

## “PELO PARANÁ MAIOR”: school material representations on a 1920s film

“*Pelo Paraná Maior*”: representações da cultura material escolar  
exibidas em película na década de 1920

“*Pelo Paraná Maior*”: representaciones de la cultura material escolar  
proyectadas en el cine en la década de 1920

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**Abstract:** This article is based on the film “*Pelo Paraná maior*”, produced by the government of Paraná in 1927, which presented information about the state, its economy, part of public education, and some educational establishments at the time. The text addresses aspects of school material culture, exploring visual elements such as furniture, uniforms, architecture, school organization, and rites, proposing relationships with the rhetoric of modernity, education, and Escola Nova. In the analysis, we use theoretical references linked to the perspective of modernity studies by Marshall Berman, school culture by Dominique Julia, school material culture by Eliane Peres, Gizele de Souza, Agustín Escolano Benito, and *Escola Nova* by Diana Gonçalves Vidal. We also ground the text on Roger Chartier's approach to cultural history and the transnational one by Martin Lawn.

**Keywords:** cinema; photography; New School; transnational history.

**Resumo:** Este artigo tem como fonte histórica o filme “*Pelo Paraná maior*”, produzido pelo governo do Paraná em 1927, que divulgou o estado, a economia e parte da instrução pública e de alguns estabelecimentos de ensino da época. Aborda aspectos da cultura material escolar explorando alguns elementos visuais como o mobiliário, os uniformes, a arquitetura, a organização da escola e os ritos, propondo relações com a retórica da modernidade, da educação, bem como com o movimento da Escola Nova. Para análise, são utilizadas referências teóricas vinculadas à perspectiva crítica da modernidade de Marshall Berman; da cultura escolar, com Dominique Julia; da cultura material escolar, com Eliane Peres e Gizele de Souza e Agustín Escolano Benito; e da Escola Nova, com Diana Gonçalves Vidal. Discute-se ainda a história cultural a partir de Roger Chartier e a história transnacional com Martin Lawn.

**Palavras-chave:** cinema; fotografia; Escola Nova; história transnacional.

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene como fuente histórica la película “*Pelo Paraná maior*”, producida por el gobierno de Paraná en 1927, que divulgaba el estado, la economía y parte de la educación pública y algunos establecimientos educativos de la época. Aborda aspectos de la cultura material escolar explorando algunos elementos visuales como el mobiliario, los uniformes, la arquitectura, la organización escolar y los ritos, proponiendo relaciones con la retórica de la modernidad, la educación y el movimiento Escuela Nueva. Para el análisis se utilizan referentes teóricos vinculados a la perspectiva crítica de la modernidad de Marshall Berman, la cultura escolar con Dominique Julia, la cultura material escolar con Eliane Peres y Gizele de Souza y Agustín Escolano Benito y la Escola Nova con Diana Gonçalves Vidal. Discute la historia cultural de Roger Chartier y la historia transnacional con Martin Lawn.

**Palabras clave:** cine; Escola Nova; historia transnacional.

## INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyze an excerpt from the movie "*Pelo Paraná maior*" [For a Greater Paraná] produced and released in 1927, used to publicize the state of Paraná and as propaganda for Caetano Munhoz da Rocha's government at that period. Regarding the aspects approached in this film, we identify in the excerpt entitled 'Public Instruction' the apparatus and elements of material culture that circulated and were used in some schools in Paraná, whose material composition refers to the rhetoric of ideal modernity, portraying it through several forms, for example, the construction of new school buildings, pieces of furniture, and objects. As an analytical construction, we present a narrative that connects the ideas of modernity and education, considering cinema as a possible representation of the modern man and, in the highlighted images, the possibility of historical analysis.

## WITHIN PARANÁ IN THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The year is 1927. On November 10, Paraná's newspaper *O Dia* published an article about the organization of public instruction in the state, portraying it as a model of civilization and progress.

There, a remarkable work of economic progress takes place: coffee cultivation in top quality lands and the progress of public instruction and teaching establishments, which rival the best ones from São Paulo. We can see that the leaders of Paraná are confident that the future of Brazil is in primary schools, which they notably organized. They went above and beyond, establishing perfect Normal schools in Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá, with magnificent pedagogical equipment (A fita do Paraná na Exposição do Café, 1927, p. 1).

The discourse of modernity and progress in the press, politics, and history was narrated in science, education, and technique, presenting itself through scientific renovations, new discoveries, and social behaviors since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. About this modernity, which enters the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Marshall Berman (1987, p. 15) stresses,

[...] the turmoil of modern life has been fed by several sources: great discoveries in physical sciences, with the change of our image in the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates

new human environments and destroys old ones; accelerates the rhythm of life, creates new forms of corporate power and class struggles; the colossal demographic explosion that penalizes millions of people removed from their ancestral territory, pushing them through world pathways towards new lives; the quick and often catastrophic urban growth; mass communication systems, dynamic in their development that wrap and tied in the same package, the most diverse individuals and societies.

