

**A CHILDREN'S BOOK SHOULD NOT BE SO DANGEROUS: IDEOLOGY IN
QUASE DE VERDADE, BY CLARICE LISPECTOR**

**UM LIVRO INFANTIL NÃO HÁ DE SER TÃO PERIGOSO: A IDEOLOGIA EM
QUASE DE VERDADE, DE CLARICE LISPECTOR**

**UN LIBRO INFANTIL NO DEBE SER TAN PELIGROSO: LA IDEOLOGÍA EN QUASE
DE VERDADE, POR CLARICE LISPECTOR**



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ABSTRACT: In contemporary times, the Brazilian educational context has been marked by setbacks involving attempts to break with democratic ideals, alongside the presence of neoliberal ideology. This essay aims to discuss how ideology determines the production and/or erasure of meanings in the teaching of literature and within the school space. Methodologically, the corpus was constituted by the work “*Quase de verdade*” by Clarice Lispector, which narrates the epic journey of a collective of birds who oppose the exploitation of their labor, fighting oppression. Interpretive gestures were produced through the concepts of authorship and ideology mobilized in the analysis of discourse, drawing from Pecheutian discourse analysis. These concepts help us understand how literature can serve humanization, social transformation, critical thinking, and democracy within the school setting. Considering that it is not possible to construct an educational action devoid of ideology, “*Quase de verdade*” presents itself as a trigger for polysemy and enduring interpretation capable of confronting the dismantling operated by an illusorily nonpartisan education.

KEYWORDS: Authorship. Ideology. Discourse analysis. Clarice Lispector.

RESUMO: *Na contemporaneidade, o contexto educacional brasileiro tem sido marcado por retrocessos que envolvem a tentativa de ruptura com os ideais democráticos, além da presença da ideologia neoliberal. Este ensaio busca discutir de que modo a ideologia determina a produção e/ou o apagamento de sentidos no ensino de literatura e no espaço escolar. Em termos metodológicos, o corpus foi constituído pela obra Quase de verdade, de Clarice Lispector, que narra a epopeia de um coletivo de aves que se contrapõem à exploração do seu trabalho, combatendo a opressão. Os gestos de interpretação foram produzidos por meio dos conceitos de autoria e ideologia mobilizados na análise do discurso pecheutiana, a AD. Esses conceitos nos auxiliam a compreender como a literatura pode se colocar, na escola, a serviço da humanização, da transformação social, do pensamento crítico e da democracia. Considerando que não é possível conceber uma ação educativa desprovida de ideologia, “Quase de verdade, na escola” se apresenta como um catalisador da polissemia e de uma interpretação contínua, capaz de enfrentar os desmantelos promovidos por uma educação ilusoriamente apartidária.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Autoria. Ideologia. Análise do discurso. Clarice Lispector.*

RESUMEN: *En la contemporaneidad, el contexto educativo brasileño ha estado marcado por retrocesos que implican un intento de ruptura con los ideales democráticos, así como por la presencia de la ideología neoliberal. Este ensayo busca discutir de qué manera la ideología determina la producción y/o el borrado de sentidos en la enseñanza de la literatura y en el espacio escolar. En términos metodológicos, el corpus fue constituido por la obra “Quase de verdade” de Clarice Lispector, que narra la epopeya de un colectivo de aves que se oponen a la explotación de su trabajo, combatiendo la opresión. Los gestos de interpretación fueron producidos a través de los conceptos de autoría e ideología movilizados en el análisis del discurso pecheutiano. Estos conceptos nos ayudan a comprender cómo la literatura puede ponerse al servicio de la humanización, la transformación social, el pensamiento crítico y la democracia en la escuela. Considerando que no es posible construir una acción educativa desprovista de ideología, “Quase de verdade” se presenta como un detonante de la polisemia y de una interpretación perdurable capaz de hacer frente a los desmontes operados por una educación ilusoriamente apartidaria.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Autoría. Ideología. Análisis del discurso. Clarice Lispector.*

Introduction

In 2021, we celebrated the centenary of Paulo Freire's birth. In light of this anniversary, it seems opportune not only to celebrate the work of this educator but also to reclaim many of the pillars he emphasized in constructing an educational practice committed to social transformation and individual autonomy (FREIRE, 2010). Despite the undeniable Freirean legacy for educational thought, we observe concerning regressions in the contemporary Brazilian educational context, especially at a time when democracy is in question, a trend that seems to have deepened since the coup in 2016 and the subsequent rise of the far-right to power between the years 2018 and 2022.

