



Educational cinema between documentary and fiction¹

Cinema educativo entre o documentário e a ficção

El cine educativo entre el documental y la ficción

André Luiz Paulilo

Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Brazil)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8112-8070>

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/8813317661046448>

paulilo@unicamp.br

Anderson Ricardo Trevisan

Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Brazil)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8174-8699>

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/0855602056725085>

detrevis@unicamp.br

Abstract

Educational cinema was an ephemeral experience in the history of Brazilian cinematography, but it was fundamental to understand, if not the beginnings of the policies for the sector in the country, at least, a fundamental chapter in the filmmaking practices of the directors. From the frontier between fiction and documentary, and between the politics of public sponsorship and authorial creation, the present essay intends to explore this already well worked for theme in historiography that is educational cinema. Based on a bibliographical review, documentary and film research, and supported by an interdisciplinary bibliography based primarily on Cultural History and Sociology of Culture, the main scope of the article is to relate the productions directed by Humberto Mauro at the INCE to the discussion of cinema control policies in the 1930s. It seemed to us fundamental to this exercise of interpretation to also consider the different itineraries of cinema in the public debate of the 1920s and 1930s, since it is hypothesized here that Humberto Mauro was a director capable of blurring the boundaries between the fictional and the documentary, between the commercial and the educational, what makes him a singular personality in this history.

Keywords: Educational cinema. Documentary. Humberto Mauro.

¹ The authors thank FAPESP and CNPq for the research funding. English version by Ana Paula Carneiro Renesto. E-mail: anapaularenesto@gmail.com.

Resumo

O cinema educativo foi experiência efêmera na história da cinematografia brasileira, mas fundamental à compreensão, senão dos primórdios das políticas para o setor no país, ao menos, de um capítulo fundamental das práticas de filmagem dos diretores. Da fronteira entre a ficção e o documentário e entre a política de patrocínio público e a criação autoral, o presente ensaio pretende explorar esse já bem cuidado tema da historiografia que é o cinema educativo. A partir de revisão bibliográfica, pesquisa documental e fílmica, e amparado numa bibliografia interdisciplinar que se assenta primordialmente na História Cultural e na Sociologia da Cultura, o principal escopo do artigo foi relacionar as produções dirigidas por Humberto Mauro no INCE ao ambiente de discussão das políticas de controle do cinema nos anos 1930. Pareceu-nos fundamental a esse exercício de interpretação também considerar os diferentes itinerários do cinema no debate público dos anos 1920 e 1930, uma vez que se toma por hipótese aqui que Humberto Mauro foi um realizador capaz de embaçar as fronteiras entre o ficcional e o documentário, entre o comercial e o educativo, o que o torna personalidade singular nessa história.

Palavras-chave: Cinema Educativo. Documentário. Humberto Mauro.

Resumen

El cine educativo fue una experiencia efímera en la historia de la cinematografía brasileña, pero fundamental para la comprensión, si no de los inicios de las políticas para el sector en el país, al menos, de un capítulo fundamental de las prácticas cinematográficas de los directores. Desde la frontera entre la ficción y el documental, y entre las políticas de mecenazgo público y la creación autoral, este ensayo pretende explorar este tema ya bien cuidado en la historiografía, que es el cine educativo. A partir de una revisión bibliográfica, investigación documental y fílmica, y apoyado en una bibliografía interdisciplinaria basada principalmente en la Historia Cultural y la Sociología de la Cultura, el alcance principal del artículo fue relacionar las producciones dirigidas por Humberto Mauro en el INCE con la discusión de las políticas de control del cine en la década de 1930. Ha parecido fundamental para este ejercicio de interpretación considerar también los diferentes itinerarios del cine en el debate público de los años 20 y 30, ya que se plantea aquí la hipótesis de que Humberto Mauro fue un cineasta capaz de difuminar las fronteras entre lo ficticio y lo documental, entre lo comercial y lo educativo, lo que le convierte en una personalidad singular en esta historia.

Palabras clave: Cine educativo. Documental. Humberto Mauro.

Introduction: an ephemeral experience

Alongside a series of scientific and technological innovations that have been incorporated into the daily life of production and entertainment in Brazil since the end of the 19th century, cinema appeared “as a summary of other inventions, capable of surpassing other forms of mass communication” (FABRIS, 1994, p. 99). For many of its observers, it was a means of communication capable of shaping new behaviors² and of, according to many of its historians, often creating types and myths of the Brazilian nationality. Theme especially dear to those interested in the Brazilian culture at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, cinema was understood as a vehicle for the dissemination of fashions and modernity from the northern western hemisphere in Brazil (SEVCENKO, 2004). As Sevckenko explains, in the predominance of American cinema, films were only one part of an industry which also had “a bountiful source of magazines, information, gossip, photographs, posters, souvenirs, records, fan clubs, and tours” (SEVCENKO, 2014, p. 92).

The concern with reactions to the advance of consumption of the so-called posed films – and above all commercial films – brings together studies on public investment in educational cinema. Still in the 1930s, due to the publication of Serrano and Venâncio Filho (1930) and Canuto (ALMEIDA, 1931) and even the presence of the theme in educational journals such as *Boletim de Educação Pública* (1930) and *Escola Nova* (1931), educational cinema was seen as an adequate alternative to commercial cinema and its possible consequences on the moral values and social costumes of the time. The historiography of education focused on the study of this type of film production and highlighted its exploration as a means of popular education.³ The presence of educational cinema in the strategies of development of the national, of dissemination of science, or in discussions on the didactic resources of mass teaching, was perceived from different perspectives by these studies, which ranged from the study of equipment and its use, and the dissemination of educational film exhibitions in schools, to censorship practices.

