

On the problem of objectivity: between rationality, representation and ideology

Sobre el problema de la objetividad: entre racionalidad, representación e ideología

**Eli Borges Junior, University of Sao Paulo, Av. Prof. Lucio Martins Rodrigues,
s/n - Cidade Universitária São Paulo/SP - Brazil - CEP: 05508-020
ridolfi.eli@gmail.com | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0937-4741>**

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2019.i45.05>

Abstract

Despite all the contemporary discussion about the relativity of the points of view, the value of "objectivity" seems still quite present mainly in the narrative of the media about itself. In this article, we will try to demonstrate how this notion of "objectivity" can be reinterpreted, in the limit, as an ideological expression. For this, we will focus on the notion of "objectivity" problematized by the Brazilian philosopher Marilena Chaui. We will make a journey based on specific writings of the extensive work of the philosopher, writings that were revised and improved in different texts in the last years. Our path will present, at first, an overfly by the definition made by Chaui about the term "ideology", going to the theme of its relationship with the idea of "objectivity", especially in regard to the role of the "objectivity" in the construction of the "ideology". Such concepts are

Forma de citar:

Borges Junior, E. (2019). On the problem of objectivity: between rationality, representation and ideology. *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación* 45, pp. 75-88. doi: 10.12795/Ambitos.2019.i45.05

quite opportune in the reflection on the new arrangements of public sphere after the explosion of digital communications. Because of this, we conclude with a brief discussion about the actual and complex problem of the post-truth and "fake news". We assume here the ongoing character of our analysis, beyond the option for the definition of this specific cut as a way to present one within the innumerable possibilities of discussion of the controversial issue of objectivity.

Resumen

A pesar de toda la discusión contemporánea sobre la relatividad de los puntos de vista, el valor de la "objetividad" parece todavía bastante presente principalmente en la narrativa de los medios sobre sí mismos. En este artículo, trataremos de demostrar cómo esta noción de "objetividad" puede ser reinterpretada, en el límite, como una expresión ideológica. Para ello, nos centraremos en la noción de "objetividad" problematizada por la filósofa brasileña Marilena Chaui. Haremos un viaje basado en escritos específicos del extenso trabajo de la filósofa, escritos que fueron revisados y mejorados en diferentes textos en los últimos años. Nuestro camino presentará, al principio, un sobrevuelo por la definición de Chaui sobre el término "ideología", yendo al tema de su relación con la idea de "objetividad", especialmente con respecto al papel de la "objetividad" en la construcción de la "ideología". Tales conceptos son bastante oportunos en la reflexión sobre los nuevos arreglos de la esfera pública después de la explosión de las comunicaciones digitales. Debido a esto, concluimos con una breve discusión sobre el problema actual y complejo de la post-verdad y las fake news. Asumimos aquí el carácter in progress de nuestro análisis, además de la opción para la definición de este corte específico como una forma de presentar una dentro de las innumerables posibilidades de discusión de la controvertida cuestión de la objetividad.

Keywords: *objectivity, ideology, rationality, representation, philosophy of communication.*

Palabras clave: objetividad, ideología, racionalidad, representación, filosofía de la comunicación.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article¹ aims to explore the limits of the notion of "objectivity" and in what extent, by presupposing a reality constructed as if it were "the reality", a sort of "neutral reality" without bias, it would ultimately be ideological. In the light of the contemporary context and relating the notions of rationality, representation and ideology, we will articulate this proposition from the reflection of the Brazilian philosopher Marilena Chaui, who presents this hypothesis and unfolds it throughout her theoretical work.

The theme of objectivity and its relation to the question of ideology assumes a remarkable place in Chaui's work, fundamentally from the point where it approaches the issue of authoritarianism and its inscription as a specific characteristic of the formation of Brazil. One of the expressions of this "authoritarian nature" would be in a certain way related to the articulation of what the philosopher describes as an "ideological discourse" (Chaui, 2013, p. 126). It is in this sense that, taking as a lesson the prudence of his great master Claude Lefort (Lefort, 1979, p. 295-296) and recognizing in advance the imprecise nature of our brief examination, we intend here to present some of the main aspects from which Chaui seeks to articulate the notion of objectivity as one of the supports of this discourse.