We live in a contemporary world where the deconstruction of the school as a space of freedom and expression of free thought is taking place. This statement can also be applied to the university, increasingly dominated by prevailing ideologies that signal their commitment to neoliberalism, to the production of professionals exclusively for the logic of the market, to be entrepreneurs who can deal with their frustrations supported by a so-called emotional intelligence capable of ensuring conformity with the roles they occupy and with the oppression suffered through attitudes grounded in the maxims of resilience, empathy, and gratitude, a movement that seems close to that criticized by Freire (2010).

The development of individual emotional competence would thus promote a subject seduced by the illusion of being successful, of being innovative, and of responding to the

challenges currently imposed, when, in fact, it would only reaffirm their place of oppression. As we will discuss next, contemporary education appears increasingly aligned with this purpose.

These principles have been presented as curricular innovations. In high school, for example, we have witnessed the implementation of a National Common Curricular Base, the so-called BNCC (BRASIL, 2016a), which establishes competency-based education: as a result of this thinking, learning, and teaching are described as actions aimed at transforming the individual into someone more competent, especially for the market. The disciplines of humanities and social sciences are diluted among other knowledge areas, no longer interested in shaping a humanized, critical individual, but rather an eminently useful one.

In the field of literature education, for example, the concern brought by Antonio Candido (2011) fundamentally disappears: that of literature as a possibility for the humanization of the individual. In the BNCC proposal, literature becomes porous to other contents not in the sense of promoting interdisciplinary reflections, but precisely as utilitarian concepts for understanding many other notions defined in this document as useful for future entrepreneurs. As an entrepreneur of oneself and one's own career, this student, upon completing high school, has the illusion of being able to control their own life through individual choices, refusing to understand that they are immersed in a network of determinations stitched by the ideology of which they present themselves as a successful product.

According to Candido (2011), literature contributes to the humanization of the individual by enabling critical thinking, positioning, and experience and being elevated to a condition of right. Thus, it presents itself as a tool capable of allowing the individual not only to understand the power structures that sew their relationships and discourses but also allow for aesthetic enjoyment responsible for the connection with the beautiful, with emotion, with what truly constitutes our process of humanization.

When educational discourses at different levels, from basic education to higher education, reinforce individualistic positions, they contribute to the promotion of an education that cannot have its discomfort shared, that cannot be structured through doubt or incompleteness, paths conducive to the emergence of imagination, as proposed by Dewey (1959) and corroborated by authors such as Candido (2011). Similarly, transformative education cannot be embodied (FREIRE, 2010).

This essentially individualistic stance reinforces the subject's alienation, subjecting them to the illusion of being solely responsible for their development and also for their speech

(PÊCHEUX, 2009). Thus, education grounded in humanism and democracy, through shared and distributed actions, can be a potent path to combat fascism in society and also in education. Sharing and distribution are promoted as democratic attitudes, which, in Paulo Freire's view, highlight the role of dialogue in its social purpose, which leads to liberation and refuses domination and alienation (FREIRE, 2010).

Given the presented panorama, this essay seeks to discuss how ideology determines the production and/or erasure of meanings in the teaching of literature and the school space. To do so, we will construct a problematization using as reference the book "*Quase de verdade*" by Clarice Lispector, originally published in 1978. Although she is more recognized for texts aimed at adults, the author's production aimed at children and adolescents has been recovered in recent years (SCORSOLINI-COMIN, 2021), in works such as *A vida íntima de Laura, O mistério do coelho pensante* and, as highlighted in this essay, *Quase de verdade* (LISPECTOR, 2010).

The works of Clarice in schools enjoy significant prestige, given the argument of authority built in relation to the author. Thus, it is very likely that no one dares to question the quality of Clarice's text or the relevance of her texts for different purposes, whether in discussing authorship, developing reading and writing skills, or even teaching literature within the school (SCORSOLINI-COMIN; PACÍFICO, 2023).

