

Fascism or the swindle of fulfillment

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There isn't much to love in the content of fascist ideology

Th. Adorno

I dare to name a malaise. To do so, I will reclaim a signifier from the early 20th century to speak about the present. I speak of fascism and identify in it three central traits: individualism sustained by the ideal of sexual complementarity, autonomy understood as non-dependence on the Other, and freedom in its libertarian version.

The individual is presented as a compact, solid, substantial sphere. An autonomous, complete, and transparent self. A two-faced machine (brain-body) fueled by dopamine, cortisol, serotonin, and oxytocin. Here, we might revisit the concept of the “unien”—an anagram of *ennui*, or boredom. The *unien* as that all-encompassing bag, a specular unity that defines an inside and an outside. The individual as a monotonous melody, devoid of modulation. For Guy Le Gaufey, “the unien One might just as well be called the *furtive* one, for it does not endure.”¹

The fascist grid allows for only two morphologies: concave and convex, man and woman. Versions that, in turn, would complement each other in a seamless, edgeless unity. And if we continue with the metaphor of spatial geometry, individuals are spheres that move (or should move) across a polished plane—without obstructions, without constraints, entirely free. In this way, both “freedom of choice” and “self-ownership” become the axes around which their ethical action moves.

This substantialism has a long history. Jacques Derrida reminded us of this when he said that “It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence -*eidos*, *arche*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *aletheia*,

¹ Le Gaufey, G. (2001) *El lazo especular Un estudio transversal de la unidad imaginaria*, México: Epele, p. 292

transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth”². This brief catalog gathers some of the names of presence, of being, of a certain fullness.

In his reflections on fascism, Ernst Bloch spoke of the “swindle of fulfillment.” Fascism sells the promise of satisfaction, painting an exact fit between word and thing, drive and object. Contemporary fascism echoes its predecessor—it has a family resemblance. This “swindle of fulfillment” becomes present through the phantasm articulated by a superego operation. We might ask: what is the antifascist other side of fulfillment?

Perhaps psychoanalysis has something to say here, if only because, to begin with, it is not concerned with the individual. In “*L’étourdit*”, Lacan says that “what analytic discourse concerns, it is the subject, which, as effect of signification, is the response of the real.”³ A barred subject, we might add—intermittent, traversed by lack, incomplete, inhabited by an extimate void, pierced through. In contrast to the polished, impermeable surface of the individual, we can oppose the image of the punctured chain of signifiers. If this single enunciation already constitutes a scandal for the referential, predicative, accumulative knowledge of contemporary science, then it is no surprise that Lacan caused an uproar when, in his interrupted 1963 seminar, he asked (in front of his psychoanalytic audience) about what creates a hole.

What creates a hole? *The Names-of-the-Father*. It is the voice of the Names-of-the-Father that induces the void, that names the void. As a result of the paradox inherent in naming the unnameable, we can only glimpse versions of the Name-of-the-Father. The versions of the father are the transformations of the phantasm within an analysis.

The Names-of-the-Father create a hole where the contemporary individual sees a contingent fullness. In the terms of René Lew, the Names-of-the-Father are impredicative, if we understand impredicative as “that which does not fill the significative void that compactifies it.”⁴ Or, to put it another way, “compactification is the aporetic fact of emptying (of the opening inherent in signification as cause):

² Derrida, J. (2002) “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” in *Writing and Difference*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 353

³ Lacan, J. (2001) “*L’étourdit*” in *Autres Écrits*, Éditions du Seuil, pages 449-495. Our translation.

⁴ Lew, R. (2023) “Anexos. Definiciones de la impredicatividad y la recursividad” en *Lógica del cuerpo y de la motilidad*, Buenos Aires: ECLAP Editorial, pág. 156

it is the Father (as the present absence) who compactifies the records of the world.”⁵

But let’s return to fascism. What conception of the body derives from its idea of the individual? It is a body as a machine of hormones and neurotransmitters. At most, if there is malaise, it is due to a cortisol intoxication. The body is conceived from a forgetting, or rather, a non-knowing, as it appeals to a “being that rests in [the body and] does not know that it is language that is granted to it.”⁶ There are no echoes of speech in the body, only chemical echoes on the matter.

The Names of Presence install disposable bodies, expendable, use-values, manageable. The Names of the Father rest on an impredicative and unpredictable logic, not manipulable. They appear as *tyche*, evanescences that cut the chain of associations, suspensions of phantasmatic, and crystallized meanings. But not only that, they whirl, spit, and swallow. This *tyche* is not manufacturable by an act of volition. That’s why Lacan will say in his interrupted seminar “The Names of the Father”: “A name, as I showed you, is a mark that is already open to reading -which is why it is read the same way in all languages – printed on something that may be a subject who will speak, but who will not necessarily speak at all”⁷

Moreover, the names mark, leave a trace. “When Abraham learns from the angel that he is no there to immolate Isaac, Rashi [An 11th-century Jewish commentator] has him say, “Then what? If that’s the way it is, have I come for nothing? I am going to give him at least a flesh wound, to draw a little blood. Will that please you, *Elohim*?”⁸. The name leaves a mark; no subject comes out unscathed by names.

If the Names of Presence bind, segregate, deport, hierarchize, stigmatize; the Names of the Father resemble escape valves, fleeting, openings, cracks, edges. Littorals where the subject, eventually, will invent something to hold onto. Thus, we ask: What fascism can be sustained on shifting sands? What illusion of

⁵ Lew, R. (2012) *Positions: (31) Compactifier*. “la compactification est le fait aporique de l’évidement (de la béance inhérente à la signifiante comme cause): c’est le Père (comme absence présentifiée) qui compactifie les registres du monde”.

⁶ Lacan, J. (20019) *Radiophonie*, in *Autres Écrits*. Paris: Seuil. Our translation.

⁷ Lacan, J. (2023) “Introduction to the Names-of-the-Fathers” in *On the Names-of-the-Fathers*, Polity, p. 75

⁸ *Op. cit*, pages 85-86

fullness withstands the movement of the hole? It is not a matter of opposing a fascist, predicative discursivity to an analytical, impredicative discursivity, as mere negativity, opposition, or antithesis. Perhaps psychoanalysis is not the antidote to fascism, but certainly, it dares, at the very least, to peek into the hole.