



The Specificity and Transversality of Philosophy Teaching in Brazilian Upper-Secondary Education: Challenges in the Face of the Contemporary Landscape and the BNCCC

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Abstract: Philosophy in Brazil went through an extended period of interdiction in upper-secondary education to, from the LDB 1996 and the PCNEM 1999 onwards, reappear as a need for a diffused presence in school, in a thematic and transdisciplinary approach. A decade later, Philosophy gains an even more important presence, becoming a mandatory subject in the upper-secondary education curriculum from 2008 onwards. In an even more recent context, with the BNCC from 2015 on, Philosophy follows a path of difficulty between transversality and specificity, sometimes understood as a discipline, sometimes as having a repertoire of themes and unavoidable problems for the education of children and young people. This article intends to identify, analyze, and problematize the situation involving Philosophy in terms of sometimes transversal, sometimes specific, and disciplinary approaches in relation to the last three decades. Throughout the highlighted period, three inflections can be noted in the trajectory of Philosophy at school. Therefore, it is intended to conjecture about hypotheses of advances or setbacks in different scenarios.

Keywords: Philosophy Teaching; BNCC; PCNs; Philosophy as a School Subject; Philosophy of Teaching Philosophy.

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A especificidade e a transversalidade do ensino de Filosofia na educação básica brasileira: desafios frente ao cenário contemporâneo e à BNCC

Resumo: O ensino de Filosofia no Brasil atravessou um longo período de interdição na educação básica brasileira para, a partir da LDB de 1996 e dos PCNEM 1999, ressurgir como necessidade de presença difusa na escola, em abordagem temática e transdisciplinar. Uma década adiante, a filosofia alcança uma presença ainda mais importante, constituindo-se como disciplina obrigatória do currículo escolar da educação básica a partir de 2008. Em um contexto mais recente, com a BNCC a partir de 2015, a Filosofia segue um caminho difícil entre a transversalidade e a especificidade, ora entendida como disciplina, ora como detentora de um repertório de temas e problemas incontornáveis à educação de crianças e jovens. Este artigo pretende identificar, analisar e problematizar a situação que envolve o ensino de filosofia no que tange às abordagens, ora transversais, ora específicas e disciplinares relativamente às últimas três décadas. Decorre dessa situação a identificação de três inflexões importantes na trajetória da Filosofia na escola no período aqui destacado. Pretende-se, portanto, conjecturar sobre hipóteses da existência de possíveis avanços ou retrocessos em distintos cenários.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Filosofia; BNCC; PCNs; Filosofia como Disciplina Escolar; Filosofia do Ensino de Filosofia.

La spécificité et la transversalité de l'enseignement de la philosophie dans les lycées brésiliens: défis face au scénario contemporain, et au BNCC

Résumé: La philosophie au Brésil a traversé une longue période d'interdit au lycée pour, à partir des LDB 1996 and PCNEM 1999, réapparaître comme un besoin de présence diffuse à l'école, dans une approche thématique et transdisciplinaire. Une décennie plus tard, la Philosophie prend une place encore plus importante, devenant une matière obligatoire dans le cursus du lycée à partir de 2008. Dans un contexte encore plus récent, avec le BNCC à partir de 2015, la Philosophie suit un parcours difficile entre transversalité et spécificité, tantôt comprise comme une discipline, tantôt comme ayant un répertoire de thèmes et de problèmes incontournables pour l'éducation des enfants et des jeunes. Cet article se propose d'identifier, d'analyser et de problématiser la situation de la Philosophie en termes d'approches tantôt transversales, tantôt spécifiques et disciplinaires par rapport aux

trois dernières décennies. Tout au long de la période mise en évidence, trois inflexions peuvent être notées dans la trajectoire de la Philosophie à l'école. Par conséquent, il est prévu de conjecturer sur des hypothèses d'avancées ou de reculs possibles dans différents scénarios.

Mots-clés: Enseignement de la Philosophie; BNCC; PCN; La Philosophie Comme Matière Scolaire; Philosophie de L'enseignement de la Philosophie.

