

FILOSOFIA BRASILEIRA COMO METÁFORA DO BRASIL

Brazilian Philosophy as metaphor of Brazil

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RESUMO:

O objetivo do presente ensaio é trabalhar algumas questões relativas às relações entre nacionalidade e filosofia. Para tanto, recuperamos um filósofo mui injustamente olvidado, Álvaro Vieira Pinto e debatemos o papel que o mesmo assinalava como próprio à filosofia no contexto do desenvolvimento nacional. A tese principal do ensaio é que o desprezo pela filosofia nacional é, no fundo, um desprezo pelo Brasil e que a valorização dela vai de par com a constituição de uma sociedade justa, igualitária e preocupada com seu povo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Nacionalismo. Filosofia brasileira. Álvaro Vieira Pinto. Estratégia.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to address some issues related to the relationship between nationality and philosophy. To do so, we revisit a philosopher who has been unjustly forgotten, Álvaro Vieira Pinto, and discuss the role he assigned to philosophy in the context of national development. The main thesis of the essay is that the disregard for national philosophy is, fundamentally, a disregard for Brazil, and that its valorization goes hand in hand with the establishment of a just, egalitarian society concerned with its people.

KEYWORDS

Nayionalism. Brazilian Philosophy. Álvaro Vieira Pinto. Strategy

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Introduction

It is a truism, but sometimes truisms need to be stated: the university is part of a society, it is part of a social formation and is influenced by it, while also exerting influence upon it. There is a relationship of double implication, since it is a society that decides the amounts it is willing to spend on a higher education institution, ever since it was invented in the West, with Plato and his Academy, or, *in limine*, whether they are willing to maintain a university, which may seem absurd in today's world, but was the reality in Brazil for most of its history. In contrast to the Hispanic colonial world, which already had universities since the mid-16th century, here the first universities date back to the last century, still surrounded by anecdotal tales. This is because they say that the University of the Federal District, still in the former capital, Rio de Janeiro, was created solely for the purpose of granting an honorary doctorate to the Belgian king, who was then visiting the country (DOMINGUES, 2017). The Brazilian university, as we know it today, is linked to the paths and missteps of developmentalism, a doctrine that advocated, as Bielchowski (2000), an expert on the subject, tells us, a double idea: that we could only break out of underdevelopment through industrialization and that the State should lead the development process.

That the university is social implies that what it produces is also social. Past science is not usually studied by scientists themselves, only by philosophers and historians of science. If among this well-educated group it is so, what can we say about the general public, scientifically illiterate in current productions, let alone those from centuries or millennia ago? Nothing causes us more strangeness than reading a scientific text from Antiquity or the Middle Ages, perhaps with the exception of mathematicians, and even then, these are productions quite distinct from current mathematics manuals, as they used a different register to immortalize their discoveries in texts, either with different numerals or with descriptions of operations through different natural languages, which require enormous powers of abstraction to be understood. A famous case is the encyclopedia that Jorge Luis Borges, a famous Argentine writer, mentions in one of his texts. The fame of this encyclopedia also comes from Foucault's citation of it in *The Order of Things*, one of the most important books of the last century. According to Borges, this encyclopedia would categorize animals in a completely alien order to our standards; for example, among those belonging to the emperor or those that have just broken the water pitcher, or even those that can be painted with a very fine brush made of camel hair. The laughter aroused in Foucault by such ordering is no different from what we might feel when reading, for example, Plato's *Timaeus*, where the illustrious philosopher comments on the formation of the universe in a manner completely foreign to later scientific theories.

This sense of estrangement is also social, as pointed out, given that it stems from our scientific illiteracy and the choices a society has made between educating its citizens in the light of knowledge or leading them to consume a plethora of third-hand productions that do not stimulate intellect beyond what kitsch is capable of. If it is social, it is inherently subject to the variabilities of time and geographical distinctions; in simple terms, it can be altered.

The Myth of the Non-Existence of Brazilian Philosophy

Thus, philosophy is also social. What abyss separates the productions of a Heraclitus or Empedocles from a text by Deleuze, those from the early days of the discipline, this one a luminary of the second half of the 20th century; but, at the same time, what greater proximity! Perhaps because, deep down, we retain much of Greece in our civilizational project, perhaps because the philosopher, this true bookworm, delights in reading, at least in the Western tradition, the old stuff that moths consume in libraries and basements.

Another aspect that stands out in the social nature of philosophy and the university is the fact that they are exposed to the same events as social life. Thus, on campuses, the same attitudes that occur in the rest of society are reflected, with nuances, of course, but still in the same way. One of these phenomena is the endless gossip that is passed down from generation to generation, consolidating a kind of university common sense, even in philosophy, which some claim would be distinguished precisely by opposing common sense, as Marilena Chaui defends, for example.