Between fiction and documentary, educational cinema became an ephemeral experience in the history of cinematography, since it was unable to create a tradition and institutionally it lasted about thirty years.⁴ Nonetheless, educational cinema is fundamental to the understanding – if not since the beginning of the policies for cinema in the country – at least, of a fundamental chapter of the filming practices of Brazilian directors. It is from this boundary between fiction and documentary, between the public sponsorship policy and authorial creation, that this article intends to explore this much studied theme of historiography: educational cinema. Thus, this article’s main goal was to relate the productions directed by Humberto Mauro (1897-1983) at Instituto Nacional do Cinema Educativo (INCE [National Institute of Educational Cinema]) and the environment of the discussion on cinema control policies in the 1930s. For this exercise of interpretation, it seemed essential to consider the different itineraries of posed cinema and of educational cinema in the public debate of the 1920s and 1930s, since we assumed that director Humberto Mauro was able to blur the

² See the compilations of critiques by Almeida (2016) and Meirelles (2017).

³ See especially Vidal (1994, p. 24-28), Monteiro (2006), Paulilo (2002, p. 169-192), and Costa and Paulilo (2015, p. 37-59).

⁴ Considering the existence of the Instituto Nacional de Cinema Educativo (INCE [National Institute of Educational Cinema]), from 1937 to 1966, as we shall discuss later.

boundaries between fiction and documentary, between commercial and educational cinema. As a result, Mauro is conceived as someone with a unique personality⁵ in the history of the Brazilian educational cinema.

From this initial hypothesis, we organized our considerations in four parts. The first one considers the conditions of cinema diffusion in Brazil and presents some thoughts on the beginning of cinema exhibitions. The next part addresses educational cinema itself and its diffusion conditions. The analysis focuses on the reforms of public education in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo cities from 1929 to 1931 and seeks the main characteristics of its promotion before the centralization brought about by the establishment of INCE. The third part of this article is dedicated to INCE, an institution established during *Estado Novo*. The study of INCE allows us to partially understand of the actions of the federal government to promote the image of a modern Brazil through cinema. Humberto Mauro is certainly the main director of INCE's films, with 357 productions (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 16). Not only did he move in the intricate network of political-institutional relationships that allowed the production of state-sponsored films at the time, but also had a career that is relevant to understanding how cinema contributed to the visual development of the nation and of the image of the "Brazilian man". Therefore, we end our reflections by addressing the relationships that, through Humberto Mauro's production at INCE, one can establish between the way educational cinema was thought in the 1920s, the role of INCE in promoting the production of this cinema, and the films that were actually made.

The interpretive perspective from which we understand this relationship associates the comprehension arising from discussions centered around a historiography concerned with the circulation of cultural models and appropriation to the ways in which the analysis of the contents of the works is suggested by the Sociology of Culture and Art practiced by Raymond Williams and Pierre Francastel, as well as by Ernst Gombrich's Theory of Art. From Williams (1992) and Francastel (1993) we used the notion of art as a human tool for building values and not as simple reflections of the society from which it arises. From Gombrich (1996), we used the notion that the artist, rather than just copying reality in his works, works from schemes born from a tradition, which is essential for the existence of some form of communication with his or her audience.⁶ These authors have in common the fact that they help us look at cinema as a form of visual thinking,⁷ which, in the case analyzed here, was valued and mobilized by intellectuals and rulers as an educational tool.

Thus, on the one hand, we are concerned with circumscribing the conditions for the emergence of educational cinema in Brazil and its relationships with film culture. On the other hand, in order to show the changes in the understanding of educational in INCE's film productions, we explore as picturesque the appropriation of the Brazilian visual tradition by Humberto Mauro in his creations. To this aim, our analysis sought to benefit from the intersections between the cultural history of education and the concerns with the system of signs through which meaning is given to art.

⁵ The concept of unique personality comes from Georg Simmel's sociology, particularly when he discusses authors such as Goethe, Michelangelo, Botticelli, or Beethoven, whose "personality expresses an individuality distinct from social individuality" (WAIZBORT, 2000, p. 234).

⁶ On Ernst Gombrich's method, see Ginzburg (2003).

⁷ Visual thinking, like every form of thought, is the result of an accumulation of knowledge, of a consolidated tradition, and it must be studied focusing on its language. Here we use Pierre Francastel's Sociology of Art, which considers the existence of a plastic or visual thinking that allows humanity to communicate its wisdom through the images it creates of itself (FRANCASTEL, 1993, p. 4). On Francastel's visual thinking, see also Fabris (2003). On the subject, see also Trevisan (2019).

Cinema in Brazil

The first fixed movie theater in Brazil was inaugurated in 1897 in Rio de Janeiro by the Segreto, a family of Italian immigrants. Its main owner was Paschoal Segreto. Initially called "Salão de Novidades" [Salon of Novelties], this place was soon called "Salão Paris no Rio" [Salon Paris in Rio], because cinema was a French novelty. One of the first films in Brazil was made on June 19, 1898, when Alfonso Segretto, Paschoal's son, recorded images of Guanabara Bay after returning from one of his trips abroad to acquire new equipment. Until recently, this was believed to be the first Brazilian film, but now it is known that the first national productions date back to 1897: for example, the film *Maxixe*, by Italian Vittorio di Maio (SIMIS, 1996, p. 19),⁸ which also featured city views.⁹

Therefore, Brazilian cinema was born from the action of Italians,¹⁰ and with an interest in capturing the "real"¹¹. From then on, there was a lot of filming of images of the city. Nevertheless, critic Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes points out that the first ten years of Brazilian cinema were very poor, mainly due to the lack of electricity:¹²

The first ten years of cinema in Brazil are extremely poor. There are few fixed movie projection rooms, which are practically limited to Rio and São Paulo, and the numerous itinerant cinemas did not change much the physiognomy of a market of little significance. The main justification for the extremely slow pace of development of the film trade from 1896 to 1906 must be looked for in the Brazilian backwardness in electricity. In March 1907, the use of the power produced by Ribeirão das Lages plant had immediate consequences for cinema in Rio de Janeiro. In a few months, twenty rooms for viewing films were installed, most of them on the newly built Avenida Central, which had already debunked old Rua do Ouvidor as the commercial, worldly, artistic and journalistic center of the Federal Capital (GOMES, 1980, p. 41).

