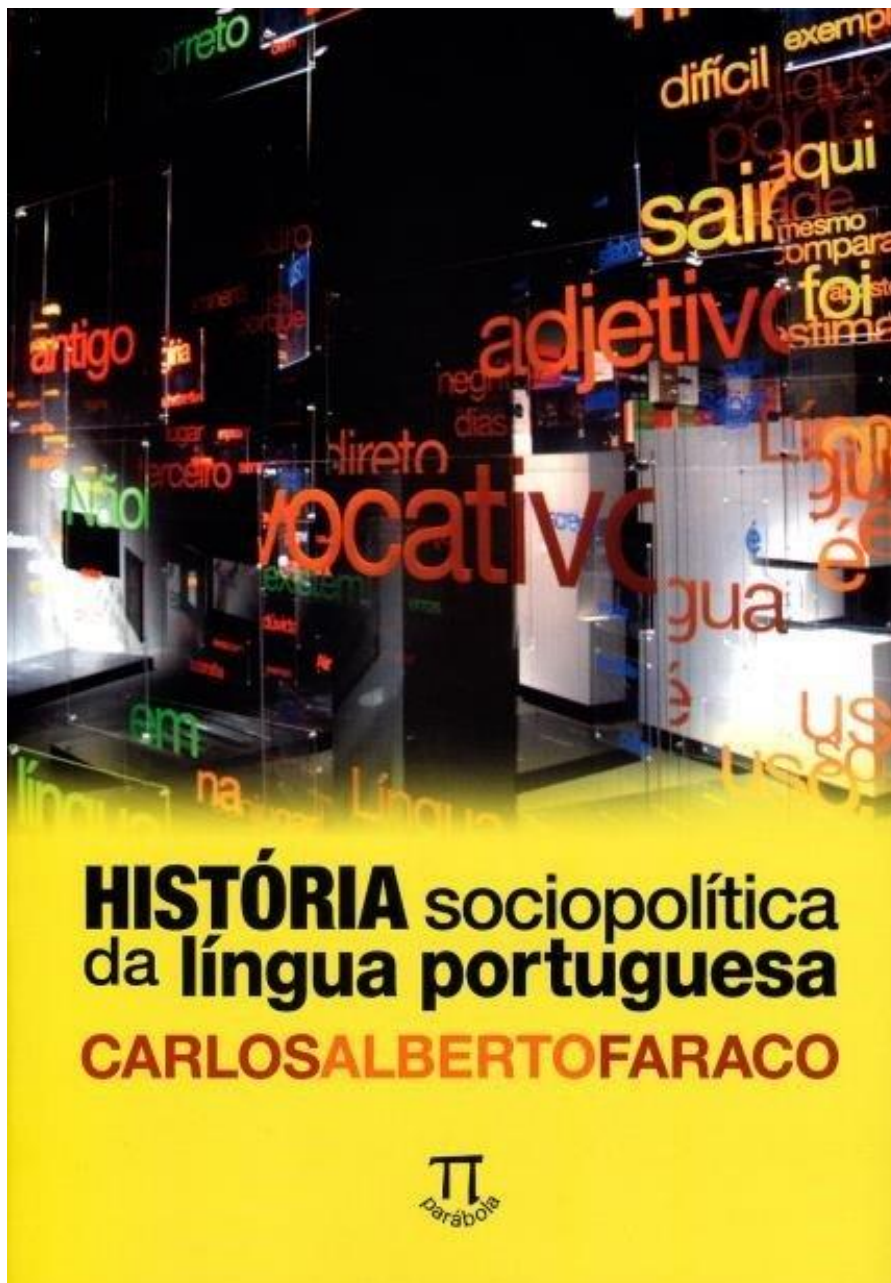


FARACO, Carlos Alberto. *História sociopolítica da língua portuguesa* [Sociopolitical History of the Portuguese Language]. São Paulo: Parábola Editorial, 2016, 400 p.