One of these rumors is that there is no Brazilian philosophy, genuine, with the flavor of the land, made here. It's an old rumor. Tobias Barreto, a distinguished thinker of the 19th century, believed that Brazilians did not have a philosophical mindset. Others disagreed with him, like Clóvis Beviláqua, more a jurist than a philosopher, but who has works in both fields. For him, writing in the early 20th century, Brazilian philosophy would see the light of day, but it would be a practical philosophy, focused on the problems of the land, on the Brazilian man, eminently practical in an ethos inherited from the Iberian colonizers, as emphasized by João Cruz Costa (1945; 1960; 1967), a historian of Brazilian philosophy and the first PhD student in philosophy at USP.

This situation—doubts about Brazilian philosophy—persisted throughout the 20th century and has roots in the present day. After all, the humanities have consolidated in the country and produced classics such as *Raízes do Brasil*, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo*, *Formação Econômica do Brasil*, *Geografia da Fome*, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. History, sociology, political science, geography, etc., all

have reference names in their fields, with original works marked by reflection both on Brazil, as they are Brazilian, and with a universalist tendency, as commonly occurs with any science, which is carried away in the universal-particular dialectic. This gossip is the whispering conversation that runs among students and even among philosophy professors.

The truth is quite different. Prior to the professionalization of philosophy in the country, which dates back to the mid-1930s with the creation of USP in 1934 and the arrival of a mission of French professors whose mission was to teach us the philosophical *métier*, and later with the establishment of Graduate Programs, there were philosophers in these parts, names that designate streets across Brazil, but are ignored by newer generations. Many works of philosophy, some good, some bad, were written in these regions or by people from here before the aforementioned mission. Antônio Paim, recently deceased, dedicated his life to recovering Brazilian production; others, like the aforementioned Cruz Costa, Luís Washington Vita, Jorge Jaime, or more recently Paulo Margutti and Júlio Canhada, have been dedicated to showing that there was philosophy in Brazil before USP, in a noteworthy memorialistic work.

Until the present date, two opinions prevail, which we cite below. One of them is from Sílvio Romero, a law graduate, like almost all of the intellectual elite of the 19th century, but with philosophical inclinations, although he stood out mainly as a literary critic and collector of Brazilian traditions. He says, in his work *A philosophia no Brazil (Philosophy in Brazil)*:

In the history of spiritual development in Brazil, there is a gap to consider: the lack of serialization in ideas, the absence of a genetic lineage. In other terms, among us, one author does not proceed from another, one system is not a consequence of what preceded it. It is a truth to assert that we do not have intellectual traditions in the strict sense. In the spiritual history of cultured nations, each phenomenon of today is a last link in a chain, evolution is a law: let Germany be the example (ROMERO, 1878, p. 35)

Fifty years later, Leonel Franca will say:

What is immediately noticeable in the majority of Brazilian philosophical writings is the lack of originality. We cannot yet claim, like the great civilized nations, a certain autonomy of thought. Very little and very meager of our own, that is what we can demand. We reflect, more or less passively, on foreign ideas; we navigate slowly and in tow in the great paths opened by other navigators; we reproduce, in the philosophical arena, strange battles and fight in them with borrowed weapons. Therefore, among the thinkers who succeed here, there is no logical continuation of ideas nor genetic affiliation of systems. We have no schools, no initiators who have aroused, either by sequence of evolution or by contrast of reaction, continuators or opponents (FRANCA, 1962, p. 262).

This trend has become a dominant force in the interpretation of Brazilian philosophy. We disregard our own authors, as indeed everything Brazilian is disregarded, in favor of foreign authors. On the shelves, we overlook Silva, Oliveira, and Prado, in favor of Zimmermans, Smiths, and Lejeunes. Brazilian philosophy is generally not read in philosophy courses, and productions about native authors are overlooked in favor of other names, deeming national production useless, in a scenario that has only recently begun to change, albeit slowly and without much enthusiasm. However, merely recognizing that there was philosophical production in Brazil before professionalization is a gigantic step, even if it is disregarded. With this, the notion of Tobias Barreto, as mentioned earlier, that Brazilians would not have much love for philosophy, falls apart.

Philosophy goes to battle: ISEB and Vieira Pinto

At the same time, it seems that the other prediction we pointed out, that of Bevilacqua, has already come true and we have not yet realized it. We speak of developmentalism and how, under its guidance, the Brazilian university system was organized and, with it, philosophy became a matter for experts, no longer for law graduates or self-taught individuals, with few (often painful, as we all know) exceptions. After Vargas's death, in a spectacular suicide, a stroke of genius that postponed the civil-military tour de force of April 1964 by a decade, Café Filho assumed power. One of the measures he took was the creation of the Institute of Brazilian Studies (Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros, ISEB) in 1954. The model for ISEB was the Collège de France, at the peak of the university system in the Hexagon, as the name suggests, aimed at providing a theory of developmentalism and thus offering intellectual support to the profound changes that the country was undergoing at that time (TOLEDO, 1982).

