



Teaching Philosophy and Research: field of tensions, collaboration and knowledge production

*Leoni Maria Padilha Henning**

Abstract: We identified tensions at the confluence of philosophical actions between teaching philosophy and research. We highlight the permanent movement of philosophers in the production of knowledge, given that there is a strong tendency towards a dynamic teaching and continuously reviewed by the findings provided by the research and appropriate to the school context. In this meeting, we envision poles that are often disparate, mainly because philosophical research often encounters barriers in teaching activities, and vice versa. However, we glimpse possibilities of interactions between teaching philosophy and research. The first, for example, poses important problems to research while it responds with suggestions and answers, which, on the whole, can result in an unusual development in the field of philosophy. In addition to the production of knowledge, we highlight contributions in this partnership such as: important dissemination of philosophy based on a better-grounded knowledge, contribution to the formation of people and a project of a nation averse to the poverty of argumentation and judgment of those who were excluded from these teachings. The approximation of teaching and research in philosophy provokes the search by the second to take the first as its object of interest and, in the context of the complexity of the field, to make the philosophy of teaching philosophy a fertile space for the production of knowledge and impacting action in school contexts.

Keywords: Teaching Philosophy; Research; Knowledge Production.

* PhD in Education at the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (UNESP). Professor at the Universidade Estadual de Londrina (UEL). Email: leoni.henning@yahoo.com. Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8165332587246727>. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8004-2371>.

Ensino de Filosofia e pesquisa: campo de tensões, colaboração e produção de conhecimento

Resumo: Identificamos tensionamentos na confluência das ações filosóficas entre ensino de filosofia e pesquisa. Destacamos o movimento permanente dos filósofos na produção de conhecimento, haja vista que há forte tendência a um ensino dinâmico e continuamente revisado pelos achados providos pela pesquisa e adequado ao contexto escolar. Vislumbramos nesse encontro polos muitas vezes díspares, principalmente, pelo fato de a pesquisa filosófica frequentemente encontrar barreiras nas atividades de ensino, e vice-versa. Porém, entrevemos possibilidades de interações entre ensino de filosofia e pesquisa. O primeiro, por exemplo, oferece problemas importantes à pesquisa enquanto esta retribui com sugestões e respostas, o que, no conjunto, pode resultar num desenvolvimento incomum ao campo da filosofia. Além da produção de conhecimento, ressaltamos contribuições nessa parceria como: importante divulgação da filosofia pautada em um saber melhor embasado, contribuição na formação das pessoas e de um projeto de nação avesso à pobreza de argumentação e ajuizamento daqueles que foram alijados desses ensinamentos. A aproximação do ensino e pesquisa em filosofia provoca busca da segunda a tomar o primeiro como seu objeto de interesse e, no panorama da complexidade do campo, tornar a filosofia do ensino de filosofia espaço fecundo para produção de conhecimento e ação impactantes nos contextos escolares.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Filosofia; Pesquisa; Produção de Conhecimento.

Enseñanza de la Filosofía y Investigación: campo de tensiones, colaboración y producción de conocimiento

Resumen: Identificamos tensiones en la confluencia de acciones filosóficas entre la enseñanza de la filosofía y la investigación. Destacamos el movimiento permanente de los filósofos en la producción de conocimiento, dado que existe una fuerte tendencia hacia una enseñanza dinámica y continuamente revisada por los hallazgos que brinda la investigación y adecuada al contexto escolar. En este encuentro visualizamos polos muchas veces dispares, principalmente porque la investigación filosófica muchas veces encuentra barreras en la actividad docente, y viceversa. Sin embargo, vislumbramos posibilidades de interacciones entre la enseñanza de la filosofía y la investigación. La primera, por ejemplo, plantea importantes problemas a la investigación mientras responde con sugerencias y

respuestas, lo que, en conjunto, puede resultar en un desarrollo inusual en el campo de la filosofía. Además de la producción de conocimiento, destacamos aportes en esta alianza como: importante difusión de la filosofía basada en un conocimiento mejor fundamentado, aporte a la formación de personas y proyecto de nación adversa a la pobreza de argumentación y juicio de aquellos que estaban excluidos de estas enseñanzas. La aproximación de la enseñanza y la investigación en filosofía provoca la búsqueda de que la segunda tome a la primera como su objeto de interés y, en el contexto de la complejidad del campo, hacer de la filosofía de la enseñanza de la filosofía un espacio fértil para la producción de conocimiento y acción impactantes en los contextos escolares.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza de la Filosofía; Búsqueda; Producción de Conocimiento.

