

De Luca, Tania R.
*Leituras, projetos e (Re)vista(s)
do Brasil (1916-1944)*

Livia Lopes Neves*

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The author of this work, Tania Regina de Luca, a well known researcher both nationally and internationally, graduated in History from the University of São Paulo, an institution where she obtained a Master's and Ph.D. in Social History. Her career is strongly intertwined with debates about the history of Republican Brazil, while her professional activities have concentrated on Historiography, History of the Press, Social History of Culture and Intellectual History. The press in the Vargas Era is the focus of her current research, a topic covered in part by her new book, the subject of this review. While her studies often refer to *Revista do Brasil*, as in *Leituras, projetos e (Re)vista(s) do Brasil*, she nonetheless continues her previous work on Brazilian cultural periodicals, noted for its strong methodological content. What actually adds to the debate is the study of other cultural publications, which provides a broad understanding of the intellectual production of the time in this type of publication. This addition also allows for discussion of readings and projects from and for Brazil, both political and cultural, that added part of the intellectuality involved in these editorial ventures.

Throughout the text the author stresses the importance of perceiving the methodological approach that guides her analysis, which, she says, represents a contribution to the construction of a specific way of approaching printed materials. In this way, the contributions result from some methodological aspects, for example, paying attention to the dynamics of intellectual groups, in relation to support, and also to the presentation of a material and typographic nature (cover, paper, illustrations, advertising, pagination). All these elements, in general, have already been the object of reflection by the author, and are among the important contributions to studies of this nature in the field of

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history. In addition to what has already been mentioned, what gains prominence in her analysis are sources which can contribute to the understanding of relations and actions of mentors and editors of publications: correspondence, memoirs and autobiographical productions.

The sum of these areas of research, as stated in the introduction to the book, demonstrates beforehand the breadth of the author's proposal, someone who has established meaningful dialogue with authors concerned with discussing intellectual sociability, the intellectual field (Brazilian and foreign), and relation which bring intellectuals and the state closer together, or drive them further apart, such as Sirinelli (1990), Pluet-Despatin (1992), Bomeny (2001), Miceli (2001) and Candido (2001), or authors who, like her, have offered contributions to the analysis of newspapers and magazines, such as Doyle (1976), and Capelato Prado (1980), and also those who have studied specific publications such as Bonaventure (1975), Caccese (1971), Guelfi (1987), Lara (1972), Leonel (1976), Napoli (1970) and Romanelli (1981), amongst others.

Divided into four chapters that chronologically follow the most significant phases of its publication, the book compares *Revista do Brasil* with other contemporary Brazilian magazines. This seems a good way of approximating an editorial panorama – though one largely based on an examination of the leading journals of the time, certainly those most studied nowadays – consisting of a long bibliographic review of each of these publications and the consultation of various periodical sources guided by a perspective alert to new concerns. In the studies of the sources cited here, De Luca presents us with an enriched and mature work, which highlights the importance of being attentive to the networks of intellectual sociability and to the fluidity of the intellectual field, as well for the impact of one element on another.

In the first chapter, “*Revista do Brasil* (first and second phases) and modernist periodicals,” the author sought to link the initial phases of the journal with modernist publications founded through *Klaxon*, with her analysis having a dual perspective: synchrony and diachrony, with the first being responsible for the time of publication of each phase of *Revista do Brasil* and for the dialogue with contemporary counterparts. The second perspective is concerned with the different phases and their possible connections. In relation to this, the author presents a graph (reproduced in the book on p.69-70), which features a selection of literary and cultural magazines in circulation between the launch of *Revista do Brasil* in January 1916, and mid-1940, at the conclusion of its fourth phase. Highlighted in this chapter are: *Novíssima*, *Estética*, *A Revista* and *Terra Roxa e outras terras*.

In the second chapter, Cultural and Literary Magazines (1927-1938), de Luca presents us with a panoramic perspective noting that, in terms of longevity, until the beginning of the 1930s short-lived magazines continued to be founded – with the exception of *Revista Nova*, which circulated for more than a year – *Verde*, *Festa*, *Revista da Antropofagia*, *Movimento Brasileiro*, *Boletim de Ariel*, *Revista Acadêmica*, *Lanterna Verde*, *Dom Casmurro*, *Diretrizes*, *Cultura Política* and *Movimento Brasileiro* are given an analysis which is not very detailed, as De Luca stated in the title of the chapter. Discussed here are aspects such as the alignment of editorial projects with political tendencies and elements of the publishing world in the post-1930s scenario, concluding with discussions about the conditions of the exercise of intellectual activity and the proliferation of publishers in Brazil. In a relevant fashion, De Luca stresses the debate about press censorship and the alignment of periodicals with the government during the *Estado Novo* and defends a historiographical analysis that prioritizes the dynamic of positioning at the expense of one-dimensional labels, which as a rule nullifies a lot of complexities involving editorial ventures.

“*Revista do Brasil* (3rd phase): insertion in the literate world, objectives, characteristics and content” is the title of the third chapter, which deals with the resumption of publication of the *Revista do Brasil* in July 1938, with its diversity of subjects and its concerns with national problems, despite having an explicitly elitist cultural project.

In the fourth and final chapter, titled “*Revista do Brasil* and the defense of the spirit,” De Luca portrays the moment when the publication began to circulate again, a period marked by the rise of authoritarian forces in Europe and the *Estado Novo* in Brazil, resulting in limitations imposed on freedom of expression by the Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP). Noting that the liberal practices, individualism and democracy, were defended by several aspects of the journal’s writers, De Luca highlights the specificity of the publication, a scenario which was altered in 1942 with Brazilian adhesion to Pan-American politics.

What is presented in *Leituras, projetos e (Re)vista(s) do Brasil* is a new and fruitful method of analysis, able to clarify the role played by the publication in the history of the press, especially based on some dialogues with contemporary counterparts, which demands, according to De Luca, that systematic consultations be allied to collections cited for reading and studying other sources, especially those that coming from the what is conventionally called ‘self-writing.’

The absence of images related to the theme and to the repeatedly cited journals is certainly felt. This would have enriched the work and perhaps could

have reached a wider readership than the academic one. The initiative of making the reading more dynamic by providing on the publisher's website a series of tables produced during the research, as stated in the note from the editors in the book, proved ineffective due to the difficulty of actually finding them. It would be more interesting for these tables to appear in the book and to accompany the line of thought developed, clarifying many of the knots related to the subject matter of the book.

In my view the contribution of this work lies in the plural methodological approach which proposes the aggregation of contributions dealing with the study of journals as a source and object, since the first general studies of journals – carried out under the coordination of Professor José Aderaldo Castello, whose research was most concerned with the collection of the of the Brazilian Studies Institute, University of São Paulo (USP-IEB) – those obtained from the renewal of historiographic practices, which glimpsed the importance of studying cultural periodicals collated with other sources, such as iconographic, epistolary, memoirs and autobiographical accounts.

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