In light of this argument, we emphasize that it is very likely that Clarice Lispector is not a restricted author in the school space, both due to her recognized authority and the remnants of a critique that positions her as an author separated from her social context. This makes the use of her books legitimate, especially when working with children, as in the case of the book "*Quase de verdade*" (LISPECTOR, 2010). Returning to the title of this essay: a children's book should not be so dangerous!

Methodologically, this essay is situated, theoretically and epistemologically, in the analysis of Pecheutian discourse (PÊCHEUX, 2009; ORLANDI, 2007), hereinafter referred to as AD. The subject of AD is the subject of ideology and the unconscious, a subject subjected to ideology through language and through the tongue. Ideology captures the subject through an unconscious movement, whereby they cannot control or reject ideology, for example. The control of meanings is an illusion. AD emerges from the interstice of three major areas: linguistics, historical materialism, and psychoanalysis (BRANDÃO, 2004).

With this genealogy, AD subverts the way language, linguistics, and discourse were conceived until then, in the 1960s, surpassing normativity and seeking to think more proactively

about how socio-historical determinations can materialize in discourses. Language, in this conception, is not something transparent but is constituted in opacity. Based on this theoretical-methodological assumption, the production context of this essay, supported by movements that have questioned the ideologies circulating in the school space, will be addressed more closely below.

Ideology in the School Space

In the educational context, some contemporary movements have become particularly concerning due to their authoritarian nature and the restriction of schools as spaces of freedom. This is the case with Bill No. 193/2016, known as the "School Without Party" project, which seeks, in essence, to punish what it calls "ideological harassment" in schools (CAPAVERDE; LESSA; LOPES, 2019). According to Macedo (2017), the discussion of this initiative originates from a debate promoted by ultraconservative students and parents who are concerned about the so-called "political-ideological contamination of Brazilian schools".

This concern gave rise to bills in 2015 and 2016 that aimed to amend the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB), with the inclusion of a program called "school without party" (BRAZIL, 2016b). With this program, the school becomes a field for restricting any and all reflections that may question lifestyles and worldviews, reinforcing culturally constructed taboos regarding topics such as politics, religion, sexuality, and even philosophies considered transgressive.

In higher education, we witness the increasingly evident logic of exclusive training for the market, stripping the university of its formative role and its ability to foster critical thinking. The separation from this critical thinking can be exemplified by the way private initiatives have become increasingly present in higher education, through seductions operated in a world of ever-developing technologies, with applications and startups, and through increasing internationalization.

According to Zanon (2019), new forms of so-called flexible work are increasingly present in education, especially when we consider higher education in close dialogue with market needs. The seduction operated by these new models, imbued with references to innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative potential of the worker, promotes the linking of desires and affections to the dimension of work. When captured by this ideology, the individual strives to produce more and more, having the illusion that their work is innovative and

differentiates itself from others when, in reality, it only reinforces a trend that is established at the level of discourse. Thus, it is an ideology that cannot be refused.

According to Sousa and Coimbra (2021), these changes are part of an "agenda of dismantling public assets, of the State's disengagement from maintaining social policies, of measures to restrict public spending, and of reforms that directly attack the rights of the population" (p. 1054, our translation), which directly interferes with how education is embodied both in terms of investments and reflections on its role in a society marked by this agenda. In graduate programs, for example, critical exercise has given way, for instance, to the need for students to construct theses and dissertations, but products no longer.

By naming products that can be developed over two to five years of graduate studies, the commitment is reinforced not necessarily to the production of knowledge but to production for the market. Graduate education, like high school, needs to be useful, generating what has been called innovation. Being entrepreneurial and innovative, in this context, means fully meeting market expectations and responding to neoliberal rationality (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016).

Internationalization, although it allows for the exchange between teachers and students with institutions worldwide, still relies on an eminently colonialist logic, that it is important for us to know other models apart from our reference context, only reinforcing the United States-Europe axis as the center of knowledge. Thus, our country is anchored in the logic of a locus that must be studied, often from a fetishized perspective of our social reality, but cannot produce scientific knowledge by itself (SCORSOLINI-COMIN, 2020).