Modernity is not marked by a period of strict boundaries and time spaces but perceived and quoted through centuries by thinkers, philosophers, and historians. Berman situates modernity in three phases: the first in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century with the early phase of the Renaissance; the second in the French Revolution and after with the Industrial Revolution and their future implications; and the third in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the author, modernity expands worldwide. Berman called modernity the “set of experiences’ of the subject. To him, the modern individual should “[...] find himself in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, self-transformation, and the transformation of things around him – but, at the same time, threatens to destroy all we have, all we know, all we are” (Berman, 1987, p. 14).

After the Industrial Revolution, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of more complex machines, moved by other types of energy besides human force, represented an enormous transformation for humanity in the following centuries. In this process, from feudalism to capitalism, some transformations changed the organization of work and life in society. Such changes transformed the way of working, relating, thinking, acting, and using time. In the words of Berman (1987, p. 14), “[...] to be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx stated, ‘all that is solid melts into air’”.

The development also reached the field of communication devices. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, amidst the emergence of a consumerism society, new inventions such as the telegraph, telephone, telex, and radio appear. The press, the cinema, and the photograph also permeated this modern world. Societies live in a period marked by industrialization and capitalism. The new technology apparatus permeated the subjects' lives and contributed to imposing a new time. The fast pace of the metropolises shortened the sensation of time and space.

In this scenario, cinema is a way to represent one of the modern forms to represent modern man's experiences. The exhibition of a film in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century offers the audience new visual experiences and the circulation of values and aesthetic, political, and social behaviors. The cinema incorporates the characteristics of modern times, and its technology allows people to capture the "frenetic pace" of modern man, offering a novelty show to the audience during the sessions. From Walter Benjamin's perspective:

The film is used to excite in man new perceptions and reactions demanded by a technical device whose role gradually increases in everyday life. To make the enormous technical apparatus of our time the object of human innervations –is the historical task whose enactment gives cinema its true meaning (Benjamin, 1986, p. 174).

Modernity is done and redone, from time to time, with the endless sensation of transformation, doubts, and time acceleration. Countless political, economic, technological, and social advancements marked this pathway until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The experience of modernity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the sense of a corporeity that adapts and incorporates itself in the ways of life anchored in the premises of progress, mechanized industrialization, the high degree of technical reproducibility, the everyday representation through the produced image, no longer through pictorial art but the camera's capture (Benjamin, 1986), multiplied and more democratic (Sontag, 1981) would be largely disseminated in the eastern world through the World Fairs (Turazzi, 1995), which broadened the modernity products as novelties and miniaturization of the world through photography.

In this sense, postcards and cinematographers in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were dissemination instruments of a representation of modernity that reached Brazil at the turn from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, together with the immigration movements, the exchange of intellectuals and artists that circulated in Europe and brought influences of European ways of life and ideals. Within this scenario, in Paraná, a *Paranista* movement emerged, grounded by an imaginary and culture, the *paranismo* (Pereira, 1996).

This movement was organized by artists and intellectuals and established identity parameters, having as icons: the *paranista*, a mixture of the *paranaense* with the immigrant and *caingangue* indigenous culture in the region; the local nature represented by the *Pinheiro do Paraná* [Paraná Pine]; and the art of local artists, such as Andersen, João Turin, Lange de Morretes, among others.

In this scope, the documentarian- photographer João Baptista Groff (Vieira, 1998) stands out. He was responsible for disseminating the *paranista* ideal in the magazine *Ilustração Paranaense* (1927 to 1930), collaborating with several artists. João Turin was responsible for the *paranista* illustrations and icons on the magazine cover and its inner pages. It is noteworthy that Groff, following the *paranista* ideal, photographed and filmed Paraná, producing materials that, at the time, disseminated its instilled modernity- albums with landscapes from Curitiba and Paraná's nature, the magazine *Ilustração Paranaense*, the film *Pátria Redimida* which started with the visit of Getúlio Vargas to Curitiba in 1930 (Vieira, 1998).

As a witness of his time, we stress in this representation context of modernity sought by Groff's photographer gaze the urban architecture, the typical nature of the place, and the production of an immigrant *paranaense*<sup>1</sup>'s conjugated life, who established themselves as people that helped construct Paraná. Through photography, a way of life associated with European modernity is highlighted, such as the example of *footing* on XV Street, and the presence of settlers in the *Largo da Ordem*, an ethnic mark for Curitiba's and *paranista* modernity. With *Estado Novo*, there are images of the Square Santos Andrade in civic events with students in formation, similar to the military aesthetic, alluding to an image of progress and civilization.

The example of Paraná demonstrates the idea of modernity that spread an ideal of modern man, which allows us to ask about the role of the image, mainly photography, on the value of the document and the truth, able to reveal the world on its representation. On the other hand, as the moving image establishes itself as the representation of everyday life, the films produced as reality documents start to connote the effect of truth, given the verisimilitude caused by the illusion of capturing the moving image.

In this educational scenario, the idea of a new school to shape the modern world was disseminated and connected with industrial development and urbanization. During the 1920s, in Brazil and other parts of the world, there were several debates and initiatives to renovate the school system. Among the proposals from different fields of action, the international movement of New School stands out, proposing to break away from the traditional educational structures (Vidal & Rabelo, 2020).