This scenario changed from 1908 on, when Brazilian cinematographic production began to gain momentum. Even though there were already projections by itinerant cinemas, this is when movie theaters started to open in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, which also meant a sudden growth in the film trade, which influenced the national film production (GOMES, 1980, p.19-24).

The expansion of the number of movie theaters was crucial for the establishment of a cinematographic culture in the country. After all, the ability to interpret language based on film juxtaposed images is part of our perception system; but let us not forget that it took time for us to make these quick, automatic and reflexive connections that give meaning to what we watch (CARRIÈRE, 1995, p. 15). Raymond Williams (1992, p. 130) argues that the perception of art

⁸ The author cites the references to the news in footnote 3 and translates the name from Italian to Vitor de Maio.

⁹ See <http://salasdecinemadesp.blogspot.co.uk/2011/06/imigrantes-italianos-pioneiros-na.html>. Access on Feb. 10, 2021.

¹⁰ According to Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes, for a long time, the technicians involved in the production of national films were Italian (GOMES, 1996, p. 30).

¹¹ In Social Sciences the discussion on the real is complex and, especially when applied to cinematographic analyses (mainly in documentaries), can lead to other good discussions. In light of this, it is worth pointing out that in no sociological tradition, not even the closest to a positivist perspective (Durkheim), the real is thought of as immediate reality; rather, it is always thought of as something sociologically constructed from a method. On this subject, see Menezes (2003).

¹² Although the lack of electricity did not, for example, prevent cinema from advancing in cities like Curitiba (SIMIS, 1996, p. 70).

depends on understanding its “signal system”, which includes its space of exhibition (or projection, in the case of cinema). Therefore, from 1908 on, in Brazil, there is a developing cinematographic visual culture, and a significant establishment of movie theaters:

In exchange for the coffee it exported, Brazil imported even toothpicks, so it was normal to also import entertainment produced in the great centers of Europe and North America. In a few months, national cinema was eclipsed and the constantly developing Brazilian film market was entirely available for foreign film. Despite being entirely on the sidelines and almost ignored by the public, a very weak Brazilian cinema survived (GOMES, 1980, p.11).

As Sheila Schvarzman points out, this situation led to the making of “non-artistic” films: propaganda works – in general political, which were called “cavação” [digging]. The success of those films allowed the film production space, which until then was limited to the Federal Capital, to expand to other regions of the country.¹³ Jean-Claude Bernardet argues that the “cavação” phenomenon served as support for Brazilian cinema at the time:

Europeans and North Americans filled Brazil with fiction films, because the industry had been developing exclusively in function plot films. However, producers who reached international markets did not have an interest in, say, municipal matters. This created a free area, away from the competition from foreign producers. The production of newsreels and documentaries – or naturals, as they were called at the time – developed. A survey of film projections in São Paulo until 1935 indicates that no less than 51 Brazilian newsreels appeared on São Paulo screens in this period (BERNARDET, 1979, p.23).

Anita Simis advances on another type of explanation by exploring distributor Júlio Llorente's argument: “the poor quality of national films and their consequent low profitability led to their being distributed by isolated agents, on a commission basis, in the poorest regions, in small towns despised by the big agencies” (SIMIS, 1996, p. 79). Another aspect of the film production in Brazil is educational.

Since the 1920s, educational cinema was part of official discussions regarding popular education. Considered a way to promote national integration through images, cinema was part of the ideal of transmitting the culture that permeated the fields of science, geography and history. Films with scientific content¹⁴ differed from the cinema called recreational by educators, which, in the 1920s, was already shown in almost 700 Brazilian movie theaters.

¹³ According to Paulo Emilio Sales Gomes, from 1925 on, the national cinematographic production doubled and its quality improved since, in addition to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo cities, the capital cities of Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais states also started producing films; besides, in Minas Gerais this movement could be noticed even in small towns – certainly a reference to Cataguases, where Humberto Mauro started his professional life as a filmmaker (GOMES, 1980, p.13).

¹⁴ Although, at the time, they were called “natural” films, as opposed to “posed” or fiction films. The term documentary, as we currently use it, was born with Scotsman John Grierson, in 1926, when he referred to the documentary value of the film *Moana*, by Flaherty (GRIERSON, 1926).

Educational Cinema in Brazil

Also in the first decade of the 20th century, based on Pathé's scientific collections, Edgard Roquette-Pinto organized the first collection of documentary films at Museu Nacional. The films' theme was science as evidenced by some titles: *Borboletas e Mariposas*, *Abelhas e Aranhas*, *A terra dos Pássaros* [Butterflies and Moths, Bees and Spiders, The Land of Birds]. In 1912, Edgard Roquette-Pinto filmed *Os Nhambiquaras* during his activities at the Rondon Commission.¹⁵ The use of the moving image as an educational resource in schools was proposed by Fernando de Azevedo in Distrito Federal, between 1927 and 1930, and by Lourenço Filho in São Paulo, in 1931, as part of a pedagogical renewal program aimed at expanding popular education.

In fact, in the capital of the Republic, Decree 2940, of November 22, 1928, the exhibition of Educational Cinema in the following year, and the texts by Jonathas Serrano (1930) in *Boletim de Educação Pública*, as well as the publication, by Serrano and Venâncio Filho, (1930) of the book *Cinema e Educação* in the Bibliotheca de Educação collection, directed by Lourenço Filho at Melhoramentos publishing house, contributed a lot in this regard. Likewise, in São Paulo, Lourenço Filho promoted a significant discussion on the use of educational cinema in schools by publishing, in 1931, an issue of *Escola Nova* journal dedicated to the subject. In the same year, Canuto Mendes published the book *Cinema contra Cinema* and claimed the regulation of cinema as a business. Lourenço Filho, Canuto Mendes and Jonathas Serrano had a very similar argument, as highlighted by Morettin, when commenting on the preface that Lourenço Filho wrote for Canuto Mendes' books: for them, the cure for uneducational cinema is educational cinema, a good oriented cinema (MORETTIN, 1995, p.14).

