52 - LIMA BARRETO X FOOTBALL: THE GAME OF CHRONIC

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INTRODUCTION

Brazilian society will be hardly able to be explained and translated in a foreign context to the great passions of the Brazilian people, among them, soccer. To that end, the purpose of this study is to analyze Lima Barreto's chronicles and the criticisms and charges that the man of letters made about soccer in the early decades of the 20th Century.

In the course of this study, we will adopt as a source of our interpretations Lima Barreto's Chronicles, where, clearly, the phenomena we are looking for appear. This is about analyzing his chronicles, titled and referring to soccer and carioca society in the early 20th Century. The methodological process consists of analyzing the socio-anthropological categories that appear in his chronicles in the period from 1910 to 1922, among these specifically those that have as a theme the obsession for social and ethnic origin, the touching descriptions of carioca suburbs, city outskirts, class division, social exclusion and the relationship of the Government with carioca elite.

As we know, social phenomena gain certain analytical or analysis depth when focused in a historical outlook. Thus, the study to be employed, provides plenty of theoretical elements for the reconstruction of a history of relations and their structures, seen through Brazilian literature, by one of the most outstanding men of letters of the early 20th Century.

Brazilian Soccer Literature

The literature about soccer history in Brazil, qualitatively does not allow deep analysis references, because publications in the course of the early 20th Century up to the 1970's, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and history few contributions were given under these perspectives. What we have are works that, in their content, refer to recitals/chronicles, tales, occurred cases and “yarns”, in the contexts of soccer, with their players, as underscores et al. (2011) [...] No caso do futebol, as narrativas jornalísticas apresentam sua memória resgatando fatos, imagens, ídolos, êxitos e fracassos anteriores, no sentido de construir uma tradição, como um elo entre as gerações dos aficionados pelo esporte (In the case of soccer, newspapers descriptions present its memory retrieving facts, images, idols, prior successes and failures, in order to build a tradition, as a link between generations of the sports fans) (SOARES et all, 2011).

Built and told in the light of the authors' private references, the historical bibliography relevant to soccer brings passages of players and leaders of this sports, imbued, to some extent, in an exacerbated dilettantism of chroniclers and lovers of this sports, which now they let a contagious romanticism appear, now they glorify their idols; and, other times, characterizes them in the light of their personal considerations, conserving empathies or sarcastically removing the idol to which he makes references.

In sports, Brazil is a country with no readings, mainly, when we raise reflections of its past. This statement gains notoriousness when we longingly talk about soccer recalling the 1950 World Cup, and the achievements of the “heroes” of 1958 and 1962. Soccer memories are dated and deal with, why not say it, solely soccer matches and not soccer as a sports institution that implies direct and indirect relations with society whether they are of social, political or economic character. The shortage o these publications, among others, makes us understand this study.

Lima Barreto and his chronicles

Lima Barreto was born in Rio de Janeiro, in 1881. He had a childhood without many privileges, studied at Liceu Popular Niteroiense. In 1897, he entered the Polytechnic School and there he got several unfair rejections. He seeks to read the intellectuals of the time, although he felt distaste for positivism and militarism. In 1902, he collaborates at A Lanterna, an unofficial body of college youth. He signs as Alfa Z and Momento de inércia. In 1905, he joins professional journalism, at Correio da Manhã newspaper, an activity he shares with political militancy at the Comitê do Partido Operário Independente (Independent Workers' Party Committee). In 1916, he participates in the radical left militant journalism struggle, supporting the anarchist thinking libertarian platform, which, in 1917, breaks out one of the greatest strikes in Brazilian workers history. Using a dispossessed and non-conformist language, Lima Barreto disdains in irony and attacks bureaucratic maneuvers, he unmasks public credulity exploiters and brings to public the abuses of rulers. He employs humanism in the defense of the oppressed and tries to understand intellectual activities in general.

In this article Lima Barreto's criticisms can be analyzed in two moments: in the first one we have the knowledge of prejudice politics and the possibility of whitening Brazilian society/people. And, in the second, soccer is used to show the maneuvers of the elite of the time. It is in his writings published in collected writings Marginália and Feiras e Mafuás that we find the chronicles where soccer of the time is the target of his criticisms.

Lima Barreto's Criticisms

From the soccer in the early century, attended by women in hats and fans in hand and well-dressed men, seated on bleachers, we almost no longer identify this kind in current stadiums, except appeals of the press so that female public will return to attend it.

The soccer universe, in the early century, radically marked/characterized class division. In order to play soccer, on should, at least, speak English. It was not futebol, but football. And between back, forwards, fall and foul, little by little, founding of associated soccer clubs further closed this division, symbolized/expressed in club mania actions, where transplanted foreignism via Atlantic was latent. On one hand, there was the post-Republic fine elite similar to the way of being European; and, on the other, there was the great mass of poor people and sub-races, consisting of black and half-breeds, outside of this context.