We will take a course here based on some of her writings concentrated mainly in the 70's and that would be revised and improved in later texts. Our key of reflection will thus be on the text *Crítica e ideologia*², aligned with other discussions in which the author would cross, directly or indirectly, this topic. At first, our text will present a brief overflight by the definition elaborated by Chaui on the term "ideology", and then we will address the theme of its relation with the idea of objectivity, mainly as regards the role of the objectivity in the construction of the ideology. We take, therefore, the option of the definition of this specific cut as a way of presenting a more detailed review within the numerous possibilities of discussion offered by the already much-commented³ – but, therefore, no less interesting – topic of ideology.

2. THE PROBLEM OF IDEOLOGY

We can begin with the relation that Chaui seeks to establish between ideology and history, namely, the way in which societies with ideological features operate their notion of temporality. It is in this aspect that the author uses the expression "*properly* historical society" (Chaui, 2013, p. 128) as a way of referring to a social context in which a certain indefiniteness is suggested as regards her identity, always subject to the burden of transformation to which the time itself submits it. It is, therefore, impossible to deal with such indefiniteness as to break the ideology, an attempt to "stoppage of time" (Chaui, 2013, p. 119) in order to establish that identity.

Chaui clarifies to us, thereby, that it is only in societies in which temporality is thematized as a fundamental question that the appeal of ideology appears: it is possible to verify here a first indication capable of pointing us a certain dimension of resistance of the very ideological orientation – converted, in the limit, into some form of violence – here in relation to the inherent movement of transformation of this same society. From the ideology, a "properly historical society" seeks to construct a sort of history of its own, to some extent unrelated to the urgency of its present and, ultimately, "producer of its own otherness" (Chaui, 2013, p. 118), by which it tells and retells episodes of its

past and interprets what happens in the past and in the future. It is from there, thus, that the basic point of the definition presented by the author seems to emerge:

Ideology is a logical, systematic and coherent set of representations (ideas and values) and norms or rules (of conduct) that indicate and prescribe to the members of a society what they should think and how they should think, what they should value and how they should value, what they should feel and how they should feel, what they should do and how they should do. (Chaui, 2013, p. 117)⁴

But, in order to this "set of representations and norms and rules" remain resistant to the movement of transformation of temporality, it is necessary that, as the author herself points out, it should observe a certain logic and coherence. These characteristics will thus act as fundamental mechanisms of asseveration of their social validity, as well as the ones to assure their own persistence as dominant values.

There is, thus, what Chaui points out as an "explanatory content" (Chaui, 2013, p. 117), which seeks to paralyze the explanation of its own dynamics not from the element of the transcendent, but by what it judges as a rational explanation of the phenomena, a way to directly access a supposed reality of the world⁵. It is by evading the movement of the events, by stealing from the risk of a constantly changing identity, that the "properly historical society" makes use of ideology, an instrument of "petrification of time" (Chaui, 2013, p. 119). In order to maintain such logic and coherence, it is fundamental that any kind of deviation or obstacle in the path of the ideological discourse be conceived as an "exception", a disturbance of something that would be the "normal" or "adequate" movement of the social whole.

According to Chaui, the entire conception that establishes the term "crisis" (Chaui, 2013, p. 144) as a moment of rupture of this dynamic stems from this aspect: it seeks to point out such "deviations" as points of exception of what it would be expected from social life – clearly demarcating its "accidental" (Chaui, 2013, p. 145) dimension and, ultimately, affirming the expected values – and, at the same time, the "crisis" still intends to provide a certain explanation for the advent of the perturbation of the social order. About that, Chaui complements:

The crisis is then imagined as a movement of the irrationality that invades the rationality, it generates disorder and chaos and must be conjured up so that the previous rationality, or another new rationality, is restored. (...) This representation makes possible to imagine the historical event as a *deviation*. (Chaui, 2013, p. 145)⁶