After the establishment of the Ministry of Education and Health, it did not take long for measures aimed at centralizing the policies to control film projection and production to appear. In 1931 a commission on cinematographic films was established at the Ministry of Education and Health to discuss censorship. Teixeira de Freitas, Lourenço Filho, Mario Behring, Ademar Gonzaga, Ademar Leite Ribeiro, Jonathas Serrano, and Venâncio Filho – led by Roquette-Pinto – worked on the draft of what later became *Decree 21.240/32*, which, according to Antonacci and Simis, nationalized the film censorship service, which until then had been the responsibility of the local police. In 1932, Roquette-Pinto became the director of the Federal Censorship Commission. However, under his command, censorship had less of a moral interest, much discussed at the time, than of cultural control of what was projected. Just as it had been done on the radio in the previous decade,¹⁶ the idea was to educate through cinema, deciding what could be useful and really educational for Brazilians. As explained by Costa and Paulilo (2015, p.54):

Decree 21,240/32 provided for the reduction of taxes on virgin film, which could contribute to the import and production of commercial films of all genres. At the same time, it mandated the showing of educational films before feature films and established cultural

¹⁵ It is worth remembering that, even though for purposes other than projections in schools, another important character in the construction of the Brazilian documentary was Major Thomas Reis, cameraman of Marshal Rondon's Expedições de Fronteiras das Missões [Missions Border Expeditions]. His first movie was *Rituais e Festas Bororo*, 1917 (TACCA, 2002, p.187-219). Some authors suggest that Reis' film can be considered the first documentary film in the world, made even before this term existed (NOVAES; CUNHA, HENLEY, 2017).

¹⁶ Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1923, which was incorporated by the Ministry of Education and Health in 1936. For Roquette-Pinto, the radio should be conceived as a "vehicle of culture and an instrument of contact between Brazilians" (SCHWARZMAN, 2004, p.13).

ensorship. The analysis and classification of the films were to be in charge of a commission composed of a professor from the Ministry of Education and Health, an educator from ABE and by the director of the National Museum, which demonstrates the strength of the defenders of exclusively educational cinema in this process.

From 1928 to 1937 both the scope of educational cinema and its institutional apparatus were defined by specific legislation. In the dealings of nearly a decade of initiatives around educational cinema, the establishment of INCE was a special chapter.

INCE

The intense appreciation of national history in the period, the important initiatives to incorporate national culture in arts and literature, and a systematic effort to understand the country through the study of its origins increased reflection on the national past. This appreciation movement, especially perceived in sociology and anthropology, animated the study on African descendants, rural populations and immigrants (CANDIDO, 1999, p. 79). In the Modernism of the 1920s, this interest in national issues, in a Brazilian identity, was already noticeable, but it became even more evident and routinized from the 1930s onwards, especially during Estado Novo, in 1937, due to the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas (ARANTES, 1997, p. 42-43).

As part of a large-scale national project, INCE was organized in 1936 as a key part in the creation of the image of a modern Brazil, which did not lose its colonial past references. Part of the so-called “official modernism of the 1930s”, the establishment of INCE, as well as Estado Novo's sponsorship of the visual arts and architecture, aimed to give meaning to a project for a nation which had a great foundation in visual culture. Around 1937, under the leadership of Gustavo Capanema, the Ministry of Education and Health developed a series of efforts to promote the construction of a cultural identity for Brazil. The headquarters of the Ministry of Education and Health, in the Federal Capital, are an emblem of the modernism of the time, a mix of Le Corbusier's modern style and local references, such as the images composed by Candido Portinari for the murals, which depicted the cycles of the Brazilian economy, highlighting the figure of the black.¹⁷ This building became a landmark of Brazilian architecture, a true emblem of the nationalist character of the period, when the city itself became the “stage of the modern” (SEGAWA, 2002, p.19).

Based on the assertions of Roquette-Pinto, director of INCE from 1936 to 1947, in addition to the educational and cultural character of the films created there, INCE worked on scientific research (ROQUETTE-PINTO, 1938, p. 18). Initially cultivated in museums and in some literary works,¹⁸ at INCE scientific knowledge became one of the vectors of the construction of the sought-after national identity, shaping an image of the so-called “Brazilian man” (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 91).

The model came from outside. In 1924, an offshoot of the League of Nations¹⁹ appeared in France: Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle (IICI [International Institute of

¹⁷ On Portinari's social painting, see Fabris (1990).

¹⁸ As, for example, in the book *Os Sertões*, by Euclides da Cunha, 1897, which proposed that social groups could be explained from the physical environment, which thus links it to the deterministic currents of the time (CANDIDO, 1999, p.64).

¹⁹ The League of Nations was created at the end of World War I with a view to providing a new diplomatic body for the six major world powers, namely, Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain. At their first meeting, held in 1919, a technical committee was created to work on cultural as well as economic and social issues, such as child development, drug use and prostitution, work (International Labor Organization), traffic and communication, and health and hygiene (DRUICK, 2007, p.80-97).

Intellectual Cooperation]). It cultivated the idea of educational cinema as an essential element in a transnational modernization project after World War I (DRUŽICK, 2007, p. 82). However, not until 1928 did the great model appear: Istituto Internazionale per la Cinematografia Educativa (IICE [International Institute for Educational Cinema]). It was based in Rome under the aegis of Mussolini and existed until 1937. Luciano de Feo was one of its main names. Roquette-Pinto, who traveled through Europe in the years before the establishment of INCE, was deeply interested in what was done in Italy, although he did not agree with the non-separation, by IICE, of popular movies and school movies, the opposite of what he found in Germany. According to the anthropologist, in Germany there was a clear separation between cinema "in general", which was linked to the Ministry of Propaganda, and educational cinema, which was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. However, as Sheila Schwarzmann observes, the line separating education and propaganda in Nazi Germany was fragile (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 203). Anyhow, in his European tour, Roquette-Pinto found models for the creation of an educational film institute, recognizing the contributions of each institution visited, but noting that in Brazil there were specific characteristics to be considered, especially so as to separate education from propaganda (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 205).