Philosophy did not miss the party, nor did other fields of the humanities. At ISEB, names of great intellectual weight coexisted, at least in their day, such as Hélio Jaguaribe, Cândido Mendes, Roland Corbisier, Guerreiro Ramos, and Álvaro Vieira Pinto. Vieira Pinto led the philosophy department of the Institute, tasked with researching and giving birth to a philosophy specific to the developmentalist project. His inaugural lecture, *Ideology and National Development*, from 1955, a pamphlet of just over 50 pages, without a reissue for over 60 years, is a text that made history. However, as philosophy is social, it fell into oblivion and was received differently by critics.

In this text, the inquiries and positions of Romero and Franca are felt, as Vieira Pinto (1960c) assigns a special role to philosophy in the context of a development project. For him, it would be up to the philosopher to elaborate the guidelines for national development and, thus, the instruments that can

enable other scholars in the humanities, such as sociologists, economists, and historians, to create a project to overcome underdevelopment. According to Vieira Pinto, up to that moment, philosophy had not taken on this project, which resulted, he tells us, in Brazilian development stumbling, occurring somewhat blindly, without clear guidelines and solid and well-established methodological and strategic elements. Thus, Vieira Pinto suggests that his task at the helm of the philosophy department at ISEB would be to provide the Brazilian intellectual, political, and economic elite with these missing elements and, thus, contribute his share to overcoming the country's woes.

He dedicated himself to this task in the following period, and already in 1960, his work *Consciousness and National Reality* was published in two volumes. The first volume dealt with what he called naive consciousness, while the second dealt with critical consciousness. Vieira Pinto's influences are clear: phenomenology, existentialism, Hegelianism, and Marxism, as well as dirigist economic theories such as those of Myrdal, Furtado, and Prebisch, at least as we judge. For him, development would only be possible if the ideology of developmentalism took hold of the masses, which implies that it would combat the obstacles that hinder this process.

The shifting ground: country of the future or inferiority complex?

It was a period of special excitement in the country. Driven by a favorable international economic context, the Golden Years of the post-war period, the country was industrializing rapidly. Not long before, Zweig had predicted that Brazil would be the country of the future, and his prophecy seemed to be coming true before everyone's eyes. In the arts, bossa nova sang the beauties of the land and its people. In sports, we won the 1958 World Cup. Cities were growing, debates were intensifying, hope was filling both cities and countryside. Pindorama seemed to be asserting itself over Brazil. But, as they say, Brazil has a long history ahead of it.

Not everyone was happy because, at the end of the 1950s, Nelson Rodrigues, in the midst of fervor, coined the term "complexo de vira-latas" to describe the malaise that gripped the nation after the humiliating defeat to Uruguay in the 1950 World Cup, in a packed Maracanã stadium with all the odds in our favor.

Márcia Tiburi (2021), in a recent book, links the "complexo de vira-latas" to the "complexo de Colombo," or, in other terms, to the fact that we were colonized and enslaved and, ultimately, failed to break what a certain contemporary school of thought calls coloniality. It is characteristic of a colony not to live its life, in the most different spheres, in relation to itself, but in relation to the other, the metropolis.

Thus, productions, customs, languages, culture, in short, the very being of the metropolitan area are exalted and considered the height of achievement, while those with the flavor of the land are disregarded or treated as inferior.

Breaking away from coloniality is not easy and imposes choices that a social formation must make. However, since no society is homogeneous and within it there are competing projects, it is eminently in a conflictual and, with it, tortuous framework that a country adjusts its affairs and defines its profile, its essence.

In April 1964, a portion of Brazilian society decided to impose its national existential choice on Brazil, and so we remained for a long 21 years. One of the first measures of the authoritarian regime, also in April, was precisely to close the ISEB, condemning its members to ostracism, especially Vieira Pinto, who went into exile in Chile, continuing his research, now redirected, but always focused on the project of thinking about the reality of the Third World (Roux, 1990), in order to overcome the steel cage of underdevelopment, equipping the elite of these countries with instruments that would allow the ideology of developmentalism to reach the masses and, thus, become, as Marx says, a material force.

For Vieira Pinto, existentialism, which was spreading across Europe at the time, did not make sense for a country like Brazil. This is because this philosophical movement and its blasé way of facing existence only make sense in the face of a reality that is bored by absurdity. But it presupposes a world already made, a culture already established, a certain popular ethos, and a settled society. Vieira Pinto notes that this was not the case for Third World countries. Plagued by illiteracy, poverty, misrule, connivance, colonialism, exploitation, and corruption, in these countries there is no world to be bored with; on the contrary, there is no shortage of tasks to fulfill, actions to take, measures to implement, struggles to wage, in short, an entire country to build (Vieira Pinto, 1960b).

Similarly, Vieira Pinto (1960b) believes that even the very thought and logical categories prevailing in wealthy countries are unsuitable for underdeveloped countries. He shared this position with Guerreiro Ramos, an eminent sociologist also affiliated with ISEB, who worked with the notion of sociological reduction to indicate the necessary acclimatization that a doctrine needs to undergo before being applied to a social formation distinct from the one where it originated. Thus, the intellectual from the advanced country believes that with their categories, they encompass objective reality as such, ignoring that these categories, especially sociological ones, were forged taking into account other assumptions and are based on experiences different from those experienced by the poor country.