Introduction

The presence of Philosophy in Brazilian schools has a history marked by comings and goings, insertions and suppressions. In this article, we address the context that emerged over a little more than two decades — beginning precisely with the 1996 LDB¹—following a long period of military governments, which began in 1964 and lasted for two decades. The establishment of the military dictatorship once again removed Philosophy from schools, officially excluding it from the upper-secondary curriculum by means of Law no. 5,692 of 1971. During the military dictatorship, Brazilians went 25 years without the right to vote for president of the Republic. The military chiefs held the power to determine who would assume the presidency, and the National Congress merely approved the names indicated to head the Executive branch.

These presidents wielded almost unlimited powers: they could close Congress, legislate by decree, suspend political rights, annul elected mandates, and summarily imprison anyone without being held accountable to anyone else (“Philosophy in the Schools – The Interdisciplinary Dialogue between Philosophy...”).

Under such conditions, the Judiciary and the Legislative branches had no choice but to comply with the Executive’s decisions. Political parties were dissolved and replaced by only two, imposed by the regime:

¹ Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Lei de Diretrizes e Base da Educação Nacional, LDB).

National Renewal Alliance (Aliança Renovadora Nacional, ARENA) and Brazilian Democratic Movement (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, MDB). For those who opposed the regime, it often used censorship, police terror, and torture as methods of interrogating political prisoners, leading many of them to their deaths. Neighboring countries such as Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina also underwent periods of military dictatorship alongside Brazil.

In 1973, Ernesto Geisel—an army general elected through indirect vote by an Electoral College, just like the generals-presidents who preceded him, and a member of the initial group that overthrew João Goulart and installed the dictatorship—took some steps toward the country’s redemocratization: he removed colonels from universities and newspaper editorial offices, revoked Institutional Act No. 5 (Ato Institucional No., AI-5), and even dismissed an army commander, Ednardo D’Ávila Melo, for complicity in torture and political imprisonment.

Finally, the last general to govern the country was João Baptista Figueiredo, and in 1983 the military governments came to an end. This shift was driven in part by the popular movement for “Diretas Já” (“Direct Elections Now”), which demanded free and direct presidential elections. Despite the widespread euphoria, millions of people went to the streets waving green-and-yellow flags to hear opposition leaders.

The *Diretas Já* campaign was a supraparty movement that brought together the main opposition parties against the military regime under the banner of restoring direct presidential elections. Among the official parties that took part were PT, PMDB, and PDT, which formed the “National Party Committee for Direct Elections.” PCB and PCdoB also contributed to the movement’s dissemination. (Delgado, 2007, p. 3)^{2 3}

² All translations of quoted material were made by the translator of this article, unless otherwise noted.

³ Original: “A ‘campanha pelas diretas já’ constituiu-se em movimento suprapartidário, que reuniu os principais partidos de oposição ao regime militar em torno da bandeira de retorno das eleições diretas para presidência da república. Dentre os partidos oficiais que

Conservative forces in Congress defeated the constitutional amendment that would have restored this right to the Brazilian people. It then fell to the Electoral College—created by the authoritarian regime—to elect Tancredo Neves, a politician from the era and circle of trust of Getúlio Vargas. His vice president, José Sarney, had been aligned with the military regime, having served as president of the Social Democratic Party (Partido Democrático Social, PDS), which provided political support to the system. However, Tancredo contracted a severe systemic infection and died before taking office.

Tancredo Neves had fallen gravely ill and underwent several surgeries to treat abdominal complications. However, his condition deteriorated, he entered a coma, and ultimately passed away on April 21, 1985, before he could assume the presidency.

Television constructed a narrative around this event, creating a kind of suspension of time. For hours, viewers followed the procession, the wake, and the burial of what would have been the first civilian president after more than twenty years of military dictatorship—just just as they had followed, for over a month, the public drama surrounding his illness (Barbosa, 2004, p. 65). Already in a republican and democratic context, philosophy returned to school curricula starting with the 1982 reform—this this time as an elective subject, leaving it up to schools to decide whether to implement it.

During the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administrations, Philosophy and its teaching in schools began to gain relevance, as can be seen in the LDB and in the National Curriculum Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, PCN) of the period, especially concerning upper-secondary education. In this article, we examine how Philosophy was positioned within these frameworks, which represent the beginning of the reestablishment of its epistemic field within Brazil's educational institutions. This moment marks the first turning point of Philosophy in schools, as we will discuss.

participaram da campanha destacaram-se: o PT, o PMDB e o PDT, que formaram o 'Comitê Nacional Partidário Pró Diretas.' O PCB e o PC do B também contribuíram para difusão do movimento."