The name Roquette-Pinto, therefore, is inseparable from the history of INCE. Firstly, because of his work in creating a cinematheque at the National Museum, in 1910, which became the first collection of anthropological films in Brazil, to which the productions of the Rondon Commission were later aggregated. According to Roquette-Pinto (1938, p. 10), this triggered the use of cinema for educational and scientific research purposes in Brazil.²⁰ Another contribution, as we have seen, was his research on the nationalist cinema made in Europe at the time, especially Italian fascist cinema and German Nazi cinema. He also showed great enthusiasm for the level of production in England and the United States (ROQUETTE-PINTO, 1937). One can think of Roquette-Pinto as a kind of link between what was done in terms of educational cinema in the world (Europe and the USA) and in Brazil. In this sense, INCE, which was definitively included "in the framework of public services" of the Ministry of Education and Health by Decree 378 of January 13, 1937, aimed to maintain a film library to: serve both official and private educational establishments; organize and edit educational films; exchange films produced by INCE with other national or foreign bodies of the genre; edit "discs or tapes" with classes, conferences and lectures by "remarkable professors" for single sale or rent; and publish a journal dedicated to the use of technical processes, such as radio, cinema, phonograph etc. in education.²¹

In these terms, INCE was born as part of the project to create a modern Brazilian nation, which at the time was in the process of industrialization. Cinema – within this plan and thought of at the same time as an educational and propaganda tool of the government – became a way of educating the masses, especially those who lived in the interior of the country and had little or no education, as it can be seen in the speech given by Getúlio Vargas at Associação de Produtores Cinematográficos [Association of Film Producers], in 1934:

Cinema will thus be the *book of luminous images*, from which our seaside and rural populations will learn to love Brazil, adding confidence in the destinies of Motherland. For the mass of illiterate people, this will be the easiest, most perfect, and most impressive pedagogical discipline. For the educated, for those responsible for the success of our administration, it will be an admirable school. (apud SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p.135).

²⁰ It is worth mentioning that important cinematographic productions arose from the Rondon Commission, such as the aforementioned documentary by Major Thomas Reis, *Rituais e festas Bororo* [Bororo Rituals and Parties], 1917.

²¹ CPDOC. *História do Cinema Educativo no Brasil*, GC 1935.00.00/2 (Mimeographed).

Although the government considered educational films important, as shown above, this project was initially shaken by the establishment of Departamento de Propaganda e Difusão Cultural (DPDC [Propaganda and Cultural Diffusion Department]), in 1934, which meant the Ministry of Education and Health would no longer be responsible for cinema or radio. Gustavo Capanema managed to reverse this by separating “spectacle” cinema, which was placed under DPDC, from “educational” cinema, which INCE, a future body to be promoted in that decade, became responsible for (BARRENHA, 2018, p. 493).²²

Educational Film Achievements

Under the mediation of Roquete-Pinto between Brazil and abroad or the work of INCE commissions and their policies, there were filmmakers. One of them was Humberto Mauro,²³ who stands out in the visual construction of the nation and the image of the “Brazilian man”. Among all the filmmakers at the time, he was one of the few who engaged in the production of educational films, which he did during thirty years of work at INCE, when he directed more than two hundred short or feature films.²⁴

Born in Volta Redonda in 1897, Mauro started working in cinema in Cataguases, a town in Minas Gerais state, and became part of the grand strategy of building of a representation of a modern nation implemented by INCE, since his first works at the Institute. *O Descobrimento do Brasil*, a 1937 historically-themed film based on the Letter by Pero Vaz de Caminha, is emblematic of the beginning of Humberto Mauro's activities as a film director in the body directed by Roquete-Pinto.²⁵ In this film, Mauro presents an image of our discovery and from that he creates myths of a nationality (TREVISAN, 2016).

A year after the release of his first fiction film, in 1925, *Valadião, o cratera* (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 24-30) and while filming *Thesouro Perdido* (1927),²⁶ Mauro met Adhemar Gonzaga, journalist and film critic of *Palcos e Telas* magazine. Gonzaga was one of the creators of the magazine *Cinearte* and had a modern point of view of film productions. Contrary to “cavação” and documentary films in general, Gonzaga defended a cinema free from its connection with literature and theatre and considered the Hollywood model of making films a great reference. The so-called unstaged cinema (which was interested in filming black people, poverty, exoticized nature) was criticized by Gonzaga and other critics of *Cinearte*, in favor of the so-called “posed cinema” (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 31-35).

²² DPDC was renamed Departamento Nacional de Propaganda (DNP [National Propaganda Department]) in 1934 and during Estado Novo it became Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda (DIP [Press and Propaganda Department]). (CPDOC. *A Era Vargas: dos anos 20 a 1945* (<https://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas/anos37-45/EducacaoCulturaPropaganda/DIP>), access on July 7, 2021). To access the documentation on these bodies, see CPDOC, GC g 1934.09.22, *Documentos sobre o Departamento de Propaganda e Difusão Cultural (DPDC) e sobre o Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* (<https://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal/gc/textual/documentos-sobre-o-departamento-de-propaganda-e-difusao-cultural-dpdc-e-sobre-o-departamento-de-imprensa-e-propaganda-inclui-comentarios-sobre-a-o>, GC g 1934.09.22).

²³ Humberto Mauro was invited by Roquete-Pinto to work at INCE, and he was officially hired on March 28, 1936 as cinematographic technician (CPDOC, GC 35.00.00).

²⁴ INCE existed until 1966, when it became Instituto Nacional do Cinema (INC [National Institute of Cinema]) (CENTRO Técnico Audiovisual, <http://ctav.gov.br/acervo/filmes-inc/>, access on July 7, 2021).

²⁵ Despite being supported by the newly founded Institute, the film was commissioned by Instituto do Cacau da Bahia (MORETTIN, 2013). It is worth remembering that even though INCE was officially established in 1937, its first productions, dedicated to scientific dissemination, began in 1936 (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p. 208).

