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Chronicles of defeat: the blame for the failure and its narratives in the 2006's World Cup

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reflect upon the chronicles written by former soccer player Tostão, about the 2006's World Cup, in the newspaper "Folha de São Paulo". Thirteen chronicles of this newspaper plus other chronicles by the same author published in a book were used as sources, analyzed and interpreted through a historiographical and anthropological methodological point of view. From the narratives articulated by the chronicler and former soccer player, it is noteworthy that a variety of contents are explored, such as the dispute for power, corporeality and lack of courage due to moral issues to give meaning and elect the culprits among the Brazilian team for the failure in this competition.

Keywords

Failure; Narratives; World Cup; Body; Moralities

Introduction

It was the second time that Germany would host the World Cup. The first time, in 1974, there was still the division between West and East Germany. At the men's soccer World Cup in 2006, efforts were made to present to the rest of the world a Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall, united by the same objective - not only to receive the teams and their fans in a welcoming way, but also to win the championship¹. The 2006 edition did not have any structural and organizational problems addressed by the media, as would be a constant in subsequent events: 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022. All 12 stadiums were ready to host the games, and only after the World Cup was held did it become public that the country had spent more than 50% above the planned budget.

This was the Superstars Cup as it brought together great players from the main clubs in Europe, among them, the best players in the world since 1996 (except Rivaldo, who won in 1999 and did not participate in the cup) Ronaldo, Zidane, Figo and Ronaldinho and the other four who would complete the list until 2017 (Cannavaro, Kaká, Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo).

The Brazilian team was pointed out by some (Brazilian) media vehicles as the main favorite, as it had 10 remnants of the fifth championship won in 2002, plus a cast of world-renowned players and younger players who stood out in European clubs. In addition to favoritism, the Brazilian team had players with individual aspirations that predicted a good campaign in the tournament. That was the case of Ronaldo Fenômeno, who was going to play his last World Cup and was looking for the top of the list of top scorers in the tournament. Cafú, who had played in the last three World Cup finals, was looking to play in his fourth. Ronaldinho Gaúcho, champion in 2002, elected best player in the world on two occasions, reached the Cup at the height of his career as the team's protagonist. Finally, and not least, there was the possibility of the Brazilian team winning two consecutive titles, repeating the feat of 1958 and 1962.

All these characteristics meant that the team was labeled, treated and behaved like a celebrity troupe. However, despite the players' celebrity status and favoritism, the World Cup in Germany was a fiasco for Brazil. The team didn't play well, the main stars were out on the field and the campaign fell short of expectations. Defeat and eventual elimination by France was the sad conclusion to a disappointing campaign – despite four wins and that single defeat. The final was marked by provocation and controversy between the Italian Materazzi and the French Zidane. This one was expelled after hitting him in the chest with his head. What motivated the aggression was a macho joke by the Italian referring to the Frenchman's sister. In the penalty shootout, Italy won a title it had not won since the 1982 World Cup.

When reflecting on how Brazilians think about community and national identity through soccer, Vogel (1982) makes a comparison between the 1950 and 1970 World Cups. In his perspective, the comparison between Cups is justified in that, being a tournament, which has a regularity of 4 to 4 years, one cannot be understood isolated from the context of the previous ones. Thus, this author makes a structural comparison between 50 and 70 and identifies pairs of opposition that differ them. If in 1950 the categories tragedy, agony, shame and arrogance were combined to understand defeat, in 1970 the categories apotheosis, glory, race (will) and humility were combined to understand victory. Still in this author's argument, as there is an identification between team and fans, the Brazilian football team becomes a metonymy of the victories and failures of the Brazilian people.

Well, this article does not conduct a comparison between World Cups, but references to other Cups are present in the analyzed chronicles, even if implicitly, and in the perception of the performance of the players and technical staff of the Brazilian team to understand the defeat of 2006. Thus, as will

¹ Having the then three-time champion as host broke a constant that lasted since 1990, when the also three-time champion Italy hosted the event, in this period the United States, France (which only became champion when it hosted the event in 1998), Japan and South Korea received the event and did not have such a leading role in the history of the World Cups.

be seen, there was an expectation that the Brazilian team would play the “national style, the affective appreciation of culture” (Vogel, 1982, p. 79), that is, football-art, happy, aggressive in search of goals. This did not happen. The expectation was based on the characteristics of the players who were summoned, for the midfield and attack, which were called “magic square”. The last Cup that this designation was used to name the group of players summoned was the one of 1982. As the performance was not characterized as beautiful, nor was it seen as efficient, the defeat was not as impactful as those from the past - the feeling of disappointment is evident in the chronicles, but nothing resembling the catharsis of other more emblematic defeats. It was not a tragedy like 1950 and 1982, it was not understood as a defeat of “moral champions” as in 1978, nor the coming disgrace of 2014.