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Carlos Alberto Faraco, a professor of the Universidade Federal do Paraná [Federal University of Parana] and a respected expert in historical linguistics, is the author of one of the most used textbooks of the field, namely, *Linguística histórica: introdução ao estudo da história das línguas* [*Historical Linguistics: An Introduction to the Study of the History of Languages*], which was first published by Editora Ática [Ática Publishing House] and recently by Parábola Editorial [Parábola Editorial Publishing House]. Faraco, also one of the greatest Brazilian experts in Mikhail Bakhtin's *oeuvre*, now brings us a brave work entitled *História sociopolítica da língua portuguesa* [*Sociopolitical History of the Portuguese Language*].

Traditionally, Historical Linguistics is divided into internal linguistics and external linguistics. Saussure, for instance, focuses on this distinction in the chapter Internal and External Elements of Language [Chapter V] of his *Course in General Linguistics*. Internal linguistics focuses solely on the changes in language structure, which become its exclusive study as it observes how the linguistic system works, its “mechanisms.” In external linguistics, language is studied in relation to social, geographical, economic, political, cultural, etc. phenomena. Taking into account Saussure's statement that “[l]anguage is a system that has its own arrangement [order]” (1966, p.22),¹ historical linguistics has always prioritized internal linguistics and considered it linguistics *par excellence*; thus, it has relegated external linguistics to a secondary role. Internal linguistics was often the object of detailed and in-depth analysis while external linguistics was basically a collection of anecdotes. However, as other concepts of language have emerged, such as the one from sociolinguistics, the so-called external history of language has assumed a relevant role.

Faraco adopts this new trend, which stems from the view that “languages are intrinsically connected to the historical-political dynamics, the imaginary-ideological constructs of the societies in which they are spoken. In other words, languages do not exist in themselves and by themselves; they are not autonomous entities – languages are also their speakers, the societies that speak them” (p.9).² That is why he makes it clear

¹ SAUSSURE, F. *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Riedlinger; translated, with an introduction and notes, by Wade Baskin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

² Source text: “as línguas estão intimamente atadas às dinâmicas histórico-políticas e às construções imaginário-ideológicas das sociedades em que são faladas. Em outros termos, as línguas não existem em *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 12 (1): 174-186, Jan./April 2017.

that he does not intend to describe the changes that have occurred in the different subsystems, be them phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical, that comprise the structural organization of the Portuguese language. In other words, he does not aim to look into the so-called internal linguistics, but intends to study the intricate web of social, economic, political and cultural phenomena that have shaped Portuguese, spoken by different peoples in different continents (pp.9-10).

We can imagine that the book deals with another history of the development and dissemination of Portuguese. However, what Faraco shows us is not another history of the Portuguese language: he presents it from new perspectives, refusing anachronistic interpretations, the “topos of pride” (p.10).³ He submits long-accepted ideas to the merciless scrutiny of documentation; thus, not only does he debunk some myths about the dissemination of Portuguese, but he also unveils the ideologemes that are the basis of what is presented as natural or scientific.

The book is divided into two long chapters, in which Faraco discusses its main topic, and a third chapter, which can be considered the book’s conclusion due to its content. The first one, entitled History, examines the development and dissemination of what would be called Portuguese. The language we call Portuguese today stems from the development of Romance languages (speeches); it began to be shaped as such after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the region known as Galicia, an autonomous region of Spain, and in the North of Portugal, i.e., in the Roman *Gallaecia*. First, Faraco presents the sociohistorical events that led to the dissemination of these languages in the region that goes from Northwestern Iberia to Algarve, allowing the Western strip to stand out in relation to the rest of the Iberian Peninsula.

As to the dissemination of Portuguese, Faraco refuses anachronisms (“the interpretation of the past through the present”)⁴ and triumphalisms (“the interpretation [...] that is based on the celebration of success”).⁵ He also argues against the statement made by historians of Portugal’s history and the Portuguese language that D. Dinis established “Portuguese” as the “official” language of his reign in 1296 (p.23). In fact, “what happened during D. Dinis’s reign was that the use of the vernacular Romance

si e por si; elas não são entidades autônomas – as línguas são elas e seus falantes; elas e as sociedades que as falam.”

³ Source text: “tópos do orgulho.”

⁴ Source text: “a interpretação do passado pelo presente.”