Introduction

Philosophy operates within institutional contexts primarily as both research and teaching. Historically, in our country, this activity has been more widely recognized in its teaching dimension, not least because the production of knowledge through research developed more slowly, due to factors stemming from our condition as a colonized nation. Within a political process that constrained our autonomy – marked by limited access to foreign philosophical culture – at a time when, in the Enlightenment, Kant himself was already urging humanity toward the necessary conquest of emancipation from tutelage, that is, from a condition of intellectual dependence sustained by fear of freedom, complacency, or even the reluctance to think for oneself, our society faced numerous obstacles to the realization of an Enlightenment project. The scarcity of printed and bibliographic production in our territory, along with the striking social, economic, and cultural inequalities that have persisted for centuries – and that still present themselves as a significant challenge – are among the factors that hindered the emergence of conditions favorable to research. Meaningful advances only began to take place very gradually, for instance with the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Family in the early nineteenth century, at a time when intellectual debates abroad had already moved well beyond the legacy of the

scholastic tradition that had been hegemonically established in our country since the colonial project. It was then that the Royal Press (now the National Press) was founded, devoted primarily to official publications, which circulated in a restricted manner and competed with an already well-established foreign press. We refer here to newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and books. Even during the imperial period, there were few bookstores, and public libraries were rare, with the National Library in Rio de Janeiro standing out as a notable exception. By the twentieth century, universities were only belatedly established, despite the conflicting forces surrounding their creation, development, and institutional orientation. To this must be added the later expansion of research through the establishment of graduate programs in Brazil, which became a privileged *locus* for its development. This panorama helps us to understand the complexity surrounding the issue of research in philosophy, although it is far from exhausting it.

At the same time, reflecting on the exercise of philosophy as a subject of teaching in our country requires contextualizing the problem and revisiting its history, even if only briefly. From this perspective, it is important to be guided by questions concerning the role philosophy has played throughout the history of Brazilian education and what is expected of this body of knowledge in the present. What educational, political, and ideological reasons surround the subject – its objectives and its profile? Likewise, it is important to consider, over time, the measures that have contributed to an ongoing uncertainty regarding its place within the school curriculum, as well as recurring expressions of insecurity concerning its role in fostering critical thinking, skepticism regarding its value for human formation, and, consequently, its pendular movement within curricula from the sixteenth century to the present day.

This reflection suggests the need for a closer relationship between research and philosophy teaching in the present day. It points out that this partnership can lead to a meaningful dissemination of philosophy grounded in more robust knowledge, enhancing its contribution to human formation and to a national project opposed to the poverty of argumentation and judgment that has historically affected those excluded from the teaching of this subject. At this

point, we are already indicating elements that, in our view, are decisive for a clearer characterization of philosophical work, whether in research or in teaching – elements that require further elaboration, which will be further elaborated in the following sections. Alongside this exposition, our analysis can be expanded as each of these aspects is addressed in turn.

Revisiting the problems faced over time allows us to recognize that we have reached a moment in which both research and philosophy teaching have succeeded in demonstrating their importance and their distinctive profile within the curricular landscape that encompasses different forms of knowledge. Regarding knowledge production, philosophy has stood out for the continuous flow of publications generated especially within graduate programs, which are committed to ongoing research in the field and to its dissemination. Concerning the theme of philosophy teaching – which has been striving for recognition as an area – we observe the same level of academic excellence. It is also worth emphasizing the productivity of “philosophy teaching” as an object of inquiry and as a central theme in the constitution of research groups across Brazilian universities. We therefore understand that the partnership between research and philosophy teaching enhances the impact of this subject with respect to human development, to a more refined understanding of the problems that surround Brazilian society and the search for ways to address them, and to the unparalleled contribution of the subject to the construction of a collective project for an inclusive and democratic nation. We have witnessed the return of issues that were mistakenly considered resolved, and which now more than ever require philosophy as a means of understanding phenomena such as authoritarian policies, ideologies, religious fundamentalism, and the need for critical thinking to prevent individuals from being drawn into dehumanizing, alienating, and prejudiced environments, far removed from a healthy freedom and from the path of enlightenment. The following passage offers an illustration of this point:

For it is an illuminating example to such a government that public peace and unity have little to fear from this freedom. Men work their way by themselves bit by bit

out of barbarity if one does not intentionally contrive to hold them in it. (Kant, 2019, p. 62)

When we so strongly aspire to hope in the present, it is perhaps this expectation that we seek to express.

Section I

I – Research enables more well-grounded knowledge to be disseminated in teaching contexts, which, in turn, can generate important problems to be addressed through investigative activity.

This concerns a very close relationship between these two dimensions of philosophical activity: on the one hand, the contributions of research to a more consistent and relevant form of school knowledge; on the other, the investigative proposals that emerge from concrete human experience, from which arise problems that are genuinely meaningful to the school context.

In the past, there was a tradition of scholastic, book-centered, and verbalist teaching, grounded in an *a priori* conception of truth to be transmitted in teaching situations and confirmed by attentive novices before the authority of the teacher. With the development of a scientific view of knowledge construction – especially from the nineteenth century onward – this model gradually gave way to the abandonment of metaphysical conceptions of knowledge in favor of an emphasis on real problems that trouble individuals in their efforts to understand the world in which they live. This shift sought to overcome entrenched dualisms such as theory and practice, mind and body, and reason and experience. This challenge also affected the construction of school knowledge and, consequently, the development of new approaches to philosophy teaching, so that it could also renew itself and become as valuable as the sciences in enabling students to better explain and understand reality, to become receptive to the transformations of a constantly changing world, and to be prepared for changes in behavior and mentality. Investigating, inquiring, venturing along the paths of experience – driven by wonder and astonishment – individuals

found themselves provoked by the problems of the world. Such a guiding principle gradually gained prominence in teaching practices which, in response to the inquiries of learners thus motivated, proved fruitful by offering the means through which satisfactory answers could be constructed, in a dialogue between student and teacher mediated by concrete experiences communicated through language, as well as by mental, symbolic, and conceptual representations. Thus, we come to understand that the world, with its problems, does not present itself to the knowing subject as raw data, since the epistemological relationship is mediated by interpretations and symbols that function as instruments of communication. This perspective has been strengthened over time, becoming both a methodological option for teaching and a source of inspiration for various approaches and lines of inquiry.