Later, under the Lula years (2003-2011), Philosophy assumed yet another status within schools, becoming more prominent and significant due to the specific way in which it was addressed. Here, we identify what can be called the second turning point of Philosophy teaching in Basic Education—although various commentators argue that the educational policies under FHC and Lula share a certain continuity, forming a possible throughline from one administration to the other (Oliveira, 2009; Aguiar, 2016).

Starting in 2008, Philosophy became a compulsory subject in upper-middle school (Law No. 11,684, of June 2, 2008), along with Sociology. This meant that graduates of Philosophy teacher education programs across the country could finally enter the public education system as Basic Education teachers—often through competitive civil service exams, which allowed them to join the permanent, stable teaching workforce. Numerous hiring processes were launched nationwide to meet the requirements of this legislation, creating a generation of Philosophy teachers who would remain in public service, especially at the state level, until retirement—unless they chose to leave the profession.

Beginning in 2015, across three subsequent versions, yet another—this time deeper—turning point emerged with the introduction and gradual implementation of a new regulatory document for national education. In the case of Philosophy, the most relevant document is the BNCC-EM, issued in the context of the 2017 curricular reform. This is the National Common Curricular (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, BNCC). Here, we face what can be considered the third turning point characterizing the most recent situation of Philosophy in Brazilian schools. This moment calls for an analysis of the BNCC-EM within the broader context of the 2017 Reform. The document is part of a period of social setbacks, including in education, following Brazil's post-impeachment reality (2016) and further intensified after the 2018 elections. From that point on, educational institutions have faced dismantling strategies: financial constraints, the discrediting of scientific knowledge (i.e., denialism), and the devaluation of intellectuals and members of the school/academic community. The BNCC text leads to a

deflation of the mandatory upper-secondary school curriculum and establishes formative itineraries that fragment it.

With the 2017 version of the BNCC, Religious Education is explicitly designated for the final years of elementary education, while the teaching of Philosophy once again takes on an imprecise and diffuse character within the school environment. It becomes relegated to a perspective of transversal educational action, and the specificity of Philosophy as its own epistemic field becomes hollowed out, losing its distinctive meaning.

The 2017 version of the BNCC presents guidelines for early childhood education and elementary education. The document concerning upper secondary education, however, was only approved later, in December 2018. The BNCC organizes elementary education into five areas of knowledge that encompass the curricular components, namely: the Languages area, comprising Portuguese Language, Arts, Physical Education, and English Language; the Mathematics area, comprising Mathematics; the Natural Sciences area, comprising Science; the Human Sciences area, comprising Geography and History; and the Religious Education area, comprising its corresponding component (Santos, 2021, p. 6).

This marks the third turning point to which the trajectory of Philosophy teaching—within the normative and legal framework—has been subjected over the course of the last three decades since Brazil's redemocratization. After this historical span, and through an analytical, critical, and problematizing approach, we will assess the advances and setbacks produced by these scenarios.

First Turning Point (1997)

Philosophy has been part of Brazilian curricula since 1553, when the first upper-secondary school was established by the Society of Jesus in Salvador, Bahia. Philosophy education, based on the system implemented by the Jesuits, remained present in Brazil over the centuries, continuing into the 19th century.

In this context, Philosophy retained its original doctrinal and confessional character, characterized by the influence of the *Ratio Studiorum* as the prescribed curriculum to be applied and maintained by the Jesuits (Cartolano, 1985). With the establishment of the republican regime at the end of the 19th century, Philosophy was removed from school curricula to make room for scientific disciplines. This exclusion, however, was temporary: Philosophy was reinstated in 1901, removed again in 1911, reintroduced as an optional subject in 1915, and became mandatory in 1925.

The educational reforms of 1932 and 1942 maintained Philosophy in the curricula, yet its character was predetermined through courses in logic and an encyclopedic approach, teaching “History of Philosophy.” Although Brazil’s redemocratization proceeded slowly, social struggles advanced more rapidly. These included the women’s movement, the fight for amnesty for political prisoners, the struggle of Afro-Brazilians, Indigenous nations, the LGBTQ+ community, landless workers, among others. The advocacy for the return of Philosophy to schools was part of this broader context of social struggles.