It must be considered that educational and scientific development is not only achieved through financial investment but also through the construction of an agenda that values figures such as the teacher and the researcher, for example. With this essay, we do not aim to deny the contemporary world as it presents itself and, fundamentally, the role of the dominant ideology. It should be allowed for the individual, student, and graduate student to access how this ideology has stitched its actions and solidified in educational institutions.

For this purpose, it is essential that current business terms in schools and universities, entrepreneurship, market, and innovation, be problematized as much as those referring more to the order of the subject, emotional intelligence, gratitude, empathy, and resilience, just as the

dominant discursive formation³ tries to naturalize. These markers cannot be understood apart from the ideology which, as we will present later, is a fundamental concept for pecheutian discourse analysis, a reference that stitches this essay together. But how can literature contribute to the reflections addressed here? This is what we will discuss next, through Clarice's work.

The Social in Clarice

Clarice Lispector, whose centenary was celebrated in 2020, is one of the most internationally renowned Brazilian writers (GOTLIB, 2009). Despite her recognition and the penetration of her work into different spaces, such as schools, some representations of the author still do not always correspond to her production. One of them refers to the fact that Clarice is often identified as an author who explored an intrapsychic universe in her titles, being separated from more burning social discussions. To counter this argument, spread in criticism and essays, it is important to refer to some biographical elements of the author, a journey undertaken by authors such as Nádía Gotlib and Teresa Montero.

Born in Ukraine in 1920, she arrived in Brazil, accompanying her parents and older sisters who were fleeing the civil war that was occurring in that country at the end of World War I, which was divided between Ukrainian nationalist separatist forces and Russian communist forces. Although she never practiced Law, she graduated in Law because, since childhood, "(...) I promised myself that one day this would be my task: to defend the rights of others" (GOTLIB, 2009, p. 131, our translation). When she married, she lived abroad for years with her husband, who was a diplomat. Throughout this time, she remained connected to Brazil through correspondence with her sisters and friends. She returned to Brazil with her two young children in 1959 when she separated from her husband. In her way, Clarice participated in the political life of her country, although she was not properly recognized as a militant.

In 1968, during the Brazilian dictatorship, Clarice participated, along with artists and intellectuals such as Ziraldo, Milton Nascimento, and Oscar Niemeyer, in a popular demonstration against the violence imposed by the military. This participation, publicized by the media of the time, receives the attention of her biographers precisely because it is one of the few public expressions in which the author speaks out (GOTLIB, 2009; MONTERO, 2021; MOSER, 2017). Although described as detached from this political context in some of her

³ Discursive formation (FD) refers to everything that can and should be said within a socio-historical situation. Thus, the subject produces their discourse from a specific socio-ideological position, determining which meanings can be conveyed.

biographies, Clarice expresses her desire for justice, her indignation at poverty, and her astonishment at the Brazilian reality at the time.

This author's connection to the social and political sphere is emphasized, especially in her more recent biographies, such as the one published by Teresa Montero in 2021. In her research, Montero (2021) highlights the author's deep discomfort with the Military Dictatorship. It also reveals that the author was monitored by the regime for being Jewish and part of an intellectual elite that fought for democracy, being monitored by the political police from 1950 to 1973. Thus, the speculation about the author's apparent "alienation" from the political and social context of her time is refuted (SCORSOLINI-COMIN, 2023).

The contours of this engagement can also be observed in some of her texts. Among her most celebrated works is *A hora da estrela*⁴, the author's last novel, which narrates the epic of Macabéa, a Northeastern migrant in Rio de Janeiro. For some critics, it is only in this final publication that Clarice seems to make her social concerns clear (MOSER, 2017). However, these markers can be identified throughout her work, as Clarice did not shy away from meaningful discussions, such as the role of women in our society. She herself represented the rise of femininity no longer subjected to the yoke of her husband, seeking her independence and, above all, her relevance as a writer in a male-dominated scene at the time.

Furthermore, Clarice represents many emerging questions in her reference context, many of them being evident to this day, as explored in the short story "*Mineirinho*," which weaves meanings against the violence with which a criminal is brutally murdered, with 13 shots: "A prior justice that would remember that our great struggle is that of fear, and that a man who kills a lot is because he has been very afraid" (LISPECTOR, 2016, p. 390, our translation).