The breadth of literature that addresses the media and sports is well known.

From the perspective of French sociology, such as studies on the models of exercising the profession of journalist, their origins and ways of writing addressed by Neveu (2006). The debate on the influence of television and power struggles on relevant approaches to the Olympic Games, presented by Bourdieu (1997). Going through the English perspective of cultural studies on the media, which has Whannel (2000) as one of its exponents, and the discussions on the intersection between means of communication, race, gender, corporeity and globalization. By Umberto Eco’s theory of communication (1984) and the pessimistic dimension of his analyses regarding the World Cup as a spectacle and the role of football in political transformation. Even the perspective of Brazilian history, anthropology and sociology. In this regard, it is important to highlight the collection organized by Hollanda and Melo (2012) and the discussion on sport and the written press in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo between the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to the sociological perspective of Helal (1997) in the approach of football as mass culture and of Helal and Costa (2020) on the theory of communication, media, idolatry, identity and football. In anthropology, the author highlights the absence of women in sports narration and the small number in sports journalism in Belo Horizonte. Still in Anthropology, at the crossroads with the field of communication, Gastaldo (2006 and 2020) explores advertising, the construction of identities and the World Cups.

This is without even taking into account the diverse perspectives of authors from many different countries. Thus, much ink has been expended by valuable hands to ponder over the media and its narrative unfoldings.

Taking into account these theoretical discussions, plus others, this article proposes a reflection on the narratives about the failure and the culprits for the defeat in the World Cup in Germany. To this end, it performs the analysis of thirteen chronicles by Tostão, published in the newspaper Folha de São Paulo between June 6th and July 3rd, 2006². The importance of this newspaper, to understand some of the narratives of the 2006 World Cup, lies in its scope and the contingent of professionals who were assigned to cover the event.

In 2006, Folha de São Paulo had a print run of over 300,000 copies and reached a specific portion of the Brazilian population as its main consumers³. It is important to remember that in that period, social networks, at least in the Brazilian context, did not have the size and capacity to guide and feedback traditional media as they do today. Facebook was in its infancy, Twitter had just been founded, Instagram and TikTok did not yet exist. Orkut was one of the social networks most used by Brazilians, but most of the information was consumed in newspapers, radio and television stations.

2 The selected chronicles were published in the printed version of the Folha de São Paulo newspaper and are Retrieved October 15, 2019 from: <https://acervo.folha.com.br/index.do>.

3 In a survey carried out by Datafolha in 2000, the average age of newspaper readers is 40.3 years, 47% attended undergraduate courses and 13% attended postgraduate courses. 53% have an individual monthly income of up to 15 minimum wages and 36% have a family income above 30 minimum wages. Retrieved January 16, 2023 < https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/80anos/quem_e_o_leitor.shtml>.

During the 2006 World Cup, Folha de São Paulo maintained approximately 17 professionals (with emphasis on Tostão and Juca Kfourri), including reporters, photographers and columnists in Germany and published the special section “2006 Cup”, containing between 8 and 12 pages⁴.

In addition to the chronicles written for the Folha de São Paulo newspaper, the text compilation book by “Tostão chronicler” – Perfection does not exist: football passion for a chronicle star” – was also used as a source of analysis.

The methodological approach of these chronicles is developed in two dimensions that intersect in carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the narratives produced by the former player Tostão. The first refers to the dimension of historiography. Because it is an episode in the history of football, more particularly the World Cups, it was considered, as Santos (2020) suggests, time, space and the intricacies of the narratives (themes addressed and problems revealed). The sources used come from the sports press and a discussion about power relations in this professional field are highlighted. Careful reading and interpretation of written sources were carried out, taking into account the procedures recommended by Létorneau and Pelletier (2011, p. 100): “good knowledge of the origin and context of document production and great capacity for questioning and imagination”. The second dimension is associated with hermeneutic anthropology. Not exactly a dense description with all the characteristics that Geertz (1989) proposes, but an interpretation of the discourse linked in the narrative about the 2006 defeat and its reasons. And, as will be seen below, these speeches reveal a web of symbolic and literal relationships between actors in the field of soccer, sports journalism and literature.

