITLER, 1976 [1925], p. 64).

state. In political campaigns - and it is noteworthy that the most emblematic leader of the Nazis (Hitler) was also elected by vote - the rhetorical usage of discourses that convey Christian symbols is used to ensure empathy from the conservative society that easily identifies itself with those values. One should not think, when Trevor-Roper points to a *conservative society*, that he is referring to the elderly population in society; the elite youth of German and Italian societies were recruited ideologically with great force by the parties. Nazifascism used (uses) the social impetus to see its religion well represented by the rulers.

In parallel analysis, language also connects to the individual through the interface of religiosity, or rather, religiosity is interwoven with language in a tenuous but significant way. The religion hidden in language manifests itself: through the interjections, *Oh my!*, *My Gosh!*; in the taboo words, *Bastard!*, *Damn!*, in the expressions that undo the curse *God forbid!*; in the mystique obliged of desired *health!* to those who sneezes, and the complimentary reply of *amen!* to whom said health; through the proper names that declare blessing, *Benedict*, *Gabriel*²¹; in superstitions while proposing special treatment for the name of the deceased, *deceased John was a good man*; in the fear of pronouncing names of deadly diseases, *John has 'c'*; in the almost silent way of speaking about *cancer*, AIDS or words about death, diseases or curses:

In some cultures, when people hear certain words, they have to cancel their “touching wood” effect. [...] a Jewish child cannot inherit the name of another person who is still alive and in certain cultures it is forbidden to announce the name of someone who has died. [...] they tell us about the importance of language and its miraculous properties that men attribute to it.²² (RODMAN, FROMKLIN, 1993, p. 15, our translation).

Language is full of mystical garrisons that were in full operation before we were born, their religious resources challenge us and we cannot doubt them, we cannot disobey the canonized indexations of language. We see the ease with which the linguistic structure kidnaps us to its congregation of invisible and inexplicable meanings, for there is no logical explanation for obeying linguistic mysticisms, even so, normally, we do not dare to subvert them.

²¹ The name *Benedict* comes from the Latin *Benedictus* meaning *blest*, *blessed*. *Gabriel* comes from Hebrew and means *man of God*.

²² Original: “*Em algumas culturas, ao ouvirem certas palavras, as pessoas têm de anular o seu efeito 'tocando em madeira'*. [...] *uma criança judia não pode herdar o nome de outra pessoa ainda viva e em certas culturas é proibido anunciar o nome de alguém que já morreu*. [...] *falam-nos da importância da linguagem e das suas propriedades miraculosas que os homens lhe atribuem*.” (RODMAN; FROMKLIN, 1993, p. 15).

Freedom?

Faced with so many insistently historical slavery and anti-democratic elements, we can think that there is not, in fact, space for freedom between language, thought and human relations. Could fascism be wiped out in the real world? Can language cease to be eternally fascist?

One cannot lose sight of the fact that we are always faced with manifestations of the will to power, that is, the *I* is always in the desire to dominate the *you* when the relationship is not dialogical (in the humanizing sense of Bakhtinian dialogism) and harmonic. In Foucault (2014 [1971]) we find the exposition of this conflict when the discourse of truth is established as the aegis of power and dominion over the other. Language as a tool of mastery is also noted by Klemperer (2009, p. 55, our translation): “Nazism became involved in the flesh and blood of the masses through words, expressions and phrases that were imposed by repetition, thousands of times, and were accepted unconsciously and mechanically”²³. The *non-dialogue* is eminently committed to compulsory learning of a new language, that of slogans, of set phrases, of military salutes and greetings, of repetitions.

The philosophical political Nazi-fascism cannot be seen as an isolated event or a product derived from the mind of a psychopath in uniform, Cytrynowicz (1995, p. 210) draws attention to this:

Illness and viruses are recurrent images in speaking of fascism, Nazism, as if it were a passing, unexpected phenomenon and, above all, an unwanted host that would have left history after a brief and evil stay.²⁴

A historic moment has passed, but so many others can erupt with repetitions of speeches and practices that did not necessarily cease to exist, they were just in a state of latency. It would be an equally innocent thought to think that all the people who followed the leading agents of totalitarian governments acted hypnotized, as Casara recalls (2017, p. 60): “The Holocaust was possible [...] because it had the help of lawyers and judges”²⁵. The clear reality is that many human beings wanted (want) Nazifascism to have existed (to exist).