It was so that Lima Barreto, precisely around 1920 to 1922, published several articles writing ironically about soccer. By observing his publications, we find the chronicles Uma conferência esportiva, Bendito Football, Educação Física, Memórias da guerra, O trem dos subúrbios, As glórias do, all included in Feiras e Mafuás. We also have the chronicle País rico, Variações, Bônus da independência, among others, which deal with soccer, published in Marginália.

Filled with certain nationalism, L. Barreto fought soccer, even knowing that his flanks were exposed to subsequent striking back from the journalistic criticism of the time. Indignant, he could not allow that sports of the carioca/Rio de Janeiro State elite could be confirmed as value adding and educational sports, representing the elitist face of the Republic with the People. Neither could it be held as heroic sports, because in its essence it represented segregation, social and racial segregation, a subtle mark of soccer and club activities of the time.

In 1920, L. Barreto publishes the chronicle "Bendito football", reporting the news of Correio da Manhã, of September 17, reporting that the Colégio de Futeboleiros (College of Soccer Leaders) had secretly met to decide whether they could take to Buenos Aires, players who had, in their veins a little black blood – "colored men, finally". Barreto makes criticisms to the eugenics ideas of the time, though he has respect to the scientific character that they present/represented. The ideas, in the understanding of Barreto, go contrary to nearly half the Brazilian population, in its majority half-breed and black. He does not hide his resentment of soccer managers, in excluding the black player from the national team, with endorsement of the Republican Government. He accuses that not calling black and mulattoes was a way of the foreigner not seeing and knowing the miscegenation. In his article, Barreto exposes the boldness of sports representatives in appealing to the President of the Republic "that such ordinary and compromising people should not figure in exportable player teams; out there, he added, they did not have to know that we had such similar human manure in Brazil" (Feiras e Mafuás). His criticism to the elite that vetoes the black as an unpleasant object to Brazilian society, was already an act of sarcasm by Latin people themselves, Argentines did not distinguish the colors in the Brazilian. All were known as macaquitos. Before such attitudes, Barreto charges: that in order to take overseas the purest Brazilian race, The State has even hired anthropologists to examine "the extraordinary envoys and plenipotentiary ministers of the Country, "the great Arian intelligences and obscure individuals form part [...] all learned in several things and also federal deputies.

Barreto was fully aware of the racial eugenics plan. Barreto was aware that it was not races/miscegenation that made Brazil not viable, because with a social investment policy the country could be made viable, placing it ahead of development conditions.

Lima Barreto criticizes and denounces the Government's subvention to soccer, saying "what admires me, is that taxes, from which proceeds the fat subventions are apportioned to soccer societies and their faithful treasurers are withdrawn [...], because a great part of them is paid by colored people". And launching all his irony, he proposed that the Government should withdraw subventions from the rural people and allocate them to soccer. Because, since this people is already decimated by endemic diseases, Brazil would become, at the same time, wealthier and whiter, and, colored people "would end up disappearing by malaria action [...]'.

In his chronicles, Barreto hardly failed to speak about the Government's intention regarding social policy. In his attack on soccer, it was understood that the same would appear as a strategy for eugenics and race improvement. Barreto was emphatic. He believed that the correct way was in Physical Education, because it was unselfish and did not create obstacles for the participation of the young black/mulatto. It is interesting to see what Lima Barreto says about physical education:

[...] Confesso que, quando fundei a Liga Brasileira Contra o Futebol, não tinha como ainda não tenho qualquer erudição especial no assunto, o que não acontece com o Dr. Mendonça. Nunca fui dado a essas sabedorias infusas e confusas entre as quais ocupa lugar saliente a chamada Pedagogia; e, por isso, nada sabia sobre educação física, e suas teorias, nas quais os sábios e virtuosos cronistas esportivos teimam em encaixar o esporte. (I confess that, when I founded the Brazilian League against Soccer, I did not as I still do not have today any special knowledge in the matter, which does not happen with Dr. Mendonça. I have never been given to these infused and confused wisdoms among which the so-called Pedagogy holds an outstanding place; and, for this reason, I knew nothing about physical education, and its theories, on which the wise and virtuous sports chroniclers insist on fitting the sports) (Careta, 8.4.1922).

The elite, dominating soccer, directed decision-making bodies. The author had full knowledge of this strategy, and understanding that soccer figured in the hands of one class, the State could not subsidize and place itself ahead of its interests.

