

Language and checkpoints (2011)

In the checkpoint language is avoided. There are few signs, few indications. You have to know. You are treated as an animal that knows which way to take to arrive to the destiny. You have to know how to perform. If you don't perform as you are supposed to perform, you don't receive any explanation, just shouts from the soldiers behind the bulletproof glass, or pale indications from the people around you, mostly using gestures and not words. People don't talk much among themselves. Sometimes they slap, they push or even they smile. And sometimes when someone loses his nerves, some violence can happen. Of course, there is no verbal communication with the soldiers. The only words you hear are: id, passport, visa, go ahead, go back... The absence of language in checkpoints is a very clear example of how power is imposed on the bodies, erasing their individuality and transforming them into a mass, ruled by the law. The law is written with words, but in everyday life nobody remember the words, they just follow a memory imprinted on the bodies. The ideal situation for the Israelis would be a checkpoint where nobody speaks, where no indication is needed and where everything works as a machine. The idea of society as a machine is the dream of fascism, where words and language are reserved to the law, and speech and conversation reserved to those who hold the power. We could see this as a futuristic situation, but this situation is planned now, is happening already. And the only way to avoid the complete erasure of language, speech and conversation, and therefore the only way to regain the rights of the individual bodies, is to put on stage the linguistic body, i.e, the body of a social individual, the body of individual with rights.

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