

# A national utopia in commercial production: the case of *Historia da Literatura Brasileira* radio program (1952-1954)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-58442021303>

**Matan Ankava**<sup>1</sup>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6351-8574>

<sup>1</sup>(Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-Graduação em História Social. São Paulo – SP, Brasil).

## Abstract

The following article seeks to study the radio program “*História da Literatura Brasileira*” (“History of Brazilian Literature” - *HLB*), produced by Osvaldo Moles, and broadcasted between the years 1952-1954. Part of the so-called “golden age” of the radio in Brazil, the program appears to successfully encompass the two models that have marked the history of broadcasting: the civilizer-educative proposal, through the discussion of a national literary canon, and the commercial orientation, expressed in the audience and critical success achieved by the program. Therefore, an accomplishment such as *HLB* evidence the complexity of the radio universe, and its constitution as an environment of multiform and polysemic production. In this paper, we seek to reflect upon the significances contained in the massification of the Program’s themes, broaching aspects such as the national identity and Brazilian culture, and the interests and disputes behind the (re)production of these debates.

**Keywords:** History of Radio. *História da Literatura Brasileira*. Radio-Communication. Mass-Culture. Osvaldo Moles.

## Introduction: the radio as a Social History object

The radio can be found in a taxi, speaking about football. In the coffee shop, commenting how much Gualicho has earned. When I go home in search of that “biblical and peaceful rest”, the radio is there, tuned in a musical. Inside, the guys are listening to a novel. So, we lock ourselves in the room, but the neighbor’s radio loudly presents the talent show, where some candidate tries to imitate Vicente Celestino. We leave home, thinking that the world is surrounded all over by the radio. I go to *Radio Bandeirantes*, where there is always a typewriting machine with its open mouth... and again, I found myself in the radio. It is the only place where we can be free. Therefore, how can we not like radio, if it is everywhere?<sup>1</sup>

---

1 Revista do Rádio, 1952/00172.

These were the words used by Osvaldo Moles, a nation-wide producer, to describe the role occupied by the radio in the Brazilian society of the mid-twentieth century. This omnipresence correspond to the force of the radio as the country's main media and an important cultural production environment, that marked the '40 and '50 as the "*Era do Rádio*" – the Radio Golden Age (SEVCENKO, 1998).

Indeed, in a country of continental dimensions, historically decentralized, with high rates of illiteracy and traditional devaluation of reading<sup>2</sup>, the radio was nothing less than revolutionary. Only few years after broadcasting was launched, its transmissions offered an unprecedented capacity to reach multiple listeners, from different social-economical groups.

Studied initially as an instrument through which the elites reinforced their hegemony, more recent studies have shown the complexity of the radio industry: as pointed out by Briggs and Burke (2006), Communication studies must recognize the participation, of equal weight and importance, of "who?" (producers), "for whom?" (audience), and "what?" (contents). This paper supports the idea of equal relevance of the three; notwithstanding, as shown later, we question the attribution of a singular role for each sector.

Nonetheless, the central aspect is the conception of the radio as a multifaceted system, inserted in social-historical circumstances. We consider that it is only possible to untangle the meanings of radio broadcasting by recognizing that:

society, the people who form it, constitute a structure that allows us to assume that the historical elements, built or destroyed, were not only elements of isolated individuals, but immersed in a broad context involving multiple factors that made possible for things to happen in a certain way (PANIAGUA, 2008, p. 2).

This understanding, and the attitudes resulting from it, are characteristic of the Social History – the theoretical and conceptual orientation that marks this research. Based on this perspective, the investigation of radio production incorporates social-historical approach into the literary analysis: the discourse is placed in a determined space and time, reflecting on the continuities and ruptures it establishes with local traditions.

Therefore, we believe that this type of material should be studied as a product resulting – or expressing – a certain social context:

as we discover the nature of a particular practice, and the nature of the relation between an individual project and a collective mode, we find that we are analyzing, as two forms of the same process, both its active composition

---

<sup>2</sup> We use the term *letramento* instead of *alfabetização* (literacy) to highlight that this socio-cultural trait does not stem only from the technical domain of reading, but also from the place it occupies as a habit. Therefore, in a country with a weak reading tradition (SEVCENKO, 2003), mere literacy, promoted in the 1920s, did not generate a real expansion of reading and the integration of historically illiterate groups.

and its conditions of composition, and in either direction this is a complex of extending active relationships (WILLIAMS, 2011, p. 67).