We will focus on the more recent period to better understand the issue at hand. This corresponds to the period of democratization under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. At this time, the normative documents that reintroduced Philosophy into schools’ curricula were the 1996 LDB and the PCN for Basic Education, 1998. This marks what we will call the first turning point in the trajectory of Philosophy Education in Brazilian schools, when the adoption of cross-cutting themes was envisaged at this level of education, notably in the areas of ethics and citizenship. The National Curricular Parameters for Secondary Education (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais do Ensino Médio, PCNEM), 1999, also foresaw that Philosophy content should be addressed in the form of cross-cutting themes, although in these documents the subject appeared under the common area of “Human Sciences and Their Technologies” (Fávero, 2004).

These provisions specify what the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB, Law n. 9394/96) had already determined

(Section IV, Article 36, Paragraph 1): that students, upon completing upper-secondary education, should demonstrate “mastery of the knowledge of philosophy and sociology necessary for the exercise of citizenship.”

The National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper-Secondary Education (CEB/CNE Resolution No. 3/98), approved by the National Education Council in 1998, along with the PCNEM of 1999, constituted, at this initial stage, the normative foundations for philosophy education in Brazil. However, Philosophy was not yet mandatory at this stage of implementation, remaining at the discretion of each educational institution or the public authorities of the federation whether to include it in their curricula. Although the documents did not exclude the teaching of subjects in schools, they introduced Philosophy as a subject to be present transversally in the curricula, considering that this condition would suffice to meet the LDB’s requirement for students to have mastery of philosophical knowledge. Consequently, there were no specific times or spaces allocated for Philosophy in school curricula at that time. The figure of a teacher with formal training in Philosophy and the implementation of the subject with its own epistemological field were not legal requirements under the framework established at the time (Durham, 1999, p. 232).

Second Turning Point (2008)

After the FHC administrations, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva rose to power through democratic elections, just as his predecessor had. Lula then remained President of the Republic for two consecutive terms because, as had happened with FHC, he was re-elected. His two terms began in 2003 and ended in 2011. It is during this period—precisely from 2006 onward—that Philosophy in schools would undergo its second inflection point. In that year, the compulsory inclusion of the subjects Sociology and Philosophy was approved by the National Council of Education.

Thus, Philosophy as a specific subject within the Brazilian upper-secondary curriculum became viable starting in 2006 and was finally

elevated to the status of law in June 2008, when the measure was sanctioned by the Presidency of the Republic. This is Law No. 11,684, which is directly based on Opinion No. 38/2006, processed within the National Council of Education/Basic Education Chamber and approved unanimously on July 7, 2006. That opinion, authored by sociologist César Calegari, interpreted the previously existing legal text and recommended modifying the earlier legal framework, which expressly recognized the importance of philosophical and sociological knowledge as necessary for the exercise of citizenship (Law of Guidelines and Bases No. 9,394/96), but relegated them to the vague and imprecise status of receiving what it called “cross-cutting and contextualized treatment,” which meant they should be included in school pedagogical projects (Article 10 of CNE/CEB Resolution No. 3/98).

The full implementation of Philosophy as a subject, however, would fall under the responsibility of state governments and their respective State Councils of Education, still facing certain difficulties—such as hiring teachers with specialized training in the field to teach the subject, among others.

The episodes that marked, in Brasília, the discussion, approval, and ratification of the measure by the CNE/CEB and the Ministry of Education brought together representatives of students, educational institutions, researchers, and teachers who mobilized so that this policy would indeed be implemented at the national level. The organizations involved in the process included APEOESP, CNTE, Contee, Sinesp, Ubes, Anpof, and the *Fórum Sul Brasileiro de Filosofia e Ensino* [Southern Brazilian Forum on Philosophy and Teaching].

This event (referring here to the *Fórum Brasileiro de Filosofia e Ensino 2006* [Brazilian Forum on Philosophy and Teaching]) was mandated by the National Constitution for the Teaching of Philosophy and by the establishment of the Anpof Working Group Philosophizing and Teaching to Philosophize, as determined in the final plenary session. It already had the character of gathering people from various regions, expanding the *Fórum Sul de Filosofia* [Southern Forum on Philosophy], which traditionally brought together only institutions from southern Brazil. In that forum—

which at that time I coordinated together with Celso Cândido—we were already discussing the need for a national organization, and Anpof was cited as the institution that could host such an aggregation in the form of a Working Group. Therefore, this event lies at the origin of what became the WG (the Anpof WG Philosophizing and Teaching to Philosophize), founded in the same year, a few months later (Velasco, 2020, p. 27).