After crossing frontiers, the New School discourses reached Brazil and were disseminated in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. However, the movement gained visibility after the renovation undertaken by Fernando de Azevedo in the Federal District in Rio de Janeiro. Azevedo believed that an efficient education was also connected with educational documents, buildings, and adequate architecture. Between 1927 and 1930, as the person responsible for the General Direction of Public Instruction, he sought to restructure public education by renovating the schools' interior and exterior, and its methods and organization. The installation of new schools and architectural projects intensified. According to Diana Gonçalves Vidal, this diversity “[...] pointed out for the various uses that the teaching based on experience, on students' lives, as advocated by Rio de Janeiro reformers, grounded in the discourse demanded by the New School” (Vidal, 2008, p. 237).

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<sup>1</sup> Translation note: *Paranaense* is the name given to those born in Paraná.

In 1932, the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova*<sup>2</sup> [Manifest of the New Education Pioneers] was released. This document addressed the Government and the Nation and defended obligatory, laic, and free education to all as a mechanism of education democratization. Still, Diana Gonçalves Vidal reminds us that, in other countries, the

Active School referred to a pedagogical principle, mainly in Brazil, it assumed a very distant meaning from the one it acquired in the other countries where it emerged. It merged an educational banner and a public investment: the renovation of the public system (Vidal, 2013, p. 582).

The author states that Brazil was the only eastern country where the New School represented a State investment. We underline that education funding was the object of conflicts between the pioneers and the conservative groups, grounded on religious institutions, which demanded state subsidies. The Pioneers represented modernity in Education because they wished for new glances on education and advocated for a public, free, and laic education as a State attribution.

In Brazilian education, we can perceive that the discourse of modernity, aligned with progress and valorization of the new, is part of many texts. Rosa Fátima de Souza describes that many models, themes, and strategies developed in several countries were considered civilized, circulated, and debated in the political and pedagogical spheres.

[...] teaching methods, the widening of programs with the inclusion of new subjects, books, and didactic materials, students' classification, the distribution of contents and time use, furniture, school material, study certificates, architecture, teacher education, and school discipline. Several means allowed the circulation of these ideas and models: the World Fairs, the instruction congresses, official reports written by ministers and education inspectors, book publications, articles, newspapers, and magazines specialized in the educational field (Souza, 2000, p. 11).

Under the perspective of Gizele de Souza's work on the state of Paraná, the ideas of education and modern school to boost progress will also be present in the debate, in architecture, in press discourses, and the circulation of educators' ideas in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova* was written by Fernando de Azevedo and signed by the educators Afranio Peixoto, Sampaio Doria, Anísio Teixeira, Lourenço Filho, Roquete Pinto, J. G. Frota Pessoa, Julio de Mesquita Filho, Raul Briquet, Mário Casanta, C. Delgado de Carvalho, Ferreira de Almeida Júnior, J.P Fontenelle, Roldão Lopes de Barros, Noemy M. da Silveira, Hermes Lima, Attilio Vivacqua, Francisco Venâncio Filho, Paulo Maranhão, Cecília Meireles, Edgar Sussekind de Mendonça, Álvaro Alberto, Garcia de Rezende, Nóbrega da Cunha, Paschoal Leme, and Raul Gomes (Freire Filho, 2002, p. 19).

The school representation as a civilization tool, as the '*cellula mater*' from which the light of instruction, progress, and modernity would radiate and remove the darkness of ignorance — all these images were strong arguments that supported the proposals to build adequate 'school houses,' translated into school groups. We understand that the construction of kindergartens in Paraná was anchored in the hypothesis to build this school modality as a component of a broad education project marked by international and national examples of pedagogical reforms (Souza, 2004, p. 38).

The changes in the school space, teachers' method, teaching instruments, pedagogical artifacts, and school organization occurred in different proportions and places. School is part of a broad social fabric involving the entire social context. Hence, in the attempt to get closer to schools' routines, we anchored our study on the concept of school culture defined by Julia (2001, p. 10): "[...] as a set of rules that define knowledge to teach and the behaviors to instill, and a collection of practices that allow the transmission of these types of knowledge and the incorporation of these behaviors".

This school scenario is also composed of specific materiality, constructed by objects that "[...] give a glimpse of pedagogical projects to school children, pedagogical rationalities, school representation; teaching methods, educational devices; educational intentions, among other aspects [...]" as Eliane Peres and Gizele de Souza (2011, p. 54) pointed out. Hence, this materiality is understood from the perspective of school material culture. Therefore, when treating the film's images as historical sources of a school material culture, we seek to contribute to the studies of the history of education within a scenario grounded by the rhetoric of modern education.

## **CINEMA: PROPAGANDA OF SCHOOL RENOVATION**

Cinema is a representative form of one of the experiences of the modern man. It was born from the human will to reproduce the moving image and, thus, to represent the world as it arises: in a (tridimensional) space and a (*continuum*) time. Since its beginning, cinema can be seen within a transnational history. When considering José D'Assunção Barros's (2019, p. 9) approach, "[...] the transnational history and the crossed histories or intertwined histories presuppose possibilities of changes in the historiographic style itself".

As image capture technology and photography, cinema did not have a single inventor. Several people, in different countries, with numerous motivations, participated and contributed to the invention of cinema. However, the brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière patented the Cinematographer: the device that allowed the projection of images on a screen for a broad audience.