The very historicity of the social whole is thus denied, attributing such "deviations" (Chaui, 2013, p. 145) to its "malfunction" (Chaui, 2013, p. 145), to "voluntary or involuntary" (Chaui, 2013, p. 145) "deceptions" (Chaui, 2013, p. 145) of the "social agents"

(Chauí, 2013, p. 145). Aspects such as the "division of classes" or even the "exercise of power by one social class over others" (Chauí, 2013, p. 131) will not be understood from the movement of the history itself, and thus as the results of social relations – as Marx will point out⁷ – but hidden by ideological operation (Chauí, 2013, p. 132) and, in the limit, "dissimulated" (Chauí, 1995, p. 103) as agents' responsibilities, always placed as capable of changing their reality in order to follow the "expected" values. Within this model of society to be followed, we can thus extract two other important elements from the author's analysis: one is the idea of progress and the other the predominance of technocracy (based on the "ideology of competence") as a way to maintain the order to achieve, in consequence, such progress.

There seems to be an already predetermined horizon, which must necessarily be drawn for the good of all – because one of the characteristics of the ideology is to appear as universal⁸. But by what means should it be put into practice? How will it operate within the very dynamics of the social whole?

3. BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND OBJECTIVITY

In order to present the values and norms prescribed by ideology as something universal, there must be – or at least it must believe that there is – a common line, a sort of neutral point, from which the totality of social actions and ways of thinking is – or it "should be" – oriented. In other words, they must be "objective", since they can not vary from subject to subject, but rather to figure as a common interpretation. However, it is not only necessary to believe in this objectivity, but also that it is accessible and accessible to all, since only in this way no one can be exempt from responsibility for not accessing them.

Chauí will then show us the extent to which such neutrality is in fact an important instrument of ideology itself in the sense of acquiring social legitimacy and thus establishing itself as universal. The great sphere responsible for operating this will be the science, inspired by the duty of positive rationality:

If ideology is a discourse that offers itself as a representation and norm of society and politics, as knowledge and as a condition of action, it means that it promotes a certain notion of rationality, whose peculiarity consists in allowing the assumption that representations and norms, that is, ideas, are placed *in* the real, *are* the very reality and the truth of this. (Chauí, 2013, p. 133)⁹

In this sense, Chauí draws attention to what she identifies as a "double pretension in ideology": to match the "discourse on things" (Chauí, 2013, p. 133) with the things themselves and, at the same time, to affirm the rationality of things, their rationalizable dimension, always able to be accessed since it is provided from certain and "legitimate"

methods. It will be by this path that the author will situate in the positivism an important root of the ideology.

As the philosopher emphasizes, Auguste Comte points directly to this by presenting, for example, his evolutionist conception of the human spirit. In Comte¹⁰ it would thus be possible to glimpse a meaning of ideology that is articulated on two complementary fronts: the one already assumed by the term in other previous occurrences (Chai, 1995, p. 22) and that is situated on the concept of "philosophical-scientific activity that studies the formation of ideas" (Chai, 1995, p. 25), a process resulting from "relations between the human body and the environment", and the other one of "a set of ideas of a time", both as regards the "general opinion" and the proper reflection of theorists of that time (Chai, 1995, p. 25). This meaning assumed by Comte would lead to a sort of scale of the human spirit, which would associate with each time an ideology determined precisely by the way a society seeks to explain its world.

As Chai asserts (Chai, 1995, p. 29), Comte presents this scale divided into three fundamental moments: the "fetishistic or theological phase", in which we can see a profound appeal to transcendence insofar as the explanations about the world manifest a divine origin; the "metaphysical" phase – and here "metaphysics" covers a certain discrimination to the term itself, since it is conceived as a vision about the extremely "general" and "abstract" world, without, however, giving access to the objective dimension of things –; and, finally, the "positive or scientific phase," in which the human spirit would have full conditions of penetrating the rationality of the world, understanding in a "positive" way, that is, objective and "true", its phenomena and the things, from the discovery and the description of its "general and necessary laws". This third phase would even guide the very advent of sociology in a similar way as the natural sciences: due to that its primordial designation was "social physics".

