

Protagonism in Theater and Education: What Displacements of Sense Make an Author/Actor Emerge? / *Protagonismo teatral e protagonismo educacional: quais deslocamentos fazem surgir um a(u)tor?*

Cláudia Garcia Cavalcante*
José Luiz de Souza Santos**

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to promote a dialogue between the senses conveyed by the word “protagonism” in the theatrical and educational fields based on the studies of Bakhtin and the Circle. It analyzes utterances from a documentary study, considering the occurrences of emerging meanings of the word “protagonism” so as to establish possible points of contact with the Bakhtinian category of authorship. From an educational perspective, the investigation stems from the analysis of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular do Ensino Médio (BNCC-EM) [High School National Common Curricular Base] (2017) and the Political-Pedagogical Project of a federal university in dialogue with the meanings of protagonism in the theater. By retrieving the discursive threads of each sphere, the analysis allowed the understanding that this appropriation of “protagonism” by BNCC-EM assigns a new discursive dimension to it, decharacterizing its original enunciators and interlocutors and denying subsidies for the development of protagonism/authorship. In addition, it takes learners as passive subjects, who are a hostage to the document’s impositions that impact school actions.

KEYWORDS: Dialogical Analysis of Discourse; Authorship; Protagonism

RESUMO

Este artigo visa promover um diálogo entre os sentidos de “protagonismo” nos campos teatral e educacional, a partir dos estudos de Bakhtin e o Círculo. Para tanto, analisa enunciados presentes em uma pesquisa documental, considerando as ocorrências da palavra “protagonismo” entre os sentidos emergentes, a fim de estabelecer possíveis pontos de contato com a categoria bakhtiniana de autoria. Para a investigação, partimos do texto da Base Nacional Comum Curricular do Ensino Médio (2017) e do Projeto Político-Pedagógico de uma universidade federal em diálogo com os sentidos de protagonismo no teatro, em perspectiva educacional. Ao resgatar as cadeias discursivas de cada esfera em particular, a análise permitiu compreender que essa apropriação pela BNCC-EM assume uma nova dimensão discursiva, descaracterizando seus enunciadores e interlocutores originais e não oferecendo subsídios para a construção do protagonismo/autoria. Além disso, evoca um sujeito estudante passivo, refém das determinações do documento que impacta as ações da escola.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Análise dialógica do discurso; Autoria; Protagonismo

* Universidade Federal do Paraná - UFPR - Setor Litoral - Matinhos, Paraná, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7695-305X>; claudia.cavalcante@ufpr.br

** Universidade Federal do Paraná - UFPR - Setor Litoral - Matinhos, Paraná, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7626-2133>; jls.zek2302@gmail.com

Discourse in life is obviously not self-sufficient. It arises from the non-verbal real-life situation and maintains a very intimate connection with it. Moreover, discourse is directly filled with that life and may not be detached from it without losing its sense.

*Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov*¹

Initial Words

This study was motivated by our uneasiness over the constant use of the word “protagonism” when the Secondary education reform (Proposta de Emenda Constitucional [Proposed Constitutional Amendment] – PEC 241) was presented by the Brazilian Ministry of Education in 2016. At that moment, high school student occupations were made known. Apart from other problems, students were protesting against the proposal to freeze public spending with education and the removal of basic subjects from the curriculum, such as sociology and philosophy, in addition to physical education and arts.

The so called “Primavera secundarista” [High School Student Spring] occupied at least 1,000 public schools in 22 Brazilian states, including the Federal District. The state of Paraná stood out, as 850 out of 2,114 state schools and 14 universities were occupied. In regard to the legitimacy of the students’ acts and the government’s request to repossess the schools, the State Public Ministry issued a public note² in which Article 205 of the Federal Constitution was invoked to guarantee the right to freedom of thought in protests, in the form of occupations of public spaces, aiming to favor the exercise of citizenship.

If common sense considered occupation subjects “protagonists of history,” especially student Ana Júlia, who spoke in the Legislative Assembly of Paraná to defend the occupations, we understand that the sense of protagonism is aligned to the theatrical use assigned to those who are in charge of the *mise en scène*, that is, the

¹ VOLOSHINOV, V. Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry: Questions of Sociological Poetics. In: SHUKMAN, Ann (ed.) *Bakhtin School Papers*. Translated by Joe Andrew. Oxford: RTP Publications, 1983[1926]. pp.5-30.

² Newsletter n. 569/2016 - Occupation of schools by adolescent students. Available at: <http://www.comunicacao.mppr.mp.br/2016/10/17300/Oficio-Circular-no-569-2016-Ocupacao-das-escolas-por-alunos-adolescentes.html>. Access on: June 01, 2018.

author/actor. When looking for references to protagonism in theater, one takes into account that every sphere functions differently and has distinctive objectives. Thus, this study is situated on the border.