The rapid development of the cinematographic industry in North America and Eastern Europe is related to those countries' scientific and technological development. In Brazil, the first session took place in Rio de Janeiro, in July 1896. However, the cinema would only reach Curitiba in 1907 brought by traveling companies. The first film produced in Paraná is also from 1907, filmed by Anibal Requião.

The moving image incorporates the characteristics of modern times because its technology allows for capturing the frenetic rhythm of the modern man and also offers the audience the spectacle of novelty during the sessions. As described by Roger Chartier (2002, p. 17), "[...]the main object of cultural history is to identify how in different places and moments a certain social reality is built, thought, and able to be read".

From this perspective, the exhibition of films contributed to circulating certain topics connected to science and the rhetoric of modern education. In Brazil, in the 1920s, educational cinema was introduced in the schools as a synthesis of the movement between Physics and the New School (Vidal, 1994). Besides its teaching use, cinema is a propaganda tool. An example is the documentary *Home Chez Nous*, produced by the Swiss pedagogue Adolfo Ferrière, in 1929, which circulated in some continents, presenting a New School model.

As sources of historical documents and means to represent history, the films can reveal fragments of everyday life for historians. To Peter Burke, images are eyewitnesses with the potential to study material culture.

The images' witness is still more valuable because they reveal not only past artifacts (that were preserved in some cases and can be directly examined) but also their organization; the books on the library and bookshop shelves, for example, or the exotic objects arranged in museums or 'curiosity cabinets' [...] images that also reveal how the objects were used [...] (Burke, 2004, p. 121-122).

In this sense, seeking elements shown in the film *Pelo Paraná maior*, which publicized the state of Paraná in 1927/1928, is an attempt to reflect part of a historical pathway to understand which apparatus and artifacts were used in some schools in Paraná at that period. As we can analyze based on Jacques Revel (1998, p. 24), the decrease in the analytical scale implies a change in historical construction. Therefore, choosing an analytical scale means choosing "[...] a knowledge point of view". Paul Ricoeur (2007 p. 222) explains that "[...] the change of scale does not mean seeing the same things larger or smaller but to see things differently [...] with different frameworks". Thus, when analyzing a particular excerpt of a film, we have opted to perceive from it the circulation and appropriation of specific elements of school material culture shown in that period on a national scale.



The primary historical source of this article is a film from the 1920s, but for this analysis, part of the movie was digitalized as photography. The photographic image is a chosen frame of a given moment. Under Benjamin's (1986) perspective, the photo, as a fragment of the past, constitutes a nomad in its particularity, i.e., through it, we can evaluate images of the past or ideas in these images as representations of a time. "The historical materialist is responsible for fixating an image of the past, how it presents itself, in the moment of danger, to the historical subject, without being aware of this" (Benjamin, 1986, p. 224).

### **"PELO PARANÁ MAIOR" – A FILM PRODUCED TO IMPRESS**

The state has lands and woods that constitute endless riches that attract money from the rest of Brazil and abroad. The administration of Munhoz da Rocha established agricultural schools to teach and prepare the land through modern processes of science. On the screen of *Palácio das Exposições*, they filmed several practical classes in these schools, with many students [...]. However, we could observe that we can honestly say that the neighboring state is implementing an extraordinary work of progress that will soon finish, as long as there is an administrative continuity (A fita do Paraná na Exposição do Café, 1927, p. 8).

The scenario is Curitiba in the 1920s. The government of Paraná, represented by Caetano Munhoz da Rocha<sup>3</sup>, seemed determined to publicize the progress in the state. An example of this attempt is the film "*Pelo Paraná maior*" (1927), produced by Botelho Films<sup>4</sup>, to be shown in the coffee exhibition in Rezende, aiming to present the state as a great example of civilization and social development. It was the ideal rhetoric of progress shown on screen. This film was produced for the *Exposição do Segundo Centenário Cafeeiro do Brasil* in the city of São Paulo in 1927. We should point out that other films were produced in the same period.

Through innovation, the film is characterized as a representation of 20<sup>th</sup>-century modern technology because it portrays a Paraná aware of the state's greatness, promoting notable economic progress encompassing public instruction and the educational establishments in that period. Ana Paula Pupo Correia's (2015, p. 06) text situates the reader by explaining that the selection of images transmitted the

<sup>3</sup> Caetano Munhoz da Rocha was born in Antonina, on May 14, 1879. He governed Paraná between 1920-1924 and from 1924-1928 (Caetano Munhoz da Rocha, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> The company Botelho Films was created by Alberto Botelho (1885-1973) in the 1920s. It uses a proud tone in its feature film projects. Botelho was hired to create several Paraná documents. It became one of the most significant documentary producers during the 1930s and 1940s (Ramos & Miranda, 1997).

idea of modernization: "[...] regarding the development of the cities, the documentary showed the organization of the space [...]", with the urban and modern cities of Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá.

Besides this, the film focused on the construction of new public buildings and documented the widening of new roads. In the educational area, the images of school infrastructure highlighted the routine of school groups and the Normal Schools in Curitiba, Paranaguá, and Ponta Grossa.

In the exhibition of the film, Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa gave a conference. At the time, he was the general inspector of education in Paraná and the State's Delegate in the *Congresso do Café*. The image of Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa can also be seen as a transnational approach, a mediator and cultural translator, considering his prominent circulation in the educational, scientific, economic, and administrative scenario of Paraná. This circulation can be perceived by the travels connected to education and economy, his correspondences with various cities in Brazil and other countries, indicating his articulation with national and international associations<sup>5</sup>.