## **The prehistory of *História da Literatura Brasileira*: Osvaldo Moles, from journal to the radio**

Perceiving the social dimension of radio does not exclude the importance of authorial role. On the contrary; the creator's trajectory is fundamental to the understatement of the ideas and experiences that originate any art creation (BOURDIEU, 2007). In the case of *História da Literatura Brasileira (HLB)*, this means investigate the figure its producer, Osvaldo Moles<sup>3</sup>. Despite several uncertainties, this task offers big contributions to our study.

Born in 1913, Moles' family probably belonged to the lower-middle class of São Paulo. Nonetheless, upon entering the “*Escola de Commercio D. Pedro II*”, Moles has already established connections with the city intellectual elites (ANKAVA, 2020). These sociabilities grew stronger when Moles began working for newspapers such as the *Diário Nacional*, the official paper of the *Partido Democrático*, and later on the *Correio Paulistano*, controlled by the traditional oligarchy. These pieces of evidence allow us to identify Moles' participation in the cultural circles of São Paulo in the 1920s and 1930s – the same group that initiated the Modernist Movement in Brazil.

Successful as a journalist, in 1937 Moles accepted the invitation of Assis Chateaubriand to participate in the foundation of the *Rádio Tupi de São Paulo*. This new media has been living a rapid expansion, with a strong commercial orientation and increasingly present among the lower classes. Moles has worked in the *Cacique do Ar – Tupi's* nickname – for 4 years, but we have almost no records from that time.

In 1941, OM transferred to *Rádio Record*, a broadcaster of national importance, and pioneer of the commercial radio: stations whose income comes from selling publicity, with popular – i.e., not erudite – approach and content, and in constant search of expanding their audience. Today, these characteristics may seem evident; nonetheless, in its first moments in the country, the 1920s and 1930s, radio was seen as an instrument of “cultural elevation”, a project whose symbol was the *Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro*.

With the rise of commercial paradigm, officially recognized by the Federal Law 21.111, of 1932, seemed to polarize the lucrative logic, (re)producing successful and ludic programs – music and talent shows, humor – with the “civilizer” orientation, seeking to diffuse moral and (certain) knowledge among the lower classes. This dichotomy synthetize opposite goals, and was perpetuated by the majority of future studies of broadcasting and mass-culture production<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1950's, it was common for producers to also write and direct their programas - as was the case of Moles and *HLB*.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in Calabre (2003, p. 162): “the first [radio model] was centered on the close link between radio, national education and state control (this is the case for most European countries in the first half of the twentieth century). The second, strictly commercial and for which the North American system serves as a paradigm, was formed by a set of broadcasters mounted on a predominantly commercial structure, geared to the interests of the market and financed by the proceeds from the sale of advertising”.

However, Moles' work requires the reevaluation of this binary conception: since his first days at *Radio Record*, he produced programs about history and literature, as well as humor and ludic content. According to contemporary press, one of Moles' virtues was his ability to reconcile "educative" themes and still reach a wide audience<sup>5</sup>. These newspapers reveal the success achieved by the producers, nicknamed "The atomic bomb of the *Record*" – reputation that was also noticed by his successive winning of the *Roquette Pinto* prize, instituted in 1950.

### ***História da Literatura Brasileira, from the drawer to broadcasting***

Despite the success, by the end of 1950, Moles and the *Record* parted ways. Later on, the producer justified his exit for professional dissatisfaction, as he experienced in the station "the death of ideas whose radiophonic value was never really appreciated"<sup>6</sup>. Moles then moved to *Rádio Bandeirantes*, founded in 1937. Initially, the station looked to establish "new directions for the local broadcasting, with religious, cultural, and educational programs"<sup>7</sup>.

However, facing a market already directed at mass-audience, the original project proved unsustainable, and *Bandeirantes* quickly shifted towards a more "popular" approach. For few years, the station was part of the *Emissoras Unidas* conglomerate, which also included the *Record*. Later on in the 1940s, it was acquired by Adhemar de Barros, the most influential politician in São Paulo at the time, who passed it on to his son-in-law, João Jorge Saad. Under Saad administration *Bandeirantes* has reached its peak of success: it was the first Brazilian station with nonstop transmissions, 24/7, having some of its programs as national audience leaders.