Always using irony, Barreto does not spare criticisms to the intention of putting an end to part of the suburbs population. In Ferias e Mafuás published on 10.01.1921, we see: "The greatest despots and the cruelest savages torment, torture their victims; but kill them at last. Kill the coloreds at once; and long live soccer". He kept one saying: "the role of soccer is to cause dissensions in the bosom of the national life", where he sought to mention fights between Brazilians and Uruguayans, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo natives; Barreto collected newspaper articles that brought news related to soccer fights. What Barreto did not see is that soccer could not only constitute a disaggregating end, as also, a violence sports. Soccer could not constitute a means of aggregation of the working class, a reality that at the time was hard to be observed, because its practice was limited to the wealthiest social stratum and most clubs belonged to the urban elite. However, later, some labor union started to use soccer as the class means of aggregation.

In the production/ work and social usefulness relation Barreto asks: what usefulness to society does this energy spending bring? What are these ball shooting and kicking good for and what benefit does society have? (Feiras e Mafuás). .His accusations in the journalistic and literary universe of the time Lima Barreto broke the colloquial language that men of letters of the time wrote. His language coherence was in a militant position and a cause, which he faced with skepticism, because elitist journalism of the time was disguised in eugenic prejudices. By the way, he says it himself in the chronicle Não queria mas... published on 06.06.1922 (Careta), [...] I was already willing not to talk any longer about anything similar to football; however, it is not possible for me to fail to do it, considering that it is a campaign of honor to which I have given myself and I do not give it up."

Concluding and classifying the analyses of studies

However, by way of a conclusion we classify Lima Barreto's criticisms to soccer: a) Lima Barreto interpreted soccer as noxious to the great mass aggregation, understanding it could be one more political-ideological domination instrument on the part of the State; b) Lima Barreto's opposition to soccer, was as a result of clearly being oriented toward and practiced by the elite of the time; c) due to the fact that State sponsoring a sports, at the occasion, being understood as segregating.

In short, it can be asserted that the transition moment between the 19th and 20th centuries, also was of transition in expressed and worshipped values by Brazilian society. Consequence of regime change. In this period, many prejudices were crystallized, because for the country to show only the beauties, the educated and noble population, was part of the ideal of the republic, worthy aspects to be presented to foreigners. To this end, many architectural changes occurred in Rio de Janeiro.

Lima Barreto, black and poor, wrote against the renewal of prejudices and making language elitist. A language in his chronicles that breaks with Portuguese language traditionalism. This characteristic, however was his manner of approaching the people, to show that what was seen was a false Brazil.

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LIMA BARRETO X FOOTBALL: THE GAME OF CHRONIC

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to identify in Lima Barreto's chronicles the charges and criticisms that the man of letters commented against soccer in early 20th Century. We will use Lima Barreto chronicles' clippings analyzing them in the social and political context of the three first post-republic decades. The study has identified that Lima Barreto's criticisms were due to the fact and soccer served as an instrument of workers' dissension, Republic maneuvering strategies and establishing the eugenics process made official by the post-republican Government.

KEYWORDS: soccer; literature; Lima Barreto

LIMA BARRETO X FOOTBALL: CHRONIQUES DU JEU

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif est d'identifier les affections chroniques de Lima Barreto et critique littéraire au début du XXe siècle tissé de football. Nous allons utiliser des coupures chroniques Lima Barreto dans l'analyse du contexte social et politique des trois premières décennies après la République. L'étude a révélé les plaintes étaient dues Lima Barreto de football servir d'instrument de travailleurs dissidence, les stratégies et les manœuvres de la République, constituent le processus eugenização républicain poste gouvernemental officiel

MOTS-CLÉS: Football; littérature; Lima Barreto

LIMA BARRETO X FÚTBOL: CRÓNICAS DEL JUEGO

RESUMEN

El objetivo es identificar los problemas crónicos de Lima Barreto y crítica literaria en el siglo XX tejió fútbol. Vamos a utilizar los recortes de crónicas Lima Barreto en el análisis del contexto social y político de las tres primeras décadas después de la República. El estudio encontró que las quejas se debieron Lima Barreto fútbol servir como un instrumento de los trabajadores de la disidencia, las estrategias y maniobras de la República constituye el proceso de eugenização mensaje oficial del gobierno republicano.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Fútbol; la literatura; Lima Barreto

LIMA BARRETO X FUTEBOL: O JOGO DAS CRÔNICAS

RESUMO

O objetivo do estudo é identificar nas crônicas de Lima Barreto as denúncias e críticas que o literato no inicio do Século XX tecia ao futebol. Utilizaremos de recortes das crônicas de Lima Barreto analisando-as no contexto social e político das primeiras três décadas pós República. O estudo identificou que as críticas de Lima Barreto foram devidas o futebol servir como instrumento de dissensão dos trabalhadores, estratégias de manobras da República e constituir o processo de eugenização oficializada pelo Governo pós republicano.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: futebol; literatura; Lima Barreto