As an example, we may consider Matthew Lipman (1923-2010), widely known for his work on philosophy for children, who strongly advocated for the inclusion of philosophy in school curricula from an early age. He writes:

When, in the late 1960s, I decided to try a new approach to the elementary school curriculum, I had sympathy with Dewey's recommendation that each discipline be reconstructed into a form of scientific inquiry so that each student could become an inquirer. Nevertheless, it was my hunch that children were primarily intent on obtaining meaning – this is why they so often condemned school as meaningless – and wanted meanings they could verbalize. It was here that scientific inquiry was less promising than philosophical inquiry. I saw philosophy as the discipline par excellence for making sense of things and for preparing students to think in the more specific disciplines. And yet the experience of teachers with traditional, academic philosophy had been anything but satisfactory. Philosophy might be indispensable for the redesigning of education, but to make this happen it would itself have to be redesigned. It would have to be brighter, more readable version of philosophy, in which the great ideas would continue to sparkle yet would provide, *as nothing else can*, the much needed *strengthening of*

children's reasoning, concept-formation abilities, and judgment. (Lipman, 1996, p. XV)

Lipman's words offer important elements for our discussion. First, he argues that teaching – regardless of the subject – must engage students in active participation rather than mere passive reception, so that the classroom becomes an investigative, curious, and active community in the construction of knowledge. Furthermore, the notion of “community” highlights the importance of social interactions in individual cognitive development, which occurs especially through exchange, dialogue, collaboration, and integration among participants. What we derive from this discussion is that individuals should be introduced, from an early age, to the field of inquiry as a formative approach that gradually leads to research as a productive mode of knowledge.

This educational perspective presupposes, in our view, the development of students' sensitivity toward the world in which they live – its problems, its possibilities, and its openings for creative and transformative action. In this regard, Paulo Freire (2008, p. 45) reminds us: “We insist that, in order to make history, human beings must first have grasped its themes. Otherwise, history carries them along, instead of their making it.”¹ Within his own framework, Lipman advances a position that resonates with that of the Brazilian thinker, emphasizing that individuals must be taught to think for themselves rather than be passively carried along by the vast currents of established knowledge without critical reflection.

We observe that research activity is firmly established within this framework and closely articulated with philosophy teaching that we seek to propose as an alternative to a view shaped by outdated *clichés* of mere erudition. Paulo Freire (2008, p. 45) advances a defense of a type of education he describes as “authentic”—and which we consider legitimate – that enables individuals “[...] to become subjects, to construct themselves as persons, to

¹ All translations of quoted material originally written in portuguese were made by the translator of this article, unless otherwise noted.

Original: “*Insistimos em que o homem, para fazer a história, tem de haver captado os temas. Do contrário, a história o arrasta, em lugar de ele fazê-la*”.

transform the world, to establish relationships of reciprocity with others, and to create culture and history...”², From this follows his call for a serious revision of traditional educational systems, programs, and methods. I believe these ideas speak directly to the issues addressed in this article regarding research and philosophy teaching. They highlight the importance of the former as a foundation for consistent and well-grounded teaching, in which inquiry plays a central role as an essential activity for a meaningful education that prepares students to act within their social and professional environments.

Regarding the extended quotation cited earlier, Matthew Lipman (1980) also points to a certain disengagement of students in relation to school—indeed, a perception still frequently reported by teachers today. He then seeks to identify the reasons that might lead children and young people to engage more meaningfully with school activities. He suggests that students are searching not merely for information, but for meaning and purpose in their lives. The sciences alone, he argues, are insufficient to fulfill this need, which can be complemented by the distinctive contribution of philosophy. As he states, children “[...] will not acquire such meaning merely by learning the contents of adult knowledge. They must be taught [...] to think for themselves. Thinking is the skill *par excellence* that enables us to acquire meanings.” (Lipman, 1980, p. 13, emphasis on the original) In this regard, we may also refer to Antonio Joaquim Severino (2001, p. 32), who asserts that “[...] the knowledge that culture characterizes as philosophical imposes itself as a peculiar form of the human spirit’s effort in search of the meaning of things.”³ Although of a different order, philosophical knowledge – like the sciences – helps individuals to seek reference points that enable a more meaningful engagement with reality, since explanations provided by the sciences alone are insufficient to address existential concerns. Human beings do not seek meaning merely to

² Original: “[...] *ao homem chegar a ser sujeito, construir-se como pessoa, transformar o mundo, estabelecer com os outros homens relações de reciprocidade, fazer a cultura e a história...*”

³ Original: “[...] *o conhecimento que a cultura caracteriza como filosófico se impõe como uma forma peculiar do esforço do espírito humano em busca do sentido das coisas.*”

contemplate the world by adding it to explanatory frameworks related to facts; rather, they seek “[...] to outline reference points that can guide the totality of their practices.” (Severino, 2001, p. 34)⁴ Although it is often difficult to argue for the intrinsic relationship between philosophical knowledge and the demands of real life, Severino (2001, p. 33) emphasizes that such knowledge “[...] involves a systematic distancing from lived experience, requiring a methodical stance in addressing its manifestations without concern for immediate urgencies.”⁵ Throughout history, this has frequently led to the interpretation of philosophy as a form of dilettantism – perhaps a refined kind of wisdom – or even as a form of knowledge that must be subordinated to the sciences to attain epistemological recognition.