Here, Moles has finally managed to articulate the necessary conditions to produce his program. As is the case for almost all São Paulo broadcasting, the only registers we have of the *História da Literatura Brasileira* are scripts. The lack of audio records turns this type of material into the main primary resource to explore the universe of radio production. In this study, we analyzed 24 scripts (as detailed in Table 1), probably about 1/6 of the episodes transmitted during the two and a half years of the program's existence.

---

5 As can be seen in the cases of *Os Grandes Processos da História* "this program praises radio for its essence, for its attraction, for its content, for its value" (*Correio Paulistano*, 1946.2768); or *O Crime Não Compensa*, "magnificent program, not only for the interest it arises or how it is conducted but - and mainly, because of its useful and educational content" *Revista do Rádio*, 1949. 00014. See also Ankava (2020).

6 Interview by Moles to the newspaper Radar, 1951. Osvaldo Moles Personal Archive. Micheletti (2015) associates Moles' exit directly with the broadcaster's refusal to produce the *HLB* - a position that we were unable to confirm and/or refute.

7 *Correio Paulistano*, 1954\ 29999.

**Table 1** – List of analyzed episodes

<b>Transmission date</b>	<b>Theme</b>
04.07.1952	“elements of formation of our language”
04.14.1952	“Brazil’s first poets, writers and historians”
04.21.1952	About Gregório de Matos (continued next week)
05.31.1952	“Presentation of the History of Brazilian Literature”
06.02.1952	“end of the chapter about the epics of the history of Minas Gerais” (next episode about Claudio Manuel da Costa)
06.16.1952	“Life and work of Tomaz Antonio Gonzaga - O Dirceu da arcadia mineira” (continued next week)
06.23.1952	“The second phase of the life and work of Tomaz Antonio Gonzaga - O Dirceu da arcadia mineira”
06.30.1952	“José Inácio de Alvarenga Peixoto” (next ep. “the last arcadians”
07.14.1952	“The struggle for freedom of thought” (next ep. “the speakers”)
07.28.1952	“José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva”
08.18.1952	“Romanticism”
09.01.1952	“Porto Alegre and other romantics”
09.08.1952	“the art of dying urgently”
09.15.1952	“the Indianism of Gonçalves Dias”
09.22.1952	“life and work of Gonçalves Dias”
09.29.1952	“life and work of Gonçalves Dias” (incomplete)
10.06.1952	“Gonçalves Dias and Brazilian poetry”
11.03.1952	“Night at the Taverna, by Álvares de Azevedo”
11.10.1952	“the last days of Álvares de Azevedo” (next ep. Fagundes Varela)
11.17.1952	“Fagundes Varela” (next. ep. Fagundes Varela)
11.24.1952	“Fagundes Varela” (next ep. “The song of the Calvary”)
02.09.1953	“Castro Alves” (next ep. “Navio Negreiro, by Castro Alves”)
03.02.1953	“Navio Negreiro, by Castro Alves”, reprise (next ep. “The social work of Castro Alves”)
03.15.1954	Poem “Escape from captivity”, by Vicente de Carvalho

Source: Own research.

The episode entitled “presentation” signals some of the program’s singular features:

History of Brazilian Literature – a task that the radio undertakes without offering to its listeners neither entertainment, nor prizes, shows, thriller, or climax. Just a History of the Literature for the people, without the spirit of criticism and probably with no spirit at all. (HLB, ep. May 31, 1952, p. 2-3).

With this list, the extract indicates, with subtle irony and criticism, some of the characteristics of common broadcasting, opposing them to the proposal of *HLB*. Moles further reinforces this distinction in an interview in the newspaper:

it is known – answers Moles – that the listener’s choice falls on exclusively recreational shows. It is also obvious that any sign from an auditorium singer is more passionate than a transmission about Gregório de Matos [...] the auditorium, with all its sores and <hoorays>>, retarded significantly the march to an adult radio, although within everyone’s reach. <<*História da Literatura Brasileira*>> is a popular program. The intellectuals who collaborate with us say so [...] the program uses daily language, comprehensible to almost all listeners<sup>8</sup>.