The second limit of this study, still internally related to the said student occupation, is established in the chronology of actions. Almost two years after these clashes between the students and the Federal Government, there is a text about to be approved that proposes substantial alterations to the Brazilian education system, regarding basic education and its stages. It proposes a National Common Curricular Base [BNCC] (BRAZIL, 2017a). In the presentation of the text that refers to secondary education (BNCC-EM), it establishes the goal of defining Brazilian education through curricular criteria to be followed in the entire Brazilian territory. In its defense, it argues that it was developed with an enormous participation of the Brazilian society and “it is organized in a completely articulated and coherent whole based on learning rights, expressed in ten general competences [...]” (BRAZIL, 2017b, p.5).³ The text describes the State goals and the laws that give BNCC its underpinnings, with an integral education and the development of its students, without advancing in the characterization of the reform’s target public, viz., children, adolescents, young people and adults, to which this base refers.

Motivated by the persistence of the High School National Common Curricular Base – BNCC-EM’s reference to protagonism and authorship as synonymous and interchangeable concepts, our interest is to know the subject that emerges from this discourse as we are convinced that the text intrinsically has data and discursive elements that result from the contact with other texts and discourses. More than this, based on the Bakhtinian theory related to the plane of enunciative positions, we bring the concept of authorship to our analysis. From this assumption, our central object is the senses of the word “protagonism,” originated in the theatrical sphere and displaced to texts pertaining to the educational sphere. Therewith, we focus on the academic context, specifically the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the Coastal Campus of Federal University of Paraná and the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM), which is

³ In the original: “organizada em um todo articulado e coerente fundado em direitos de aprendizagem, expressos em dez competências gerais [...]”

still under analysis,⁴ seeking to understand the relation and constitution of “protagonism in theater and education.”

Considering the epigraph that opens this section, from the text produced in 1926, as our *motto* (VOLOSHINOV, 1983),⁵ we are interested in the extraverbal situation that assigns judgements and values to the word as an event of life. Therefore, through discourse from the theatrical and educational spheres, this study aims to discuss the concept and understandings of authorship, enunciative position and discursive position regarding the word, such as it presents itself as a means of actualizing language through the conceptions of texts and discourses that produce it.

This study aims to analyze the occurrences of the word in different utterances. As a documental inquiry, it proposes a dialogue between emergent senses in order to establish possible points of contact with the Bakhtinian category of authorship.

Aiming at presenting a theoretical-methodological path that leads to the achievement of our objectives, this paper is divided into four sections followed by final remarks. After we present the dialogical perspective of language, the theoretical basis of this study, we describe and discuss the social context in which the Secondary education reform occurred, being materialized in this text by the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). It is worth situating the senses of protagonism in the theatrical sphere so as to propose a reading of protagonism/authorship in action outside that sphere, but under its influence. We do so by presenting the political pedagogical thinking of a Brazilian federal university.

1 Theoretical-Methodological Bases

This study comprises different areas of knowledge around the senses of a word and aims to retrieve the discursive chains of each individual sphere to allow the understanding that an appropriation of senses is a discursive entity in itself. Nevertheless, these spheres are not to be confused with the discursive chains of the areas in which they individually are. In this sense, we understand that “protagonism” as

⁴ The more recent version of BNCC referring to Secondary Education was sent to the National Council of Education (CNE) on April 3, 2018, almost a year after the Children and Basic Education BNCC was issued and one year and a half after MEC’s decision to reform Secondary Education. CNE is responsible for defining the schedule for the analysis, discussion, and voting of the document.

⁵ For reference, see footnote 1.

a construct is the same in both spheres, but acquires a new discursive dimension and decharacterizes its first enunciators and interlocutors.

In this theoretical-methodological perspective, the concept of ‘word’ is supported in many debates found in the writings of Bakhtin and the Circle (Medvedev; Vološinov) about the word in discourse. Thus, we do not refer to “protagonism” as a lexical item pertaining to the abstract system of the Portuguese language, but to a term concretely situated in a social universe of speakers who use that word in a continuous interaction. The dialogical perspective of discourse understands the word as a concept of a double-voiced orientation; that is, it is analyzed by taking into account its linguistic materiality so it is inserted in the living discourse produced in real and tense interaction with the environment from which it emerges and to which it is addressed.

In this social context, the word acquires value; it has an axiological dimension which constitutes it, revealing the axiological position of the subject that is situated among a huge amount of values.

Therefore, there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. *Meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex* (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.102; author’s emphasis).⁶

Therefore, coming from someone and addressed to the other, the word is a responsive act, oriented by/towards a cultural context that is saturated with senses. It is not restricted to the word-form, reduced to an axiologically void materiality. The word, as a cultural object, bears collective memory. It is this dynamic interaction that interests us when we propose a study that seeks the appropriation of a theoretical construct from theater by education.

We conceive of the Bakhtinian theory as the possibility to participate in this relationship. It emerges not from the counterpoint between the two spheres, but in the constitution of both, in the conceptualization of the word at hand and in the utterances

⁶ VOLOŠINOV, V. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Landislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973. [1929]

each sphere offers. The study is based on the assumption that a living dialogue between the spheres exists. It poses the following research question: if the word “protagonism” in education is a word-reply to the word “protagonism” in theater, what does the latter have that provoked the reply, anticipated it and offered elements to construct the reply based on it? (BAKHTIN, 1981).⁷

A theatrical text or an educational text is a product of ideological creation, whose senses are produced in objects and material actions. They convey beliefs and particular and/or collective views because they are realized in words that organize the world (BAKHTIN/MEDVEDEV, 1978).⁸ It is in this sense that signs are ideological, because the word assumes an evaluative position towards its object through this objective material; in other words, the word has an axiological dimension that constitutes it as it becomes a part of the social and material reality.

