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NIETZSCHE IN BRAZIL: THE CREATION OF A NEW LEXICON

Introduction

Since the late 19th century, Brazilian intellectuals have embraced the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, disseminating his ideas throughout the country. To speak about him and his ideas, they created words, signaling the way in which his philosophy was recreated within the Brazilian context. The prime examples are the neologisms created to translate *Übermensch*: “sobrehomem”, “pro-homem”, “super-homem”, “Além-Homem”, and “além-do-homem”. This process of word formation raises linguistic and philosophical questions. How, exactly, were these neologisms created? Are they vernacular – that is, formed from elements of Portuguese integrated into the language? How did they acquire their meanings? Was it through the reciprocal transposition of a primary meaning, present in the philosopher’s text, into the Portuguese language? Or do the meanings of these terms stem from the uses made of them within the Brazilian context? By inventing words in Portuguese to designate Nietzsche’s concepts, were Brazilians engaging in philosophy?

These neologisms rely on traditional word formation systems, such as compounding, bringing together elements identifiable by the receiver into a new unit of meaning. They are “linguistic calques”, according to Bechara: “translated words and grammatical elements (prefixes, prepositions, word order)” [Bechara 2009: 351]. They differ from direct loans or phonetic adaptations, as they give rise to compound words formed by the juxtaposition of elements already existing in the language to preserve foreign concepts and compounds through word-for-word translation. This process legitimizes them within the Brazilian lexicon without the direct adoption of the foreign form. They are calques insofar as they seek to recreate the meaning of *Übermensch* by juxtaposing a preposition, prefix, or adverb (“sobre”, “pro”, “super”, “além”) + the noun (“homem”).

They create different meanings of overcoming the traditional concept of “man”, marking a position (above, for, super, beyond) in relation to him. They reflect the influence of foreign languages (German, French, English, Italian, Spanish) and the creativity of Brazilian translators and intellectuals, who created vocabulary for Nietzsche’s philosophy according to the specific form of life of the Brazilian context. To identify their meanings, I draw on Wittgenstein and his conception of meaning as use within a form of life and its language games [Wittgenstein 2009]. To explore how they function in discursive practice, I turn to John Searle and his theory of speech acts [Searle 2002]. And to Hilary Putnam,

with his division of linguistic labor [Putnam 1975], to understand the specialization of this Brazilian lexicon of Nietzsche's philosophy.

The translations of *Übermensch* in Brazil, starting with "sobrehomem" by Julio Erasmo, then "prohomem" by João Ribeiro, followed by "Super-homem" by Leopoldo de Freitas, "Além-Homem" by Mário Ferreira dos Santos, and "além-do-homem" by Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho, are conceptual creations, in line with Deleuze and Guattari, who define philosophy as the creation of concepts [Deleuze, Guattari 1991], and with Sílvia Gallo, who emphasizes the re-creation of concepts in the process of philosophical reception [Gallo 2012]. This hypothesis shows that these words do not merely translate the *Übermensch* but create new meanings, shaped by the Brazilian cultural, philosophical, and linguistic context.

To develop this hypothesis, I distinguish between primary meaning and secondary meaning. Primary meaning is the meaning of *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's texts, tied to its use in specific contexts, such as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where the term designates an overcoming of traditional man. Secondary meaning refers to the meanings generated by the Brazilian recreations, which rework the concept based on language games, speech acts, and divisions of linguistic labor within the Brazilian context. This distinction allows for an analysis of how the neologisms created to translate *Übermensch* are both isomorphic (maintaining a structural and conceptual correspondence) and reciprocal (dialoguing with the original concept while introducing their own nuances).

Each neologism created to designate this Nietzschean concept can be analyzed in terms of its linguistic formation, usage, discursive practice, and lexical specialization, in addition to its relation to the idea of transcreation (Haroldo de Campos) and conceptual re-creation (Deleuze and Guattari, Gallo).

The Primary Meaning of *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's Performative Language

The primary meaning of *Übermensch* is tied to Nietzsche's philosophical context, characterized by a critique of Christian morality and nihilism, an emphasis on self-affirmation and the creation of values, and a rejection of idealism in favor of immanence. The *Übermensch* appears in specific language games, such as the poetic-philosophical discourse of the conceptual character Zarathustra, which combines metaphors, aphorisms, and provocations. In *Ecce homo*, Nietzsche clarifies how the word should be understood ("as the designation of the most highly achieved type") and how it should not be understood ("as the 'idealistic' type of a higher species of man, half 'saint', half 'genius' ...") [Nietzsche 1999: 300].

Nietzsche used language in a performative way in many of his works. His lexicon conveys both meaning and action, provoking responses and transformations in the reader. Concepts such as the *Übermensch* and the *ewige Wiederkunft* call for action and personal transformation. According to Linda Simonis, Nietzsche is a "defender and theorist of the performative *avant-la-lettre*" [Simonis 2002: 58]. Barbara Cassin sees him as a precursor of the notion of linguistic performativity [Cassin 2011: 120]. In this sense, "what the 20th century calls 'performative' appears in embryonic form in Nietzsche's thought" [Barbosa 2013: 9]. In line with John Searle's categorization of speech acts, many of Nietzsche's concepts are assertive, in that they tell people how something is, but they are also directive, in that they seek to move them to action, and commissive, in that they commit them to something, whether a value or an action, as well as expressive, since they allow for the

expression of feelings and attitudes. Indeed, his performative language provokes reflection and action in his readers.