Therefore, regardless of its more refined theme, the program sought to be no less popular or intelligible. This perspective seems to correspond to the circumstances of commercial broadcasting, with 95% of metropolitan households owned a radio (McCANN, 2004). These material conditions were also supported by the political positions of those involved in the Program:

Today, literature is no longer a luxury item. It is made by the people and to the people. Therefore, its best vehicle should be the radio. I am convinced that this program, organized by Osvaldo Moles and Mario da Silva Brito, will provoke not only interest, but also rises vocations in the houses that will listen to it (HLB, ep. May 31, 1952, p. 4).

In this statement, Oswald de Andrade, one of the Program supervisors, defends that “the people” – i.e., the masses, the lower classes – should engage with literature. For this to happen, this art has to break off its historical barriers, with broadcasting representing “the best vehicle” for this purpose.

In another passage, Oswald de Andrade praises Moles and Brito for “spreading the supreme values of Brazilian intelligence among the general public” (HLB, 1952). This

---

8 Unidentified journal, Osvaldo Moles Personal Archive.

perspective summarizes one of the main objectives of the modernist movement: the diffusion of a national symbology and the construction of a widely shared *Brazilianness*. An ambition that allows us to consider the modernists as “missionaries of a national-popular utopia” (BARBATO, 2004, p. 136).

The affinities between *HLB* and the modernist movement turns even more evident as we examine its staff: besides Oswald, the “supervision” unit also included Jamil Almansur Haddad and Sérgio Milliet; Mario da Silva Brito was listed as “collaborator and guide” while Moles was responsible for “writing, research, and general direction”.

As can be noticed by the list of episodes, Moles and his partners adopted a chronological approach: the episode *elementos de formação da nossa língua* (“formative elements of our language”), was followed by *Primeiros poetas, escritores e historiadores do Brasil* (“Brazil’s first poets, writers, and historians”); after the episodes dedicated to the Arcadian movement of *Minas Gerais*, came the episodes related to emergence of Romanticism, in Europe and Brazil. The chronological presentation offered different advantages: first, it established a linear narrative, that reinforces the scientific credibility of the program; second, the continuity facilitates comprehension, while also helps to captivate the listeners.

This last aspect was especially important for commercial radio. In fact, listeners held an important role, which surpassed the one of mere passive consumers-audience (ANKAVA, 2020). In *HLB*, this participation – that one may call *agency* – is exemplified in the scripts:

We were not expecting for *Navio Negroiro* (“Black Ship”) become the most embraced episode of *História da Literatura Brasileira*, with the highest repercussion. Many missed the episode; and those are the ones whose been asking for a replay (...) we are greatly thankful to those who incentivize us with their cards, telegrams, and phone calls, and the radio writers who encourage us; but our true happiness is to see how the public has embraced the biggest Brazilian poet (*HLB*, ep. Mar. 2, 1952, p. 3).

This announcement expresses the audience’s active dimension, beyond listening, or not, to a program. Here we can notice the variety of channels through which public interests and wills used to express public will – variety that indicates the intensity and importance of this kind of communication and demands. Naturally, we do not compare the creative power of broadcasting producers and consumers; nonetheless, we wish to show the complexity of the cultural production scene, and the insufficiency of its comprehension simply and solely as vertical.

All the episodes of *HLB* began with an advertisement of *Caixa Econômica do Estado de São Paulo*, the program sponsorship. This was a frequent structure in radio broadcasting, indicating the importance of publicity to this media. In our case, it is interesting to notice that the public nature of the bank: founded in 1917 by the state governor Altino Arantes, the

*Caixa Econômica* had an independent administration but subjected to the State Secretary of Treasury. Its agencies multiplied over the next decades, and in the early 1950s, it turned into an “autarchy” – a public entity of indirect administration<sup>9</sup>.

It is necessary to remember that *HLB* escaped the typical content and approach of commercial radio, which probably caused it to be ignored by radio-station managers and owners, and publicity directors, as testified by Moles<sup>10</sup>. This statement also turns patent the force that patronage and marketing directors had over cultural production.