In this sense, Vieira Pinto revisits a tradition that has its roots far in the past. Let's consider, for example, how List denounced liberalism in the 19th century as an English doctrine, especially suited to the situation of those lands, already in full industrialization and thus in an advantageous position in the global scenario, while the continent was just beginning to industrialize. List's statement that England was kicking away the ladder for other countries, preventing them from achieving the development it had itself achieved, became particularly famous in recent times thanks to the work of Chang (2004), a South Korean author based in England, who elaborated a historical study on how the policies and measures imposed by rich countries on poor ones prevent them from developing. Clearly, neoliberalism and globalization as they are configured constitute obstacles to development.

I recall a text by the journalist and self-proclaimed historian Leandro Narloch (2019), in which he asserts that the location where a product is produced means nothing, at least to him and his ilk, but rather if it is cheap. Thus, it matters little whether Brazil produces high-tech gadgets or oranges: in the end, the result is the same. In economics, this is what the so-called theory of comparative advantage advocates, whose first formulation is credited to David Ricardo in the 19th century. Narloch dedicates himself in the *Politically Incorrect Guide to the History of Brazil* to destroy any trace of national pride and downgrade Brazil and its people as much as possible, using questionable intellectual procedures, to say the least.

Thus, he does not practice sociological reductionism, nor does he consider that, for a country to develop, especially one with the potential of Brazil, national pride is important, which does not mean chauvinism. Similarly, in a highly competitive global market, it goes against logic to imagine that a developed country would support another to develop and thus become another competitor. Consequently, the consequence is that already wealthy countries, with strong companies and a modern state, impose policies on weaker ones that prevent them from developing and, in this way, becoming new competitors in the global market (Chang, 2004).

Without development, there is no possibility of building a national future worthy of that name. The options on the table seem to be the same as they were in the time of Celso Furtado and Gudin, or in other words, between a state concerned with development or blatant liberalism. From the 1930s until the election of Collor, Brazil pursued the developmentalist path and achieved admirable results, transitioning from an essentially agrarian economy to one that produced cutting-edge aircraft and electric cars before they became the dominant trend. With the Washington Consensus, we opened our market, privatized, and handed over our wealth to international speculators. China, on the other hand, although opening its markets in the general movement of globalization, never lost sight of the role that a state concerned with development should play. The results could not be more opposite. China has slowly but

steadily developed, and today it can offer a much better standard of living to its citizens, while Brazil in the 1990s deindustrialized and became more reliant on primary commodities. Its population suffers from issues that investment in science and technology could prevent, such as dengue outbreaks or the lack of qualified jobs for its engineers, who are now working as app-based drivers.

Criticism of Vieira Pinto

The reception of Vieira Pinto's work was fraught with difficulties, but, as noted by Costa (2021), it was generally marked by the interpretation made by the famous Padre Vaz (1962), an interpretation that resonates to this day, when, in 2005, Paulo Arantes, a prominent figure in USP philosophy, revisited Vaz to discredit Vieira Pinto. Furthermore, Vieira Pinto was harshly criticized by those who were about to become the country's intellectual hub, in line with the economic and social preponderance of the state where it was located: USP. Norma Côrtes (2003) precisely situates the debate: it was a struggle between irreconcilable philosophical positions and even ways of understanding Brazil in order to act upon it. Let's explain.

The ISEBians were generally aligned with a different branch of interpretation of Brazilian reality. On one side, they were close to the Marxism of the Third International, with its characteristic stagism, embodied at the ISEB by Nelson Werneck Sodré. On the other hand, there was a strong influence of phenomenological thought, whether that of Sartre, Heidegger, or even Husserl. But especially in the Institute's early period, until Jaguaribe's departure, there were several other currents that made themselves felt. Alongside the aforementioned philosophical positions, Vieira Pinto was influenced by Jaspers, Hegel, Plato, and German historicists, not to mention his past as a Catholic and integralist, which coincided with Corbisier, another member of the Institute.

Indeed, USP was not formed under the Teutonic aegis, as emphasized above, but under the direct auspices of the French, who came to take part in the university's foundation. Thus, among these thinkers, a whole other range of theoretical references and frameworks, such as the then-fashionable structuralism, were popular. Moreover, through the Marx Seminar, led by Arthur Gianotti, they offered a different reading of Marx. According to Caio Navarro de Toledo (1982), Vieira Pinto was attached to Marx's Manuscripts, the Jewish Question, etc., whereas the USP scholars, steeped in Althusser, made the epistemological break and emphasized the so-called scientific Marx of Capital.