In the passage from Zarathustra titled “The Convalescent”, Nietzsche plays with concepts such as *ewige Wiederkunft* and *Übermensch*. By proclaiming that Zarathustra will return to “once again teach the *ewige Wiederkunft* of all things” and “announce the *Übermensch* to men”, he uses language performatively to draw the reader into action. In Part 3 of the Prologue, *Übermensch* signifies the idea that man is something that must be overcome. The term is not a symbol representing an ideal; it is a speech act that intervenes in and transforms human interactions. It serves Nietzsche to affirm that man must be overcome, carrying a directive sense that incites the reader to the action of self-transcendence, to abandon traditional morality, and to create values rooted in earthly life. It is a call to transformation. As a goal to be achieved, it questions what men have done to overcome themselves and demands fidelity to the earth, in opposition to hopes in an afterlife or beyond-the-grave.

These are performative concepts; they go beyond argumentation to become vehicles of speech acts that seek to transform the reader. The *ewige Wiederkunft*, more directive than assertive, is not only a doctrine of cyclical repetition, it is a thought that questions established values and demands a radical re-evaluation of existence. By imagining having to live the same life eternally, the reader is confronted with the necessity of affirming their life in its entirety, including suffering and pain. This thought acquires power over the reader and transforms them, conveying a directive speech act that urges self-overcoming. Similarly, the *Übermensch* is not merely assertive but a call to action. In teaching that man is something to be overcome, Zarathustra uses the term assertively, comparing contemporary man to an ape in relation to the *Übermensch*. But its use is primarily directive, questioning what men have done to overcome themselves and demanding fidelity to the earth. Through it, its author mobilizes the reader to act in order to overcome themselves and affirm their earthly life. As a performative, it provokes the reader’s radical transformation toward an affirmation of their own life.

Let us now examine some of this performative language of Nietzsche in the context of the reception of his philosophy in Brazil.

Analysis of the “sobrehomem”

The word “sobrehomem” appears in the first text about Nietzsche published in Brazil that I have record of. It is the article “O neocinismo” (Neo-Cynicism), from 1893, signed by Julio Erasmo. In this text, “sobrehomem” translates the German term “übermensch”. The word’s formation follows a process of lexical composition with vernacular elements of independent existence, as defined by Evanildo Bechara. According to the grammarian, there are compound words formed by the juxtaposition of terms already existing in the language, such as “segunda-feira” (Monday). The word “sobrehomem” fits this model. Both elements of the composition (“sobre” + “homem”) are autonomous Portuguese words. Although “sobre” functions as a prefix in this compound, it is a Portuguese preposition, with autonomous use and origin in Latin “super” (“above”) to indicate a superior position, that something is on top of another. The union of the two terms resulted in a new and meaningful construction: “he who is above man”, seeking to convey the Nietzschean concept of the *Übermensch*.

The form without a hyphen was compatible with the orthographic uses of the time. Under the currently in force Orthographic Agreement, the correct form would be “sobre-

homem”, since the rule prescribes the use of a hyphen when the prefix ends in a vowel and the second element begins with “h”. However, it is important to consider that in the late 19th century, such norms were not consolidated, and the use without a hyphen was common. Julio Erasmo’s lexical choice combines a nationalist intention (avoiding foreignisms) with a didactic concern: the term “sobrehomem” relies on words familiar to the Portuguese speaker and offers a direct approximation of the philosophical concept. As Bechara emphasizes, calques are not always welcome, as they can sound artificial or inadequate. And indeed: “sobrehomem” did not become established.

In his text, Erasmo states: “Currently, there is persistent talk about Frederico Nietzsche”. Who was talking persistently about Nietzsche? In Brazil of that period, it was the Germanists, particularly those of the Escola do Recife (Recife School). It is in this philosophical context that Erasmo cites the term *übermensch*, implying he had access to the original, discussing “Nietzsche’s theories” based on an unrevealed “excellent critical study”. He translates it as “sobrehomem” and defines it as a “type”, a “product of rigorous selection”. Historical examples of this type would be Cesare Borgia and Napoleon. From the text, we can list stereotypes that confer a secondary meaning to the neologism. A general and negative meaning, used to combat the neo-cynicism of the “philosophical tendencies of some German schools” [Erasmo 1893: 1]. Let us see.

Erasmo contextualizes the “sobrehomem” within a critique he makes of the emerging “philosophical tendencies” in Germany (and Brazil), associating Nietzsche with immoralism and what he calls aristocratic neo-cynicism. Among the stereotypes he attributes to the “sobrehomem”, which form the basis of his critical view, are the rejection of a general human morality, and the adoption in its place of a set of individual values, oriented towards the development and expansion of exceptional qualities. The “sobrehomem” is presented as a being above religion, homeland, family, or any other traditional social commitments, living according to his own principles and instincts. He is seen as the product of a “rigorous selection”, suggesting an elitist and social Darwinist view of human evolution.

Through these stereotypes, Erasmo constructs a general meaning of the “sobrehomem” that positions it strongly against the prevailing moral and religious norms, particularly those associated with Christianity. They reflect a specific and critical understanding of Nietzsche’s philosophy and serve as a means to challenge and criticize philosophical trends considered dangerous, then emerging in Germany (and Brazil). Thus, Erasmo’s use of the term “sobrehomem” is not neutral but laden with criticism aimed at alerting Brazilian readers about the risks this concept represents for the then-established moral and social order. It serves, therefore, to convey speech acts by the unknown author of this Brazilian intellectual scenario.