All this mobilization arose because, prior to that, the national legal framework already recognized the importance of philosophical and sociological knowledge as necessary for the exercise of citizenship. This situation gave rise to an opposition expressed in various ways, all converging on the defense of the return of Philosophy as a subject—rather than relegating it to an interdisciplinary and contextualized approach in which its epistemological field and the very existence of this type of knowledge were not assured within school curricula. Sociology faced the same problem, and in reaction, several fronts of mobilization were organized. There were bills, public policies developed within state education systems and legislative bodies, as well as a series of initiatives intended to promote philosophical education within civil society. Finally, in this context, the regional forums on philosophy and teaching also emerged.

In Brazil, each region created its own *Fóruns Regionais de Filosofia e Ensino* [Regional Forum on Philosophy and Teaching], the oldest of which is the *Fórum Sul Brasileiro de Filosofia e Ensino* [Southern Brazilian Forum on Philosophy and Teaching], established in the late 1990s. From its inception, the trajectory of this forum was accompanied by symposia—annual events aimed at bringing together teachers and researchers who had relevant contributions to the field of philosophy teaching, and more specifically, to each year's chosen theme. As a result, the bibliographic gap regarding the teaching of philosophy was significantly reduced through the publication of a book released at each symposium, in addition to the conference proceedings containing the full texts of all participants.

It is worth highlighting the characteristics of the forums and, more specifically, of the *Fórum Sul* [Southern Forum]. Initially conceived as the *Fórum dos Coordenadores de Curso de Filosofia* [Forum of Philosophy

Program Coordinators], it later became the *Fórum dos Cursos de Filosofia* [Forum of Philosophy Programs]. This organizational shift is significant when we consider the reality of Philosophy degree programs in Brazil, where a large portion of the teaching staff generally shows little interest in issues related to teaching, and even less experience in Basic Education. In a more recent context of curricular reform, not even Philosophy Teacher Education programs (Philosophy Teacher Education Degree) demonstrated genuine interest in orienting themselves toward a concrete commitment to teacher preparation. Therefore, forging a connection among university-level Philosophy programs, Basic Education teachers, and public policy will become our greatest challenge following the approval of Philosophy as a mandatory subject. More than ever, the organization of philosophy-and-teaching forums across the country is essential so that higher education programs may meet what society expects of schools: teachers equipped to effectively guide the process through which philosophical thinking is formed—whose value is explicitly affirmed in the text of CNE/CEB Opinion No. 38/2006:

To begin with, it is important to reiterate the value and significance of Philosophy and Sociology for building a consistent and high-quality educational process aimed at developing the humanistic formation of young people who are expected to become ethical, critical citizens, capable of agency and protagonism. (Opinion CNE/CEB No. 38/2006)⁴

Everyone who pursues a university education in philosophy today is aware of the deep divide that has traditionally separated basic education from higher education. Some university students interested in becoming Philosophy teachers are discouraged early in their studies and at times end up abandoning that career path altogether. Others, who might otherwise discover skills and interests in this area, never even come to envision it.

⁴ Original: “*Preliminarmente, reitera-se a importância e o valor da Filosofia e da Sociologia para um processo educacional consistente e de qualidade na formação humanística de jovens que se deseja sejam cidadãos éticos, críticos, sujeitos e protagonistas.*”

Unfortunately, this is the reality of many higher-education programs, even those structured as licensure programs in philosophy. Thus, initiatives that foster closer ties between higher education and basic education are not only commendable but necessary under current circumstances. The legislation coming into force will encourage and require such articulation, as evidenced in the regional forums.