Clarice has become an author synonymous with literary credibility, with quality writing, to the extent that excerpts from her texts are disseminated uncontrollably on social media (OLIVEIRA, 2018; SCORSOLINI-COMIN; RODRIGUES; PACÍFICO, 2023), almost always reaffirmed in a position of prestige, of authority, and responsibility for what is said. Thus, reading or working with the author's work can be synonymous with profound literary knowledge. It is for this reason that texts such as the short story *Amor* and the book "The Hour of the Star" have been required readings in entrance exams such as those of the State University of Campinas and the University of São Paulo, respectively, just to mention two examples. But what about her production aimed at children?

⁴ The Hour of the Star.

In *Quase de verdade*, a book narrated by the character dog Ulisses, the author addresses life on a farm, where each species is dedicated to a specific task. At one point, the chickens, who were responsible for producing eggs, were exploited by a fig tree that did not bear fruit. This tree, realizing that the chickens laid eggs only when there was light, makes a pact with a witch who starts to illuminate its canopy: "I want to sell these eggs and make a lot of money" (LISPECTOR, 2010, p. 56, our translation). Thus, with the tree permanently illuminated, the chickens start laying eggs all day long, even at night, generating great profit for the fig tree, which starts selling all the production.

The birds take a while to understand what is happening, only complaining about being exhausted. The rooster Ovídio is also exploited: "It so happened that the hens were scared because they never slept again, as they laid eggs non-stop, all the time. As for Ovídio, he got in trouble: since he thought it was daytime, he became hoarse from crowing so much" (LISPECTOR, 2010, p. 57, our translation). By this point, the fig tree is tallying its profit: "Meanwhile, the fig tree collected eggs that weren't life and everything to sell and become a millionaire. And it paid nothing to the hens, not with corn, not with worms, not with water. It was just that slavery" (p. 57, our translation).

The situation of exploitation of labor only ceases when the hens and roosters, organized against the oppression of the fig tree, come together: "(...) they went against the dictatorial fig tree, they were demanding their rights, laying eggs for themselves, claiming food, water, sleep, and rest" (LISPECTOR, 2010, p. 58, our translation). To do so, they put a plan into action: they then throw the eggs produced against the fig tree, breaking them all: "(...) they fell to the ground, breaking them all, and it was shells over there, yolks over there, whites around here, all rotting in the soil. Is it a shame to sacrifice so many eggs? Yes, but sometimes we need to make a sacrifice" (p. 59-60, our translation). Not even the witch, the accomplice of the fig tree, supports it at this moment.

After the organized movement, the hens then only produce when there is light, that is, only during the day, returning to normality. With this brief description of the plot, we will problematize, according to the Pecheutian discourse analysis, how the concepts of authorship and ideology help us understand how literature can be used in schools in the service of humanization (CANDIDO, 2011), social transformation (FREIRE, 2010), critical thinking, and democracy (DEWEY, 1959).

Authorship and Ideology

In AD, authorship is not located in an empirical subject, as if the individual characteristics of the writer, in this case, Clarice, were sufficient to explain how a particular text or work is produced. Beyond the particular aspects and traits of an author, an aspect that dominates authorship studies even today, Pêcheux (2009), in AD, works with the positions assumed by the author, seeing "in the protagonists of discourse not the physical presence of individual human organisms, but the representation of determined places in the structure of a social formation" (BRANDÃO, 2004, p. 44, our translation). In other words:

For us, the author function is realized every time the language producer represents themselves at the origin, producing a text with unity, coherence, progression, non-contradiction, and an end. (...) the author is accountable for what they say or write because they are supposed to be at their origin. Thus, we establish a correlation between subject/author and discourse/text (between dispersion/unity, etc.). In our view, the author's function is touched upon in a particular way by history: the author manages to formulate, within the formulable, and constitute themselves, with their statement, in a history of formulations. This means that, although they are constituted by repetition, this is part of history and not merely a mnemonic exercise (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 69, our translation).

To be an author, according to AD, one must present a text with unity and coherence and also be accountable for what is said; in other words, be responsible for their discourse. However, this is not a responsibility assumed by an "I," the empirical subject, but one that occurs within a certain discursive formulation. The author could not be constituted apart from their social function and exteriority (socio-historical context) (Brandão, 2004).