⁵ Source text: “a interpretação [...] que se pauta pela celebração do sucesso.”

language in documents produced by the Royal Chancery became systematic and supplanted the use of Latin” (p.23).⁶ He rejects the interpretation of the officialization of Portuguese because, according to him, the production of documents by the Royal Chancery cannot be confused with the officialization of the language: the modern meaning of official language is “language whose use is compulsory in every public domain” (p.24).⁷ We need to remember that teaching “was primarily in Latin until the 18th century”⁸ and that doctors wrote prescriptions in Latin until at least the 17th century (p.24). Similarly, we cannot talk about a national language in this period, once the process of national construction, as we understand it today, starts only in the 18th century.

Faraco prompts a courageous discussion in the name of the language, as the “selection and nomination of a historical language (that is, the selection of a specific set of language varieties that are grouped under a unique name – Portuguese, Galician, English, Chinese, etc.) are fundamentally sociocultural and political phenomena” (p.47).⁹ This means that a historical language is more of a sociocultural institution than a purely linguistic entity. During most of the Middle Ages, the references made to Romance varieties were not according to specific names that would single them out. In texts of this period, we only find generic references, such as *vulgar*, *Romanic/Romance*, *language*, *our language*. “It seems that the Romance language of Portugal had to wait until the 15th century to be called *Portuguese* or *Portuguese language*, but its definite current use began in the 16th century” (p.48).¹⁰

Faraco then studies the dissemination of Portuguese in the world, which started in the 15th century – a period called the Great Voyages of Discovery. He also points to its linguistic consequences, such as the emergence of a Portuguese-based *pidgin* and Portuguese creoles.

⁶ Source text: “o que aconteceu no reinado de D. Dinis foi que o uso da língua românica vernácula na documentação produzida pela Chancelaria Real se tornou sistemático e suplantou o uso do latim.”

⁷ Source text: “língua de uso obrigatório em todas as instâncias públicas.”

⁸ Source text: “continuou a ser feito primordialmente em latim até o século XVIII.”

⁹ Source text: “o recorte e a nomeação de uma língua histórica (ou seja, o recorte de determinado conjunto de variedades linguísticas agrupadas sob um nome singular – português, galego, inglês, chinês, etc.) são fenômenos fundamentalmente socioculturais e políticos.”

¹⁰ Source text: “A nomeação da língua românica de Portugal como português ou linguagem/língua portuguesa teve de esperar, ao que tudo indica, o século XV, tornando-se definitivamente corrente a partir do século XVI.”

As Faraco presents the linguistic situation in Goa, he discusses the reasons why interracial marriages were encouraged there; thus, he debunks another myth created by ideologists of Portuguese colonialism who claim that Portuguese colonization was tolerant of and open to miscegenation with locals (p.73). By showing that in 1974 only a very small fraction of the population of the colonized territories could read and write and had access to education, he unveils the deceptive discourse of the “civilizing mission” with which European colonialism justified their actions in Africa and Asia (p.80).

Marquess of Pombal’s linguistic policy, which was legitimized by the Royal Act of 1757, deserves a detailed analysis. Rejecting the common idea that this policy was successful, since it led to the dissemination of Portuguese throughout the nation, Faraco shows that it was actually a failure (p.114). In places where Nheengatu [Amazonian general language] was spoken, the dissemination was a result of demographic and economic changes that occurred in the region (p.103). Thus, he shows that the dissemination of a language is not a consequence of voluntary actions but of an intricate web of economic and social factors.

General languages are analyzed as a byproduct of colonization (p.120). “The colonial European intervention in Brazil, and in America in general, caused the economic, social, and cultural disintegration of indigenous people, especially those who lived on the coast or in its proximity as they were submitted to the logic of colonial exploitation” (p.121).¹¹ This brought about new social interactions that deeply affected the languages involved: “on the one hand, it contributed to the emergence of the so-called general languages (Paulista [Sao Paulo general language] and Nheengatu) and, on the other, it established “language” lines, because of which the dissemination of Portuguese in Brazil became polarized” (p.121).¹²

Portuguese becomes the hegemonic language in Brazil, the L1 of the absolute majority of the population. This is due to a complex sequence of events occurred in the 18th century along with the progressive territorial unification caused by the discovery of

¹¹ Source text: “A intervenção colonial europeia no Brasil, como na América em geral, redundou na destruturação econômica, social e cultural das populações autóctones, em especial das que viviam no litoral ou em sua proximidade, submetendo-as à lógica da exploração colonial.”