The case of *HLB* represents a collaboration between public administration and private radio station: the first took advantage of broadcasting popularity, while the latter used public funds to obtain profit. According to our research, state patronage was not a very common case; nonetheless, it occurred in at least two more programs of Moles – curiously, all for the Adhemar-friendly *Radio Bandeirantes*.

The publicity presented during *História da Literatura Brasileira* contains two key events: 1) the opening of a bank agency with an around-the-clock operation, placed at *Praça Ramos* (“Ramos Square”), in the city downtown; 2) informations related to the bank savings accounts. In both cases, the propagandas addressed the clients-listeners with a direct approach, presenting the bank – a metonymic representation of the State – as working for the citizen, as an individual or the collective: “open day and night, to serve your economy” (08.18.1952); “separate 10% of all your income, and deposit them in the *Caixa Econômica Estadual* popular plan for the *povo* (population) enrichment” (11.03.1952).

Even Though the advertisements addressed the public as a whole, it recommends a percentile that certainly was unviable for all. On the other hand, it followed a significant raise of the minimum wage that occurred in 1952. Thus, it is acceptable to consider that the Program audience was probably not as “popular” – i.e., of the subaltern classes – as defended by its creators, but more directed towards the lower-middle class, among which it diffused what we call today “financial education”.

The analysis of the scripts reveal some of the Program’s main topics. Albeit the commercial orientation of broadcasting, *História da Literatura Brasileira* did not leave aside complex and refine content. For example, the episode *Os Épicos da História Mineira* (“The Epics of Minas Gerais History”), correlated the narrative style of *Caramuru* and classical western literature: “As in Homer’s *Iliad*, the spectator attention shifts from the general scenery of the battle to a more particular one” (ep. 06.02.1952); or when the character of Victor Hugo elaborate an artistic synthesis according to which “what our movement, known as Romanticism, seeks is the reality of beauty, mixing sublime and grotesque, heaven and hell, smile and a tear” (ep. 08.18.1952, p. 5).

These extracts show the intellectual quality that Moles and his collaborators sustained, which was also expressed by the frequent use of passages related to the themes, artists,

9 Available at: <http://www.saopaulo.sp.gov.br/ultimas-noticias/nossa-caixa-ha-90-anos-o-banco-dos-brasileiros-de-sao-paulo/>. Accessed on: Feb. 8, 2020.

10 *Revista do Rádio*, 1951. 00089.

and works in discussion. The scripts reproduce relatively extent part of literary pieces such as *Marília de Dirceu*, *Juca Pirama*, *Navio Negreiro*, among others, while also constantly referring to critics like Ronald de Carvalho, José de Alencar, José Veríssimo, and Sílvio Romero. Probably, these mentions also served to insert the Program within the scientific tradition regarding the formation of a national literature – hence, integrating broadcasting and canonical knowledge.

Alongside a more stylistic point of view, many social, cultural, and political themes also permeate the narrative of *História da Literatura Brasileira*. It is possible to defend that those historical events were the main focus of the Program and not literature *per se*. Thus, episodes such as Minas Gerais Arcadian Movement, Castro Alves, or Vicente de Carvalho emphasize the historical context of Independence or Abolition more than the formal aspect of literary and artistic creation.

Many samples can be found, to help exemplify this point:

Increased numbers of slaves from Guinea were involved in the development of homesteads. Slaves now worked in the sugar mills and farms. In the physical service, the white labor force was substituted by the black one. The Portuguese people were lazing around, free from the hardest tasks. Olinda flourished (...) Brazil's main commerce at that time was this: we export brazilwood and import captives! (HLB, ep. Apr. 14, 1952, p. 3).

Extracted from the episode *Primeiros Poetas, Escritores e Historiadores do Brasil*, we can notice Moles' concern of bringing up the social-economical and historical conjuncture. The same happened in the case of Tomaz Antonio Gonzaga, from the Arcadian Movement:

During the last twenty years of the 18th century, Brazil participated in a cold war against those who insisted on enchaining it to its colonial status. As ordered by Her Majesty (God protects her), all those who hide their mining revenue should be exiled (...) São Paulo, Bahia, Minas – reaction spread from north to south. The Portuguese government employed repression (...) this was the environment in *Vila Rica, Minas Gerais*, where Tomas Antonio Gonzaga had lived” (HLB, ep. Jun. 16, 1952, p. 2-3).