Finally, Father Vaz, in turn, also aligns himself with Hegel, but with an anthropological tradition of Hegelianism that, in Brazil, flowed into interpretations close to liberation theology. As a priest, he was

therefore Catholic. Vaz's activism, as noted by Domingues (2017) and Arantes (2005), directly resulted in AP (Popular Action), an organization that stood up against the dictatorship with arms in hand. It's worth noting that Vieira Pinto began his career as a university professor by recommendation of Catholics but later broke ties with them.

Thus, it is not surprising that Vieira Pinto suffered at the hands of criticism and, in our view, was overshadowed. The project he advocated and sought to justify, national-developmentalism, was defeated with the coup of 1964, on the one hand, and by its own weaknesses on the other. Perhaps this project still breathes within laborism, represented in the PDT and smaller groups, but they are small forces without the same weight as their rivals. This is because the USP project flowed, on one hand, into the PSDB, which once governed the country and is now dwindling; on the other hand, from the action of Catholics in the Basic Ecclesial Communities (with the influence of Father Vaz), combined with USP intellectuals and unionists, resulted in the PT. Now, Vieira Pinto is among the defeated, and it is the victors who write history...

Although we were suggested to analyze the criticisms directed at Vieira Pinto by Vaz and Arantes specifically, we believe that, regarding the latter, it is not necessary. Arantes (2005) himself admits that he did not read Vieira Pinto's main book, *Consciência e realidade nacional*, in its entirety, and that he relies on Vaz. However, to avoid any objections of negligence, we will at least indicate the main points of criticism.

Firstly, Vaz, elected by Domingues (2017) as the main representative of philosophy in the period, which we obviously disagree with, as Vieira Pinto would be the most suitable. Vaz's interpretation has already been subjected to critical scrutiny by several authors such as Roux (1990), Freitas (1998), Côrtes (2003), Costa and Martins (2019), and Costa (2021). Vaz's tone is respectful and polite, but perhaps it betrays itself in the details; for example, the author indicates that the work constitutes a milestone of developmentalism in the 1950s. Now, here, a certain disdain becomes clear. Vieira Pinto's work, as Vaz himself indicates, is programmatic; it indicates, after a detailed phenomenological description, a path for the future and intends to systematize a certain political position, that of national-developmentalism. Therefore, by indicating that it is a classic work of the 1950s, our dear priest is already preparing the obsequies instead of hastening to organize the baptism. Furthermore, he indicates that there is nothing in the work that indicates that it deals with the Brazilian reality under Vieira's theoretical microscope, a refrain that will be repeated, among others, by Arantes (1996; 2005) and Domingues (2017). Nothing could be further from the truth: in addition to the constant references to Brazil, on one hand, the work aims to describe the two most basic types of consciousness, the naive and the critical, induced by the very national reality of that time; now, Michel Debrun (apud Toledo, 1982) states that Vieira tells the

miracle but does not tell the saint, so it can be said: for the discerning reader, half a word is enough; Vaz himself (1962) indicates how in the work it is possible to recognize national authors, thus betraying himself. On the other hand, as Roux (1990) notes, and as we ourselves pointed out elsewhere, if Vieira deals with Brazil, he also deals with the Third World in general: neither Yankee capitalism nor Stalinist communism, but a third way, a new path, that combines democracy and development.

Another criticism from Vaz is that the work does not contain a bibliography, thus preventing the identification and appreciation of Vieira's loyalties and connections. This issue was thoroughly debated by Côrtes (2003), who argues that this is not a weakness of the text, but rather indicates that Vieira wanted to open a dialogue not so much with academics and the intelligentsia, but with the common human, the masses often evoked. For us, whether Côrtes' assertion is correct or not, it would be worth asking if Father Vaz would question another work, which was dear to him, and which also lacks a bibliography, such as the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Of course, one could argue that a century and a half separates the two texts. However, just as the *Phenomenology* obliges us to delve into the repository of Western philosophy, Vieira Pinto likewise invites us to know his time and to discover his sources for ourselves. On the other hand, the context of the work clearly indicates what the author's sources were. Now, the ISEB had published works by Jaspers and Sartre. In the institution, there were figures like Guerreiro Ramos, Cândido Mendes, Jaguaribe, Corbisier, and Sodré. Clearly, this well-thought-out intellectual environment is implicit in the text, in which Vieira only lets slip his affiliation with phenomenology once. Thus, this is not a condemning point of the work, nor does it hinder its comprehension.

Another misrepresentation by Vaz refers to the fact that he points out that Vieira wants to find the being of the nation. On the contrary, unlike some sociologists or historians, this is precisely what he does not want to do. In the second volume of *Consciência e realidade nacional*, Vieira points out how the German phenomenological vocabulary, in the form of the famous *in der Welt sein*, implies two translations in Portuguese, suggesting that the last flower of Latin is richer than the German language. This is because *sein*, in German, means both "to be" and "to be situated at"; the language of Heidegger does not operate with or recognize the semantic subtlety that this implies (nor English). For Vieira, being in the world is a condition of existing in the world, but the latter reflects back on the former: being is historical. The categories that the ISEB member deduces from the world are not a priori given, but rather the result of the correlation itself; in other words, they are historical. There is no Brazilian essence hovering in the realm of ideas, waiting for a sage to dialectically ascend to them. Quite the contrary, the categories that the reality of the country demands for us to understand it are the result of the situation of that social

formation at that moment. Before, they literally were unthinkable. Thus, there is no essence of the nation, no essence to capture, but a historical reality to apprehend.