This notion presented by Comte refers itself, and in the context of the definition of ideology, to its important characteristic – emphasized by Chai – of establishing itself as a type of knowledge that seeks to detach itself from transcendence, whether it is properly situated in the figure of one or several gods or even allegorized by the myth. This social science of which Comte will be great and its first herald will rely precisely on the "belief" that holds within it the possibility of access to the world as it "is", thus being able "scientifically" to produce a discourse that, as Chai has just pointed out, is approaching the "things" seeking to confuse themselves.

That is why, in addition to putting itself as the "true" explanatory version of the world, science would ultimately claim such legitimacy, able to discard all other discourses that somehow come up against its version. In the same way, all forms of understanding that do not follow the laws and methods discovered and stipulated by scientific rationality (which seeks to determine the events of reality based on an ability of predictability

merely protected by its own methods) must be disqualified. It is there where resides, according to Chaui, "the maintenance of the subject-object dichotomy" (Chaui, 2013, p. 136), which is directly related not to the very rationality of the world, of the things, but to the "rationality of a representation" (Chaui, 2013, p. 136) of the world, of its things.

It is worth here briefly to refer to what the author preciously brings us about such a question of "rationality of a representation" and how it would relate even to a "notion of knowledge as representation" (Chaui, 2013, p. 136). From the representation, Chaui points out (Chaui, 2013, p. 136), Modern Philosophy appropriates the things of the world transforming them into ideas, which, in the end, establishes them as external to itself. There is, thus, an operation that, at first, "recognizes" the exteriority of the object in relation to the cognoscent subject in the same measure in which it positions the cognoscent subject as capable of accessing the object by the rational path, when, in the limit, it would no longer work with something other than their representations. Chaui even refers to a certain "pretense" on the part of the subject, which, on the one hand, in the scientific task of knowledge, delimits the externality of the object by recognizing it as amenable to representation, and, on the other hand, it would eventually "devour" its exteriority, by assuming this object as mere representation (Chaui, 2013, p. 137).

As a consequence, we would have a clear "position of domination" (Chaui, 2013, p. 137) of the subject concerning to its object, by not taking place of a more sophisticated form of "interiorization" of the outside, pretending to "submit to things for the better submit them" (Chaui, 2013, p. 137). This operation of knowledge would not be able neither to achieve what would purely distinguish subject and object nor to explore the dialectical implications of this difference¹¹.

In this sense, it may not be hyperbolic to say that science itself would eventually function, in the limit, as a fundamental terrain of development of ideology, as a mode of operation of the ideology within the praxis. It is, therefore, that, according to what Chaui claims, the element of objectivity would be so important to the maintenance and perpetuation of ideological discourse:

Ideology, as a science, establishes an immediate and empirical distinction between subject and object, then begins to regard them as diverse essences, and finally, in the epistemological operations of the subject of knowledge, finds a means of concealing that distinction which it has itself established. These operations build what we are accustomed to call as objectivity. (Chaui, 2013, p. 137)¹²

In this process that such objectivity is "constructed," as the author states, scientific rationality operates what can be called as "complete determination" (Chaui, 2013, p. 137), a process from which the act of knowing objectively something would mean to take it completely by the understanding. Chaui even uses the term "dominate him", as

a way of highlighting the position assumed by the subject before his object: it is here an exercise that comprises much more than a mere methodological task, but that, in the last instance, would mean a form of domination¹³, as the philosopher would say "the notion of objectivity is, therefore, a notion of power" (Chauí, 2013, p. 138).