This is the context of the creation of the neologism “sobrehomem”. The element “sobre” seems to indicate hierarchical superiority, an understanding that may be related to the evolutionist thought of the late 19th century. It is a prefixed compound created to translate *Übermensch*. Its formation is not neutral: the prefix carries a hierarchical connotation, suggesting superiority or excess in relation to traditional man. In the phrase “Only the *sobrehomem*, the type of the *übermensch*, product of rigorous selection, can save us from irremediable decadence and repugnant degradation”, it designates a eugenic human type. This meaning attributed by Erasmo distances itself from the Nietzschean primary meaning. While Nietzsche saw the *Übermensch* as a creator of values beyond traditional morality, the Brazilian text associates it with a eugenicist social salvation project, that is, against the “degradation” of civilization. With the word “sobrehomem”, the concept of the

Übermensch begins to gain meaning in the Brazilian language and a specialization, in Putnam's sense, and a function in language, in Searle's manner. Let us see.

This resignification illustrates what Hilary Putnam would call semantic specialization: "sobrehomem" ceases to be an abstract philosophical term to take on local ideological contours, linked to Brazilian debates of the late 19th century about racial degeneration and progress. The word begins to operate in public or collective discourse, encapsulating both the fear of decadence and the belief in a redeeming elite. Pragmatically, its use constitutes a directive speech act (in John Searle's terminology), for Erasmo not only exposes it assertively but, against it, prescribes a worldview. Although Erasmo criticizes Nietzsche, he ends up adopting and disseminating his vocabulary, such as the terms "sobrehomem", "degenerescência" (degeneracy), and "seleção" (selection). This contradiction shows how philosophical neologisms, even when rejected, can infiltrate the social imaginary and influence political debates. In the Brazilian case, Erasmo's "sobrehomem" anticipates discourses that, decades later, would be mobilized to justify authoritarian projects, proof that the translation of concepts is never innocent, but always an act of cultural reinvention and symbolic power.

Thus, I highlight the role of language in the transnational circulation of ideas, showing how concepts are deformed and reactivated in new contexts. Next, let us examine other calques of the *Übermensch* created also in the late 19th century, highlighting how each variant reflects distinct ideological projects of that period.

Analysis of the "pro-homem"

The Germanist João Ribeiro translated *Übermensch* with orthographic variations: "prohomem", without a hyphen, and "pro-homem", with a hyphen. Later, José Veríssimo altered it to "Pró-homem", with a capital letter and an accent, sometimes without the capital. Ribeiro even used, on one occasion, "sobre-homem". He did so in the text "F. Nietzsche", published on the front page of the Rio de Janeiro daily *Jornal do Comércio* in 1897, written the previous year in Berlin. The word "prohomem" is formed by the juxtaposition of "pro" (with a prefixal value) + "homem" (noun). It is a transcreation that recreates the *Übermensch* with nuances for the Brazilian context. It reflects the creativity of João Ribeiro, who molds the Nietzschean concept to the "forms of life" (Wittgenstein) of Brazil. This reinforces the understanding that it is a vernacular composition, created with elements already available in the Portuguese language. The hyphen indicates that the elements maintain their formal integrity, suggesting a composition by juxtaposition.

It is an attempt to preserve the senses of the prefix "über" = "above", "beyond" + "mensch" = "man". However, "pro-homem" does not exactly capture the primary concept, but rather a man "in favor of man" or oriented towards the human, which is a rather free interpretation. The prefix "pro" serves as a calque for an equivalent of "über", albeit with distinct nuances. In João Ribeiro's usage, the choice seems to reflect a neoclassical and moderate reading of the *Übermensch*, not as a radical transgressor, but as "the one who lies ahead". The graphic variations may have occurred due to a lack of standardization and due to stylistic and conceptual freedom; an attempt to capture the philosophical and elevated tone of the German term; the influence of other languages (e.g., French and German write *Übermensch* as a single word); and the desire to establish a conceptual mark, as if it were a proper name or a new type of being. The form "pró-homem" (with an accent and hyphen) is the most appropriate according to current norms. It results from the composition by juxtaposition of a stressed prefix ("pró") of Latin origin and the noun "homem",

forming a noun with a hyphen. It fell into disuse not long after, but its analysis reveals much about the history of Nietzsche's reception in Brazil and the effort of the first translators to vernacularize foreign philosophical concepts.

In the phrase "The philosopher who had dreamed of the type of the prohomem (*übermensch*) omnipotent, outside of morality and conventions, realizing, in the fullness of all freedom, all his individual strength, passions, instincts, or talents", it reveals a specific recreation of the *Übermensch*. The prefix "pro" adds a specific sense to the word "homem", suggesting the idea of future projection. This lexical choice distances the term from the hierarchical connotation present in "sobrehomem", replacing it with a notion of potentiality, a man who is "ahead" of himself, in the process of self-realization.