Thus, this article is divided into three moments. The first moment has the dilemma of understanding the reasons why Tostão was questioned by actors in the field of sports journalism and in the field of football for his approaches as a former player who wrote chronicles since 1996 for several newspapers, including Folha de São Paulo. Thus, it presents and unveils the space occupied by Tostão to legitimize his narratives. It approaches the dispute for the authorized speech and the credibility of the chroniclers to express perceptions about the social reality, in this case the performance of the athletes and technical commission in the World Cup of 2006.

The second and third moments explore relevant themes in Tostão’s chronicles that structure the understanding of the Brazilian failure and reveal the culprits for the defeat. Corporeity, through the discussion of the blister on the foot and the excess of adiposity of the main Brazilian player, is presented as a theme that leaves the physical sphere and enters the sphere of morality to determine responsibilities for the defeat. As well as the lack of courage and the lack of authority of the technician and his commission, which, in addition to denoting weaknesses concerning virility, also manifest inability to command and transgress hierarchies - which undermines the moral virtue of these social actors, putting in their actions to blame for the elimination in this World Cup. The dilemma that runs through these two moments lies in understanding the reasons that make Tostão mobilize the categories, listed above, to explain the Brazilian defeat in his chronicles. In other words, why were corporeality, emotion, authority and their consequences used to build the narrative of the defeat chronicles in 2006?

Who Can Speak About What and Under What Circumstances: Authorized Speeches

Eduardo Gonçalves de Andrade (Tostão) was a soccer player of rare ability who played for several Brazilian teams between the 60’s and 70’s. He played for América - MG, Cruzeiro, Vasco da Gama and the

4 During the competition, the newspaper named the section, in which the chronicles were found, “Copa 2006”, which covered news from the World Cup and other sports. The notebook was published daily. In addition, six special sections were published before the event and seven more were published until the end.

Brazilian national team. Winner of the 1966 Taça Brasil, he is the top scorer in Cruzeiro's history. For the Brazilian national team, he played in the 1966 and 1970 World Cups. In 1970, in the third championship won in Mexico, he was one of the protagonists of a team that went down in history, not only for the title, but also for having among its holders (and substitutes) players who practiced what was conventionally called art football (Soares et al., 2004).

His football career was cut short by a detached retina in his left eye. As soon as his career as an athlete ended, another began, that of General Practitioner and professor at the same university where he studied, the Federal University of Minas Gerais. In the early 1990s he returned to the world of football as a commentator for a television channel and a columnist for several newspapers.

In his master's thesis, Costa (2009) indicates that Tostão's transition from former player to sports commentator and columnist took place in the early 1990s as a characteristic phenomenon of competition between press and television media in coverage of World Cups. In the case of Tostão, the author locates this transition in the 1994 World Cup. In that World Cup, Tostão commented that he played on ESPN. Two years later he became a columnist for *Jornal do Brasil* and in 1999 he took up a space as a columnist for *Folha de São Paulo*.

The increase in the presence of chroniclers and columnists in national newspapers, during the World Cup, is a transformation process that marks the contemporary Brazilian press, as indicated by Marques (2010). In his perspective, the addition of personalities and celebrities in the special sections is one of the ways to leverage newspaper sales and make the printed media competitive against its rivals. In this sense, this author presents four groups of social actors who sign conics in the World Cup. The first is constituted as the journalists of the house, the second is constituted by great writers and chroniclers of the culture section, the third by journalists from other editors of the newspaper itself and finally the personalities outside the practice of journalists, whether they are from the sports world, from the art or politics.

Tostão is not literate per se. He is also not a canon of sports journalism. In addition to being a "soccer expert", he is one of the players who participated in overcoming the "mutt complex" in the 1970 victory over Uruguay in the semifinals of the Mexico Cup (Marques, 2014). Therefore, he represents the idea-value of a style of play associated with football-art (Guedes, 1998) and his look – his chronicles – emphasizes the benefits of approaching this style of play and the drawbacks of moving away from this characteristic closely linked to the national way of practicing football.