Whatever a word’s meaning, it establishes a relationship between individuals of a more or less wide social environment, a relationship which is objectively expressed in the combined reactions of people: reactions in words, gestures, acts, organizations, and so on (BAKHTIN/MEDVEDEV, 1978, p.8).⁹

Protagonism, then, does not become an object of this research because of its linguistic and formal value, although it materially constitutes it. It is so because the sense of “protagonism” results from the relations established in the physical and social environments in which it circulates. It is in the phenomenon of communication, of exchanges among socially organized beings, that senses are produced, reflecting and refracting existence itself.

There is no inherent meaning outside the material; only the limited word-form restricted to the material is axiologically null (BAKHTIN, 1990).¹⁰ Then, when we consider the occurrences of the nominal syntagma “protagonism and authorship” in the

⁷ BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. BAKHTIN. Translation by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.259-422.

⁸ BAKHTIN, M./MEDVEDEV, P. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: a Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Trans. A. J. Wehrle. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. [1928]

⁹ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹⁰ BAKHTIN, M. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translation and notes by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp.4-256.

High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM), we relate it to the ideological sign constituent of utterances, i.e., the responsive acts in social contexts that are charged with value and senses, representing a position toward the educational context. For a historically-, culturally- and socially-anchored view of language, dialogism is an essential concept to define language practices connected to specific and concrete activities of effective communication produced by and among subjects and discourses involved therein.

Adopting this concept of dialogism, from the Bakhtinian perspective, as a constitutive aspect of the processes that involve language, as our theoretical-methodological basis, we are interested in understanding the dialogical relations that are established, in the movement from discourses of theater to education-theater, in the proposal of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) and in a university's Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP), observing the concepts of protagonism/authorship that traverse them, such as they are presented in the subsequent sections of this text.

Thus, we intend to establish a relationship between the origins of the word “protagonism” in the theatrical sphere as an action modality of those occupying a main role in a particular event and its use by the educational sphere as a “subject of his own learning,” broadening thereby its sense to that of the concept of authorship.

2 Protagonism in Theater

Due to the complexity of the contemporary theatrical phenomena, the actor, in order to be a creator, will need to know how to compose. But to be able to compose, he will have to be capable not only of doing it, but *of intending to do it.*

*Matteo Bonfitto*¹¹

Aiming to understand the senses of “protagonism” in the High School National Common Curricular Base – BNCC-EM (BRAZIL, 2017b) and the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná (2008), we

¹¹ In the original: “Diante da complexidade dos fenômenos teatrais contemporâneos, o ator, a fim de ser criador, precisará saber compor. Mas para poder compor, ele deverá ser capaz não só de fazer, mas de pensar o fazer.”

focus on the theatrical sphere. In this sense, we notice that historically it proposes the notion of protagonism through the representational construction of a character, a text, a context or a theatrical acting. Piqué (1998) summarizes this in his writings on the Greek tragedy and makes it clear that the protagonist is the first actor or the one who first faces the public or his own representation from a hierarchical perspective on the theatrical stage. Greek tragedy, which for a time approached, in lyric form, the representations and stagings of the myth of Dionysus, the god of wine, began to dramatize the stories and events of the life of kings and heroes. This evolution led Aeschylus, the Greek playwright and admittedly the father of tragedy, to introduce another character who dialogued with the protagonist, the deuteragonist (VILELA, 2002).

The theatrical sphere thinks protagonism based on the actor who positions himself in front of the stage. He has responsibility, acting experience and focus, an immediate role of visibility, and influence both in acts and political essence. He is the one who presents himself in a responsive way through discourse. However, this perspective about theatrical dialogue reveals the protagonist as the one who is always in contact with the other subject, the other character, the audience, who are also part and parcel of the ongoing dialogue that goes toward this actor, as if in a circular theatrical space in the typical Italian style, and shows, by means of the concept of protagonism, the actual performance to the community (the audience).

The scene represents authority, power. It speaks, fictitiously, in its name. And the actor on stage is already distinguished from the audience, such as power is distinct in the city. Clearly, the act of performance and the circular arrangement that organizes it integrate this authority and its discourse as a part of the gathered community, situating it as a fragment – detached – from its circle and not as an irruption that comes from the outside, a celestial incident, or a divine graft (GUÉNOUN, 2003, p.33).¹²

Thus, to think the notion of protagonism from the perspective of theater is to go beyond the very etymology of the word: it directs our view to the possibilities of the subject's acting and appearance, of facing recurrent issues in everyday education, which

¹² In the original: “A cena figura a autoridade, o poder. Ela fala, ficticiamente, em seu nome. E o ator que está no palco já se distingue da plateia, como o poder se distingue na cidade. Simplesmente, o ato de representação, e a disposição circular que o organiza, integra esta autoridade e seu discurso como uma parte da comunidade reunida, colocando-a como um fragmento – destacado – de seu círculo e não como uma irrupção externa, incidente celeste ou enxerto divino”.

are consequently constituted in dialogical relations between this subject and the character that embraces him through his authorship. Bakhtin offers a possible understanding of protagonism/ authorship:

[...] the author intonates every particular and every trait of his hero, every event of his life, every action he performs, all his thoughts and feelings, just as in life, too, we react valuationally to every self-manifestation on the part of those around us (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.4).¹³

A question is thus posed: how should we think the relation of being an actor and an author and make the education being rethink his self and his role as a protagonist? Answering it in a somewhat challenging way, we understand that this may happen by means of the way he acts towards the relations provided by art (which, in this perspective, is related to the theatrical sphere) and daily life. The act of rethinking the self, which entails seeking for ways of acting, brings the actor a protagonist action, axiologically constituted in the relation with the other.