Ribeiro associates the "prohomem" with the fullness of individual freedom, highlighting the rupture with conventional moralities and the exaltation of "passions, instincts, or talents". This specialization of the term reflects a more existentialist than elitist reading: the focus is not on superiority, but on self-affirmation. This nuance differentiates it from "sobrehomem" (linked to social selection) and the primary *Übermensch* (which in Nietzsche combines self-overcoming and the creation of values). Pragmatically, it functions as a directive speech act: Ribeiro presents the "pro-homem" and with it prescribes a vision of emancipation. The use of the verb "had dreamed" attributes to Nietzsche a promise of liberation, while the enumeration of qualities ("strength, passions, talents") transforms his concept (*Übermensch*) into a performative ideal. Unlike Erasmo, who saw the concept as dangerous, Ribeiro seems to celebrate its transgressive charge, even though, as Searle would emphasize, as a speech act, it carries the illocutionary intentionality of influencing his reader to surpass social norms and to self-overcome.

The choice of "pro-homem" (instead of "sobrehomem" or "super-homem") reveals a culturally situated translation. The prefix "pro" brings the concept closer to 19th-century progressive ideas, such as evolutionism. The omission of hierarchies suggests that Ribeiro reads Nietzsche through a less social-Darwinist and more individualist and aesthetic lens. This difference exemplifies how the same philosophical concept can be reconfigured by linguistic choices, reflecting local disputes. While Erasmo saw the *Übermensch* as a threat, Ribeiro recreates it as a future promise.

Thus, João Ribeiro offers a particular understanding of the "pro-homem" in his text, reflecting on Nietzsche's ideas in a way that, while maintaining a certain critique, seems imbued with a more nuanced understanding of Nietzschean philosophy. To assign meaning to the term, he highlights some stereotypes that emerge from his reading of Nietzsche's work. Let us see.

The "prohomem" is defined as an "omnipotente" type, above conventional morality. Ribeiro emphasizes the idea of the "prohomem" as a being who overcomes morality and social conventions, manifesting his individual strength, passions, instincts, and talents in a full and free manner. Comparing him to Schopenhauer, he argues that "Nietzsche dreamed of a new evolution, that of the *sobre-homem*, but no longer through the Darwinian or Goethean process of hunger and love, but through a new selection, undoubtedly warlike, and yet intellectual" [Ribeiro 1897: 1]. The future imagined by Nietzsche would be incompatible with Christian morality and its derivatives, such as socialism and democracy, seen as expressions of the herd, in opposition to the individual. Inspired by historical figures like Napoleon and the Borgias, the "pro-homem" symbolizes the triumph of the individual who uses his strengths to achieve supremacy, regardless of social norms. Through

it, according to Ribeiro, Nietzsche proposes an “inversion of all values”, valuing strength, conquest, and power to the detriment of compassion, humility, and solidarity.

Through this, João Ribeiro presents a meaning of the “prohomem” that maintains reciprocity with the complexity and radicality of Nietzsche’s proposal. At the same time, he points to the ambivalence and destructive potential of this vision, especially in relation to the humanitarian and Christian values that, according to him, still sustain civilization. Different from Julio Erasmo’s critical approach, Ribeiro adopts a stance that, although critical, also recognizes the value and originality of Nietzsche’s thought. He does not wholly reject the “prohomem”, but questions the implications of its realization for society and the moral values then prevailing.

João Ribeiro shows this in the relationship of the “prohomem” with women, marked by a possessive perspective, where love is understood as a selfish search for possession. This view conflicts with the freedom and individualism of the “prohomem”. Therefore, Ribeiro mentions that, in the future envisioned by Nietzsche, sexual impulses would give way to a “serene friendship”, transforming marriage into “a long dialogue”. This view implies a radical reconfiguration of relations between men and women, aligned with the freedom and individuality characteristic of the “prohomem”. This appreciation by João Ribeiro of the “prohomem” reflects his attempt to understand and contextualize a complex and controversial concept of Nietzschean philosophy. By highlighting both the potentialities and the dangers associated with the “prohomem”, he contributes to the debate about Nietzsche’s ideas in the Brazilian cultural and philosophical context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

So much so that the word “prohomem” was inherited and used by other authors, such as José Veríssimo. He contributed to circulating stereotypes of the Nietzschean concept in the country. More than a theoretical-philosophical resource, for Veríssimo, Nietzsche’s “pró-homem” would be “a beautiful poetic idea, a splendid aesthetic symbol” [Veríssimo 1899: 1]. Critical of the philosopher, for Veríssimo, “his *Pró-homem* (if this word translates well the *Übermensch* of his creation)” [Veríssimo 1903: 1], opposes what is traditionally respectable.

Among the stereotypes that compose the meaning of the term are individuality, freedom, and self-overcoming. The “pró-homem” designates a possible human type that is free, individual, and seeks to continuously self-overcome. There was not yet a specialist who had traversed the entire extent of the Nietzschean text to identify the primary meaning of the *Übermensch*. The predominant meaning was the secondary one, that is, the one that emerged from the contextualized use of the term in a certain form of life and its language games. As a conceptual benchmark for thinking about the human being in general, the extent of its secondary meaning was not clearly identifiable. After all, who would have been or could be the Brazilian “pro-homem”? Dom Pedro II, would Ribeiro say?