In a way, he approaches renowned chroniclers, such as Mário Filho, Nelson Rodrigues and José Lins do Rego, when he interprets the national character, the style of playing the Brazilian and the emotions involved in defeats (Ferreira Antunes, 2004). But he certainly distances himself from these due to a series of characteristics that made them great exponents of the sports chronicle. Not only are the quality and stylistic resources different, but there is no psychological portrait of the Brazilian in Tostão as in José Lins do Rego, nor an explanation of football and the national identity that permeates miscegenation and race as in Mário Filho and neither the exaggerated patriotism and nationalism of Nelson Rodrigues.

It is also necessary to emphasize that the spaces occupied between these chronicles and Tostão are diverse. Tostão was a player and then a doctor. Mário Filho was the owner of *Jornal dos Sports*. He was a political and cultural mediator, as well as a historian of Brazilian football. Nelson Rodrigues was a playwright, writer and journalist, while João Lyra Filho was a member of the judiciary, a classic writer and was rector of a University, FIFA advisor, and worked for the Brazilian Sports Confederation. He was a Top Hat, as were most of the "pink" chroniclers (Hollanda, 2012).

The place of Tostão in the sports chronicle, as Costa (2009) makes believe in an Eliasian interpretation, is that of an outsider (Elias & Scotson, 2000): "Tostão as a football player – established – and as a chronicler, in a new context – "outsider", from outside" (Costa, 2009, p. 15). In a chronicle titled

Nada é Fácil na Vida, the former player argues about the difficulties faced when positioning himself as a sports commentator and columnist:

As I was an athlete, sometimes players and coaches complain that I am too critical, as if I wasn't supportive of "the class" or that I underestimated the technical quality of some players. I cannot be corporatist, even more so for no reason, since I carry out other activities. The past is present in our lives, but it cannot be ahead of the present. [...] Since I was an athlete and I don't have a degree in journalism, from time to time, there are explicit manifestations of protest against the presence of commentator-athletes working in the press. [...] Years ago, a journalist I never saw again and whose name I don't remember said on television that my texts could not be done by me. He suspected that they were written by Roberto Drummond, a great writer from Minas Gerais, who died in 2002. I received this prejudiced and delusional comment as an offense and also as a compliment, due to the comparison with Roberto Drummond (Tostão, 2012, p. 151).

The argumentation, in an outburst tone, allows us to point to questions that affect the authorized discourse. In The economy of linguistic exchanges, Bourdieu points out that it is inherent to every field, be it religious, scientific or sports, a game of symbolic disputes for power to impose legitimate visions of social reality. Language does not escape this struggle for power. In fact, words do not have power by themselves, they acquire power through the authority of those who pronounce them, the effectiveness of their meaning by the person authorized to use them and the recognition of the members of the field of the legitimacy of the linguistic performance of the enunciator. This is what this author calls "authorized language" (Bourdieu, 2008, p.85).

Authorized language or authorized discourse, as preferred by Guedes (1998 and 2011), about football in Brazil is enunciated by sports journalism. The areas of Physical Education and Social Sciences enter this interpretation dispute on the social reality of the phenomenon in a peripheral way, since it is the press that has the greatest scope and scope when carrying out readings about football. Therefore, the press, in addition to carrying out multiple authorized readings about the same event through chronicles, interviews and reports, still has the legitimacy and consequently the credibility to define the social reality about sporting events.

This is not everything. The power of the press is still present through the standard court in the sphere of Brazilian football. It is in this sense that Florenzano points out when he addresses the power dispute between players of the Brazilian national team and the sports press, in what became known as the "Glasgow Manifesto":⁵

The play staged on the pages of newspapers, transformed into the standard court, followed a plot established by the device of power in football, a plot in which the confessional technique plays an important role, determining the player's guilt, extracting his confession and, afterwards, granting him pardon. The naturalness with which the journalist submits the player to the condition of defendant, accusing him of indiscipline, rebellion or loss of awareness of his place, classifying him in the field split between Good and Evil, distributing forgiveness and sanctioning guilt makes -o a decisive instance in the exercise of power (Florenzano, 2009, p. 117).

Certainly, it is not just the aforementioned social actors who dispute the authorized discourse on the social reality in football. In addition to them, Toledo (2002) adds at least two more of these: the speech of fans, former players and former coaches who became commentators.