Another crucial point, the crux of the matter to which Father Vaz devotes the bulk of his argumentation is as follows: according to him, Vieira Pinto would be attached to a conception of consciousness as a reflection of materiality, whereas in a dialectical conception, which Vieira intends, reality can only be discovered by consciousness through the mediation of labor. Vaz, while on the one hand brings Vieira close to Lukács, from *History and Class Consciousness*, on the other hand distances him, insofar as the priest clarifies, the ISEB member seems to think of a theory of the dialectic of nature, which, in Vaz's understanding, would be antidialectical. Thus, the priest aligns himself with the Lukácsian tradition of Marxism, moves away from Hegel himself, Engels, and the Marxism of the Third International. It's his position. As pointed out, it seems to us that this Marxism greatly influenced Vieira, especially considering that one of its exponents in the country, the military man and historian Nelson Werneck Sodré, was his teaching companion at ISEB. We do not intend to delve into this point, either because we ourselves are not adherents to Marxism nor to many of Vieira's theses, or because we believe it is a debate that deserves more detailed consideration, thus escaping the limit of this text, which is already lengthy. Now, Vaz says that the world can only be understood as dialectical through the mediation of praxis. In the tradition to which Vaz belongs, this mediation is primarily labor. The priest's criticism is unwarranted in this sense, since Vieira places at the root of sociability the notion of manuality (*amanualidade*), that is, the fact that the world is manipulated, is taken by the hand. Furthermore, Vieira centralizes important aspects of his thought around the notion of labor. Therefore, the criticism of the clergyman seems unjustified to us.

Finally, the corollary of Vaz's criticism. The theory of Vieira Pinto, he tells us, would lead to a totalitarian state, due to its defense of nationality as the encompassing reality of consciousness. Implicitly, Father Vaz would prefer, in the good Marxist tradition, that this mediation between the self and the world be the class. For Vieira, however, according to his own etapism, the main contradiction of the country at that time was not the class contradiction, but rather that of the nation against anti-nation, namely imperialism, the domination of foreign forces over our means of production. Now, the ISEB member believed that development, the ideology of the working masses, should direct the development process, in alliance with endogenous capital, against imperialist forces. Once this was done, Brazilian society would develop, and only then would the contradiction between classes become paramount. In this way, it does not seem to us that Vieira thought or aimed for a fascist-type state. Costa and Martins (2019) provide

very convincing arguments to show how the ISEB member was a democrat; they do so by deconstructing Father Vaz's arguments, which is why we refer the reader to this article.

As for Arantes, even though we assume that his position stems from not having carefully analyzed the text, since he himself admits to not having read it completely, we will point out some errors and one correct observation. According to Arantes, echoing Vaz, there is no reference to Brazil in the text, which we have already addressed. Secondly, he very erroneously states that Vieira Pinto treats the concept of nation as substance, whereas Vieira never misses the opportunity to affirm national reality, which he considers a presupposition of existence in the current historical period, as a dynamic given; as such, possibly transient. Now, in Vieira's work, the nation composes the encompassing totality, it is the closest reality, which serves as mediation with the world, among others, but it does not acquire the character of substance. Arantes's other considerations follow the same line as Vaz's and indicate a hasty and incomplete reading. In *O fio da meada* (1996), he alludes to some aspects of Vieira Pinto's theory, maintaining, as always, a mocking, pedantic tone, which Vieira Pinto, concerned with the formation of critical consciousness, would not fail to point out as a trait of naive consciousness. Now, the issue is that Arantes does not consider Vieira Pinto a philosophical peer. In his flag-bearer mentality, anything other than USP philosophy is amateur, pre-scientific, disposable. The text is almost thirty years old and possibly the author has revised his positions, considering that currently, historical-philosophical research on national authors is beginning to be conducted at USP, research that is of quality, as evidenced by Canhada, albeit limited by the structural method, a hallmark of USP scholars.