¹² Source text: “fazendo, de um lado, emergir as chamadas línguas gerais (paulista e amazônica) e, de outro, traçando as primeiras grandes linhas que resultaram no modo polarizado pela qual se deu a disseminação da língua portuguesa no Brasil.”

gold in Minas Gerais: “the shift of a large number of people to the gold-mining region; the massive arrival of metropolitan Portuguese people”;¹³ the creation of commercial networks to supply goods to Minas Gerais, thus “the uniting of the Center, the Northeast, the South [of Brazil], Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, favoring the inter-regional use of the Portuguese language”;¹⁴ “the establishment of an increasing urban society hitherto never seen in colonial spaces (giving rise to a growing number of people who were socioeconomically middle-class and educated, virtually nonexistent in centuries before)” (p.148).¹⁵ Therefore, it is only in the 18th century that Portuguese becomes the language that people generally use in Brazil.

When Faraco explains this long-term process, determined by socioeconomic factors that make the Portuguese language supplant the general languages (Paulista and Nheengatu), he debunks another current ideologeme in social histories of languages, one that states that the victory of a language over another is due to the superiority of the victorious language. Serafim da Silva Neto, for instance, is one of the Brazilian philologists that disseminate this idea. According to him, “the victory of the Portuguese language was not a result of the imposition of the dominant class; it was due to its superior prestige, which forced individuals to use the language that expressed the best form of civilization” (p.142).¹⁶

Faraco examines the sociolinguistic cleavage of the Portuguese language in order to explain its genesis. After studying what happened to the African languages in Brazil, he concludes that the Brazilian sociolinguistic polarization was a result of the contact of languages and the adoption of Portuguese as L2 by the slaves, foreign languages speakers, as well as the subsequent nativization of this defective model and the elite’s refusal to use these language varieties (p.148). Concomitantly, there happened the “lusophonization’ of the Brazilian society, which, in its turn, guaranteed

¹³ Source text: “o deslocamento de grandes contingentes populacionais para a região aurífera; a vinda maciça de portugueses metropolitanos.”

¹⁴ Source text: “unindo o Centro, o Nordeste, o Sul, São Paulo e o Rio de Janeiro e, assim, favorecendo o trânsito inter-regional da língua portuguesa.”

¹⁵ Source text: “o estabelecimento de uma sociedade urbana em grau até então nunca visto, nos espaços coloniais (o que fez surgir e crescer um segmento socioeconômico médio e letrado praticamente inexistente nos séculos anteriores).”

¹⁶ Source text: “A vitória do português não se deveu à imposição violenta da classe dominante. Ela explica-se pelo seu prestígio superior, que forçava os indivíduos ao uso da língua que exprimia a melhor forma de civilização.”

a relative uniformity of the standard Brazilian Portuguese” (p.148).¹⁷ Therefore, “it is not possible to talk about a unique sociopolitical history of the Portuguese language in Brazil. In a society that, from the beginning of colonization, was socioeconomically polarized, language actually trod two wide parallel paths, each one with its own dynamics” (p.150).¹⁸ He then explains the socioeconomic changes occurred especially in the 20th century that created a dialectical interpenetration of these two paths, with the consequent redesign of the sociolinguistic profile of Brazil. “This dialectical process is slow and complex, but ongoing and irreversible” (p.150).¹⁹ Although sociolinguistic polarization and language discrimination still exist, “many effects on the sociolinguistic reality of the country can be noticed,” “pointing to the emergence of a linguistic leveling of the Brazilian society” (p.150).²⁰ The issue of the language of immigrants is also analyzed, and he shows that “we still do not have many systematic studies on the possible influence of the languages of immigrants over Brazilian Portuguese” (p.159).²¹ As we can conclude, the author studies, in all its complexity, the question of the introduction of Portuguese in Brazil and its heterogeneous configuration.

The name of the language in Brazil deserves special attention, for it has always been clear that we do not speak Portuguese as it is spoken in Europe either because we sometimes want to praise this variety, which is different from the European language, or because we many times want to condemn it.