The first session of the film "*Pelo Paraná maior*" was held on November 5, 1927, at 8 p.m., in the projection room of *Exposição do Café de Rezende*. The article published in the newspaper *Correio Paulistano*, the day after the event states:

[...] the distinguished delegate of Paraná spoke in detail about his home state, demonstrating the various possibilities enacted in favor of the country's progress, in an admirable synthesis that caused admiration in the selected and numerous audience (O II Centenário da Introdução do Cafeeiro, 1927, p. 04).

After the discourse of Paraná's representative, the audience watched the exhibition of the film "*Pelo Paraná maior*" and could know several scenes of Paraná's daily scenes and geography. According to the exhibition program, the film is divided into nine parts: 1) Curitiba; 2) the Leper shelter São Roque; 3) the Sanatorium São Sebastião; 4) Nursing home S. Vicente de Paulo; 5) Underage shelters; 6) A village for public workers; 7) Public Instruction; 8) Main industries; e 9) Highways. The first subtitle of the film has the following text:

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<sup>5</sup> Lysimaco belonged to various societies related to Education: *Instituto Brasileiro de Filologia (RJ)*; *Associação Brasileira de Educação-ABE(RJ)*, *Associação Paranaense de Educação (PR)*, *Sociedade Brasileira de Educação (RJ)*, *Liga Pedagógica do Ensino Secundário(RJ)*, *Instituto Nacional de Ciência Política (RJ)*, *Instituto Científico de Estudos Corporativos (RJ)*, *Sociedade Amigos de Alberto Torres( RJ)*, *Centro Dom Vital (RJ)*, *Instituto de Engenharia do Paraná (PR)*, *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (RJ)*, *Sociedade Fluminense de Agricultura e Indústria Rurais (Niterói- RJ)*, *Bureau Internacional de Educação – Instituto Jean Jaques Rousseau (Genebra-Suíça)*, *Academia de Letras do Paraná (PR)*, and the *Sociedade Magnética da França (Paris)*, according to (Costa, 1987).

BOTELHO FILM, a national company whose guidelines to exalt the Brazilian land and people, show an enthusiastic dissemination of the good and grandness of the Brazilian nation, returns today, after six years, to talk about the satisfaction to show the state of Paraná to Brazil and the world, shooting the films *A Erva Matte ou Chá do Brasil*, *A Indústria da Madeira*, *A Pecuária Paranaense*, *Cerâmica de Pinhais*, *A Estrada de Ferro Paranaguá a Curitiba*, *A Instrução Pública* and many others in which Paraná's effort is evident within the Brazilian Federation. It turned its lenses to the new aspects of his fruitful and vertiginous work, which produced many new things in these five years (Mucha, 1927).

The film lasts 90 minutes and intends to show a city considered modern, well-structured, and consistent with the understanding of order and progress. The government publicized the feats of Paraná in events, such as exhibitions and congresses. Even though Botelho Film produced the film<sup>6</sup>, the teacher and researcher Solange Straube Stecz (1988, p. 110) identified, about the film, the following manifest in the press at the time: "[...] characteristic of Groff's production, however, not citing his name [...]". The excerpts were discussed in a newspaper from Curitiba and referred to an article that approached the theme *A fita do Paraná* in the *Exposição do Café - São Paulo* (1927).

Though Groff was initially a photographer, as an enthusiast of the cinema, he turned himself toward documentary production. One of his first initiatives was to film the Iguazu Falls in 1922. Later, in the 1930s, he became the official state documentarian, following the intervener Manoel Ribas pelo Paraná (Vieira, 1998).

In this article, among the film's topics, we emphasize "Public Instruction," which shows a part of the educational investment in that period. To analyze it, we transformed parts of the film into figures/images to highlight some elements and artifacts in the school culture of Paraná's education in 1927.

It is a silent film with a black background with subtitles in white, situating and leading the spectator through the state of Paraná. It presents some institutions from the time pointing out a disciplinary and sanitarian perspective, strongly permeated by the ideal of progress. Five of the nine topics presented in the program indicate to the audience that, when watching the film, they will see actions developed by the government of Paraná regarding the service to lepers, tuberculosis patients, elderly poor people, abandoned children, and young students.

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<sup>6</sup> The Rio de Janeiro company Botelho Films also produced between 1928 and 1929 the films *Neves brasileiras* and *O que é o Paraná*. The first was released on September 25, 1928, and was preceded by adverts that cited its success in the cinemas of the circuit *Serrador* in Rio and São Paulo. The film portrayed a snowy day in Curitiba, with houses and streets covered with snow and people playing with snow on the streets.

About 20 minutes were used to show the facilities and elements of modern education institutions in three cities in Paraná: Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá. In documents entitled *Mensagens de Governo*<sup>7</sup>[Government Messages], signed by the state president Caetano Munhoz da Rocha, between 1927 and 1928, we find the description of the investments made by the state's Public Instruction. In the 1927 text, the government points out that it broadly answered the education dissemination in the state.