The actor, who possesses and continuously incarnates a technical apparatus, becomes one with himself. According to the way he prepares for the scene, he is undeniably capable of defining a number of physical actions that at every moment lead him to come into contact with the other possible actors- works that surround him and to establish a close or somewhat close contact with the public with whom he intends to communicate. He can undoubtedly make himself known and communicate in different ways (AZEVEDO, 2002, p.243).¹⁴

The theatrical sphere, which is actively human, is also a place to understand the body as an object of communication and a participant. Therefore, we understand that the protagonism related to theater goes beyond the effective distinct position of a character. Protagonism occupies a political, social, cultural and artistic space, which occurs only

¹³ For reference, see footnote 10.

¹⁴ In the original: “O ator, detentor de um aparato técnico que, mais e mais, se encarna nele mesmo, tornando-se como que um com ele mesmo, é capaz, com certeza, de estabelecer, conforme seu jeito próprio de preparar-se para a cena, uma partitura de ações físicas que o conduz, instante a instante, em direção ao contato com as outras obras-atores circundantes, se os há, e ao contato de maior ou menor proximidade com o público com o qual pretende comunicar-se, sendo que é certo que de vários modos pode dar-se a conhecer e comunicar-se.”

from the perspective of the other, which, in turn, constitutes experiences in this relation and evidences a totality of meanings through context.

Every time a subject is presented through his theatricality, which is disclosed to the public, a process of his resignification regarding the other occurs. Acting, placing the self in the theatrical scene as a character that was imagined by an author, comes to life in a dialogically evidenced context.

Staging is the art of placing verbal, textual language before the eyes. Theater is loyal to its essence in so far as it sets text anteriority, which is distinct from the act of representation and whose representation is the passage to the visible. The theatrical, being properly this coming to be (staging, putting on stage), cannot discard the first, previous text, distinct from it and endowed with an autonomous existence (GUÉNOUN, 2003, p.54).¹⁵

The act of becoming manifest through the act of staging, through theatricality, which is the act and the effect of bringing the text to the visible, of making one visible and occupying a place, presents a political dimension that the theatrical sphere may provide. It is distinct from the educational sphere and shows, in relation to this notion, a protagonism that may be re-signified. From the Bakhtinian perspective, this resignification is characterized as an essential element that inscribes, through utterances and on the borders of the concept of text, points of view and, in the dialogical relations, authorship in this interdependence (the political dimension).

In the attempt to present the nature of the word “protagonism” and, based on it, the notion of protagonist, we also seek to understand a body that is in school, preparing himself to enter the university. However, it is important to emphasize that the anchorage of our study in the Bakhtinian perspective goes well beyond the analysis of this mutual constitution between subjects. The perceptible conceptualization of the subject, his identity, and the fact this identity cannot be fixed, show that the idea of a unique identity has no ground, since identity is always mediated by otherness in the discursive relation, in the enunciative interpretation and in the processes of constitution of this protagonist/subject who acts.

¹⁵ In the original: “O pôr/em/cena é a arte de colocar diante dos olhos a linguagem, o verbal, o textual. O teatro só é fiel a sua essência na medida em que coloca a anterioridade de um texto, distinto do ato da representação e cuja representação é a passagem ao visível. O teatral, sendo propriamente esta vinda (encenação, o pôr em cena), não pode dispensar o texto primeiro, anterior, distinto dele e dotado de uma existência autônoma.”

Since discourse is always language *in actu* and the subject, when speaking, is in action, the protagonism that embraces him is interpreted through his body language. After all, “language makes life of discourse possible, and, at the same time, is influenced by it (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.117).¹⁶ Therefore, in order to analyze the notions of protagonism and, thereby, the notion of protagonist/author and the senses produced by theater discourse, it is necessary to consider the text in its comprehensive sense and outside a uniquely verbal centrality of discourse. Gonçalves (2014, p.272) explains:

Theatrical discourse, if considered from a dialogical perspective, acquires a dimension that necessarily encompasses every text related to theater. The show loses its role of main actor and allows other discursivities; in other words, it embraces situations in which the show is not the materialized culmination of a process. This means that the process itself (classes, trainings, tests, diaries, protocols) has textualities worth analyzing. Likewise, the *corpus* of the theater discourse may incorporate materialities from theatrical experiences that are not confined to the space of the show: conversations with the audience, specialized critiques, pre- and postproduction stages, reports, posters, programs, projects, and any other record of these experiences.¹⁷

This way, we dare say that there are elements that allow thinking theater discourse outside the field of theater; in other words, theater discourse is not in theater alone, but in other fields that are not part of this sphere. To think protagonism from this perspective is to think theater discourse outside the theater: it is to use theater discourse to analyze something not related to theater, except for the notion of protagonist/author. This subject allows us to understand the notion of protagonism as an utterance that

is also joined to history through the unique act of its realization, becoming a historical phenomenon. For it is the given meaning which becomes the object of discussion in the here and now, and the fact that

¹⁶ In Portuguese: “linguagem torna possível a vida discursiva e, por outro lado, ela mesma é influenciada por ela.”