According to Chauí, the "complete determination" would, in the limit, lead to a "dead object" (Chauí, 2013, p. 138) insofar as it would no longer be characterized by its singularities, by the possibilities of transformation. It is put as something "immovable", completely knowable, because knowing it is not related to properties that are specific to it, but to laws that express themselves outside and independently of him. The domination of the object would be, to a large extent, by the very imposition of the research methods, that, by questioning the object, believe to know it from its answers.

The object is not allowed to say anything outside the script dictated by such methodology. Any element out of the expected will be considered illegitimate as a form of knowledge, becoming something "non-objective" and therefore unscientific. All this would make science, as Chauí points out, a stage more sophisticated than ideology itself in its initial phase, which was arisen fundamentally as a counterpoint to the "metaphysical horror of disaggregation" and in favour of a "metaphysical desire for identity" (Chauí, 2013, p. 139)¹⁴.

It is in this sense that we turn to one of our last elements of discussion, that is, the notion of "ideology of competence". Chauí awakens our attention to the ways in which this particular form of operation of ideology – through scientific rationality – would invade the most varied spheres of social life, valuing and normalizing almost all aspects of life related to our present forms of existence. This is due to a certain "prestige" (Chauí, 2014, p. 57) acquired by "scientific-technological knowledge" (Chauí, 2014, p. 57) capable of dividing society between those who hold that knowledge and the ignorants whose task is to carry out what is said by that first group. "Ideology of competence" is, therefore, the expression that Chauí relates to such a distinction, and which would ultimately reflect the "dissimulation" (Chauí, 1995, p. 103) of the division between social classes operated by ideology in its most general sense.

There is, thus, the perpetuation of a discourse¹⁵ that seeks to place in the "specialist" the representative responsible for dictating the norms and values to be followed, because, "to the extent that we are invalidated as competent beings, everything needs to be taught 'scientifically'" (Chauí, 2014, p. 57). To this, Chauí associates the products of self-help, as well as all diverse kinds of mediation and that seek to concentrate on such specialists private tasks¹⁶, like the exercise of motherhood, the body care, the love experience or even the pursuit of happiness:

This mode of competence is entirely absorbed by the cultural industry and advertising, which sell signs and images, thanks to the invention of a model of a

human being who is always young (thanks to cosmetics, for example), healthy (by "working out", for example) and happy (thanks to the goods that guarantee success). (Chauí, 2014, p. 58)¹⁷

This "competent discourse of specialists" (Chauí, 2014, p. 58) will be added to the "competent discourse of the Organization" (Chauí, 2014, p. 58), which, according to the professor, would fill roles previously exercised by figures such as the father, the teacher, the priest. The "organization" and its format would reach the most varied spheres of contemporary life, bringing to it the very logic of functioning of the capitalist system¹⁸.

Chauí seems to denounce, from the expression "ideology of competence", a very particular form of organization of contemporary life able of allying two fronts that are fundamental to it: the affirmation of the laws of the market as the guardians of rationality and, thus, of an "objectivity" – a logic that will be reflected even in the contemporary modes of production of knowledge – and the affirmation, also consequence of this first front, of a value of competitiveness, always to persecute those who want a full or happy life. This logic, diluted in the most different spheres of social life, suggests not sparing even the university, which, like any organization, would be increasingly focused on meeting the needs of the market. There, science and ideology, both related to the notion of objectivity, are suggested to be, if not identical, at least indiscernible.

4. CONCLUSIONS: TO THINK OBJECTIVITY IN OUR DAYS

From this notion of "competence", Chauí helps us to understand, therefore, not only the ways in which this "objectivity" would operate as a kind of value of our time, but mainly how such value would be, in the limit, unfeasible or even impossible. Beyond a mere historical construction, objectivity would function as a very efficient mechanism for articulating diverse interests from the presupposition of an impartial point, capable of representing a collectivity in a "fair" form. An impartiality that seeks to affirm itself especially from the assumption of a neutrality of the rationality and, therefore, of the word, of the discourse. In times of information hypertrophy, in which digital communication places us before the most different "worldviews" (Vattimo, 2011), with the weakening of the "grand narratives" (Lyotard, 1979), the notion of objectivity tends to gain strength, either as attempt to bring these various discourses into "common" visions – with the greater aim of mitigating their singularities – or as resistance to this plurality of voices, reinforcing or even retaking old discursive devices such as the fight against the "ideologies" and/or the promotion of "national" interests.