It is essential to clarify that AD addresses exteriority not in an attempt to explain discourse or reveal a given author's intention in producing a certain text, as if this context provided justification for the speech. This context, in AD, helps us understand certain positions taken by the author, positions that cannot be materialized independently of ideology. For AD, ideology materializes precisely in discourse.

In this sense, it is possible to recognize that there is no discourse without ideology, just as no text, book, or work does not carry certain ideologies or clues that situate them in specific production conditions. In AD, production conditions refer to the circumstances in which a particular discourse is produced (PÊCHEUX, 2009). Production conditions, along with formal mechanisms, allow for the production of a given discourse, highlighting the relationship

between language and discourse (the sense effect between speakers). Here, the author's figure as an empirical subject plays a less important role, and it is crucial to analyze how the effects of ideology enable certain interpretations of speech.

If we revisit the proposal of the "School without Party" (BRASIL, 2016b) as synonymous with a school without ideology, we can understand that this discourse is woven in the face of a great illusion, a deception: if there is no discourse without ideology, there is no school without ideology, there are no books without ideology. What happens in the face of the illusion operated by language is that certain discourses, such as that of a school without ideology, seem to promote in the interlocutors an effect of neutrality: by not taking sides, by not having ideology, it would prioritize a neutral education, allowing the learner to "just learn," in an exclusively cognitive sense, detached from the socio-historical materiality that, in fact, imposes school as an institution that must be attended by individuals until adolescence/adulthood.

Attempting to unlink ideology from the educational act is like trying to extract it from its essence. If educational action aims precisely to educate individuals with a critical stance towards reality (DEWEY, 1959) and capable of transforming what is presented, proposing relationships that are not based on oppression but on dialogue (Freire, 2010), recognizing ideology and its role in school, in society, and our discourse is, in itself, educational. This way of thinking about school and education as "neutral" instances produces effects that do not escape the omnipresence of ideology, since the

The critique of ideology itself implies a kind of privileged position, as if the critique of ideology were exempt from the agitations of social life, which would grant to this critical subject, facing reality, the incredible ability to perceive the hidden mechanism that regulates social visibility and invisibility. Is this image of offering a critique of ideology from a supposedly neutral standpoint not, in itself, ideological? (FOFANO; RECH, 2021, p. 3, our translation).

The deception represented by this bill becomes evident precisely when we understand that ideology "seems to arise exactly when we try to avoid it and ceases to appear where one would clearly expect it to exist" (ŽIŽEK, 1996, p. 9, our translation). By avoiding at all costs assuming the role of ideology in our lives and the emergence of an ideology that stitches together the proposal of a school precisely without ideology, the reinforcement of a markedly authoritarian, totalitarian ideology is produced as an effect, one that does not allow individuals to educate themselves (DEWEY, 1959).

The school here emerges as an ideological apparatus of the State (ALTHUSSER, 1980), representing censorship over the speech and expression of individuals. For this author, ideology should be analyzed through the class struggle, that is, it is through the class struggle that one can identify the dispute between a dominant ideology and another. The so-called Ideological State Apparatuses are structured through these ideologies (FOFANO; RECH, 2021).

In this illusion of neutrality, which aims to extend to all aspects of educational work, certain literary works may be "authorized" as not posing any "risk" to non-partisan education. A similar effect can be discussed when the Brazilian dictatorship censored all artistic and intellectual production of the time, subjecting all speech to censorship. It was censorship that had the power to authorize or not authorize what could be or could be circulated. Works considered subversive, or authors already associated with communism were summarily prevented from circulating, with many of these authors being tortured and exiled. A school without a party project operates nothing more than updating this stance, evaluating what can and cannot circulate in the school space.

And here is where ideology reveals itself once again. By associating the figure of Clarice Lispector as an author who, in life, did not formally affiliate with left-wing parties, who did not identify as a communist, who did not write works recognized as "left-wing" or subversive in the face of censorship, the illusion is created of her being a neutral author, as if she could be separated from her production context. As we stated earlier, when tracing the author's biography, Clarice aligned herself with various writers and intellectuals, many of whom were persecuted, violated, and exiled.