Thus, philosophy teaching has been shaped by the various challenges posed by the historical and cultural manifestations of the subject throughout the course of human history. Emerging “from myth to logos” in the search for the absolute and the universal – for the essences of all things – it was appropriated in the medieval period by theology, which placed it in a position of subordination; later, in modernity, this condition was reinforced by the rise of the positive sciences, and subsequently intensified by the expansion of technology, whose results and objective production came to be seen as the culmination of knowledge. From its role as a meta-science, philosophy was redirected toward the task of linguistic clarification and the elimination of pseudo-problems. This ongoing process of debate and questioning concerning what philosophy should be as a subject – though not limited to it – has further enriched human knowledge. Through its distinctive critical practice, philosophy continues to renew itself and, interestingly, to open multiple paths for its own configuration.

What emerges from this discussion is that research in philosophy has become the very nourishment of teaching, which, in turn, enriches it

⁴ Original: “[...] *delinear referências para balizar o conjunto das suas práticas.*”

⁵ Original: “[...] *envolve um distanciamento sistemático do vivido, exigindo uma postura metódica para tratar de suas manifestações sem se preocupar com urgências.*”

with questions arising from the lived experience of the community that constitutes school life.

Section II

II – Both research and philosophy teaching can contribute to the construction of a project of human formation as the aim of school practice.

This statement brings to light an undeniable feature of teaching: its intentionality. Teaching thus operates within the context of “formal education,” understood as that which is regulated by the public policies of a given country or society, guided by scientific, philosophical, and pedagogical theories, and supported by state or private funding. Its purpose is human formation – whether of the citizen or the professional – aimed at enabling a more meaningful engagement in the diverse roles individuals assume within social life. It is therefore necessary to clarify the intentionality of philosophy within school education, that is, how this form of knowledge contributes to the broader aims of the educational programs of which it is a part.

From this concern, other questions unfold: What is the intentionality of the school in which philosophy is taught? Does this intentionality align with that of the teacher-philosopher? How can philosophy contribute to helping the school clarify its primary purpose? – this, indeed, constitutes an important contribution of the subject to the educational institution. What other school dimensions might be available to the philosophy teacher, allowing their work to extend beyond the classroom? Does the philosophical-pedagogical framework adopted by the school correspond to contemporary problems and inquiries? What philosophical problems inherent to human life today should the philosophy teacher seek to understand to support younger generations in their social integration and participation?

These questions point to the central role of the teacher in their professional practice in the classroom. What materials should be used to achieve their objectives? Should the history of philosophy be taught as the organizing axis of the subject, or should emphasis be placed on encouraging the practice of

philosophizing? And should this process originate in the students' own experiences, or should the teacher propose what they consider the most relevant problems to be investigated? These are some of the concerns that emerge from the philosophical-pedagogical context. As Velasco (2019, p. 15) argues

[...] teaching (and learning) philosophy requires an insertion *into* philosophy: even if not reflectively, every teacher teaches philosophy according to the way they relate to that – whatever it may be – philosophy. Since the question ‘What is philosophy?’ is itself eminently philosophical, the teaching (and learning) of (in) philosophy necessarily takes place within philosophical terrain.⁶

However, I understand that the teaching–learning situation requires the teacher to engage with other forms of knowledge that can support a deeper understanding of this relationship – particularly in grasping students as social beings, endowed with desires and aspirations, but also with frustrations, among other dimensions. This also extends to the interpersonal relationships developed within the classroom and across other spaces of the school environment – between classrooms, among educational agents, and so forth. Such demands call for the resources of interdisciplinarity, without displacing philosophical problems to a marginal position within the educational field. In fact, we argue that philosophy teaching must maintain its centrality with regard to the contents specific to the subject, while at the same time encouraging the use of its conceptual tools to interpret an integrated reality, capturing meanings that are significant both for individuals and for society. It seems evident that the set of these questions ultimately points to a particular conception of education or human

⁶ Original: “[...] ensinar (e aprender) Filosofia demanda uma inserção na Filosofia: ainda que de maneira não refletida, toda a professora e todo o professor ensinam Filosofia de acordo com o modo como se relacionam com essa – seja qual for – Filosofia. Uma vez que a questão ‘Que é isto – a Filosofia?’ é eminentemente filosófica, o ensino (e a aprendizagem) da (em) Filosofia ocorre necessariamente em terreno filosófico”.

formation, grounded in a philosophical-educational framework, as well as to a vision of the kind of society that is collectively sought.