There is an important phenomenon of our contemporaneity that is perhaps one of the main symptoms of this value of "objectivity" as Chauí presents us: we refer here to what is commonly called "post-truth". The term would be widely discussed among philosophers – such as Maurizio Ferraris (2019) and Myriam d'Allonnes (2018) – and scholars of the media, especially after the explosion of what has been called "fake

news" – for example, the studies developed by D'Ancona (2017), François-Bernard Huyghe (2018) and Tommaso Venturini (2018). Its projection is due in large measure to Oxford Dictionaries, after the publication has elected it as the word of the year in 2016. Despite their singularities, all these meanings seem to converge to the idea of a certain weakening of rationality as a means of construction and support of the public debate, thus configuring a state of affairs in which the definition of truth would become a confusing or even impossible task.

The great question, however, and what concerns us here, is precisely what it suggests to be hidden behind that term so in vogue. The notion expressed by it seems to denounce the permanence of this "objectivity" as a value to be pursued. Assuming the existence of "post-truths", as well as opting for the term "fake news", presupposes the notion of a previous "truth" or even of a certain "truth" that would serve as the basis, therefore, for the determination of this "fake" character. Post-truth or fake news would then represent the loss of this first notion. If today we live in a diverse world, characterized by the emergence of post-truth and its fake news, and if this is conceived as a recent phenomenon, does it mean that we already lived some day in a world where the situation was another, in a world where the simplest and pure "truth" reigned?

What we would like to point out here is the complicated path to which this may lead us. It is precisely the belief in a certain "objective value", in an "impartial" version of the facts, that has motivated initiatives with the purpose of carrying out a sort of checking or evidence of the "veracity" or "precision" of speeches and images that circulates on the Internet. Supported and/or financed mainly by large media vehicles and grouped under the general expression "fact-checking", this verification seeks to extend and deepen a work carried out by traditional journalism, commonly known as "fact-finding". In fact, fact-checking can be an interesting and important resource in the sense of confirming or not certain data, especially those of a quantitative nature or those capable of being synthesized in a "yes" or "no". The major problem, however, is the verification of qualitative data or information. What criteria would define it?

Although fact-checking is based mainly on this quantitative verification, what we would like to underline is what it seems to announce as a symptom: this presupposition of a single "reality", from which the facts would be originated, the definition of a universal ballast from which all "could" thereby restore the legitimacy of public debate. This would thus throw us into a final concern that Chauvi helps us to problematize: such mechanisms would not ultimately express a certain "ideological" character in that they would choose a general point of view (although many of them are based in an idea of "public interest" or even in discussion spaces for the final decision making)? Consequently, would not these services of defining a common horizon of truth represent one of the last and extreme strongholds of action of the so-called "ideology of competence"?

Even the definition of what is or is not true, of what one should or should not believe, becomes a function of the specialist. It is clear that media vehicles have always focused on this task of "seeking" the truth and affirming their points of view as "true" points. And it was the divergence between them that rightly served as stimulus for the public sphere in the context of mass media. But the main problem comes when the focus of the public debate concern changes its target, when it shifts from the concern to promote "several" to the concern to define "one". The main question to which Chauí draws our attention – that is precisely her *tour de force* – is perhaps that objectivity, on the limit, seems to be competing for its own opposite, one of the greatest threat for our times: the affirmation of an "objective", "impartial" or "universal", which, in the end, expresses a specific, "partial" and "particular" world perspective and, in this sense, not only "exclusive" but also "excluding". By confusing the diversity of "world views" (Vattimo, 2011) with differences in data, the greatest risk is, whose price is high and well known in history: the one of weakening the democracy and, deliberately or unintentionally, creating the conditions for the return of the ghosts of authoritarianism.