The non-native varieties, namely those that emerged “in colonial societies when the European language was basically used as a second language by the people who were either born in the land or transferred to it,”²² deserve to be analyzed. It is important to show that if Portugal was forgotten as the place where the “true,” “correct,” “legitimate,” “pure” language is, the idea that this language dwells in the “ethereal territory,” “answering by the name” of Grammar or Standard language (p.174) is still

¹⁷ Source text: “‘lusofonização por cima’ da sociedade brasileira, garantindo, por seu turno, a relativa uniformidade do português brasileiro culto.”

¹⁸ Source text: “não se pode falar de uma história sociopolítica única da língua portuguesa no Brasil. Numa sociedade socioeconomicamente polarizada desde o início da colonização, a língua caminhou, de fato, por duas grandes trilhas paralelas, cada qual com sua própria dinâmica.”

¹⁹ Source text: “Esse processo dialético é lento e complexo, mas constante e irreversível.”

²⁰ Source text: “são perceptíveis os muitos efeitos sobre a realidade sociolinguística do país”; “que apontam para a emergência de um certo nivelamento linguístico da sociedade brasileira.”

²¹ Source text: “não temos ainda muitos estudos sistemáticos das eventuais influências das línguas dos imigrantes sobre o português do Brasil.”

²² Source text: “em sociedades coloniais quando a língua europeia foi apropriada basicamente como língua segunda por populações originárias do território ou para ele transpostas.”

present in the imaginary of the people. That is why Faraco studies in detail the process of the development of this imaginary language, “the uniforming idealization that hovers over the concrete and fluid diversity [of language]” (pp.176-177).²³ He starts his analysis by examining the “compliments” given to the Portuguese language, such as the ones written by João de Barros and Pero Magalhães de Gândavo, who tried to show not only the “excellency” of Portuguese due to its being the closest to Latin, as Camoes had stated in his *The Lusíads* (I, 33),²⁴ but also its superiority over Spanish (p.178). He investigates the compilation of Portuguese dictionaries and studies the issue of orthography based on works on the subject (in the 17th and 18th centuries, there were relatively many studies on orthography) and the ups and downs of orthographic reforms in Portugal and Brazil, including the 1990 reform, which is currently in force despite all the mishaps. Finally, Faraco presents a history of the Portuguese grammar in Portugal and Brazil and points to the “grammatical discourse, historically constituted, [...] that establishes, in the midst of variation and change (inherent to any language), the “true,” “legitimate,” “correct,” and “pure” language” (p.200).²⁵ In order to do so, he adopts criteria that are of a rhetorical-literary, logic, or social nature (pp. 200-201). He ends the chapter, asking “if it is not high time we created an ecumenical grammar of Portuguese, following the programmatic work of Celso Cunha & Lindley Cintra (1985), which takes into account the international and polycentric nature of the language” (p.225).²⁶

In the second chapter, entitled Rumo à lusofonia [On the Way to Lusophony], Faraco examines this entity called Lusophony. The idea of a Portugal that is bigger than Portugal itself has been around ever since the Portuguese left the European borders to conquer Ceuta in 1415 (p.228). If in the glorious days of Portugal there was an imperial culture, in the days of crisis and decadence the ideas of future greatness are promoted.

It is a fertile period for sharp prophetism that creates a wonderful Fifth Empire: [...] times of hardships will be over, and the great Empire of

²³ Source text: “aquela idealização uniformizadora que paira sobre a diversidade concreta e fluida.”

²⁴ TN. The author refers to the following lines of Canto One, stanza 33: “In the language which an inventive mind / Could mistake for Latin [...]” (CAMOES, 2001, p.9). [CAMOES, L. *The Lusíads*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Landeg White. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001].

²⁵ Source text: “o discurso gramatical se constituiu historicamente [...] justamente para estatuir, em meio à variação e à mudança (que são inerentes a qualquer língua), a língua ‘verdadeira’, ‘legítima’, ‘certa’, ‘pura.’”

²⁶ Source text: “se não é chegada a hora de elaborar, na senda programática do trabalho de Celso Cunha & Lindley Cintra (1985), uma gramática ecumênica da língua portuguesa, tendo em conta a realidade de português como língua internacional e pluricêntrica.”