Section III

III – Philosophy teaching, when well articulated with research, can foster a project of nationhood shaped by reflection encompassing the philosophical domains of politics, morality, and ethics.

When I develop a research project, I include not only logically and rationally structured stages, but also my ideas, feelings, disposition, motivation, and will – in short, the elements of subjectivity – so that, in practice, all of this may acquire meaning. The knowledge that results from such a process is expected not only to provide a solution to the central problem under investigation, but also to advance the understanding of the world for all those it reaches.

The set of these actions, produced through research and philosophy teaching, contributes to the expansion of human intellectual capacities, allowing for the envisioning of a broader political horizon in which pedagogical practices are articulated with a consistent philosophical perspective.

How, then, can the validity of a project with such ambitious aims be assessed? The promotion of exchange among the members of a given group presupposes a healthy range of shared interests. This breadth of possibilities, diversity of stimuli, and openness to novelty help prevent the establishment of exhausting routines, which often lead to a breakdown in communication and to the marginalization of those less advantaged. If we understand education – within which philosophy teaching is situated – as a social process, we must consider the extent to which the interests of a group are shared among all its members and, likewise, the degree to which this group engages with others, collaborates, expands, and enriches its experiences. It is, therefore, the interaction of the various expressions of associated life that characterizes a democratic society.

However, in our globalized world, the realization of the aims of a democratic education – aimed at a society of the same nature – appears increasingly difficult, a difficulty already noted in the previous century. John Dewey (2001, p. 102, emphasis added) offers a pertinent illustration of this problem:

On the one hand, science, commerce, and art transcend national boundaries. They are largely international in quality and method. They involve interdependencies and cooperation among the peoples inhabiting different countries. At the same time, the idea of national sovereignty has never been as accentuated in politics as it is at the present time. Each nation lives in a state of suppressed hostility and incipient war with its neighbors. *Each is supposed to be the supreme judge of its own interests*, and it is assumed as matter of course that each has interests which are exclusively its own. To question this is to question the very idea of national sovereignty which is assumed to be basic to of political practice and political theory.

Observing the persistence, even today, of authoritarian tendencies that seek to take root in society, I am led to reflect on the model of teaching and the form of philosophy best suited to the flourishing of a democratic environment, as well as on how a project of nationhood might be formulated – one shaped by philosophical reflection, particularly in the domains of politics, morality, and ethics, and capable of incorporating the demands of both research and philosophy teaching, with a view to forming democratic subjects able to confront, through well-founded arguments, the intensification of disputes, conflicts, and unfounded speculations.

Section IV

IV – This partnership offers conditions for confronting the poverty of argumentation and judgment among those who have been excluded from the teaching of this subject.

We understand that the school can offer conditions for a richer understanding of reality that goes beyond the mere transmission of information, even when such information is current. As Paulo Freire (2008, p. 34) observes, “[...] in the spontaneous way in which human beings approach the world, the fundamental and prevailing position is not a critical one, but a naïve one.”⁷ Human beings, by their very nature, tend to engage with reality as an object of knowledge, since they possess a form of epistemological curiosity. However, reflective and critical consciousness must be cultivated through educational practices – and philosophy is an indispensable subject in this regard.

Initially, this is a situation in which each individual grasps what their immediate experience presents as given, without perceiving that there is also a dimension of possibility yet to be uncovered. From this perspective, research emerges as a crucial strategy for advancing knowledge of the world and for guiding educational practices toward a critical, creative formation capable of revealing the complexity of reality. We live in a world permeated by contradictions, or constituted by a network of elements that make it, at first glance, incomprehensible and even unsettling. Plausible explanations for the problems we encounter do not immediately present themselves, nor do the meanings we seek in the face of such tensions arise spontaneously from reality itself. For this reason, research is indispensable as a tool for clarifying the complexities and challenges that often hinder our progress along uncertain paths. Once again, I find in Freire a powerful source of inspiration – while recognizing the specific context of his reflections. He writes:

Faced with a *universe of themes* in dialectical contradiction, human beings adopt contradictory positions: *some work toward maintaining existing structures, while others work toward their transformation*. As the antagonism between themes that express reality intensifies, these themes themselves tend to become mythified, and a climate of irrationality and sectarianism

⁷ Original: “[...] *na aproximação espontânea que o homem faz do mundo, a posição normal fundamental não é uma posição crítica mas uma posição ingênua.*”

emerges. This climate threatens to strip themes of their deeper significance and deprive them of the dynamic character that defines them. *In such a situation, myth-producing irrationality itself becomes a fundamental theme.* Its opposite – the critical and dynamic view of the world – makes it possible to *unveil* reality, to demystify it, and to achieve the full realization of human labor: the permanent transformation of reality for the liberation of human beings (Freire, 2008, p. 35-34, emphasis added).⁸

This passage is particularly fruitful insofar as it reinforces the need for philosophy teaching to be introduced as early as possible in individuals' education, making them attentive to challenges while also encouraging them to confidently exercise their potential as knowing and investigative subjects. Otherwise, it is likely that individuals may drift toward a fanatical stance, seeing themselves merely as part of an uncritical mass, attached to models that are not always reliable as guides. Fanaticism exceeds the realm of possibility, leading individuals to reject their own singular capacities and to surrender to the forces of irrationalism.