They were duly provided with excellent furniture and teaching material, the kindergarten, the groups, schoolhouses, the isolated schools, and the complementary ones, which needed this equipment. The laboratories of physics, chemistry, and natural history were ordered in Europe for the three Normal schools in the state (Paraná, 1927, p. 81).

We perceived the material composition of the school in the rhetoric of modernity ideal by disclosing elements that distinguish a model of education in different ways: the construction of new buildings; the new school furniture; the uniforms; and the teaching materials available in the schools.



Figure 1 – Students of the Complementary Course in Curitiba.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

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<sup>7</sup> The *Mensagens de Governo* are reports from the president about the finished year, presented in the Legislative Chamber and available in the public archives. These documents describe the actions enacted by the government.



Figure 2 – Another aspect of the students of the Complementary Course in Curitiba.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Figures 1 and 2 show students' entrance into the school building. The moving image highlights the number of students, shows the uniforms, and the students carrying their didactic material and school folders.



Figure 3 - Inauguration party of the Paranaguá Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 4 – Civic aspect of the inauguration of Paranaguá Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 5 – The end of the Paranaguá school inauguration.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Figures 3, 4, and 5, previously shown, represent parts of the film that document the inauguration of a new imposing school building in Paranaguá, 91,2 kilometers away from Curitiba. Munhoz da Rocha, in his report from 1928, points out that Paranaguá Normal School presented a vast building with 24 classrooms, principal and secretary offices, a dental office, a spacious park with a schoolyard, and a gymnastic pavilion (Paraná, 1928, p. 140). Marta Carvalho affirms that “[...] to make itself be seen, the school should make itself visible”.

Therefore, the majestic, broad, and light buildings, where everything is in a permanent position. Furniture, didactic material, work done, teacher and student activities – everything should point out the school’s conformation to the precepts of modern pedagogy, highlighting the Progress established by the Republic (Carvalho, 2003, p. 24).

The representation brings various symbolic elements. The movie intends to show the audience that the government of Paraná was offering education to the whole state, surpassing the geographic limit of the capital. Besides this, it presents the community mobilization and the official equipment, with the presentation of a martial band in the inauguration ceremony. The film also shows students' organization and their 'at attention' position. These images raise the image of the school's disciplinary role.



Figure 6 – Entering the classroom in Paranaguá Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

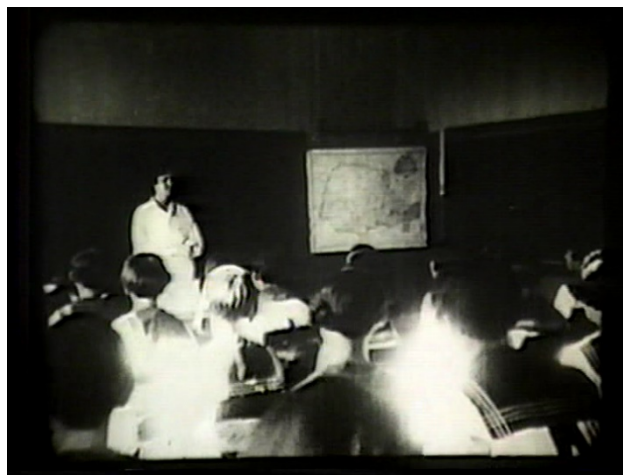


Figure 7 – Teachers in a classroom.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 8 – Normal students in a gymnastic demonstration.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

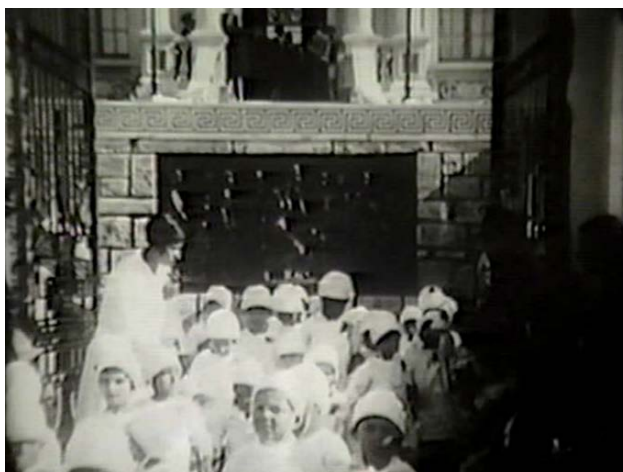


Figure 9 – Teacher with children.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 present scenes of a model class with the organized entrance of uniformed students. We can also see a teacher giving a class. In Image 7, we can observe the pedagogical material used in that class with an easel presenting the map of Paraná. Furthermore, we see scenes of the teacher with students moving, probably toward the schoolyard.





Figure 10 – Civic ritual in the gymnastic at a square.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 11 – Gymnastics at Ponta Grossa Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Figures 10 and 11 bring the idea of an organization to the students, the practice of physical exercises, and the rites about the national flag. A scenographic and representative aspect of the idea of disciplining education.