Analysis of the “super-homem”

The term “super-homem” already appeared in the Brazilian press in 1896, in the *Jornal do Comércio* (and the *Jornal do Recife*), in a text by the Italian intellectual Giovanni Bovio, correspondent for the Rio de Janeiro newspaper in Italy. His text was published without reference to the translator. Bovio engaged with Nietzsche’s thought. At least once, he

used the term “superuomo” in explicit reference to Nietzsche¹. His text provides a broad cultural and historical context; he uses the term as a metaphor or symbol related to historical expectations and human ideals, in a passage where he asks: “Why do you seek the superuomo?” [Bovio 1896: 1] Therefore, the word “super-homem” was already circulating in Brazil, at least in 1896, with indirect reference to Nietzsche.

In Freitas’s case, his contact with Nietzsche came through the literary critic Teodor de Wyzewa. From him, Freitas translated a passage in which Wyzewa states that it was in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Nietzsche invoked “the appearance of the *Super-homem*, the intelligent and strong being destined to free the world from its degradation, resulting from so many centuries of morality and religion...” [Freitas 1899: 1]. Wyzewa, a Franco-Polish critic and translator, translated the Nietzschean term into French as “Surhomme”. Based on this, Freitas creates a calque and disseminates a word that recreates the Nietzschean philosophical concept in Portuguese.

In modern Brazilian Portuguese, “super”, a prefix meaning “above», “beyond», “superior to», is used informally as an intensifying adjective and adverb. I have not found a study that pinpoints a date for when “super” ceased to be used solely as a prefix and became an autonomous word. The phenomenon seems gradual, associated with increasing informality and the influence of spoken language and industrial culture. This usage, however, postdates the formation of the word “super-homem”, which, in its Nietzschean context, shows influence from English, especially from the 20th century onwards. At the time “super-homem” was created (late 19th century), “super” was primarily a prefix, not an autonomous word. Thus, it does not fall into the same category as words like “papelmoeda” (banknote), for while the latter is formed from an autonomous vernacular word, “super-homem” combines a dependent vernacular prefix (“super”) with an autonomous vernacular noun (“homem”). The composition is vernacular (both elements are integrated into Portuguese), more precisely a case of prefixation, due to the non-autonomous nature of the prefix “super”.

Beyond Freitas’s text, “Super-homem”, as a collective creation, reflects influences from the French Surhumain/Surhomme and the English *Superman/Overman*, introducing connotations of heroism or exceptionality. In the Brazilian context, the term resonated within the modernist imaginary and mass industrial culture, especially after the popularization of the *Superman* comic book character in the 1940s.

The hyphen in “super-homem” follows a traditional orthographic rule for using a hyphen in prefixal compounds when the second element begins with “h”. Regarding the capital letter, “Super-Homem” or “Super-homem”, the issue is contextual and semantic. When referring to the comic book character (*Superman*, created in 1938), the established form in Portuguese became “Super-Homem”. Capital letters are used because it is a proper name of a character. The hyphen remains due to orthographic rules. When dealing with the philosophical concept (*Übermensch*), there is great historical and editorial variation. We find “Super-homem” (with an initial capital, treated as a central concept); “super-homem” (in lowercase, treated as a common noun); “SuperHomem” (an archaic or stylistic form, widely used between the 1920s and 1950s); and “superhomem” (an agglutinative form, though not orthographically recommended). The most widely accepted form, both philosophically and grammatically, is “super-homem”, with a hyphen (because of the “h”).

¹ This precision could be achieved thanks to the kind verification in the *Sententiae*’s review of this article: “[...] l’ideale di Nietzsche – l’egoismo assoluto – che inteso a costruire il superuomo riuscì alla gran bestia” [Bovio 1923] (this article was first published 1896 in the journal *Rivista Popolare* (Rome), whose editor-in-chief was Antonio Fratti).

It should be in lowercase (unless it's the start of a sentence or refers to the comic book character). In the first decades of the 20th century, before the standardization of orthographic vocabulary, non-standardized forms were common, such as: "SuperHomem" (influenced by French or German spelling); "Super-homem" (in more technical translations); "superhomem" (without a hyphen, agglutinative, especially in journalistic articles). These variations occurred due to the influence of foreign languages, the absence of clear norms, and the stylistic desire to differentiate a philosophical concept from a comic book character (created later).

In Leopoldo de Freitas's text, the term "Super-homem" is a recreation of the Nietzschean concept that differs from both "sobrehomem" and "pró-homem". This lexical choice has philosophical implications. The prefix "super" carries a connotation of superiority that shapes the entire understanding of the concept. It is composed of "super" (a Latin prefix indicating superiority or excess) + "homem" (a root maintaining the reference to the human). In this way, Freitas contributes to the specialization of the term, which acquires a soteriological (salvific) sense.

It contrasts with previous translations, as the "Super-homem" possesses an almost heroic connotation, linked to a historical mission. It operates as both an assertive speech act, by affirming the existence of a "Super-homem", and a directive one, as a solution to decadence. The term is mobilized to persuade the reader of the need for a break with traditional morality, legitimizing the figure of the "Super-homem" as an antidote. Following Wyzewa's interpretation, Freitas attributes a redemptive function to the "Super-homem". While the philosopher saw the *Übermensch* as a creator of values, Freitas transforms him into a kind of savior, "destined to free the world from its degradation". Here we have a resignification: the concept takes on a quasi-messianic character, distant from Nietzsche's proposal. This resignification reveals how philosophical ideas are adjusted and recreated by the cultural contexts that receive them.