Acknowledgments

This paper is a result of PhD fellowships: grant #2018/06565-3 and grant #2016/03588-7, São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). The opinions, hypotheses and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAPESP.

Notes

¹ This article is an improved version of a presentation made during the First International Congress of Communication and Philosophy (I Congress Internacional Comunicación y Filosofía), held in Priego de Córdoba on 23 and 24 November 2018. All the citations here were translated from the Portuguese to the English by the author of this article.

² We will refer here to the most recent publication of the text *Manifestações ideológicas do autoritarismo brasileiro*, volume 2 of Chauí's collection of writings organized by André Rocha. As a note of the text itself reminds us, it is a conference held by the author in 1977 (Symposium *Filosofia e Sociedade*), later published in the work *Cultura e democracia* (Chauí, 1981; 1989).

³ Under the risk of even a certain degradation of the term itself, as Lefort asserts, by pointing to its use both by "sociologists and historians, who put themselves under the authority of science, and by revolutionary militants" (Lefort, 1979, p. 296). In the version consulted by us: [tanto por] "sociólogos e historiadores, que se colocam sob a autoridade da ciência, quanto por militantes revolucionários".

⁴ In the original version: "A ideologia é um conjunto lógico, sistemático e coerente de representações (ideias e valores) e de normas ou regras (de conduta) que indicam e prescrevem aos membros de uma sociedade o que devem pensar e como devem pensar, o

que devem valorizar e como devem valorizar, o que devem sentir e como devem sentir, o que devem fazer e como devem fazer".

⁵ And here Chaui seems to agree with his master Lefort, who restricts his concept of ideology to "a type of society and therefore formally refuses to apply the term to a feudal, despotic, or stateless structure in which discourse always takes its legitimacy from a reference to a transcendent order, and leaves no room for the notion of a reality in itself intelligible, or simultaneously to that of a history or a nature in itself intelligible" (Lefort, 1979, p. 298). In the version consulted by us: "um tipo de sociedade e que recusa, portanto, formalmente, a aplicação do termo a uma estrutura feudal, despótica ou sem Estado, nas quais o discurso tira sempre sua legitimidade de uma referência a uma ordem transcendente e não deixa lugar para a noção de uma realidade em si inteligível nem, simultaneamente, para a de uma história ou de uma natureza em si inteligível".

⁶ Italic by the author. In the original version: "A crise é imaginada, então, como um movimento da irracionalidade que invade a racionalidade, gera desordem e caos e precisa ser conjurada para que a racionalidade anterior, ou outra nova, seja restaurada. (...) Tal representação permite, assim, imaginar o acontecimento histórico como um *desvio*".

⁷ Especially in his book *The German Ideology (Die deutsche Ideologie*, with Friedrich Engels), Chaui's fundamental inspiration in her reflection on the elementary characteristics of ideology. See Marx; Engels, 1998.

⁸ And the author is emphatic about this: "since the dominant ideas of an era are the ideas of the ruling class of that time, the point of arrival of ideology is necessarily inscribed at its starting point, that is, in both there is the dominant coated by the generality and the universality of ideas, which nullify and conceal the dominant reality as a particular social class" (Chaui, 2013, p. 129). In the original version: "visto que as ideias dominantes de uma época são as ideias da classe dominante dessa época, o ponto de chegada da ideologia está necessariamente inscrito no seu ponto de partida, isto é, em ambos encontra-se o dominante revestido com a generalidade e a universalidade das ideias, que anulam e ocultam a realidade dominante como uma classe social particular".

⁹ Italic by the author. In the original version: "Se a ideologia é um discurso que se oferece como representação e norma da sociedade e da política, como saber e como condição da ação, isso significa que promove uma certa noção de racionalidade, cuja peculiaridade consiste em permitir a suposição de que as representações e as normas, isto é, as ideias, estão colocadas *no real, são a própria realidade e a verdade desta*".

¹⁰ In his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, as Chaui asserts (1995, p. 25).