Figure 12 – Classroom with desks at Ponta Grossa Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

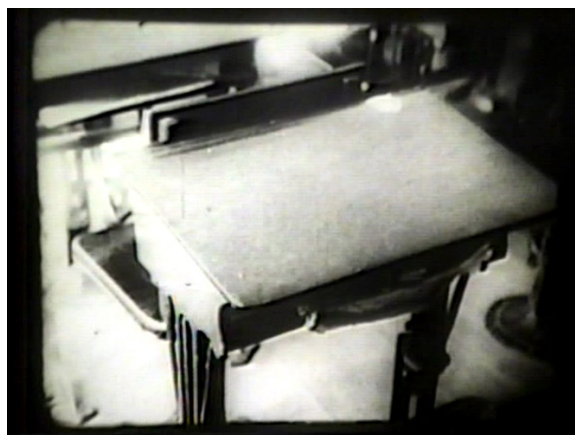


Figure 13 – A close-up of a desk.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Figures 12 and 13 show the furniture and the desks considered appropriate to the school model, representing modern school artifacts. All these aspects, from the architectural structure of the building, the school desks, and the internal and external decoration, should be considered part of the school material culture "as they answer cultural and pedagogical patterns that the child internalizes and learns" (Benito Escolano, 2001, p. 45).



Figure 14 – Internal hallway of Ponta Grossa Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 15 – Congregation Room of Ponta Grossa Normal School.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

We can observe in Figures 14 and 15 the concern with the organization of the furniture, the space, and the equipment available in the school. Here, the images show the broad hallways with light, the drinking fountains, and the basins. We can also see the Congregation Room used for meetings about the school community.



Figure 16 – Gymnastics in the square in front of the University  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.



Figure 17 - Munhoz da Rocha and Lysimaco Ferreira.  
Source: Cinemateca de Curitiba.

Finally, figures 16 and 17 show the prominent presentation of joint gymnastic exercises with batons, which, according to the film's subtitles, gathered four thousand children for the demonstration held in front of the *Universidade Federal do Paraná* in 1927. Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa and Caetano Munhoz da Rocha appear in the final images of the presentation, going down the stairs in front of the university. This is the final scene of the topic Public Instruction, following the program of the film mentioned earlier. It proposes a way to sign and document the work enacted by the government in education that year. When finishing in front of a space of educational reference, the intention is to show that one could reach the university with numerous investments in education, as presented during the film. In the 20-minutes dedicated to public instruction, we can perceive that the film portrays the better-equipped cities, showing the new buildings, the adequate furniture, the space organization, the uniforms, and the pedagogical practices represented respectively in the schools filmed

in Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá. According to the *Mensagens de Governo* in 1927 and 1928, the educational establishments in the state mostly received:

[...] the elements of the respective furniture composed of the national flag, desks, table, cabinet, blackboard, chairs, and a series of necessary tools and, regarding the teaching material, reading books, and others, for the three years, calligraphy and language books, geography maps, language and arithmetic records, pencils, pens, ink, chalk, etc. (Paraná, 1927, p. 214).

We also highlight that modern technology, such as film/cinema, could be a strategy from the Paraná government to help present and disseminate a particular economic and social situation from the state of Paraná to convince the population of the truth in its discourse.

## FILM: A STRATEGY OF TRANSNATIONAL ARTICULATION

Another point to be highlighted about this film is that, though it was created to be shown at a coffee event in São Paulo, we know that it was also used some months later in a lecture to illustrate the Aspects of Paraná Education and promote Paraná that wished to host the *I Conferência Nacional de Educação*<sup>8</sup> [1<sup>st</sup> National Conference of Education]. In this scenario, based on Martin Lawn's texts, we can think about crossing state frontiers (Lawn, 2014).

The film was produced in Paraná to be released in the *Congresso do Café* in São Paulo. However, the same film was taken to Rio de Janeiro for an event about educational aspects some months after its release. This information reminds us of World Fairs' role as a space to present, disseminate, and publicize products of modernity, a culture established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, having cinema or documentaries as the primary disseminator of progress.

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<sup>8</sup> The *I Conferência Nacional de Educação*, proposed by ABE with the support of Paraná's government, was held in Curitiba from December 19 to 27, 1927. The event promoted the debate about primary education and teacher training, presenting 112 theses, organization ideas, and society models that advocated for quality education. Among the central themes for education at the time were hygiene, women's pedagogical celibate, religious education, and the non-laic character of education, among others. Four themes were considered official, discussed in the plenary sessions, together with other nine that established guiding axes of discussions: 1) national unity through a) literary culture; b) civic culture; c) moral culture; 2) the standardization of primary school on its main ideas but keeping some pedagogical freedom; 3) the creation of higher education Normal schools, in different parts of the country, for pedagogical preparation; and 4) the organization of national boards, corporations for technical, scientific, and literary improvement (Costa, Shena, & Schimidt, 1997).

In this sense, it seems timely that, in an event aiming to promote progress and development in Brazil, the film was shown to depict the desired modern state. The objective was to publicize the state of Paraná in both events, though the audiences were quite different: one focused on the economy and the other on education. Besides the film itself, the exhibition also had a presentation or lecture with the general education inspector of Paraná, Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa, before and after the session, circulating the idea of modern education held in Paraná.