The *Fórum Sul* [Southern Forum] event, held in 2006 in the city of Londrina, Paraná, became a landmark in the history of the *Fórum Sul Brasileiro* [Southern Brazilian Forum] due to its broad scope, the high level of participation, and the attendance of representatives from Anpof, Capes, and Crub, as well as members of the government and public-policy sectors. This was reflected in the quality of the presentations, discussions, and articles published in the book and proceedings. The political momentum generated by the participants' engagement culminated in the drafting and approval of a petition titled the *Carta de Londrina* [Letter from Londrina]. It was personally delivered to the CNE councilors before and during the vote. The letter was also presented to the Minister of Education, Fernando Haddad, during a meeting, as well as to all other bodies in which the teaching of Philosophy had been placed on the agenda. The petition was signed by the organizations present at the event, by members of each regional forum, and by all professionals, students, and supporters advocating for the reinstatement of Philosophy as a subject in schools. The coordination of the Southern *Fórum Sul* [Southern Forum], present in Brasília, took part in the June meeting of the CNE/CEB, where it presented the letter and the principal demand of its signatories. The petition and the forum's representation at that moment acquired national relevance and may be considered the first political action in a nationwide articulation that brought together all forums across the country.

We can argue in favor of including Philosophy as a subject in the curricula of Brazilian basic education in several ways. One aspect of its importance lies in the fact that, today, we increasingly face the need for cognitive tools that enable us to think about thinking—that is, to engage in reflection and philosophical activity. In this sense, philosophy and its study

may be conceived in a broad sense, as a form of knowledge capable of addressing any object, whether external or internal to the subject, allowing one both to ground that object and to place it within a broader context aimed at understanding and problematizing it. In other words, the ability to move among the various domains of human knowledge studied throughout basic education, as well as to situate them within their historical, political-economic, and cultural contexts, constitutes an indispensable skill for a future autonomous political agent who is, above all, capable of recognizing their own existence and the world around them.

To preserve with seriousness what had long been demanded, the consolidation of Philosophy as a subject within school curricula is even more important than guaranteeing its legal status as mandatory. If universities remain indifferent to their social responsibility toward future professionals and to the continued education of those who are already teachers—through courses, events, and outreach programs—we may once again face the unfortunate prospect of seeing the subject removed from curricula. At this moment, it is undeniable that although universities have not effectively embraced these concerns and are therefore not at the center of the responsibility for this achievement, an examination of the state-level contexts reveals that the national decision encountered a highly favorable landscape: nineteen states had already implemented Philosophy and Sociology as mandatory subjects, and two had adopted them as elective subjects. This situation unfolded despite the context of existing national legislation and the resistance of a large part of philosophy professors in higher education. Multiple movements occurred, spontaneous or organized, continuous or interrupted, each of which, in its own way, culminated in specific achievements over time, generating a broader spectrum of action and inspiring others to mobilize to varying degrees towards the same goal. This was the case of the *Fórum Sul Brasileiro* [Southern Brazilian Forum], which has increasingly gained followers within universities and, thus, contributed to changing the reality of these courses.

The presence of Philosophy as a subject in the curricula of Brazilian basic education would encompass all these aspects necessary for

its effective consolidation. The regional forums, along with the creation of a *Fórum Nacional de Filosofia e Ensino* [National Forum on Philosophy and Teaching], could have taken on this task and become a valuable instrument for achieving that goal. Although the national forum was not created, at least two other organizations—equally or even more significant at the national level—were established: the Association of Philosophy Teachers and Philosophers of Brazil (Associação de Professores(as) de Filosofia e Filósofos(as) do Brasil) and the Working Group Philosophizing and Teaching to Philosophize (*GT Anpof Filosofar e Ensinar a Filosofar*, ANPOF). Regarding the latter, this is demonstrated by Patrícia Del Nero Velasco in her work *O Filosofar e Ensinar a Filosofar: registros do GT da ANPOF 2006–2018*, the result of an extensive and highly relevant postdoctoral research project.