¹⁷ In the original: O discurso teatral, se pensado por uma perspectiva dialógica, ganha uma dimensão que abriga, necessariamente, todo e qualquer texto relacionado ao teatro. O espetáculo perde seu lugar de ator principal, dando lugar a outras discursividades, ou seja, assumindo, também, aquelas situações nas quais o espetáculo não seja o fim concretizado de um processo. Isso significa que o próprio processo (aulas, treinamentos, ensaios, diários de anotação, protocolos) contém textualidades merecedoras de análise. Da mesma forma, podem integrar o corpus do discurso teatral, aquelas materialidades provenientes de experiências teatrais que extrapolam o espaço do espetáculo: conversas com o público, críticas especializadas, etapas de pré e pós-produção, relatórios, cartazes, programas, projetos, e quaisquer outras formas de registro dessas experiências.”

this topic is discussed in a certain way and enters the concrete purview of the speakers is completely determined by the aggregate sociohistorical conditions and the concrete situation of the given individual utterance (BAKHTIN/ MEDVEDEV, 1978, p.120).¹⁸

Thus, if we do not want to acquiesce to common sense, we must re-signify the word *protagonism* based on the perspective of another field. Theater discourse leaves the field of theater in order to consider another field of human communication and expression, that is, the field of education. Therefore, we pose the following question: what does it mean to be a protagonist in education? Our answer: to be a protagonist is to be an actor/author at the unique and unrepeatable moment of the relations developed in the educational sphere. In the following sections, based on Bakhtinian studies, we will discuss protagonism in the educational sphere and how it is mentioned in the documents here analyzed.

3 National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) and Protagonism

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) is a normative document addressed directly to the three stages of basic education in Brazil, viz., Early childhood education, Primary education and Secondary Education, and the different modalities, namely, Special Education, Youth and Adult Education, Rural Education, Education for Indigenous Peoples, Quilombo¹⁹ School Education, and Distance Education. The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) should be in force in 2019 or, at most, in the beginning of 2020 (BRAZIL, 2017). It will be compulsorily used to design and revise school curricula of the educational system in general and of public and private schools in particular, whether they are federal, state, or municipal. As to the three stages of basic education, the instrument of Secondary education, the *High School National Common Curricular Base* (BNCC-EM), is still to be approved by the National Council of Education (CNE). When approved, it will be incorporated into the normative document addressed to Early childhood education and Primary education (BRAZIL, 2017b).

¹⁸ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹⁹ TN. According to the English Oxford Living Dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>), quilombo, or kilombo, is, in Brazil, “a remote settlement originally founded as a refuge by fugitive slaves or their descendants.”

The document defines the subjects to be learned and regulates the essential skills to be developed by children, young people and adults during school life so that this national standard contributes to an “[...] integral human development and the construction of a just, democratic and inclusive society” (BRAZIL, 2017b, p.25).²⁰ High school education is centered around four areas of knowledge: Languages and their Technologies, Mathematics and its Technologies, Sciences of Nature and their Technologies, and Applied Human and Social Studies. For each area, there are specific competences that will also regulate the construction of educational paths. This stage of education aims to render flexible students’ interests related to learning enhancement and professional technical training (BRAZIL, 2017b).

As it is a process predominantly generated and conducted by the Ministry of Education (MEC), not surprisingly the development process of the document has been an object of controversies and has led to heated debates, especially at public universities.²¹ They have questioned that the process was not transparent and that society did not have a say²² in the choices of the objects of learning that were made and the legal bases of the undertaking, in spite of the alleged *great contribution* of society (organizations, entities, associations, and education specialists).

In this regard, Geraldi (2015) remembers that the neoliberal logic aims at making profits. However, quantifying is not so important in teaching, and productivity in education is measured by wide-scale evaluations that show the market where the best professionals are trained. In the same logic, an abundance of official documents establish objectives and goals that address the educational system by decree, imposing a

²⁰ In the original: “[...] formação humana integral e para a construção de uma sociedade justa, democrática e inclusiva.”

²¹ As an example, see the discussion “Teachers’ Education: to whom does the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) interest?” It was part of the Cycle of Debates titled “University and Teacher Education Policies in Times of Coup” by GTPE-ADUSP. It took place in the auditorium of the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Human Sciences (FFLCH) of the University of São Paulo, SP, on April 23, 2018. Available at: <http://youtu.be/QE4BCfUkYtI>. Access on: May 30 2018.