Christ and Christians will be established under the leadership of the Portuguese, thus fulfilling the manifest fate of the country, which was announced in the miracle of Ourique (when, before the victorious battle against the Moors in 1139, Christ himself would have appeared to Afonso Henriques) (p.230).²⁷

The great ideologist of the Fifth Empire was Father Vieira. Fernando Pessoa postulates that the Fifth Empire will be “an empire embodied in language, because it will not be a material Empire; it will be cultural” (p.235).²⁸ As there is no Empire without an Emperor, Pessoa will elect Vieira as the “Emperor of the Portuguese language.” The topos of pride permeates Pessoa’s thinking, for he considers Portuguese the richest and most complex of the Romance languages (p. 239). The poet makes an assertion that has become commonplace: “My nation is the Portuguese language.”²⁹ Portuguese intellectual Agostinho da Silva gives this royal ideologeme a new expression. He was the great intellectual inspiration of CPLC (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa) [Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries].

Agostinho da Silva’s thinking was somehow connected to nostalgia (a certain idealized image of Portugal’s medieval past) and mystic hope (for a future of peace, fraternity, freedom and abundance to the entire world, which will be achieved through the leadership of Portuguese-speaking people in the realization of the Age of the Holy Ghost) (p.244).³⁰

However, this would not be a task for the European Portugal, but for the Portugal that is bigger than Portugal itself: the Portugal of the five continents. The idea of the Fifth Empire is actualized: it is an Empire of the Portuguese language that “will only be established when Portugal, sacrificing itself as a Nation, becomes an element of

²⁷ Source text: “Momento fértil para o profetismo desabrido; tempo próprio para se fabular um maravilhoso Quinto Império: [...] os tempos de provação estarão encerrados e o grande Império de Cristo e dos cristãos estará implantado, sob a liderança dos portugueses, cumprindo-se o destino manifesto do país, anunciado já no ‘milagre’ de Ourique (quando, antes da vitoriosa batalha contra os mouros em 1139, o próprio Cristo teria aparecido a Afonso Henriques).”

²⁸ Source text: “um império encarnado na língua, porque não há de ser um Império material, mas cultural.”

²⁹ TN: This famous quotation is found in Text 259 of *The Book of Disquiet*. [PESSOA, F. *The Book of Disquiet*. Editorial matter, selection and translation by Richard Zenith. London: Penguin Books, 2001, p.225].

³⁰ Source text: “O pensamento de Agostinho da Silva aliava, de certa forma, a nostalgia (certa imagem idealizada do passado medieval de Portugal) e a esperança mística (de um futuro de paz, fraternidade, liberdade e abundância para toda a humanidade a ser alcançado pela liderança dos povos de língua portuguesa na concretização da Era do Espírito Santo) (p.244).”

a Portuguese-speaking community” (p.246).³¹ In Agostinho da Silva’s work, Portuguese is “the exclusive carrier of a particular redemptive worldview of humanity that is rooted in the medieval experience of the Portuguese society” (p.248).³² CPLP “can thus be understood as the point of confluence between two important imperial ideologemes that have traversed the history of Portugal since the 16th century: the political-economic and the linguistic-cultural” (p.249).³³

Faraco analyzes Gilberto Freyre’s “theory” about Lusotropicalism. Although he recognizes that Freyre’s cultural perspective helps us to understand the contribution of black and native people to the development of Brazilian society and culture and to rethink the issue of miscegenation positively, he shows how fragile Lusotropicalism tenets are. In fact, the idea that Portuguese colonialism was different from the other European colonialism because it was benign and loving and practiced “sweet assimilation” is nothing but a myth. For the sociologist from Pernambuco [Gilberto Freyre], “Portuguese colonialism created a great ‘unity of feeling and culture,’ a large Lusotropical complex originated from racial and cultural miscegenation, a transnational and supranational whole that encompasses Portugal and all the areas colonized by the Portuguese in America, Africa, and Asia” (p.254).³⁴ Not empirically based, Freyre glamorizes Portuguese colonialism and even slavery. Actually, just like any colonialism, Portuguese colonialism is grounded in the

[...] domination of lands and peoples in order to dispossess them of their natural and agricultural wealth. This is done based on the workforce of the dominated people, be them autochthonous or transposed, which necessarily presupposes the inferiorization (based on race) of these peoples, whether in an ideological plane (in order to justify exploitation through discourse) or in the plane of concrete acts (the very practice of discrimination and exploitation) (p.251).³⁵

³¹ Source text: “só poderá surgir quando Portugal, sacrificando-se como Nação, apenas for um dos elementos de uma comunidade de língua portuguesa.”