²⁶ For a study on this phase of Humberto Mauro's cinema, see Gomes (1974).

Mauro and Gonzaga first worked together in Rio de Janeiro, where they made the film *Lábios sem Beijos* (1930), at Cinédia production company, which was owned by Adhemar Gonzaga. Mauro had his own way of working and was always interested in landscapes and the image of common people, while Gonzaga had a modern view, in tune with what was done in Hollywood.²⁷ According to Sheila Schvarzman, the result of this meeting, in *Lábios sem Beijos*, is that two films end up overlapping in the same production:

That of Gonzaga, its producer: a luxurious film in terms of the environments, costumes and characterizations that build an image of wealth and sophistication of the wealthy youth of the Federal Capital; and another, that of Humberto Mauro, which ironizes these beliefs and slowly and fondly focuses on the landscapes of Rio de Janeiro (SCHVARZMAN, 2004, p.69).

Humberto Mauro's particular way of working is a mark, with films in which the landscape is worked on with the care typical of an idyllic painting, and in which the plot itself often goes to the background. His picturesque view resembles that of plastic artists, which is a hallmark of his films (TREVISAN, 2016, p. 219).

The picturesque, so valued by Mauro, was a term cleaved by Englishman William Gilpin (1782) in his texts from 1760 on, which are especially condensed in the book *Three essays: on picturesque beauty; on picturesque travel; and on sketching landscape: to which is added a poem, On landscape painting, 1792*.²⁸ As elements of a painting with a picturesque character, the author suggested a visual construction with a variety of figures (animals, plants, people, vehicles) and the use of contrasts between them (GILPIN, 1982, p. 68), such as a ruined building next to beautiful vegetation or else of a mature man next to a young woman (GILPIN, 1982, p. 23). According to Ernst Gombrich, over time, the picturesque taste or view ceased to value ruined castles or bridges and started paying attention to simpler things such as a sailing boat or a windmill. Therefore, the picturesque is not just a way of making paintings or enjoying them, but a way of appreciating nature in its "unpretentious beauty", as if it were a painting (GOMBRICH, 1972, p. 330). We understand Mauro's view within this cleavage, which differentiated him from Adhemar Gonzaga's propositions and his yearning for a more Hollywood style cinema. In Mauro's educational films, however, he was able to advance a lot in this "way of seeing",²⁹ especially in the short films of the *Brasilianas* series,³⁰ made between 1945 and 1956. Of course, this view could already be seen in fictional works at the beginning of his career, such as *Sangue Mineiro* (1929), in which there seems to be a deliberate effort to "build what he thought was the national and the typical of Minas Gerais" (SCHWARZMAN, 2004, p.54). But at INCE Mauro had the time, space and institutional structure to give wings to his picturesque view.

Nonetheless, as it can be seen, Humberto Mauro's work was not limited to national themes or educational cinema. He also worked on a variety of subjects – ranging from animation for children (*O Dragãozinho Manso - Jonjoca* - 1942 B&W) to the approach of

²⁷ Interestingly, for John Grierson, one of the creators of the notion of documentary film, Hollywood was a model for filmmaking for its ability to captivate viewers and build public opinion. (HARDY, 1946, p. 12). However, not all Hollywood cinema, which generally simplified life and worked for its own benefit, but rather the cinema made by Chaplin, Fairbanks, Von Stroheim, Von Sternberg, King Vidor, Harry Langton, Raymond Griffith (HARDY, 1946, p. 36).

²⁸ For this article, we have consulted the French edition (GILPIN, 1982), first published in France in 1799.

²⁹ Here, we use the assertion of John Berger (1999, p. 12), for whom every image incorporates a way of seeing.

³⁰ On the subject, more precisely on the film *Cantos de Trabalho* in this series, see Trevisan (2019).

Brazilian literature (*Meus oito anos*, 1955, from the homonymous poem by Casimiro de Abreu) – and built a careful aesthetic of the landscape, which was capable of expressing itself through the picturesque. In 1952, in an INCE independent project,³¹ he worked on another fiction film, *Canto da Saudade*, in which elements that value the countryside, folklore and the national past are much explored. In 1964, he produced the short film *A velha a fiar*, which became a classic and is considered the first Brazilian music video.³²

It is rather difficult to make generalizations about Humberto Mauro's cinema, even if we limit ourselves to his universe of creation within the Institute – after all, just for INCE he made more than 300 films. However, we agree with Sheila Schwarzmans's propositions about there being a clear difference between the films made in the first phase at INCE, from 1936 to 1946 (when Roquette-Pinto was ahead of the Institute) and what he accomplished after that. Before, a great country should be shown, with an emphasis on science and historical figures. After Roquette-Pinto leaves and Paschoal Leme takes office, Mauro had more freedom to work on his own references, and then the rural world, which hardly appeared in his first years at INCE, gains space. The rural world materializes in an emblematic way in the *Brasilianas* and *Higiene Rural* series.³³

In any case, it can be said that the cinema made by Humberto Mauro was no longer the one that educational reformers spread and propagated in the federal capital and in Sao Paulo as educational cinema in the 1920s and 1930s. However, it is reasonable to notice, within the diversity of his cinema production, what was thought to be feasible at the time: to present notions taken as true through a text that was scientifically correct and appropriate for teaching; and to “faithfully” reproduce the facts that occurred in the past, with the aid of subject matter experts, as Mauro did with Taunay when directing *O descobrimento do Brasil* (1937) or *Os Bandeirantes* (1940).³⁴

Final thoughts

The history of Brazilian cinema in its early days is mixed with the history of educational cinema and, in this sense, has a direct relationship with the State. In this context, Humberto Mauro is one of the most important names. No wonder Glauber Rocha, one of the central figures of the so-called “Cinema Novo”, a Brazilian cinematographic movement of the 1960s, recalls Humberto Mauro to elect him the founder of Brazilian cinema (ROCHA, 1978, p. 80). Even though the history of Brazilian cinema precedes him, Mauro has a solid work at the service of building – in a key that mixes the fictional and the documentary, the folkloric and the historical, the countryside and the city – an image of Brazil. For that reason, he provides those interested in the study of the Brazilian visual thinking³⁵ with abundant material to be explored, and he filmically suggests a way of seeing Brazil.