²² The document was approved in December of 2017 by the National Council of Education (CNE) after eight months of analysis. According to three counselors who were opposed to the text, it was a verticalized process regulated by MEC. Still regarding the effective (non) participation of society during development process of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), we suggest the reading of the text *Participação e participacionismo na construção da Base Nacional Comum Curricular [Participation and Participationism in the Construction of the National Common Curricular Base]* by Fernando Cássio. The researcher analyzes the microdata of the contributions of individual participant categories (“individuals,” “organizations” and “schools”) in public consultations carried out between 2015 and 2016. Available at: <http://www.nexojournal.com.br/test/2017/Participação-e-participacionismo-na-construção-da-Base-Nacional-Comum-Curricular>. Access on: June 01, 2018.

“verticalized [implementation] as an imposition and not as an option chosen by the actual education agents” (GERALDI, 2015, p.383).²³

Along these lines, Normative Resolution CNE/CP No. 2, issued on December 22, 2017 (BRAZIL, 2017c), highlights the organic and progressive process of regulating basic education curricula, broadening its scope to include the production of teaching materials, wide-scale evaluations and teachers’ training.

Article 17. With a view to the valorization of teachers and their first and continued training, the norms, curriculum of courses and programs intended to them must comply with BNCC, according to LDB Article 61 (8), and be implemented in a period of two years, starting from the publication of BNCC, in accordance with Article 11 of Law No. 13.415/2017.

(1) Courses and programs designed to teachers’ continued education may start from the date of BNCC’s publication.

(2) For the compliance of teaching with BNCC, MEC must provide technological instruments which favor a relevant training, in periods of up to 1 (one) year, to be developed in collaboration with Brazil’s teaching systems (BRAZIL, 2017c, p.11).²⁴

In this sense, it is natural that agents involved in Pedagogy and Teacher Education Programs are worried about a deliberate attack to the autonomy of the universities, which have been consolidating their practices in the definition of the profile of the professionals they train and in the construction of the directions of this trajectory that culminate in the certification of teachers who are able to work in public and private schools. When we take into account the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM), which claims that its propositions are based on ethical, aesthetic and political principles, our interest is to know how the student-subject is represented in the document. The steps to acquire this knowledge include research, analysis and interpretation of this subject who, after completing basic school, will be in a position to continue with his education in college and do professional work.

²³ In the original: “verticalizada do novo como exigência e não como opção abraçada pelos verdadeiros agentes educativos”.

²⁴ In the original: “Art. 17. Na perspectiva de valorização do professor e da sua formação inicial e continuada, as normas, os currículos dos cursos e programas a eles destinados devem adequar-se à BNCC, nos termos do §8o do Art. 61 da LDB, devendo ser implementados no prazo de dois anos, contados da publicação da BNCC, de acordo com Art. 11 da Lei no 13.415/2017. § 1o A adequação dos cursos e programas destinados à formação continuada de professores pode ter início a partir da publicação da BNCC. § 2o Para a adequação da ação docente à BNCC, o MEC deve proporcionar ferramentas tecnológicas que propiciem a formação pertinente, no prazo de até 1 (um) ano, a ser desenvolvida em colaboração com os sistemas de ensino.”

Because we need to establish a methodological path, and in consonance with the discussion we present further on (the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná), we decided to take into account the occurrences in the text that explore the notion of student protagonism proposed by the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM), a document available for public consultation at the MEC website. There are fifteen occurrences of “protagonism” in the document and, in five, we find the nominal syntagma “protagonism and authorship.” It is found in the first use of the word in the text. We decided to restrict the analysis to the nominal syntagma, because it concerns exclusively language practices found in the different spheres of social communication. The uniformization of teaching in a country characterized by social, cultural, regional and economical diversities that affect and construct heterogeneous languages is presented as the foundations of teaching and learning.

Understanding, using and creating digital technologies of information and communication in a critical, meaningful, reflexive and ethical way, in several social practices, which includes the school, allows communicating, accessing and disseminating information, producing knowledge, solving problems and practicing *protagonism and authorship* in both personal and collective life (BRAZIL, 2017, p.9, our emphasis).²⁵

In the beginning of the quotation, we do not find the subject of the verbs understand, use and create. The verbs related to thinking and acting are mixed, producing a mechanical nature to the stages of knowledge development. When emphatically relating students’ skills with technological tools, the National Common Curricular Base excludes the context of a great number of public schools in which the access to computers is limited due to the lack of technicians, repairs, *wi-fi*, among many other limitations.

In the text, the exercise of protagonism and authorship is mixed with the development of knowledge and, especially, with problem solving activities. They seem to be desirable characteristics for a valued professional in the market; however, where is the Ethics and Citizen Education during the school years?

²⁵ In the original: “Compreender, utilizar e criar tecnologias digitais de informação e comunicação de forma crítica, significativa, reflexiva e ética nas diversas práticas sociais (incluindo as escolares) para se comunicar, acessar e disseminar informações, produzir conhecimentos, resolver problemas e exercer protagonismo e autoria na vida pessoal e coletiva.”

The next passage mentions students' autonomy in connection with the area Languages and its Technologies, adopting a conception of language as a way to act in and interact with the world. Must we understand that the actions of 'identifying,' 'criticizing,' 'appreciating,' 'participating' and 'using' culminate in a subject that is both protagonist and author of his own actions? Interlocutors who are active in real life are not found. The text seems to present practices that not necessarily constitute a protagonist-subject.