It is evident that, from its inception, the Working Group aspired to reflect philosophically on themes and problems related to Philosophy and its teaching, establishing itself as a space that brings together the field's scholarly output. As of October 2019, after 13 years of existence, 7 meetings within ANPOF and another 6 outside of it, a significant number of research projects, and a substantial collection of bibliographic and technical works, it can be confidently affirmed that the Working Group Philosophizing and Teaching to Philosophize has fulfilled, in its own proper and appropriate way, the objectives originally set forth. (Velasco, 2020, p. 25)⁵

One issue that must be addressed concerns the teachers who, at the time the subject became mandatory, did not hold a higher-education degree in

⁵ Original: “Nota-se que o GT, já em sua criação, aspirava refletir filosoficamente sobre temas e problemas concernentes à Filosofia e seu ensino, consolidando-se como um espaço que congrega as produções da área. Outubro de 2019: após 13 anos de existência, 7 encontros no âmbito da ANPOF e outros 6 fora desta, uma quantidade significativa de projetos de pesquisa e produções bibliográficas e técnicas, pode-se afirmar com segurança que o GT Filosofar e Ensinar a Filosofar cumpriu de modo próprio e apropriado os objetivos postos.”

Philosophy. The consequences, in this case, could have been negative, potentially jeopardizing the consolidation of the subject itself. According to data from the Secretariat of Basic Education (SEB/MEC) at the time, there were 10,452 Philosophy teachers in the public school system. Based on the 2005 School Census, there were 23,561 upper-secondary schools in Brazil, 16,570 public and 6,991 private. These figures give us an idea of the scale of the challenge ahead. State school systems are generally responsible for providing upper-secondary education, a context in which the portion of private schools proportionally increases as well. Numerous public civil service exams were applied in each state to employ full-time Philosophy teachers, which allowed the subject to acquire a concrete and mandatory presence in school curricula, especially at the upper-secondary education level.

Third Turning Point (2017)

The third turning point occurs with the first act of the government of Michel Temer (PMDB), who assumed the Presidency of the Republic following the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (PT). This was the publication of Provisional Measure No. 746/16, which instituted the reform of secondary education. Among the arguments presented was the need to correct the allegedly large number of subjects in secondary education, which the document claimed were not compatible with the world of work; it also stated that the proposal was in line with recommendations from the World Bank Group and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Moreover, the reform would be articulated with 'the four pillars' of Jacques Delors: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. From the initial justifications it is possible to identify a discourse that harkens back to the mid-1990s and that informed the curricular regulations of that period. The purpose of this text is to show that, under the appearance of novelty, the current

secondary-education reform conceals old discourses and old aims (Silva, 2018, p. 2).⁶

This is indeed what the document itself conveys: a return to the 1990s, the period in which we identified the first turning point in the legal and regulatory trajectory of Philosophy teaching. From the outset of the document, two features immediately stand out: the proposal to eliminate the compulsory status of the subjects Philosophy and Sociology, and the permission for people of supposed “notorious expertise” to assume teaching roles—an arrangement that leads to the precarization of the teaching profession. Thus, it is clear that the document had a retrograde orientation in relation to the advances achieved since the 1996 LDB.

In basic education, Religious Education reappears as a curricular component, which also represents a setback with respect to a secular public school offering quality education. This legal and regulatory implementation occurs precisely at a historical moment of great ascendancy and consolidation of power by intolerant Christian fundamentalist groups in our social milieu, whose members occupy strategic positions across society—in politics, the economy, and education. It is very unlikely that this would amount to the development of teaching and learning founded on a more scientific and academic approach, critical rather than catechetical. Quite the contrary: public-school teaching posts become highly sought after by sectarian and fanatical groups of various stripes, as well as by corrupt, perverted, and avaricious pastors. What we witness is an escalating struggle by groups that coopt individuals still in childhood and adolescence into their flocks, a process that unfolds in political, social, and cultural choices and that utterly violates the emancipatory principle we expect from schools and from individual

⁶ Original: “*Além disso, a reforma se articulava aos quatro pilares de Jacques Delors: aprender a conhecer, aprender a fazer, aprender a conviver e aprender a ser. Desde as justificativas iniciais é possível identificar um discurso que retroage a meados da década de 1990 e que compuseram as normativas curriculares daquele período. A intenção neste texto é mostrar que, sob a aparência de novo, a atual reforma do ensino médio acoberta velhos discursos e velhos propósitos.*”

autonomy—a *sine qua non* for modern, republican, and democratic societies. Gradually, this will give rise to catastrophic consequences, causing undeniable harm to the scientific, critical, tolerant, and republican formation of our children and young people.