Em *O fio da meada* (1996), Arantes suggests that Brazilian philosophy was on the verge of gaining autonomy around the 1960s, after following the scheme that Antônio Cândido used to analyze the formation of Brazilian literature, which Domingues also used in his *A filosofia no Brasil (The Philosophy in Brazil)*. According to these authors, before the mid-20th century, there were only episodes of philosophy in the country, not a system. Cruz Costa, whom Arantes does not sympathize with, referred to them as "filosofantes," clearly attempting to diminish them. Furthermore, they tell us that philosophy before Guérault's structuralism in Brazil would be guided by external impulses, meaning it did not have within itself the principle of its movement; it is the lack of serialization in ideas as pointed out by Romero, in the quotation highlighted at the beginning of this text. Now, this reading deeply marked the self-representation of philosophers in Brazil, in a movement that is only now beginning to be questioned. It is worth asking, for example, about continuity in French philosophy. In the last two centuries, it has been under the tremendous influence of thinkers, especially Germans, who determined its methods, themes, and practices. Victor Cousin is a minor presence among contemporary French philosophers, even though

he enjoyed great influence in his day. After the wave, it dissipated with the tides. Nevertheless, no one would claim that there is no continuity in French philosophy. By acting in this way, the adherents of Cândido's theory, heirs of Romero, behave like chauvinists, which they accuse the defenders of the philosophy that was made in Brazil before structuralism. Now, nobody is advocating for building a Great Wall of China around the country and starting to self-center like the navels of the world. On the contrary, it is simply about valuing the thinkers who were here before and treating them as individuals who did the best they could given the circumstances.

Vieira Pinto and the Present Day

Vieira Pinto is indeed an important figure to understand the historical context and the ideas that shaped Brazilian thought in the 20th century. His defense of developmentalism, with an emphasis on the need for a philosophy of development, reflected the challenges and aspirations of the time. His project was defeated not only by the repression of the civil-military coup of 1964 but also by its own internal limitations and the lack of support from the national bourgeoisie.

Today, we observe a resurgence of similar ideas in the Brazilian political scenario, with neo-developmentism gaining ground among certain progressive sectors. This current proposes a pact for the development of Brazil, but faces challenges similar to those of Vieira Pinto: the resistance of the Brazilian elite to commit to a national project and the preference for alliances with international capital.

The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016, for example, was marked by the lack of support from national elites for a democratic-popular government, opting instead to ally with sectors of international capital rather than support neo-developmental policies. This shows how Vieira Pinto's ideas remain relevant for understanding the challenges of development in Brazil and the tensions between internal and external interests.

This, in our view, shows how Vieira's theses are fundamentally flawed: there is no national bourgeoisie in Brazil willing to confront imperialism. On the two occasions it was called upon to act, it preferred to ally with international capital, to the detriment of the people. In both periods following the coups, whether military or parliamentary, what followed were extreme-right regimes, marked by rights cuts, persecutions, deaths, and the dismantling of the State. Thus, there is a major theoretical error in Vieira's thinking, as it considers the fictitious existence of such a national bourgeoisie and separates the class struggle from the struggle against imperialism. The reality is that if we need to develop in order to alleviate the people's suffering, this development must be the result of the people and only the people,

fighting both against imperialism and against the national elites who profit from the plunder of the country.

That doesn't mean that Vieira's so-called developmentalism or the defense of nationalism is futile. On the contrary, they are pressing needs. But they must be addressed within a different framework. In fact, however, Vieira Pinto's ideas were never put into practice, as he never tires of repeating that development is a function of mass consciousness. It is clear to us that by this he meant that such a process should be undertaken with the dominance of the masses, which has never happened in the country.

Final considerations

Gonçalo Armijo Palácios (2004) suggests that philosophy is like the mathematics of the humanities, thus agreeing with Vieira Pinto. Philosophy forges the logical categories that guide the other human sciences, holding the torch in the darkness of this jungle called the world. Under the baton of developmentalism, we develop; under the direction of neoliberal theses, we lose ground and achieve alarming levels in social issues and structural deficits. Since philosophy plays a special role in the development of a country, its contempt indicates contempt for the destinies of a nation. Philosophy is like a strategy (LUIZ, 2021): it considers possibilities, answers fundamental questions, provides logical categories, and offers existential indications. Just think, for example, of Fichte and his speeches to the German nation, where the old idealist shows himself to be very astute in defending this nationality and a future for the German people. Or of Machiavelli and his plea for the necessity of the unification of Italy, at a time when modernity was just awakening and nations with weak states were condemned to the role of colonies.

Similarly, Vieira Pinto considered that development and the struggle against both exogenous and endogenous forces that hinder it were contemporary concerns of his, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. The modernization of Brazilian society was on the agenda. With covert support from national sectors, and with the explicit assent and support of the US embassy, this modernization took place from the top down, in a conservative manner, generating the woes that still afflict us today, through the 1964 coup and the ensuing regime of terror. Recent Brazilian history seems to confirm Vieira Pinto's notions, and his work is being rediscovered, with new editions of his main works.