In Secondary education, the focus of the area of Languages and its Technologies is the enhancement of autonomy, of *protagonism and authorship* in the practice of different languages; in the identification and criticism to the diverse uses of languages, elucidating their power to establish relations; in the appreciation of and participation in several artistic and cultural manifestations, and in the creative use of the various media. (BRAZIL, 2017th, p.470, our emphasis).

To use different languages (artistic, physical, and verbal) so as to exercise, with autonomy and collaboration, *protagonism and authorship* in life, both personal and collective, in a critical, creative, ethic and supportive way, defending points of view that respect the other and promote Human Rights, the socioenvironmental conscience and responsible consumption in the local, regional and global contexts (BRAZIL, 2017th, pp.481-485, our emphasis).²⁶

According to our reading of the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM), the student is placed in a perspective of protagonism that is different from the theater perspective we have already discussed. In the document, the student's responsibility is reduced to solving operational problems, carrying out competence-tasks, and obeying norms. The occurrences in the text do not provide opportunities for a progression in learning; besides, they lose focus when they do not relate the protagonist-individual to the political possibility of reflection. It is not possible to identify a concept of protagonism throughout BNCC-EM. One has the impression that the protagonism/authorship syntagma appears randomly, being interchangeable by any other. The term is not used in articulation and progression, which would allow the

²⁶ In the original: "No Ensino Médio, o foco da área de Linguagens e suas Tecnologias está na ampliação da autonomia, do protagonismo e da autoria nas práticas de diferentes linguagens; na identificação e na crítica aos diferentes usos das linguagens, explicitando seu poder no estabelecimento de relações; na apreciação e na participação em diversas manifestações artísticas e culturais e no uso criativo das diversas mídias. / Utilizar diferentes linguagens (artísticas, corporais e verbais) para exercer, com autonomia e colaboração, protagonismo e autoria na vida pessoal e coletiva, de forma crítica, criativa, ética e solidária, defendendo pontos de vista que respeitem o outro e promovam os Direitos Humanos, a consciência socioambiental e o consumo responsável, em âmbito local, regional e global."

perception of learning and knowledge development; it is simply there, recurrently, as if it had been used incorrectly or were a copy, or common sense's attempt to justify a text that was produced outside of what constitutes the educational sphere, its subjects and their relations, with senses deviating from what the term protagonism/authorship may effectively comprise. Thus, through the educational sphere, it is possible for us to understand the senses of the term. This considered, the next section presents and discusses a higher education proposition so we can do a hypothetical exercise through which we imagine how this term constitutes an effective education proposal.

4 Protagonism at the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná: A Possible Protagonism?

To understand that the object of human studies is the “social (public) man, who speaks and expresses himself through other means” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.113),²⁷ to conceptually observe protagonism in the education field, to observe the subject who takes the path of Secondary Education and may thereafter attend university is also to think about his process of recognizing the self in relation to the other and how the educational sphere will affect this subject and be affected by him.

In the Bakhtinian thought, we must only conceive of man as the object of research of the human sciences. A researcher is interested not only in meanings, but in the multiple senses a situation of enunciation may produce. This man, in his interactions, among utterances, who is social, constituted in the relations with other men, occupies a central place of discussion. Therefore, to study man is to study the dynamism of enunciation (GONÇALVES, 2016, p.4).²⁸

At this point, as we analyze the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná, we seek to understand (i) the perspective in which the word “protagonism” is used in the text, (ii) how a possible

²⁷ BAKHTIN, M. M. The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis. In: BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee; edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, pp.103-133.

²⁸ In the original: “No pensamento bakhtiniano, só se pode conceber como objeto de pesquisa das ciências humanas o próprio homem, e mais do que o significado, são os múltiplos sentidos de uma situação de enunciação que interessam ao pesquisador. É o homem, nas suas interações, entre enunciados, social, constituído nas relações com o outro, que ganha lugar central de discussão. Por isso, estudar o homem, é estudar o dinamismo da enunciação.”

opening to the actualization of what is understood by this word occurs, and (iii) how it is pedagogically directed to its practical actualization. In this sense, we identify something that probably hints at what the text presents as having protagonism.

The Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) proposes, in the theoretical/methodological guidelines for the *Campus*, concrete experiences to be developed in three spheres, namely, Theoretical and Practical Bases, Cultural and Humanistic Interactions, and Learning Projects. These spheres of pedagogic development refer to a repository of life and academic experiences, show a possible recognition of Being, of the personal elements of each subject, and realize an enunciative process that is inexhaustibly full of meaning. Therefore, this protagonism that raises doubts, confuses and opens precedents for the understanding of school and schooled subjects is filled with voices of other subjects who obviously have been to school. It then takes us to the university sphere as we seek to understand the notion of protagonism and its real actualization.

This way, in the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) we identify the following phases: To Know and to Understand, to Understand and to Propose, to Propose and to Act. They articulate a processual approach to education and engender what would be considered the achievement of protagonism, due to the social responsibility that university students and, subsequently, professionals, need to have. These phases are related to the aforementioned spheres and guide students in their academic practices and experiences.