This view of the "Super-homem" as a redeemer dialogues with Brazilian debates of the late 19th century about social decadence and regeneration. Freitas, by linking "degradation" to "centuries of morality and religion", is participating in a broader discussion about modernization and secularization. His recreation of the Nietzschean concept serves both to criticize the Christian tradition and to propose an elitist alternative for social renewal.

Through this, Freitas's approach exemplifies how the reception of Nietzsche in Brazil involved both linguistic translation and conceptual recreation. The word "Super-homem", created in 1899, juxtaposes elements of the German original with local concerns about degeneration and progress. The terms "sobrehomem" and "Pró-homem" fell into disuse in the early 20th century, and the term "Super-homem" became consolidated in their place. Used in the press and literature in the most diverse contexts, it soon became a jargon, employed both to praise and commend, and to disparage and criticize. It meant both an intelligent and strong human type, and a libertine and tyrant.

Analysis of the "Além-Homem"

The neologism "Além-Homem", coined by Mário Ferreira dos Santos, was created in 1954. "Além" is a vernacular Portuguese word. Its original class is an adverb of place (e.g., *foi além* – he went beyond), but it can be substantivized. It has autonomous use in the language. And "Homem" is a vernacular and autonomous noun. Both are independent

in the Portuguese language. Thus, “Além-Homem” is a compound word formed by the juxtaposition of two vocables; its formation follows the traditional rule of composition by juxtaposition. The spelling with a hyphen follows the convention of uniting the two terms and indicating that they form a compound semantic unit. This is consistent with similar formations, such as “além-mar” (overseas). Therefore, “Além-Homem” follows the traditional graphic model of vernacular composition.

Considering the different functions of the word “além” – as a noun (“o além”, with metaphysical connotations of transcendence) and as an adverb (indicating location, direction, or surpassing, with a more immanent sense) – is crucial for deepening the analysis of the neologisms “Além-Homem” (Mário Ferreira) and “além-do-homem” (Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho) in the reception of Nietzsche’s philosophy in Brazil. This distinction has significant philosophical implications, especially when related to the concept of the *Übermensch*, which, in Nietzsche, does not imply transcendence but rather an overcoming of modern Christian man. When used as a noun, “Além” often denotes an idea of metaphysical transcendence, as in “o além” (a realm beyond earthly life) or “além-túmulo” (the afterlife). This meaning is associated with religious or metaphysical conceptions, suggesting a superior plane separate from material reality. In the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy, this reading would be inadequate, as the *Übermensch* is not a transcendent entity but an immanent figure who overcomes the limits of modern man through the affirmation of life, the will to power, and the acceptance of the eternal return.

In the case of “Além-Homem”, the word “Além” maintains its adverbial nature, functioning as the first term in a composition by juxtaposition that associates the sense of overcoming, of surpassing, with the noun “homem”. As an adverb, “Além” indicates location, direction, position, or time, suggesting something that is “further ahead” or “beyond”. This function is aligned with the German prefix *über* in *Übermensch*, which denotes surpassing or overcoming in the sense of going beyond a state or condition, without implying metaphysical transcendence. In this sense, “Além” as an adverb is closer to the Nietzschean immanence, which emphasizes existential transformation within the world, not an ascent to a superior plane.

Thus, the word “Além-Homem” is composed of “Além” (adverb, indicating “beyond” or “further ahead”) + “homem” (noun). The use of the capital letter in “Homem” may indicate not a stylistic emphasis, but a philosophical one, highlighting the human as central. By using “Além” as an adverb, Mário Ferreira suggests that the *Übermensch* is a being who surpasses the current human condition, moving “beyond” the traditional modern Christian man, whom Nietzsche calls the “last man”. This choice avoids metaphysical connotations (like “o além”) and aligns with the Nietzschean sense of immanence: the *Übermensch* is an existential possibility within the world, not a transcendent entity. The choice of “Além” reflects a rigorous philosophical reading, possibly influenced by Ferreira dos Santos’s systematic training, which sought to articulate complex concepts with precision.

As a speech act, “Além-Homem” can be interpreted as an assertive term, used in academic contexts to recreate the Nietzschean idea of overcoming. The term performs an illocutionary act, suggesting a new vision of the human as a being in transformation, involving an assertion about the world, much like assertive acts, which focus on the truthfulness of what is stated. And it participates in a philosophical language game, confined to academic or essayistic circles, where the emphasis is on existential transformation and the critique of traditional morality.

In this way, Ferreira dos Santos, as a philosopher and translator, acted as a “specialist” who contributed to the creation of the Brazilian Nietzschean lexicon, creating a term that reflects his interpretation of the *Übermensch* as a concept of immanent overcoming. “Além-Homem” is a transcreation that preserves the spirit of the *Übermensch* (overcoming) while introducing a Brazilian nuance, adjusted to the country’s intellectual context. The term “super-homem” was worn out and pointed more to the character from industrial culture or was compromised by Nazi-fascist ideology. It was necessary to do philosophy: to create another term, to recreate Nietzsche’s philosophy in a new context.

Based on the “Palavras prévias do tradutor” by Mário Ferreira dos Santos for his translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1954), one can identify a profound philosophical engagement in his creation of the term “Além-Homem” to translate *Übermensch* – a conceptual intervention that predates Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho’s proposal by decades. Ferreira dos Santos did not see translation as a mere linguistic transposition, but as an “effort” and an “expenditure of energies” that required total immersion in the author’s thought. His stated goal was to “be as faithful as possible to [his] thought, never sacrificing it for the sake of style”, positioning himself from the perspective of “how [Nietzsche] would write Zarathustra in Portuguese” [Santos 2014: 10].