³² Source text: “portadora exclusiva de uma determinada cosmovisão redentora da humanidade enraizada na experiência medieval da sociedade portuguesa.”

³³ Source text: “pode, então, ser entendida como o ponto de confluência dos dois grandes ideologemas imperiais que atravessaram a história de Portugal desde o século XVI: o político-econômico e o linguístico-cultural.”

³⁴ Source text: “o colonialismo português criou uma grande ‘unidade de sentimento e cultura’, um grande complexo lusotropical que nasceu da miscigenação racial e cultural, um todo transnacional ou supranacional compreendendo Portugal e todas as áreas colonizadas pelos portugueses na América, África e Ásia.”

³⁵ Source text: “dominação das terras e povos para a espoliação de suas riquezas naturais e agrícolas com base na exploração da força de trabalho da população dominada - autóctone ou transposta, o que

The idea that Lusotropical peoples are a big community is the basis of the discourse of Lusophony and the justification for the creation of CPLP.

As to the Portuguese language, when Freyre stated that Portuguese is a polycentric language, he “already pointed to issues that are present in current political debates about the language both in the national and international level” (p.262).³⁶ This is the reason why he was against any linguistic purism and for the existence of a plurality of norms, not granting Portugal the privilege of being endowed with the “true” language.

Faraco analyzes in detail the policies that have tried to bring Portugal and Brazil together since 1822 (in general, they have failed) and that have fostered the creation of CPLP. The eight Portuguese-speaking countries, “as they claim historical, cultural and linguistic bonds, decide to create an international organization that is committed to achieve three main objectives: political-diplomatic agreements, cooperation in every domain and the dissemination of the Portuguese language” (p.303).³⁷ CPLP was a strategic project conceived exclusively by the Portuguese. It was never viewed as a priority by Brazilian foreign policy and was never received with enthusiasm by the other Portuguese-speaking countries. Therefore, “the possibility for CPLP to establish itself as an international organization that goes beyond the sentimental rhetoric is not very encouraging” (p.308).³⁸ CPLP, in its 20 years of existence, has become nothing else than “a geopolitical or political-cultural *reverie* whose success is doubtful” (p.311).³⁹

Faraco then addresses the issue of Lusophony, a concept that would be used as the basis to assemble Portugal and its former colonies. This project is of primary interest to Portugal. “It would be a postcolonial/neocolonial political project, an attempt to establish a ‘soft’ power presence, a strategy devised to continue the webs of domination

pressupõe necessariamente uma inferiorização (de base racial) dessas populações, seja no plano ideológico (a justificar, pelo discurso, a exploração), seja no plano das ações concretas (as próprias práticas de discriminação e exploração).”

³⁶ Source text: “antecipa questões hoje presentes nos debates políticos sobre a língua, no plano nacional e internacional.”

³⁷ Source text: “apelando aos aspectos históricos, culturais e linguísticos, decidem congregar-se numa organização internacional voltada para o cumprimento de três grandes objetivos: a concertação político-diplomática, a cooperação em todos os domínios e a promoção e difusão da língua portuguesa.”

³⁸ Source text: “não são muito alentadoras as possibilidades de a CPLP se firmar como um organismo internacional para além da retórica sentimental.”