This illusion of neutrality, of being non-subversive, extends to what she wrote. Returning to the concept of authorship advocated by DA, it is illusory to attribute the responsibility for speech exclusively to an empirical subject. In the "logic" operated by the non-partisan school, ideology would be responsible for promoting the illusion that Clarice, in fact, is at the origin of her speech. As Clarice is discursively constructed as an "authorized" author, so are her writings subject to circulation. Her writings are not, therefore, interpreted as "subversive," "dangerous," or even "left-wing."

It is essential to understand that the author does not appear separated from this context. No individual is neutral, considering the role of ideology in DA, so the author-subject Clarice was not neutral either, nor was her speech: of Jewish descent, she came from Ukraine with her parents and sisters in search of better living conditions and also protection from the persecution of Jews in Europe. As an adult, Clarice married a diplomat, living in different countries and

associating with politicians and prominent figures until returning to Brazil, already divorced, at the beginning of the dictatorship. This protective context made Clarice a figure above "any suspicion." But this small biographical excerpt already announces, in fact, that the author was not neutral regarding politics and, above all, the way artists and intellectuals were treated in totalitarian regimes.

Ideology produces the effect of evidence, that interpretation refers to accessing something that is already there, given, or naturalized. For DA, interpreting is not assigning meanings, which would expose us to the exclusive effect of an empirical subject, but exposing oneself to the opacity of the text. In the ideological field, DA works with two forgettings (Pêcheux, 2009). Number 1, which produces the illusion that the subject is the origin of their speech, and number 2, which produces the impression of the reality of thought:

A discursive conception of ideology establishes that, as subjects are condemned to signify, interpretation is always governed by specific production conditions that, however, appear as universal and eternal. This results in the impression of a single and true meaning (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 65, our translation).

The ideology inherent in a "School without party" project, to this extent, would promote, as an effect, the illusion of representing the reality of thought: that a school can indeed be built without any ideology. The dominant ideology here overrides to promote the effect that we can, if we organize ourselves as a society and, with the help of the State (bill project), effectively produce a school capable of materializing without ideology. This illusion, number 2, also orders that judgments taken about certain works and authors, for example, crystallize their identification as authorized and lawful for a non-partisan school or, alternatively, be excluded from this school space. Another illusion operated is that the possible exclusion of content, works, and authors can remove ideology from the school.

In this effect of interpretation, ideology aligns with something condemnable, and that must be eradicated from the school space and the formation of the individual. A book, therefore, "with ideology," would be considered abject and not recommended for reading and study. By extension of meaning, therefore, we might consider that all books, by their very nature immersed in and influenced by ideology, should be excluded from the school space. *Quase de verdade* (Almost True), as the guiding thread of our argumentation, would be elevated to the status of subversive precisely because it grates against the dominant ideology that naturalizes exploitation, insofar as it produces meanings that a critical and organized society can oppose

exploitation and oppression, that dialogue can promote sharing and unity in pursuit of a common goal, that consideration for alterity can place us before communion as opposed to exclusion. The book is a metaphor, although the narrator explicitly states its anchorage in reality: "What I'm going to tell also seems like something people do, although it happens in the kingdom where animals talk" (LISPECTOR, 2010, p. 52, our translation).

However, a school without party or ideology would probably not recognize in *Quase de verdade* this ideological potency. Firstly, because Clarice Lispector is a recognized author about whom no major judgments hover regarding her party-religious-political-amorous affiliation, being elevated to the condition of neutrality, as opposed to authors known to be communist, such as Jorge Amado, associated with a literary school more directly involved in the discussion of social and political issues, just to cite an example. As emphasized in the biography constructed by Montero (2021), Clarice was closely monitored by the political police from 1950 to 1973, although this and other similar information have been erased or made invisible over time, allowing for the discourse of Clarice as an alienated author estranged from the political and social issues of her time (SCORSOLINI-COMIN, 2023).

Secondly, because *Quase de verdade* presents itself as a children's book, aimed at children in the early stages of schooling. If Clarice were not to be transgressive or subversive in her literature aimed at adults, why would she be in texts written for children? Here, the children's book seems to enjoy the same innocence, at times, attributed to childhood and children. However, the "School without Party" project does not understand childhood as a phase in which ideology cannot operate, or that material aimed at this audience cannot be identified as ideological; quite the contrary.