The first stage refers to the presupposition that the first contact students have with the university and, as a consequence, their experiences at the *Campus* and its ancillary spaces, should lead to a process of problem recognition through the pedagogic spheres and the peculiarities of each program as well as to an understanding of what one identifies in this process, so as to propose possible solutions. In the second, based on students' understanding and description of their experiences in the lived reality, they propose actions, based on theory, their studies, research, experiences and practices, that will help them find a possible resolution.

Later on, subjects set out for the implementation of actions planned during the three stages. Although we find only two occurrences of the word "protagonism" in the text, we understand that it implies, through these directions, contexts that consolidate

the *campus* as an institution that implements and considers the constitution of a protagonist-subject as really possible. It supports this protagonism by the organization of the curriculum - contrary to the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which has fifteen occurrences and does not deepen the concept of protagonism and protagonist/author.

The quotation below refers to the first time protagonism is found in the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP). It mentions the “collective action and the protagonist action,” which takes us to the third phase of the education process of the Coastal Campus. In other words, through their individual action in the collective, subjects become the protagonists of what they learn and apprehend in their academic experiences and daily life.

Based on this understanding, [the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná] is present in the regional reality of the coast of Paraná and Vale do Ribeira in order to develop a project with these communities whose presupposition is the collective action and the action of *protagonism* of their subjects, a project that integrates all levels of public education, from early childhood education to graduate studies (PPP, 2008, p.10, our emphasis).²⁹

Still according to this quotation, the subjects’ protagonism is obviously connected with the regional reality of the coast of Paraná, from a communitarian perspective. Thus, similar to the theatrical sphere, protagonism rests on the interdependence among subjects, dialogically bringing the constitution of a protagonist-Being in the relations with others. We also notice that, in relation to protagonism, the excerpt is directed towards the university sphere. These directions affect all levels: from early childhood education to graduate studies, enunciating a notion of protagonism that may be developed in the educational sphere by any subject of any age.

The education process aims at an integral development, which involves cognitive, affective and social aspects, from an emancipatory

²⁹ In the original: “Nossa compreensão insere-se a realidade regional do litoral paranaense e Vale do Ribeira, para desenvolver, juntamente com essas comunidades, um projeto que tem como pressuposto a ação coletiva e a ação de protagonismo de seus sujeitos, que integre a educação pública em todos os seus níveis, desde a educação infantil até a pós-graduação.”

perspective of *protagonism* of its subjects and their communities (PPP, 2008, p.11, our emphasis).³⁰

This is the second time the word is mentioned, proposing protagonism as an alternative of emancipation of the subject in his contact with the education process of the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná. Emancipation is an antonym of submission, and thus we understand that, from the PPP perspective, it is the possibility for the emergence of a protagonist/author as a subject who takes responsibility for his own affective, social and cognitive development. He is the author of his own actions, who identifies, criticizes, appreciates, and participates actively in the relations that encompass him.

Some Remarks

From the beginning, this study aimed to map the senses of protagonism from the theatrical sphere to the educational sphere based on two texts: the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM) and the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the Coastal Campus of the Federal University of Paraná. In this sense, we understand that, despite its apparent similarity in both spheres, “protagonism,” as a construct, is assigned a new discursive dimension. The notion of protagonism from the perspective of theater may be configured as a possibility of a non-mechanical use of the word, recurrent in the documents and in its daily use. Thus, it becomes necessary, as we expand the possibilities of its meaning, to consider how theater discourse may contribute to a reflection in the education field.

The normative document shows, from the context of its production, circulation and reception, that high school students are being prepared to the labor market. “And the school is regarded as a production unit that must be efficiently managed so as to present the required results (profits and dividends in the form of numerical indexes obtained in evaluation processes)” (GERALDI, 2015, p.395).³¹ Publicity around the High School National Common Curricular Base (BNCC-EM) insists on reinforcing that

³⁰ In the original: “A intenção do processo educativo é o desenvolvimento integral, não apenas no aspecto cognitivo, mas também nos aspectos afetivos e sociais, em uma perspectiva emancipatória e de protagonismo de seus sujeitos e de suas coletividades.”

³¹ In the original: “E pensa-se a escola como uma unidade de produção que deve ser gerida com eficiência para apresentar os resultados requeridos (os lucros e dividendos na forma de índices numéricos obtidos nos processos avaliativos)”.

the document “is based on ethical, political and aesthetic principles that aim at the integral human development and the construction of a just, democratic and inclusive society” (BRAZIL, 2017b, p.7).³²

This document, as our reading shows, reveals a market-oriented thinking and offers students a pre-defined and mechanical curriculum, thus disregarding their surroundings and possibilities. A national education occurs when subjects are protagonists of an education that is not homogenizing in its practices and teaching contents. An intendedly democratic education, which highly values the autonomy of its actors/authors, must be achieved through the adoption of assumptions that promote participative freedom and a curriculum that is created in a unique space of diversity, a space which, by its turn, is constituted by the subjects who are in that space. From this perspective, basic and higher education are interdependent, but the possible protagonism in both spheres will only constitute a subject as an actor/author of his own actions when democratic public policies that aim effectively at collective emancipation are fostered.

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³² In the original: “[...] está orientado pelos princípios éticos, políticos e estéticos que visam à formação humana integral e à construção de uma sociedade justa, democrática e inclusiva”.

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Translation by Adail Sobral - adail.sobral@gmail.com

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