³⁹ Source text: “uma *rêverie* geopolítica ou político-cultural de duvidoso sucesso.”

in different guise, an imaginary space of imperial nostalgia” (p.327).⁴⁰ Brazil views it with indifference and the other Portuguese-speaking countries are suspicious of it. In the discourse of Lusophony, there is an “emphasis on the role that language theoretically plays to bring together the peoples who speak Portuguese and the common elements they have, which were given by the Portuguese colonizer to their respective cultures” (p.316).⁴¹ He then analyzes the different concepts, projects and interests to which this word refers. He shows that as Lusophony, contrary to *Francophonie*, did not become a political-economical project, it intends, thus, to become a linguistic-cultural project. However, even the concept of cultural unity presents difficulties in that it assumes a homogeneity that is hardly found. It claims to common cultural traits that although given as evidence, they are never specifically pinpointed; in fact, what is really lauded is abstract values. Maybe the only common ground of CPLP upon which we can talk about a joint action would be the promotion of the Portuguese language. Moreover, “due to the lack of a strategic view of language and culture, Brazil has not yet assumed a protagonist role in the promotion of the language, thus choosing certain immobilism” (p.347).⁴²

However, Faraco is not a complete pessimist about the cooperation between Portuguese-speaking countries. In the third chapter, a brief one, which is entitled *Alguma esperança para o mundo da língua portuguesa?* [Some Hope to the Portuguese-Speaking World?], he describes the situation of the language in the world and the language problems Portuguese-speaking countries have. He then outlines a joint action “program” to implement a bolder policy aimed at disseminating Portuguese. The book ends with the following paragraph:

The effective international prominence of the Portuguese language in the galaxy of the other languages in the future will depend upon the Portuguese-speaking societies to substantially improve their socioeconomic and cultural conditions, to develop their economy and the resources for a “language reservoir” [according to Houaiss (1985,

⁴⁰ Source text: “Seria um projeto político pós-colonial/ neocolonial, uma tentativa de instauração de um poder ‘soft’, uma estratégia de continuidade de redes de dominação com outra roupagem, um espaço imaginário da nostalgia imperial.”

⁴¹ Source text: “uma ênfase ao papel que a língua exerce, em tese, como elemento aglutinador dos povos que a falam e daquilo que haveria de chão comum, dado pelo colonizador português, em suas respectivas culturas.”

⁴² Source text: “por lhe faltar uma visão estratégica da língua e da cultura, o Brasil não assumiu até agora papel de maior protagonismo na gestão e promoção da língua, optando antes por certo imobilismo.”

pp.149-150), language reservoir is a common dictionary, a scientific and technical glossary, common orthographic vocabulary, aesthetic literature and general bibliography], and to be projected as an international political reference of fundamental values of Humanity, such as peace, democracy, justice, equitable distribution of wealth and environmental balance. After all, the relevance and prestige of a language are not acquired effortlessly (p.367).⁴³

The description of the contents of *História sociopolítica da língua portuguesa* [*Sociopolitical History of the Portuguese Language*] shows us that it is a fundamental work not only to those who study the Portuguese language or are interested in language issues, but also to scholars in human sciences. This is due to the fact that the book does not examine only questions related to the constitution and dissemination of Portuguese, but also addresses the problem of the Portuguese colonization, the relationship between Portugal and its former colonies, the role of language in international relations of power, and so forth. Faraco uses an extensive bibliography in order to discuss every single topic in a unique manner as he is aimed at debunking myths and ideologemes, correcting erroneous interpretations, shattering commonplaces, undoing vainglorious conclusions, and rectifying inadequate explanations. And he fulfills his promise. Therefore, in Brazil this work will have a special place in human sciences in general and language studies in particular. We also want to highlight that the book's reach goes way beyond the discussed subject: Faraco's work has a theoretical dimension that cannot be ignored when studying the history of languages. Thus, this work is indispensable and cannot be missed.

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⁴³ Source text: “O efetivo destaque internacional futuro da língua portuguesa na galáxia das línguas dependerá de as sociedades que a falam melhorarem substancialmente seus índices socioeconômicos e culturais; sofisticarem suas economias; desenvolverem seus recursos de “reserva gráfica” (no sentido de Houaiss, 1985, pp.149-150 – um grande dicionário comum, os glossários científicos e técnicos, um vocabulário ortográfico comum, a literatura estética e a bibliografia geral); e, por fim, se projetarem como referência política internacional de um conjunto de valores fundamentais da Humanidade tais como a paz, a democracia, a justiça, a distribuição equitativa da riqueza e o equilíbrio ambiental. Afinal, uma língua não adquire peso e prestígio no vazio.”