Once again, we can notice the intertwining of literature and social dimension, with historical narrative suppressing the stylistic analysis.

More than a simple nexus between literature and history, we consider that this movement aimed at strengthening the national identity throughout the reconstruction of the past. Thus, *HLB* followed the intentions of the 1920s and 1930s modernist movement, while also complying with educational radio perspective, mixing technical instruction and nationalistic culture. Therefore, the frequent allusions to themes such as colonization,

miscegenation, independence process help transcending literature, establishing common traditions and past.

At last, we should observe the reception of the Program among the public. By the end of 1954, newspapers informed the end of the show, which probably occurred in January of 1955<sup>11</sup>. Hence, the *HLB* was transmitted for two and a half years – by itself an evidence of satisfactory results, both artistically and commercially. The fact that *Radio Bandeirantes* renovated Moles contract in 1954 also indicates a successful performance.

The journals also praised the Program and its popularity: “*História da Literatura Brasileira* is a true watershed in national radio. This show initiate the cultural moralization of radio broadcasting”<sup>12</sup>; “the sensation of the *Paulista* radio (...) this program defines how far broadcasting can go when directed towards its higher educational and cultural purpose”<sup>13</sup>; “a remarkable show of Osvaldo Moles, *História da Literatura Brasileira* has obtained great success since its launch”; and “this program has the highest audience rate on Mondays 9 PM, which proves that the public also enjoys content of high cultural value”<sup>14</sup>.

We can see that the newspapers exalted both the commercial and educational attributes of *História da Literatura Brasileira*. This position corresponds to two aspects we noticed previously: on one hand, the critiques (somewhat) subtle against the cultural value of radio broadcasting; and on the other hand, the presence of cultural-political project, counter-hegemonic, amid mass cultural production and media. In our consideration, these two are the most interesting contributions that the analysis of the Program adds to radio studies.

## Final considerations

Many researches broach the history of Brazilian radio broadcasting as an opposition between the “educational” model, guided by the intellectual elite and represented by stations such as the *Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro* and the *Rádio Educadora Paulista*, and the “commercial” radio, oriented by financial interest and market forces.

It is frequently considered that the first model predominated during radio first years, and was later substituted by the latter, with the advance of radio publicity. One of the consequences of this perception was the devaluation of broadcasting as a creative environment: either by degrading its audience and formats – as shown by expressions such as *macacas de auditório* (“auditorium monkeys”) –; or the nullification of its cultural value (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985). In our view, a case like *História da Literatura Brasileira* reveals the limits of this polarizing conception, displaying the coexistence of the two projects.

---

11 *Revista do Rádio*, 1955. 00278.

12 *Sombra*, 1952. 00124.

13 *Revista do Rádio*, 1952. 00156.

14 *Revista do Rádio*, 1953. 00201.

Transcending the literary discussion, the program represents a historical and cultural educational project, which unrolled in a nationalistic-identitarian formation. Thus, the creators of the radio program – Paulistas – continued the project the modernist movement – originated in São Paulo –, whose central discourse defended the democratization of culture:

hence the idea that it was necessary to extract culture from the hands of ‘privileged groups’, turning it into something everyone could enjoy. Above all, it aimed at integrating groups that were marginalized of the cultural scene (...) this allows us to designate them as *missionaries of a national-popular utopia*” (BARBATO, 2004, p. 136).

Nonetheless, we must consider that those “missionaries” looked to massificate **one** cultural tradition. Here, the creators of *HLB* nourished an already established canonical literature, consolidating in among the masses as a “selective tradition”.

Moreover, at a philosophical level, at the true level of theory and at the level of the history of various practices, there is a process which I call the selective tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as ‘the tradition’, ‘the significant past’. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded (WILLIAMS, 2011, p. 54).

Viewed from this perspective, *HLB* implies wide dissemination of a sociocultural genesis that barely dialogued with the heterogeneity of traditions and artistic expressions present in mid-twentieth century Brazil. Thus, while proposing to carry out a “civilizing” movement, it also represented the exclusion of other bodies, such as popular culture and folklore, which did not belong to the hegemonic centers.