This was not a stylistic task, but a philosophical one. Ferreira dos Santos grounded his interpretation in a study of “several long Years”, during which he consulted “not only all of Nietzsche’s work but also his most authoritative commentators”. More than a translator, he saw himself as an interpreter responsible for “offering the Brazilian reader as clear a vision as possible of the genuine thought of the poet-philosopher of Sils-Maria”. By choosing “Além-Homem”, he rejected the heroic and industrialized baggage of “super-homem”, seeking a term that would capture the notion of immanent overcoming and transcendence present in the German original. Thus, long before Torres Filho, Mário Ferreira dos Santos already demonstrated that creating a concept in Portuguese – a philosophically informed transcreation – was a legitimate and necessary way of doing philosophy, guided by “love for the work” and “fidelity to his thought” [Santos 2014: 9]. His choice of “Além-Homem” was, therefore, an act of philosophical recreation, an effort to rearticulate Nietzsche’s most radical concept in Brazil.

Analysis of the “além-do-homem”

As we already know, “além” is an adverb (vernacular and autonomous); “do” is a contraction of the preposition *de* + the definite article; and “homem” is a vernacular and autonomous noun. Although all the elements are vernacular and autonomous, the structure of the expression is not one of direct juxtaposition of two vocables, but rather of a substantivized prepositional phrase – that is, a term that behaves like a noun but is still composed of adverb + preposition + article + noun. Compare: *papel-moeda* (banknote) → a lexicalized compound word; *além-do-homem* → a substantive phrase (or compound expression), not a single word. The expression “além-do-homem”, created by Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho in 1974 to translate *Übermensch*, has a broader grammatical structure, with a unitary conceptual meaning, formed by vernacular elements with autonomous existence, built with an internal prepositional structure (adverb + preposition + article + noun).

Why did Rubens create “além-do-homem” with a hyphen? His use of the hyphen is stylistic and conceptual, not normative. Torres Filho chose to spell “além-do-homem”

with hyphens to give the expression visual and semantic unity; to indicate that it is not a common phrase, but a unique and compound philosophical concept; and thus to counter other translations, like “super-homem”, which had long become inappropriate for designating the Nietzschean concept. In this sense, the hyphen acts as a resource for philosophical nominalization (a “concept-name”). It makes it possible to indicate the unification of meaning, as it signals that the expression should not be understood by its isolated parts (“além”, “do”, “homem”), but as a conceptual whole. This is common in philosophical or technical texts. Examples: “ser-aí” (being-there) in translations of Heidegger; “para-si” (for-itself) in Sartre; “mais-valia” (surplus value) in Marx. Thus, the use of the hyphen in “além-do-homem” does not follow traditional orthographic norms but fulfills a stylistic and conceptual function: it signals the semantic unity of the expression as a compound philosophical term, similar to other technical-philosophical translations. It is a marked option that confers upon the phrase the status of a singular philosophical concept, equivalent to a compound word.

The inclusion of the article in “do” is significant, as it confers specificity to the recreated concept, suggesting that the “além-do-homem” is a particular individual who surpasses the human condition. In this way, we have a compound and nominalized expression. The presence of the preposition (required by nouns or substantive phrases) indicates that “além” is behaving as a noun, functioning as the nucleus of a substantive phrase, with the sense of a surpassed place or stage, something beyond the human condition. Even though it is originally an adverb, it functions as a noun in the expression. This becomes clearer when we compare it with “O além é desconhecido” (Here, “além” is a noun). “A busca pelo além-do-homem” (Here “além” is also nominalized). Although “além” is originally an adverb, in the expression “além-do-homem” it is substantivized, as it receives a complement introduced by a preposition (“do homem”). The term “do homem” functions as a nominal complement. Thus, “do” (preposition + article) links the noun “além” to its complement “homem”. The preposition “de” indicates relation or overcoming. The definite article “o” suggests specificity: it is not “beyond a man”, but “beyond the man”, that is, beyond the human condition. In this way, the “além-do-homem” can appear as a specific, ideal figure, and even a messianic one in some readings.

However, the choice of “além-do-homem” also reinforces the idea of immanent surpassing, since the presence of the article “do” introduces a nuance of individuality or specificity. This suggests that the “além-do-homem” is not just a general category, but a singular being who embodies overcoming. The preposition marks the relation of overcoming, and the definite article introduces specificity, indicating that the “além-do-homem” refers to a particular being, the one who surpasses the human condition.

As a speech act, “além-do-homem” can function as a commissive term, which implies a commitment to the idea of an individual who transcends the limits of modern humanity. The article “do” can reinforce the illocutionary effect, highlighting the communicative intention of the speaker in uttering a statement directed towards the singularity of the *Übermensch*. It can also have a directive use, being employed or understood as something that impels one to overcome oneself.