This can be exemplified through the reception of educational material pejoratively known as the "gay kit," a derivative product of the National Plan for the Promotion of LGBT Citizenship and Human Rights (PNPCDH-LGBT), from 2009, intended for addressing and preventing homophobic bullying in schools (ROMANCINI, 2018). By condemning the circulation of this educational material in schools, various conservative and far-right social movements communicated, according to the dominant ideology, that sexuality should not be a subject addressed in schools.

But, again, we return to Clarice's privileged authorial position. Would the author not be responsible, then, for disseminating any kind of non-dominant ideology to children in school? Due to this illusion of neutrality, which is an ideological effect, her work would pass unscathed from any kind of judgment or censorship. *Quase de verdade* reveals that Clarice is not only

attentive to her context but also willing to address this subject with children, even though this is not a stated objective by the author in interviews or even in the presentation of the book to the public. It is at this point that the concept of authorship, for DA, helps us understand the authorial position beyond the empirical subject Clarice Lispector. Published posthumously, *Quase de verdade* does not evoke the need for an empirical Clarice to discuss these issues with children in school.

As a "linguistic-historical object" (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 53), *Quase de verdade* represents a historical materiality, allowing for different effects of meaning. By enabling polysemy, as opposed to the paraphrastic discourse responsible for the illusion that meanings are already given a priori, Clarice exposes her text to the opacity of an interpretation that cannot be separated from ideology, because that would be impossible. Reducing a text like *Quase de verdade* to a narrative about animals and their nature in an approach similar to the fables authorized within the space of children's education disregards its potential for broader discussions.

How do the chickens recognize that they are being exploited? How does the fig tree feel authorized to oppress the chickens and steal their production, the result of their labor? How does the fig tree use oppression to deceive the chickens into believing that they should produce more and more, as this was their nature? Although the answers to these questions may be circumscribed to certain concepts in Marxist thought, the place of interpretation must be respected, allowing the student to work with opacity and polysemy, rejecting meanings already given, for example, by an interpretation marked by the "without party," "without ideology" effect.

DA allows us to consider that subject and meaning cannot be given a priori, as if they were always there. Educational action consists precisely of allowing students to construct these questions, even if they cannot be easily answered or if they are not answered at all. In the position of the teacher-subject, it is up to the educator to allow the enjoyment of meanings, opening interpretation to collective, historical work that materializes in speech. A school that proposes, from the outset, to be "without a party" and "without ideology" corrupts the very existence of the school space. When an educational institution does not recognize polysemy, it is reduced to a mere reproduction of society, incapable of challenging dominant ideology. By naturalizing meanings, it compromises its own function in favor of education.

Final considerations

At the end of this essay, it is essential to emphasize the impossibility of any educational action being devoid of ideology. Ideology permeates how the academic space is organized, how content is chosen, how the articulation between disciplines operates or not, and how the free exercise of critical positioning and interpretation is allowed or not. Interpretation should not be an attempt to unveil what lies behind a text, as normatively occurs in language teaching, but rather the possibility for polysemy to be established, allowing dialogue, contestation, criticism, and confrontation. DA aligns with an attitude that deconstructs the passive student position, which is merely the repository of ready-made interpretations.

As discussed, ideology influences the emergence of authorship, which implies that the student, when adopting the roles of reader and author, must be able to subject them to critical analysis, to the circulation of meanings, and to attempt to avoid naturalization. Armed with these concepts, it is possible not only to problematize the way Brazilian education has been emptied and deprived of its potential for citizen formation, but also to build new ways to respond to these movements operated in the discursive and material realms.

We conclude with an invitation for the concepts of authorship and ideology to be further debated in formative spaces, from basic education to higher education, also understanding how literature can serve humanization, social transformation, critical thinking, democracy, and, perhaps, a fairer society. "*Quase de verdade*," thus, aligns with this invitation, allowing its interpretation to surpass the universe of fable and bestiary, including reflections that produce effects of meaning on collectivity, work organization, exploitation, and even humanization.

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