Dalcastagnè’s (2007) statements regarding the correlations between “representativeness” and literature indicate some of the consequences of this process:

Those who are formally excluded from the universe of literary creation, due to insufficient mastery of certain cultural expressions, believe that they would also be unable to produce literature. However, they are unable to produce literature precisely because the definition of “literature” excludes their forms of creation. In other words, the dominant definition of literature circumscribes a privileged space of expression, which corresponds to the modes of expression of some groups, not others (DALCASTAGNÈ, 2007, p. 17).

The invisibility of subjects from art also affects their identity, since “recognizing oneself in an artistic representation, or recognizing the other within it, is part of a process of legitimizing identities, even if they are multiple” (DALCASTAGNÈ, 2007, p. 14). In the case of “national” culture, which directly affects the collective identity, the hierarchical spread of a literary canon relegates to secondary place those whose “first” literature – the one they recognize as their own – is not part of the established *corpus*.

We conclude with two considerations we consider to carry the main implications of cultural massification, according to *História da Literatura Brasileira*. First, the constitution of mass media as terrain of disputes and, even more, of conciliations. If, on the one hand, literature – metonymy of a whole cultural ensemble – was widely shared, it was still an act of establishing the common and its pieces (RANCIÈRE, 2005). In other words, considering the apology made by Oswald de Andrade, the literature perhaps ceased to be “a luxury item”, but it remained produced and defined by a limited group. At the same time, recognizing the role of the audience, it seems credible to defend that greater participation of the “people” really occurred, even if primarily as consumers.

Second, the Program exposes the dynamics and restructuring amid hegemonic groups: in the universe of mass culture, the intellectuals had to collaborate with commercial producers, who knew the art of “popularization”. At the same time, we observe a transference of responsibilities from the State to the private sector – notably the media, whose power and dissemination were constantly growing. Hence, a “national-popular utopia” remained possible, although relatively distant from public administration and whose popularity must be translated into audience and profit.

## References

- ADORNO, T. W.; HORKHEIMER, M. **Dialética do esclarecimento**: fragmentos filosóficos. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 1985.
- ANKAVA, M. **Modernização não é Mole(s)**: rádio e produção cultural em São Paulo, 1937-1962. Dissertation. Master’s Degree in History, UNIFESP, 2020.
- BARBATO JR., R. **Missionários de uma utopia nacional-popular**: os intelectuais e o Departamento de Cultura de São Paulo. São Paulo: Anneblume/FAPESP, 2004.
- BOURDIEU, P. **A economia das trocas simbólicas**. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2007.
- BRIGGS, A.; BURKE, P. **Uma história social da mídia**: de Gutenberg à Internet. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2006.
- DALCASTAGNÈ, R. A auto-representação de grupos marginalizados: tensões e estratégias na narrativa contemporânea. **Letras de Hoje**. Porto Alegre, v. 42, n. 4, p. 18-31, dez. 2007.
- GOLDFER, M. **Por trás das ondas da Rádio Nacional**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1981.
- MICHELETTI, B. D. **Oswaldo Moles: O legado do radialista**. Dissertation. Master’s Degree. UNIP, 2015.
- MOLES, O. **História da Literatura Brasileira**. Roteiros de rádio do acervo pessoal de Oswaldo Moles. 1952-1954.

PANIAGUA, J. La história social en la diván del psicoanalista. **Revista História Social**, n. 60, p. 193-200, 2008.

RANCIÈRE, J. **A partilha do sensível**: estética e política. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2009.

SEVCENKO, N. (org.). **História da Vida Privada no Brasil - 3**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998.

SEVCENKO, N. **Literatura como missão, tensões sociais e criação cultural na primeira república**. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2003.

TOTA, A. P. **A locomotiva no ar**: rádio e modernidade em São Paulo, 1924-1934. São Paulo: Secretaria de Estado da Cultura/PW, 1990.

WILLIAMS, R. **Cultura e sociedade**: de Coleridge a Orwell. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2011.

### **Matan Ankava**

Doctoral candidate in Social History at the University of São Paulo (USP). He holds a Master's Degree in History from the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP). E-mail: [matan.ankava@gmail.com](mailto:matan.ankava@gmail.com).

Received on: 03.16.2020

Accepted on: 03.21.2021