Similar to “Além-Homem”, “além-do-homem” participates in a philosophical language game – that is, an abstract one – but the inclusion of the preposition + article may suggest a use in contexts that emphasize the individuality or concreteness of the *Übermensch*. In this way, Rubens R. T. Filho, as a translator and interpreter, contributes to the Brazilian Nietzschean lexicon with a choice that highlights the singularity of the

Übermensch, differentiating it from other, more generic neologisms, such as “super-homem”. In this sense, “além-do-homem” is a transcreation that recreates the *Übermensch* with an emphasis on individuality, reflecting the Brazilian context and Torres Filho’s intention to articulate the concept in a precise and innovative manner. And thus, to do philosophy.

In his translation of *Ecce homo*, Torres Filho intervenes philosophically by rejecting the established – yet distorted – translation “super-homem”. He justifies his choice in a footnote to the passage where Nietzsche criticizes the mistaken understanding of the *Übermensch* as an “idealistic” type of superior man. The translator’s note is illuminating:

The word – *Übermensch*, already discussed in other notes. The distortion that Nietzsche refers to here corresponds to the ill-fated translation as “super-homem”. [Torres Filho 1974: 383].

Torres Filho identifies that the “ill-fated translation as “super-homem”” is not merely a lexical problem, but a conceptual one: it perpetuates precisely the “distortion” that Nietzsche himself denounces – the reading of the *Übermensch* as a transcendent ideal, a “superhero” or a model of moral perfection, which stands in radical opposition to its primary meaning of immanent overcoming and the creation of new values. Faced with this, “além-do-homem” emerges as a philosophical necessity. More than finding a synonym, it is a matter of creating a concept in the sense proposed by Deleuze and Guattari – for whom “la philosophie, plus rigoureusement, est la discipline qui consiste à créer des concepts.” [Deleuze, Guattari 1991: 10]. By coining “além-do-homem”, Torres Filho is not merely substituting words; he is engaging in an act of philosophical recreation aimed at restoring the potency and nuance of the German concept in Brazil.

His choice seeks to establish a relationship of maximum reciprocity with the primary meaning of the *Übermensch*, as Nietzsche outlines it in the passage cited above. The compound term “além-do-homem”, with its prepositional structure, avoids the hierarchical and heroic connotations of “super” and emphasizes the idea of a movement of surpassing – a “going beyond” the prevailing human condition, thus aligning itself with the immanence and performative character of the Nietzschean concept.

Therefore, by creating “além-do-homem”, Torres Filho did more than translate: he did philosophy. He performed an active conceptual transcreation, diagnosed a historical-linguistic misunderstanding in the reception of Nietzsche in Brazil, and proposed a linguistic-conceptual solution that reopens the philosopher’s thought to its complexity and transformative power. His gesture exemplifies how philosophical translation, when conscious of its creative power, is a legitimate and necessary way of practicing thought.

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Nietzsche in Brazil: The Creation of a New Lexicon

The reception of Nietzsche's philosophy in Brazil was marked by a remarkable phenomenon: the invention of a unique lexicon that not only translated but also reinvented his key concepts, distinctly shaping the appropriation of his thought in the Latin American context. This article investigates the formation of this lexicon, focusing on the different translations of the concept of *Übermensch* (such as *sobrehomem*, *prohomem*, *super-homem*, *Além-Homem*, and *além-dohomem*). The study analyzes how these neologisms were created through processes of vernacular composition and linguistic calques, reflecting not only a linguistic transposition but also a conceptual re-creation contextualized within Brazilian reality. Drawing on theoretical frameworks

such as Wittgenstein's notion of meaning as use, Searle's speech act theory, and Putnam's linguistic division of labor, the article demonstrates that each translation carries a secondary meaning, shaped by local debates and distinct from Nietzsche's primary meaning. The trajectories of each term are examined, from their first appearances in the late 19th century to the more refined proposals of the 20th century, highlighting how each variant reflected distinct ideological, philosophical, and stylistic projects. It is concluded that the creation of this specific lexicon was not merely a translation exercise but a philosophical act in itself, a way of doing philosophy through the dialogue between Nietzsche and the Brazilian intellectual context.

Жералду Діас

Ніцше в Бразилії: створення нового лексикону

Сприйняття філософії Ніцше в Бразилії ознаменувалося визначним явищем: винаходом унікального лексикону, який не лише перекладав, а й переосмислював його ключові концепції, чітко формуючи сприйняття його думки в латиноамериканському контексті. Ця стаття досліджує формування цього лексикону, зосереджуючись на різних перекладах концепту надлюдини (таких як *sobrehomem*, *grohomem*, *super-homem*, *Além-Homem* і *além-do-homem*). У дослідженні аналізується, як ці неологізми були створені за допомогою процесів повсякденного словотвору та лінгвістичних кальк, що відображає не лише лінгвістичну транспозицію, а й концептуальне відтворення, контекстуалізоване в рамках бразильської реальності. Спираючись на Вітгенштайнове поняття значення як використання, теорію мовленнєвих актів Серла та лінгвістичний розподіл праці Патнема як на теоретичні засади, стаття демонструє, що кожен переклад несе вторинне значення, сформоване місцевими дебатами та відмінне від первинного значення Ніцше. Досліджено траєкторії розвитку кожного терміна від їх першої появи наприкінці XIX століття до вишуканіших пропозицій XX століття. Підкреслюється те, як кожен варіант відображав окремі ідеологічні, філософські та стилістичні проекти. Зроблено висновок, що створення цього специфічного лексикону було не просто перекладацькою справою, а філософським актом самим по собі, способом філософування через діалог між Ніцше і бразильським інтелектуальним контекстом.

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