Section V

V – Points of tension at the intersection of philosophical practices: on the one hand, philosophy teaching; on the other, research.

I propose to begin with philosophy teaching in order to do justice to the historical perspective, given that research in philosophy – or research on

⁸ Original: “*Diante de um universo de temas em contradição dialética, os homens tomam posições contraditórias; alguns trabalham na manutenção das estruturas, e outros, em sua mudança. Na medida em que cresce o antagonismo entre os temas que são a expressão da realidade, os temas da realidade mesma possuem tendências a serem mitificados, ao mesmo tempo que se estabelece um clima de irracionalidade e de sectarismo. Este clima ameaça arrancar dos temas sua significação profunda e privá-los do aspecto dinâmico que os caracteriza. Numa tal situação, a irracionalidade criadora de mitos converte-se, ela própria, em tema fundamental. O tema que se lhe opõe, a visão crítica e dinâmica do mundo, permite des-velar a realidade, desmascarar sua mitificação e chegar à plena realização do trabalho humano: a transformação permanente da realidade para a libertação dos homens.*”

philosophy teaching—is a more recent development. It is well known that philosophy as a subject entered the school system in Brazil during the colonial period and has since been established in a problematic and unstable manner over the centuries. The first two centuries were marked by the predominance of a *philosophy oriented toward salvation*, followed by disruptions brought about by the valorization of reason as the sole source of knowledge, in opposition to theological and metaphysical orientations. This shift gave rise to a significant conflict within both thought and educational public policies, with the growing influence of scientific and progressive perspectives, later accompanied by modernist and libertarian movements – without disregarding the role of conservative reactions as interlocutors in this process.

Although this brief synthesis inevitably oversimplifies the complex intricacies of our history, it serves to highlight the turbulent path through which philosophy teaching has developed in Brazil. From a book-centered and scholastic model aimed at a propaedeutic formation, there emerged a renewal of cultural standards and an effort to free Brazilian thought from ecclesiastical tutelage. New themes arose, emphasizing attachment to the land and to specifically national concerns, particularly from 1914 onward, with the First World War and the subsequent anthropophagic movement. Yet there remained persistent criticism that a predominantly Eurocentric perspective continued to hinder the incorporation of national issues into philosophy curricula. The earlier elitist conception of education, oriented toward the formation of the ruling classes of the young nation, was challenged in the 1930s by a broader vision of integral education, aimed at preparing individuals for participation in various sectors of social life after completing their schooling. However, this tension persisted in the policies of the Estado Novo, which, under the banner of national modernization, promoted a model of society conceived as a corporation in which each individual would be trained to perform a specific function. Thus, two distinct educational profiles were maintained: on the one hand, a propaedeutic education for those at the top of the social hierarchy; on the other, vocational education for workers at the base, thereby ensuring the functioning and order of the whole. This dual structure is exemplified by Decree No. 4.244/1942, known as the *Lei da*

Educação Secundária (Law of Secondary Education), which divided schooling into two cycles: (1) the lower secondary education, lasting four years and; (2) the upper-secondary education, lasting three years and subdivided into scientific and classical tracks. In the former, the emphasis was on the sciences, with a reduced number of philosophy classes; in the latter, philosophy was allocated four hours per week, aimed at intellectual formation. Over time, however, instructional hours were reduced and the space devoted to philosophical content diminished.

In the 1960s, philosophy teaching underwent significant disruptions. Under Law No. 4.024/61, philosophy became a *complementary* subject – a status further reinforced by the authoritarian regime established in 1964, which rendered it merely *optional*, viewed with suspicion in light of national security policies and deemed unnecessary in the context of the country's development agenda. With Law No. 5.692/71, philosophy was *removed* entirely from the curriculum and replaced by so-called ideological subjects – Moral and Civic Education (Educação Moral e Cívica, EMC), Social and Political Organization of Brazil (Organização Social e Política Brasileira, OSPB), and Studies of Brazilian Problems (Estudos de Problemas Brasileiros, EPB), in alignment with a vocational model of upper-secondary education shaped by the MEC/USAID⁹ agreements.

With the process of redemocratization, efforts were made to restore philosophy to a meaningful place within the school curriculum, particularly as a compulsory subject – a demand that persists to this day. However, this process has been gradual and marked by instability. Philosophy initially reappeared as a *recommended subject, often treated as a transversal and interdisciplinary component*, with occasional moments of consolidation, such as in 2008, when it was made compulsory – though only for a relatively brief period in effective terms.

⁹ The MEC–USAID agreements refer to a series of cooperation arrangements established in the 1960s between Brazil's Ministry of Education (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These agreements aimed at restructuring the Brazilian educational system, emphasizing technical and vocational training, and are often associated with the political and ideological context of the military regime.