In *Consciência e realidade nacional*, he points out that naive consciousness is defined above all by not being able to pinpoint the origin of the categories it employs. Thus, although notions such as patriotism, fighting corruption, reducing the state, or combating communism have become common currency in

Brazil, especially in the mouths of sectors influenced by think tanks and personalities funded by shady interests, the "law-abiding citizen," as they like to be called, is unaware of what lies behind this situation and the tools they use to think about Brazil. They celebrate police violence against the poorest as if it were a World Cup title, but fail to see that brutal policing only serves those who advocate for a police state and arbitrary rule, and that they too are in the crosshairs of shotguns and baton strikes. They call themselves patriots, but detest everything Brazilian, such as its multiethnic people, its indigenous populations, its music, and its companies. They think that reading an astrologer's predictions constitutes authentic and enlightening philosophy, when in fact they are being sold a bill of goods, using a conceptual framework tailor-made for the United States and its setbacks, poorly suited to the delights of their homeland. They believe that the Brazilian state should shrink and lose space, when there is a shortage of doctors in health clinics, teachers in schools, and personnel trained to fulfill their roles in regulatory agencies. They confuse patriotism with wearing Brazilian national team jerseys and fall for a mythological congressman steeped in fake news and manipulation. In short, they are a portrait carved in marble of a sector of the Brazilian population that believes itself to be the cleverest and most politically astute, but in fact, they are manipulated and deceived, acting against their own interests.

This disregard for Brazil and its affairs, as mentioned, is manifested in the disdain for national intelligence and universities, precisely the sectors that think about Brazil's problems and offer solutions to them. They are the qualified ones, by definition, to do so, supported by the country as a whole and trained through techniques, rituals, and training to fulfill what they have been taught. The disdain suffered even among professional philosophers for Brazilian philosophy, or the belief that it is a contradiction in terms, since philosophy is universal, as is truth, so that neither has nationality, are strong indicators of this situation. With this, they forget an old Aristotelian lesson: being is said in many ways. Ultimately, concepts bear the mark of the time and place of their birth, so ignoring that there is a conflict-ridden society and that only with great effort will we succeed in creating a more solidary world with social justice, and that there are people whose interests do not align with these objectives, is an immeasurable naivety.

Let's remember, for example, the "drought industry" and how it served powerful interests to keep the Northeast of the country in a situation of poverty. Let's think about recent reports of slave labor and how the lack of oversight benefits sectors whose last concern is the development and well-being of the Brazilian people, especially the working masses. Let's pay attention to the fact that recently, Japan, ignoring any ethics or environmental and human concerns, dumped atomic waste from Fukushima into international waters. In short, it is enough that we are aware of the interests at stake to discover that even

in the heart of philosophy there are diverse interests and that words, as Lukács says in *The Destruction of Reason*, are not innocent.

The disdain for Brazil and for solutions that benefit the entire country and, with it, the other disadvantaged people of the world, goes hand in hand with the disregard for philosophy that deals with Brazilian issues and precisely because of this, is universal, since as Brazilians, we share an experience of colonialism and underdevelopment with other countries in the world. Ivan Domingues, in his excellent book *A Filosofia no Brasil* (Philosophy in Brazil), published in 2017, criticizes Vieira Pinto harshly for not having developed a Brazilian philosophy, since according to Domingues, there are no traces of Brazil in his writings. He overlooks the fact that Vieira Pinto was against the idea of Brazilian philosophy, considering it nonsense, because he did not believe that Brazil's development could be disconnected from the fate of other underdeveloped countries (ROUX, 1990). Brazil and the rest of Latin America, Africa, and Asia share a destiny, precisely that of having been colonies and still suffering from the problems resulting from it. Only a common effort can propel us from poverty to offering optimal living conditions to our peoples. As noted by Jorge Roux (1990), Vieira Pinto is a philosopher of the Third World.

The idea of a Brazilian philosophy is not a fantasy, even though Vieira Pinto, committed to it and its author, disagrees. Now, the recent criticisms that the canon has faced are welcome, given that entire groups have been disqualified as thinking subjects. There is a movement in the philosophical community that is moving towards rethinking the tradition and recovering authors who have been sidelined, in favor of constructing a more inclusive history of philosophy. Indeed, it is precisely because new sectors have entered the global arena, constituting themselves as historical subjects, that these philosophies, long considered non-existent, can now fight for a place in the sun.

The "vira-lata complex," the lack of education, sheer ignorance, and the ill intentions of so many need to be confronted in order to allow us to escape from anomie and barbarism. The world is too beautiful for people to have to rummage through garbage in search of their meager sustenance. Philosophy plays a prominent role in forging a new world, as it, since Kant, as Foucault argues, must question what has constituted us and marked us as unique in the myriad of the formed, within being itself. Disdain for Brazilian philosophy and the supposed pursuit of an empty universality, disconnected from the pressing issues of a world in crisis, work against the interests of those who act in this way. An inclusive, just world, based on respect for human and animal integrity and equality of conditions, is not just a dream that the human mind entertains. It is a goal that the best part of humanity has set for itself. Let us value ourselves, let us look at the world with pride, aware of our problems, but also conscious that our difficulties can be overcome and that valuing the disadvantaged is the way forward. This path involves

philosophy and an authentic and healthy nationalism, which knows how to integrate with other nations with respect and deference but does not bow to the whims and dead-end routes of a decaying world.

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