The desire for control is a gluttonous sink. It is necessary to keep in mind that the will to find oneself superior to the other is a problem that finds reasonableness when our less virtuous desires become achievable in the applauded egoism archetype.

²³ Original: “O nazismo se embrenhou na carne e no sangue das massas por meio de palavras, expressões e frases que foram impostas pela repetição, milhares de vezes, e foram aceitas inconscientemente e mecanicamente” (KLEMPERER, 2009 p. 55).

²⁴ Original: “Doença e vírus são imagens recorrentes para falar do fascismo, do nazismo, como se fosse um fenômeno passageiro, inesperado e, acima de tudo, um hospedeiro indesejado que teria deixado a história após uma breve e maligna estadia.” (CYTRYNOWICZ, 1995, p. 210).

²⁵ Original: “O Holocausto foi possível [...] pois contou com a ajuda de juristas e juizes”. (CASARA, 2017, p. 60).

It is necessary and possible to humanize the *I-you* relationship, and this evolution cannot be guaranteed except through dialogue and popular participation. It is necessary to face the fascist temptation in any form, and, above all, not to allow the damage of fundamental rights, for: “every time a fundamental right is violated or put into perspective, a step is taken towards authoritarianism”²⁶ (CASARA, 2017, p. 65).

The proposal of escape from the prison of language is something similar. Barthes, on this structural slavery, writes:

[...] the only remaining alternative is, if I may say so, to cheat with speech, to cheat speech. This salutary trickery, this evasion, this grand imposture which allows us to understand speech outside the bounds of power, in the splendor of a permanent revolution of language, I for one call *literature*²⁷. (BARTHES, 1992, p. 16, our translation).

Literature or, even better, the manifestations of literatures are the forms of escape from the tentacles of the language. That’s what makes the literary language a linguistic subversion that dodges the grammar structures and becomes *plurimorphologic*, *nonsyntactic* and *ultrasemantic*. Meaning the uncertain, it multiplies the possibilities of recognition of the reader (that is, *you*) as a legitimate author. Faced with this hungry fascism manifested in and by language, Barthes illuminates the door to evasion: literature.

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- **RESUMO:** *A partir da declaração de Barthes, afirmando que a língua é fascista, este artigo de opinião realiza uma relação entre os modelos político-ideológicos dos movimentos nazifascistas e as características do conceito de língua barthesiana. As análises caminham pelo campo da filosofia da linguagem e metaforizam os espaços do leitor; autor; texto e contexto de forma a trazer uma reflexão provocativa aos momentos históricos e quadros políticos dos últimos 80 anos. Para esse exame, leva-se em conta teóricos do campo da linguagem como Rodman & Fromklin (1993), Rajagopalan (2003), Fiorin (2008); na esfera da historiografia dialoga-se com Casara (2017), Woolf (1974), Trevor-Roper (1974), além de outros autores que circundam esta investigação de forma relevante. A medida em que se reflete sobre as razões dos pensamentos totalitaristas e verifica-se sua aproximação com a língua-autoritária vislumbrada por Barthes, pode-se mais facilmente compreender como as relações humanas precisam, muitas vezes, ser humanizadas. Como resultado deste estudo, pode-se considerar que os lugares discursivos são capazes de gerar aprisionamento ou liberdade, podem propor o fascismo ou a democracia pela literatura, e tais análises precisam ser contempladas.*
- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Fascismo. Nazifascismo. Língua. Barthes. Filosofia da Linguagem.*

²⁶ Original: “cada vez que um direito fundamental é violado ou relativizado, caminha-se um passo rumo ao autoritarismo” (CASARA, 2017, p. 65).

²⁷ Original: “[...] só resta [a nós], por assim dizer, trapacear com a língua, trapacear a língua. Essa trapaça salutar: essa esquiwa, esse logro magnífico que permite ouvir a língua fora do poder, no esplendor de uma revolução permanente da linguagem, eu a chamo, quanto a mim: literatura.” (BARTHES, 1992, p. 16).

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