Thus, with the legal reforms of the 1990s, one may highlight the establishment of the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCNs) [National Curriculum Parameters], which, however, merely recommended that philosophy contribute to transversal themes as content, rather than as an autonomous subject. With the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC) [National Common Curricular Base] of 2018, this situation changed little: philosophy was subsumed within the broader domain of the human sciences in upper-secondary education, under the principles of interdisciplinarity and transversality. This has led to increasing indeterminacy regarding the subject's place within the school curriculum, as well as to difficulties faced by teachers in maintaining its specificities and even in securing sufficient instructional time to fulfill its objectives. In effect, this represents a return to a condition of curricular *indeterminacy*.

It is often stated that the BNCC promotes student development through a set of competencies aimed at integral human formation and the construction of a just, democratic, and inclusive society. However, its language appears paradoxical, insofar as it addresses philosophical problems – present in the list of competencies – without providing the necessary curricular delineation to ensure their adequate treatment.

Considering the foregoing, I understand that, unlike many other school subjects, philosophy has not been continuously present in people's education; consequently, its incorporation by students as curricular content in Brazil has occurred in a discontinuous manner.

This brief historical overview provides a basis for assessing, among other aspects, the effective possibilities for the production of dissertations, theses, and other academic research projects in the field. It is possible that such content was not fully present in the education of those who wish to teach philosophy; due to the absence of the subject in schools, researchers may have encountered difficulties in defining their object of inquiry – namely, philosophy teaching; and there may not yet be sufficient academic spaces to accommodate projects focused on this theme.

In this regard, I refer to Rodrigo Gelamo (2019), who, after estimating the time required for the training of a researcher in philosophy teaching, states:

If we consider the chronological course of history, the first PhD researchers who had access to philosophy in their basic education would only complete their doctoral studies, at best, by 2020 (Gelamo, 2019, p. 7).¹⁰

In view of these considerations, I emphasize several issues that, in my view, deserve attention. First, it is necessary to understand why the trajectory of this subject has been so turbulent. What, after all, is the scope of the subject? Which philosophy should be proposed to young people as part of their education? For what purposes, and for whom, is it intended, and what does the subject represent for society? When, historically, philosophy has been excluded from school curricula and replaced by other forms of knowledge, what reasons have been put forward to justify such decisions?

Second, we return to the strength of the numerous movements *advocating for the mandatory inclusion of philosophy in the Brazilian school curriculum*, often accompanied by complaints regarding the instability imposed on its teachers. When such debates arise, one observes a considerable effort on the part of philosophers to persuade policymakers that these contents genuinely contribute to fostering individuals' capacity to think critically about their reality, to understand the whole and its components, and to situate themselves within this broader context in which their existence unfolds. The path toward this, they insist, lies in philosophy itself – with its theories, concepts, and accumulated materials imbued with rich reflective, critical, and meaningful insights into the world in which we live.

Furthermore, the effective practice of research by teachers is not easy to achieve, although, as we argue, it is an indispensable factor for successful teaching. In many cases, teacher education programs do not provide adequate philosophical-pedagogical support, failing to promote the necessary integration between philosophy and the pedagogical task of teaching – as well as *learning*. Often, they approach these dimensions in a dual and fragmented manner, as illustrated by Velasco (2019, p. 14):

¹⁰ Original: “Se considerarmos o curso cronológico da história, os primeiros pesquisadores com doutorado que tiveram acesso à filosofia em sua formação básica só terminariam o doutorado, na melhor das hipóteses, em 2020.”

[...] much remains to be done for student teachers to engage in philosophical reflection on the didactics and methodologies of Philosophy Teaching, for undergraduate programs to enable future teachers to investigate teaching practice through the lens of philosophical literature; and, ultimately, for teacher education programs to conceive Philosophy Teaching as inseparable from philosophy itself.¹¹

Final considerations

In this brief essay, I have addressed research in the field of philosophy from at least two perspectives: first, the practice of research by professionals in the field itself and by those dedicated to philosophy teaching, with a view to the discovery of new knowledge and to understanding the scope, validity, and profile of such teaching. At present, it seems almost self-evident that research should accompany forms of knowledge, particularly those conveyed within educational institutions. It is clear that philosophy should be no exception. Research also aims at the continuous updating, revision, and revitalization of already consolidated knowledge. Such a stance calls for the formation of researchers – perhaps beginning as early as school life. Accordingly, schools constitute a *locus par excellence* for fostering investigative activity, rather than merely serving as stages for the reproduction of established knowledge or its transmission to individuals who passively encounter, in school, themes that ought instead to stimulate their curiosity and awaken both their intelligence and their engagement with the problems of the world. It is evident that accumulated

¹¹ Original: “[...] há muito ainda a ser feito para que as licenciandas e os licenciandos reflitam filosoficamente sobre as didáticas e as metodologias do Ensino de Filosofia, para que as graduações propiciem que a futura professora e o futuro professor pesquisem a prática docente sob a ótica da literatura filosófica; para, enfim, que os cursos de formação concebam o Ensino de Filosofia como indissociável da própria Filosofia.”

knowledge provides a solid foundation from which investigative inquiry may begin; however, this requires continuity within human experience.

In this sense, I emphasize the need to cultivate a research-oriented mindset – an attitude that should guide philosophy teachers, but also inform an active and investigative school practice aimed at the formation of subjects who embody a philosophical way of living across the various contexts in which they act, a way attuned to the dynamics of the world.