The concept of laicity, so fundamental to democratic republics, has its etymological origin in the word *laico*, which derives from the Greek *laos*, meaning people. From this, we obtain a broader sense of laicity as a regime in which no individual may be discriminated based on their life orientations, since freedom of conscience is guaranteed before a State that belongs to everyone (the people), and not merely to a segment of the population. In the political sphere, laicity in the service of the *laos* presupposes the separation between the just and the Good, as well as the principle that conceptions of human existence belong to one's own conscience and cannot, under any circumstance, be imposed upon others. In the sphere of the Good, religions align themselves with the belief that there is a transcendent foundation for moral questions—one that would represent an entity ontologically superior to ordinary human beings and, therefore, beyond their jurisdiction. Allied to laicity, then, is the ideal of a just State.

With the philosophers of modernity, philosophy becomes emancipated from any form of tutelage. From this perspective, one might believe that its study would foster the development of each subject's autonomy—free to decide and to judge, conscious of their own existence and of the world around them. The question that arises at this point is whether the teaching of Philosophy is in fact oriented toward this path and, if it has deviated, how we might think of ways to return to the ideal course (Maamari, 2014, p. 92).

About the teaching of Philosophy, the BNCC emphasizes its transformation into a transversal component, which likewise represents a setback in relation to the introduction of Philosophy as a compulsory curricular subject, as seen at the moment of the second turning point. In upper-secondary education, the BNCC presents four areas of knowledge and only Portuguese and Mathematics as curricular subjects, thereby completely emptying the specific epistemic field of numerous other

areas—including Philosophy. Consequently, Philosophy teaching becomes scattered, diluted, and weakened within the broader area of Human Sciences and Applied Social Sciences. From that point onward, the BNCC advocates a model of teaching and learning based on skills and competencies, notions already well established in previous regulatory texts and for some time present in the daily practice of teachers.

Final considerations

We have seen that Brazil, regarding the teaching of Philosophy in school settings, made advances in the 1990s (the first turning point), progressed even further in the first decade of the present century (the second turning point), and then regressed when, in 2017, under the Temer administration, the BNCC was implemented. The regression referred to here concerns, above all, the precarization of teaching work through the valorization of individuals deemed to possess notable expertise—that is, dispensing with academic, technical, or scientific training in specific areas of knowledge; in addition, this regression results from the deflation of Philosophy as an epistemic field that must be systematically studied within school contexts. What we observe, therefore, is the trivialization of philosophical work in the classroom.

At some public universities, Philosophy was included on university entrance examinations even before its mandatory inclusion in 2008 was approved. Today, it is part of the ENEM.⁷ This is another factor that contributed to the gradual introduction of the subject in public and private schools in certain regions of the country. In general, the moment when Philosophy was added to entrance examinations was linked to attempts to reform the system as a whole—moving away from selecting candidates based on mechanical assimilation of fragmented knowledge, expressed primarily through memorization, and toward requiring

⁷ National Upper-Secondary Education Exam (Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio, ENEM).

satisfactory performance on questions involving interpretation, analysis, the establishment of relations, contextualization, and, ultimately, the clear expression of ideas in a critical and reflective manner. This pedagogical conception guided both the thematic organization and the focus of some exams. The inclusion of Philosophy as a subject at the moment of this implementation aligned with the development of the skills and competencies expected of students completing basic education, as outlined in the text of the LDB and the DCNEM⁸ beginning in 1998, as previously discussed, as well as in the PCN and the OCN. In this way, training based on skills and competencies was promoted, while specific aspects of the philosophical domain of knowledge were still preserved.

There are several reasons cited by critics for opposing the introduction of this subject in public schools, which justify their stance. At this point, we would like to focus on one of them, due to its philosophical-political nature and its relevance within a broader global debate. One of the arguments raised by these critics—one we wish to highlight—is the alleged insufficiency of professionals to meet the recent demand for new teaching positions within the school system. Undergraduate programs in Philosophy in Brazil generally fall into three types of training or qualification, namely: the teaching degree (teacher education); the bachelor's degree (research training); and seminary programs (preliminary stages in the training of clerical leadership). To meet the national need for teachers in upper-secondary education, Philosophy teaching degree programs must expand the number of available places and improve their quality—both in terms of preparing teachers with more specific training in the philosophical epistemic field, and in terms of training them for the diversity and inclusion that now characterize Brazilian schools.

⁸ National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper-Secondary Education (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino Médio, DCNEM).

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