³¹ This film was made at Rancho Alegre Studios, in Volta Grande (MG).

³² A sequel to the movie *Prisoner of Rock* (Directed by Richard Thorpe, 1957), in which Elvis Presley sings the song *Jailhouse Rock*, is considered the first music video in history. The performance drew attention for its agility, making it a model (BRYAM, 2011, p. 47). In Brazil, the short film *A velha a fiar*, directed by Humberto Mauro in 1964, is considered the first music video (Guilherme BRYAM, *A autoria no videoclipe brasileiro*, op. cit., p. 15), even though the superposition of songs and images had already been performed by the director in popular songs of the *Brasilianas* series (1945-1955), such as *Casinha pequenina* (1945) and *Azulão* (1948).

³³ On this subject, see Schwarzman (2004, p. 232) and Schwarzman (2018, p. 508-525).

³⁴ For a detailed survey of the historical references, including careful iconographic work, of these two films, see Morettin (2013).

³⁵ Here I return to the concept of Francastel (1993), as indicated at the beginning of this article.

As it can be seen, this relationship between education and cinema in Brazil is not disconnected from what was happening in different parts of the world at the same time – and one of the central elements of this approach is the participation of intellectuals not only in film projects, but also in publications designed to promote (or even build) the strength of cinema as an educational tool. The relationship with the State is another key element in understanding this phenomenon, even though it would be hasty to label all cinema created in this context as government propaganda. As we have seen, Roquette-Pinto, one of the pioneers in the institutionalization of educational cinema in Brazil, opposed this mixture. Humberto Mauro, in turn, appears as a key part of this process, for being the most involved with film production at INCE, where he worked until INCE ceased to exist, in 1967.

References

- ALMEIDA, G. de. (2016). *Cinematographos. Antologia da crítica cinematográfica*. (Organização de Donny Correia e Marcelo Tápia). São Paulo: Editora Unesp.
- ALMEIDA, J. C. M. de. (1931). *Cinema contra cinema*. Bases gerais para um esboço de organização do cinema educativo no Brasil. São Paulo: Cia. Editora Nacional.
- Anuário estatístico do Brasil*. Ano VI – 1941/1945, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, Conselho Nacional de Estatística, Rio de Janeiro, Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, acervo Real Gabinete Português de Leitura.
- ARANTES, P. E. (1987). Providências de um crítico literário na periferia do capitalismo. In: O. B. F. ARANTES, P. E. ARANTES. *Sentido da formação: três estudos sobre Antonio Candido*, Gilda Mello e Souza e Lúcio Costa. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
- BARRENHA, N. C. (2018). E o Estado entra em cena (1932-1966). In: F. P. RAMOS; S. SCHWARZMANN (orgs.). *Nova história do cinema brasileiro*, v. 1. São Paulo: Edições Sesc, pp. 490-507.
- BERGER, J. (1999). *Modos de ver*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco.
- BERNARDET, J-C. (1979). *O que é cinema*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- BRYAM, G. (2011). *A autoria no videoclipe brasileiro: estudo da obra de Roberto Berlinder, Oscar Rodrigues Alves e Mauricio Eça*. Tese de doutorado (Meios e Processos audiovisuais), ECA, USP, São Paulo.
- CANDIDO, A. (1999). *Iniciação à literatura brasileira*. São Paulo: Humanitas: FFLCH-USP.
- CARRIÈRE, J-C. (1995). *A linguagem secreta do cinema*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira.
- COSTA, P. C. da; PAULILO, A. L. (2015). Arautos do improvável, pioneiros da radiofonia e da cinematografia educacional no Brasil (1920-1930). *Educação em Revista*, Belo Horizonte, vol. 31, nº 2, p. 37-59. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0102-4698132459>
- CPDOC. (S/D). *A Era Vargas: dos anos 20 a 1945*. <https://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas1/anos37-45/EducacaoCulturaPropaganda/DIP>, access on 07/07/2021

CPDOC. (S/D). *CARTA de contratação de Humberto Mauro como técnico cinematográfico*. Datilografado, Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, GC 35.00.00, Acervo do CPDOC.

CPDOC. (S/D). *Documentos sobre o Departamento de Propaganda e Difusão Cultural (DPDC) e sobre o Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda*. Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, GC g 1934.09.22, Acervo do CPDOC. <https://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/arquivo-pessoal/gc/textual/documentos-sobre-o-departamento-de-propaganda-e-difusao-cultural-dpdc-e-sobre-o-departamento-de-imprensa-e-propaganda-inclui-comentarios-sobre-a-o>, access on 07/07/2021.

CPDOC (1938). *História do Cinema Educativo no Brasil*. Instituto Nacional de Cinema Educativo, 22 de novembro de 1938, GC 1935.00.00/2, Acervo do CPDOC. https://www.docvirt.com/docreader.net/docreader.aspx?bib=ARQ_GC_G&pasta=GC%20g%201934.09.22&pagfis=14498, access on 07/07/2021.

DRUÏCK, Z. (2007). The International Educational Cinematograph Institute, Reactionary Modernism, and the Formation of Film Studies. In: *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 16 (1), p. 80-97. Available at: <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cjfs.16.1.80>. Acesso em: 27 ago. 2020. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjfs.16.1.80>

FABRIS, A. (1990). *Portinari, pintor social*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

FABRIS, A. (2003). O pensamento visual. In *Estudos SOCINE de Cinema - Ano IV* São Paulo: Editora Panorama, p. 17-25.

FABRIS, M. (1994). Cinema: da modernidade ao modernismo. In: Annateresa FABRIS (org.) *Modernidade e modernismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Mercado de Letras, p. 97-110.

FRANCASTEL, P. (1993). *A realidade figurativa*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

GILPIN, W. (1982). *Trois essais sur le beau pittoresque*. Paris: Éditions du Moniteur.