As a corollary of the desired *rapprochement* between teaching and research in philosophy – which encourages the latter to take the former as an object of inquiry – I maintain that, within the complexity of the field, the *philosophy of philosophy teaching* can become a fertile space to produce knowledge and for impactful action within school contexts.

Drawing once again on Velasco (2019, p. 15, emphasis added), I reinforce this argument:

Since there is (at least) a philosophical perspective underlying reflections on Philosophy Teaching, it follows that such teaching contains philosophical presuppositions. Discussions of these presuppositions – *the identity of philosophy and of philosophizing, its formative meaning and its purpose as a subject, the determination of what to teach and how to do so, the relations between philosophy and its history, among others* – define and constitute what is termed the “Philosophy of Philosophy Teaching”.¹²

I have sought to show that philosophy teaching is far from being a straightforward matter. Rather, as its turbulent trajectory within Brazilian educational institutions reveals, it often appears as a curricular component marked by indeterminacy – at times desired and applauded, yet also

¹² Original: “Uma vez que há (ao menos) uma perspectiva filosófica implicando nas reflexões sobre o Ensino de Filosofia, infere-se que este contém pressupostos filosóficos. As discussões sobre esses pressupostos – a identidade da Filosofia e do filosofar, seu sentido formativo e sua finalidade enquanto disciplina, a determinação do que ensinar e de como fazê-lo, as relações entre a Filosofia e sua história etc. – demarcam e constituem a intitulada ‘Filosofia do Ensino de Filosofia’.”

regarded as a threat to the status quo, and occasionally dismissed as useless in comparison with forms of knowledge deemed “truly” productive. Thus, in the practice of philosophical work in teaching, a certain rupture with complacency emerges within the classroom environment. I contend that a teacher-researcher is better equipped to confront such conditions through the tools developed in their studies, thereby lending greater consistency to philosophy teaching. Taking it as an object of research may also enable a deeper understanding – often hindered by routine constraints and limited autonomy – of many situations encountered in practice.

To feel oneself as belonging to a field endowed with history, meaning, and knowledge production may serve as a vital source for the (re)assertion of a subject that has historically been contested within the school curriculum. This is not merely a matter of devising pedagogical innovations or producing engaging materials for students – important though these may be – but rather of understanding the origins of the issues that affect philosophy teaching and the very purposes of pedagogical action.

To teach is to promote humanity – so often concealed within the suffering of being human. Possessing a profound anthropological understanding, capable of informing the act of “professing” what is considered relevant, necessary, and true, should, in my view, be an essential element of the *philosophy of philosophy teaching*. Why do we teach something to someone? This question must be closely articulated with others: who is the one who teaches, and who is the learner? In this encounter between persons, the whole of society is reflected – so often in need of projects that may guide its transformation, foster its development, and offer paths that are just, secure, and promising.

If the various “teachings of” fail to respond to what has been done thus far, it is unlikely that we will transform the history of education in our country. Here lies a salutary invitation from philosophy to education, as well as a challenge to perspectives that have produced arrangements that are insufficiently bold, experimental, and permeated by systematic reflection within school institutions.

References

BRASIL. Congresso Nacional. Decreto nº 4.244, de 9 de abril de 1942. Lei orgânica do ensino secundário. Brasília: Diário Oficial da União, 1942. Disponível em: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/declei/1940-1949/decreto-lei-4244-9-abril-1942-414155-publicacaooriginal-1-pe.html>. Acesso em: 20 out. 2023.

BRASIL. Congresso Nacional. *Lei nº 4.024, de 20 de dezembro de 1961*. Fixa as Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional. Brasília: Diário Oficial da União, 1961. Disponível em: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei/1960-1969/lei-4024-20-dezembro-1961-353722-publicacaooriginal-1-pl.html>. Acesso em: 20 out. 2023.

DEWEY, John. *Democracy and Education*. State College: The Pennsylvania State University, 2001.

FREIRE, Paulo. *Conscientização: teoria e prática da libertação*. Uma introdução ao pensamento de Paulo Freire. São Paulo: Centauro Editora, 2008.

GELAMO, Rodrigo Pelloso. Prefácio. In: VELASCO, Patrícia del Nero (Org.). *Ensino de – qual? – filosofia: ensaios a contrapelo*. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2019. p. 7-12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36311/2020.978-85-7249-063-4.p7-12>.

KANT, Immanuel. An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment? Trad. James Schmidt. In: SCHMIDT, James (Ed.). *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019. pp. 58-64. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520916890-005>.

LIPMAN, Matthew. *Natasha: Vygotskian dialogues*. New York: Teachers College, 1996.

LIPMAN, Matthew. *Philosophy in the Classroom*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.

SEVERINO, Antonio Joaquim. *Educação, sujeito e história*. São Paulo: Olho d'Água, 2001.

VELASCO, Patrícia del Nero. Apresentação. In: VELASCO, Patrícia del Nero (Org.). *Ensino de – qual? – filosofia: ensaios a contrapelo*. Marília: Oficina Universitária; São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36311/2020.978-85-7249-063-4.p13-20>.

Submission date: 01/20/2023

Acceptance date: 01/24/2024