The film showed an educational Paraná that portrayed Curitiba as one of the most significant cultural centers in the country. This lecture took place on August 23, 1927, at a conference <sup>9</sup>, sponsored by the *Associação Brasileira de Educação* (ABE-Brazilian Association of Education), in the Amphitheater of *Escola Politécnica*, in Rio de Janeiro. According to the press at the time:

The first part presents Curitiba as a great cultural center of the country, where we could find all types of schools, from kindergarten to the majestic *Universidade do Paraná*. After the second part, a beautiful film about the Normal schools of Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá was shown, causing a unique sensation regarding the assistance of Paraná children, the school museum, and the Secondary School, about whose organization the lecturer gave length explanations. In the third part of his conference, Dr. Lysimaco talked about the University and the university spirit of Paraná, showing the beneficial reactions produced in Paraná's social environment. He argued about the action of Munhoz da Rocha's government, finishing with the expression: 'here is the result of 8 years of a happy government!'. This excited projection was shown on the screen of the beautiful building of the University. Dr. Lysimaco thanked the presence of teachers and other people and authorities, thanking the Botelho Film company for the kindness to gratuitously present the conference [...] The *Associação Brasileira de Educação* [Brazilian Education Association] promoted this conference seen by a public of teachers and those interested in the topic, notably the presence of Dr. Fernando Magalhães, president of the Association, and Dr. Fernando de Azevedo, director of Public Instruction of the Federal District (Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Paranaguá, 1927, p. 1).

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<sup>9</sup> Many scholars from the educational field attended this conference held on August 23, 1927, in Rio de Janeiro. Among them, Aloisio de Castro, director of the National Department of Education, Fernando de Magalhães, director of Public Instruction of the Federal District, Barbosa de Oliveira, Delgado de Carvalho, Venâncio Alves, Renato Jardim, Paranhos da Silva, Augusto Rocha, Dulcídio Pereira, university professor, teachers from *Colégio Pedro II*, senators, federal representatives, etc. (Van Erven, 1944).

We should remember that Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa was a founding member of ABE in 1924 and participated in internal discussions and articulations with other intellectuals that debated political and educational projects to be implemented in the country. ABE emerged when there was a belief that education would recover the country from a hypothetical perspective of cultural and scientific delay. For Marta Carvalho (1998), ABE was

[...] one of the most efficient instruments to disseminate the European and North-American pedagogical thought, and one of the most import, if not the most important center of coordination and debates to study and solve educational problems, circulated in different forms, through studies, press releases, vacation courses, and congresses promoted in the state capitals (Carvalho, 1998, p. 31).

In the fabric of this history, when following the guiding thread of a name (Ginzburg, 2007), we found among the documents of the Public Instruction in 1927, kept in the Public File, the payment receipt <sup>10</sup> for the film, signed and paid by Paraná's general inspector of education at the time Lysimaco Ferreira da Costa (Allgayer, 2020). We should reflect on why the film production passed through the hands of the general inspector. Besides this, which were the interests in circulating images of Paraná's schools at Conferences in São Paulo? Which is the relation of the film's topics with the idea of modernity that circulated in Brazil?

In this sense, the analysis developed here was grounded on Ginzburg's (1989) thought, which affirms that the little things, the signs, the pieces of evidence, are crucial elements for the historian's work, i.e., the observation, the attention to details, and the possible association. In this scenario, we can affirm that the use of the cinema as a visibility strategy was the right one, considering that the *I Conferência Nacional de Educação* [1<sup>st</sup> National Conference of Education] took place in the city of Curitiba in December 1927.

## FINAL REMARKS

In our opinion, the film analysis of the 17 figures/images taken from "*Pelo Paraná maior*," more specifically the seventh topic of the film, called Public Instruction in the program, points out some elements and artifacts present in the school culture of Paraná education in that period. Twenty minutes of the film are

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<sup>10</sup> We found in the public archive of Paraná, AP. 2269, n/p, 1927, the payment receipt for the film "*Pelo Paraná maior*" also cited in the dissertation *As exposições e eventos nas conferências nacionais de educação: um repertório pedagógico para se dar a ver (1927-1956)* (Allgayer, 2020).

dedicated to Paraná education, shown to the audience as a representation of the investments enacted by the government of Caetano Bento Munhoz da Rocha, in part of the public instruction of the state.

By comparing the sources, we could perceive investment initiatives in Paraná's public instruction, aiming to equip public schools according to modern precepts, to broaden, renovate, and develop them. The images point out that in the state of Paraná, at least three cities filmed Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, and Paranaguá –the schools considered and represented as modern were portrayed as imposing school buildings with spacious, well-equipped, and functional rooms. They also underline the school desks as an important artifact in the material composition adequate to those schools and show teachers' work, Normal and complementary course students, all in uniform, and some teaching objects organized in the schools. Furthermore, the images present scenes of parties and school rituals, such as raising flags and physical exercises. These elements emphasize aspects that construct an idealized image of what school renovation should be.

The film frankly and appellatively shows the economic, productive, and modernizing force of Paraná's government. Located in 1927, we can question: What impact would the moving images as a symbolic construction of the state have in the audience's imagination? How could such production, heavy with social representations, be used to consolidate the image of a solid and prosperous Paraná? We know that the film was produced to publicize the state in the *Exposição Café*. However, it was also used as a dissemination strategy in other spheres, including education. In this sense, analyzing some scenes shown in the item Public Instruction, in the film "*Pelo Paraná maior*" was an attempt to extract some representations that dialogue with the ideas of *Escola Nova* [New School] and circulated through various frontiers.

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