¹¹ In the words of the professor, unable to "achieve the dialectal movement of their suppression as separate and the movement of their next separation" (Chaui, 2013, p. 137).

¹² Italic by the author. In the original version: "A ideologia, como ciência, fixa uma distinção imediata e empírica entre sujeito e objeto, em seguida passa a considerá-los como essências diversas e, por fim, encontra nas operações epistemológicas do sujeito do conhecimento um meio de escamotear aquela distinção que ela mesma estabelecera. São essas operações que constroem aquilo que nos acostumamos a designar como *objetividade*".

¹³ To a certain extent, we are referring to the reflection of the Frankfurters, especially Max Horkheimer, on “traditional Science”, considered as an instrument of domination of the capitalist system and one of the dilemmatic issues of Critical Theory. This would be especially present in texts such *Traditional and Critical Theory* (Horkheimer, 1992), published in 1937, and *Notes on Science and the Crisis* (Horkheimer, 2002), published in 1932.

¹⁴ As Chaui points out in a note at the bottom of the page (2013, p. 139).

¹⁵ As the professor adds, “the competent discourse can be summarized in this way: it is not anyone who has the right to say anything to anyone else in any place and in any circumstance. The competent discourse, therefore, is the one uttered by the specialist, who holds a position or a place determined in the organizational hierarchy, and there will be as many competent discourse as there are organizations and hierarchies in society” (Chaui, 2014, p. 57).

¹⁶ For this reason, she will use the expression “privatized competence speech” (Chaui, 2014, p. 57).

¹⁷ In the original version: “Essa modalidade da competência é inteiramente absorvida pela indústria cultural e pela propaganda, que passam a vender signos e imagens, graças a invenção de um modelo de ser humano sempre jovem (graças aos cosméticos, por exemplo), saudável (por meio da “malhação”, por exemplo) e feliz (graças às mercadorias que garantem sucesso)”.

¹⁸ At this point, Chaui starts from Lefort’s text in his reflection on the concept and the diffusion of it as “a new practice of social relations” (Chaui, 2014, p. 54), especially after the advent of the Fordist mode of production.

References

- Chaui, M. (2014). A ideologia da competência. In: *A ideologia da competência*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica / São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo.
- Chaui, M. (2013). Crítica e ideologia. In: *Manifestações ideológicas do autoritarismo brasileiro*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica / São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo.
- Chaui, M. (1981). *Cultura e democracia*. São Paulo: Moderna.
- Chaui, M. (1989). *Cultura e democracia*. São Paulo: Cortez.
- Chaui, M. (1995). *O que é ideologia*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- D’Allonnes, M. R. (2018). *La faiblesse du vrai: ce que la post-vérité fait à notre monde commun*. Paris: Seuil.
- D’Ancona, M. (2017). *Post-vérité: guide de survie à l’ère des fake news*. Paris: Plein Jour.
- Ferraris, M. (2019). *Postvérité et autres énigmes*. Traduit de l’italien par Michel Orcel. Paris: PUF.

- Horkheimer, M. (2002). Notes on science and the crisis [1932]. In: Horkheimer, M. *Critical Theory: selected essays*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell and others New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Horkheimer, M. (1992). *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie: Fünf Aufsätze* [1937]. Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch.
- Huyghes, F.-B. (2018). *Fake news: la grande peur*. Versailles: VA Éditions.
- Lefort, C. (1979). *As formas da história: ensaios de antropologia política*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). *La Condition postmoderne*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Marx, K.; Engels, F. (1998). *The German Ideology* [1846]. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Vattimo, G. (2011). *La società trasparente* [1989]. Milano: Garzanti.
- Venturini, T. (2018). Sur l'étude des sujets populaires ou les confessions d'un spécialiste des fausses nouvelles. In: Sauvageau, F.; Thibault, S.; Trudel, P. *Les fausses nouvelles: nouveaux visages, nouveaux défis. Comment déterminer la valeur de l'information dans les sociétés démocratiques?* Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.