GINZBURG, C. (2003). De A. Warburg a E. H. Gombrich: Notas sobre um problema de método. In: _____. *Mitos, emblemas, sinais: Morfologia e história*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, p. 41-94.

GOMBRICH, E. H. (1996). Truth and the stereotype. In: _____. *The essential Gombrich*. London: Phaidon.

GOMBRICH, E. H. (1972). *The story of art*. London: Phaidon.

GOMES, P. E. S. (1974). *Humberto Mauro, Cataguases, Cinearte*. São Paulo: Perspectiva: EDUSP.

GOMES, P. E. S. (1996). *Cinema: trajetória no subdesenvolvimento*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra.

GRIERSON, J. (1926). *Moana*. New York Sun.

HARDY, F. (1946). Introduction. In: John GRIERSON. *Grierson on Documentary*. Edited with an introduction by Frosyth HARDY (org.). London: Collins, 14 St. James's Place.

HARDY, F. (1979). *John Grierson: A documentary biography*. Faber and Faber: London.

MEIRELLES, C. (2017). *Crônicas de Educação*. Vol. 5. Organização de Leodegário A. de Azevedo Filho; coordenação André Seffrin. 2ª Edição. São Paulo: Global.

MENEZES, P. (2003). Representificação: as relações (im)possíveis entre cinema documental e conhecimento. In: *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, v.18, n.51. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092003000100007>

MONTEIRO, A. N. (2006). *Cinema educativo como inovação pedagógica na escola primária paulista (1933-1944)*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação). São Paulo: FEUSP.

MORETTIN, E. (1995). Cinema educativo: uma abordagem histórica. *Comunicação e Educação* (4): 13-19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9125.v0i4p13-19>

MORETTIN, E. (2013). *Humberto Mauro, cinema, história*. São Paulo: Alameda.

NOVAES, S. C.; CUNHA, E. T.; HENLEY, P. (2017). The First Ethnographic Documentary? Luiz Thomaz Reis, the Rondon Commission and the Making of *Rituais e Festas Borôro* (1917), *Visual Anthropology*, 30:2, p. 105-146, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2017.1276383>, access on 10.02.2021.

PAULILO, A. L. (2002). A leitura, o cinema e os processos educativos na obra de Jonathas Serrano: problemas metodológicos e precauções morais da pedagogia nos anos 1910-1930. *História da Educação*, Pelotas, vol. 11, p. 169-192.

ROCHA, G. (1978). Humberto Mauro e a situação histórica. In: *Humberto Mauro: sua vida/ sua arte/ sua trajetória no cinema*. Rio de Janeiro: Artenova: Embrafilme.

ROQUETTE-PINTO, E. (1938). Cinema Educativo. Conferência realizada no Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros em 2 de julho de 1938. Separata da revista Estudos Brasileiros, Nº 1. Julho-Agosto.

ROQUETTE-PINTO, E. Carta Ofício ao Ministro Capanema, de 24/02/1937 (Acervo CPDOC/FGV).

SCHVARZMAN, S. (2004). *Humberto Mauro e as imagens do Brasil*. São Paulo: Unesp.

SCHVARZMAN, S. (2018). A educação rural e a participação norte-americana no cinema educativo brasileiro (1954-1959). In: Fernão Pessoa RAMOS; S. SCHWARZMANN (org.). *Nova história do cinema brasileiro*, v. 1. São Paulo: Edições Sesc, pp. 508-525.

CENTRO Técnico Audiovisual. (S.D). *Filmes INC*. <http://ctav.gov.br/acervo/filmes-inc/>, access on 07/07/2021.

SEGAWA, H. (2002). *Arquiteturas no Brasil 1900-1990*. São Paulo: Edusp.

SERRANO, S.; VENÂNCIO FILHO, F. (1930). *Cinema e Educação*. São Paulo: Melhoramentos.

SEVCENKO, N. (2014). *Orfeu estático na metrópole*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

SIMIS, A. (1996). *Estado e cinema no Brasil*. São Paulo: Annablume.

SORIANO, A. R. (2021). Imigrantes italianos, pioneiros da exibição cinematográfica brasileira: Vittorio Di Maio. Site *Resgate histórico dos cinemas de São Paulo*. Available at: <http://salasdecinemadesp.blogspot.co.uk/2011/06/imigrantes-italianos-pioneiros-na.html>, access on 10.02.2021.

TACCA, F. de. (2002). Rituais e festas Bororo: a construção da imagem do índio como "selvagem" na Comissão Rondon. *Rev. Antropol.* [online]. vol. 45, n.1, pp.187-219. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-77012002000100006&lng=en&nrm=iso, access on 10 Feb. 2021. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-77012002000100006>.

TREVISAN, A. R. (2016). Cinema, história e nação: Humberto Mauro e *O Descobrimento do Brasil*. *Estud. sociol.* Araraquara v.21 n.40 p.215-235. <https://periodicos.fclar.unesp.br/estudos/article/view/7477>, access on 07/07/2021.

TREVISAN, A. R. (2019). Imagem, sociedade e conhecimento: da História Cultural à Sociologia da Arte. *Leitura: teoria e prática*, v.37, p.113-128. <https://ltp.emnuvens.com.br/ltp/article/view/810/581>, access on 07/07/2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34112/2317-0972a2019v37n77p113-128>

TREVISAN, A. R. (2019). O cinema educativo de Humberto Mauro: análise do filme Cantos de Trabalho. *Pro-Posições*, Campinas, SP, v.30, p.1–22. Available at: <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/proposic/article/view/8656724>. Access on Feb 10, 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-6248-2017-0015>

VIDAL, D. (1994). Cinemas, laboratórios, ciências físicas e Escola Nova. *Cadernos de Pesquisa*. São Paulo, vol. 89, p. 24-28.

WAIZBORT, L. (2000). *As aventuras de George Simmel*. São Paulo: USP: Editora 34.

WILLIAMS, R. (1992). *Cultura*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.