It is in this category of specialized speech by a former player that Tostão would be framed, but

5 The "Glasgow Manifesto" was a letter written by the athletes of the Brazilian national team addressed to the sports press that covered the friendlies held in Europe in 1973. In it, the players said that they would no longer grant interviews until the press changed the way it had been criticizing the Brazilian Team. This manifesto letter caused great discomfort among journalists, showing a hierarchy between them and the players.

with an addendum, as there are few former players and former coaches who are invited to write in periodicals. It is more common the presence of these, and their specialized speeches, in sports programs, round tables and commenting in the booths of television transmissions of the games. However, due to his sports career plus the fact that he was a doctor and a teacher, Tostão had the symbolic capital to occupy this role. Certainly, the authority of his speech came from the experience of being world champion in Mexico, in 1970. In addition, there was consent and institutional acceptance of the authority of speech by big names in sports journalism.

This is noticeable in the preface to the collection of chronicles written by Tostão (2012). Juca Kfouri praises and authorizes the former player to deliver sports analysis, even though they are not journalists. In fact, the journalist compares the former player's text with the way he acted on the field and, perhaps more relevant to attributing power and authority to his speech, he also compares it with texts by classic writers of Brazilian literature.

I once wrote that if master Armando Nogueira was the Machado de Assis of the Brazilian sports press, as we all said, Tostão was Graciliano Ramos. [...] Tostão was one of the greatest players I've ever seen. And he writes like he played. Also in his chronicles, he manages to see what we didn't even suspect and resolves everything with minimalist simplicity and touching delicacy. (Kfouri, 2012, p. 11-12).

Even with this institutional assent of the authorized discourse, Tostão still reports difficulties for his perception to be considered relevant in the dispute for the legitimate enunciation of social reality. As he makes believe in the chronicle "Nothing is easy in life", partially reproduced a few pages above, he faces the resentment of the players and the danger of his speech being delegitimized by journalists. He protects himself from resentment by arguing that he cannot be corporatist because he is a former player and claims his authority by occupying a new position in the hierarchical scale of the sports field – he is now a columnist and commentators, therefore he is part of those who use the "superiority of the intellectual work of journalists", instead of the "inferiority of the physical work of the players" (Florenzano, 2009, p.109). Then, he protects himself from the accusation of the journalist, who he "never saw again and doesn't even know the name" using the comparison with one of the canons of Brazilian literature. If Juca Kfouri had already compared him with Graciliano Ramos, in his postulation of speech authority, he mentions Roberto Drummond to remove any doubts about his quality as a writer and his right to be a sports writer.

The body and its vicissitudes

Leda Maria da Costa (2020) reflected on the defeats of the Brazilian soccer team in the World Cups. In this process, the author, based on the concept of melodrama, used two categories to understand how sports journalism attributed meaning to defeat. The first category is the villain and the second is the quasi-villain.

The villain is that guy who has an unfortunate performance or made a wrong decision during the match, identified as the catalyst for defeat. In this category are allocated players who are positioned in defense - such as defenders, laterals and goalkeepers - and coaches. Those are to blame for the defeat. On the other hand, the quasi-villains are those players considered to be "stars", "out of the box" who, for some atypical circumstance, do not perform as expected of them. Unlike villains, quasi-villains are excused from these capital mistakes due to the positive performance record over the course of their career.

When approaching the 2006 World Cup, this author suggests the quasi-villainness of the player Ronaldinho Gaúcho and the villainy of coach Carlos Alberto Parreira. In addition, Costa (2020) identifies a macro structural issue to explain this defeat. The players were accused of mercenaries, in other words, the accusation rests on the excessive profitability of the profession that made competition just another

professional commitment, and not a unique commitment that should be faced with love for the nation.

In the chronicles written by Tostão, the structural macro issue almost does not appear. It timidly appears between the lines – when the chronicler suggests disinterest, an excess of confidence and arrogance in the performance of some players, in the same way there is no scathing criticism of the performance of the player Ronaldinho Gaúcho. The approaches, as will be seen further on, are directed towards corporality, in the case of the player Ronaldo Fenômeno, and towards the lack of command, courage and daring, in the case of coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

When corporeality comes into question, it is to focus on the injured foot and the excess weight of the player Ronaldo Fenômeno. Le Breton (2011) points out that Western societies work on the bodily erasure of individuals. The body is present, but there is learning about the invisibility of bodily manifestations, about forgetting and silencing them. The body only becomes visible when “[...] in moments of crisis, of excess: pain, fatigue, injury, physical impossibility of performing a certain act [...]”. (Le Breton, 2011, p.195). Now, this is precisely the highlight that the player’s body acquires in preparation for the eve of the World Cup.

Visibility occurs at the first moment in the blisters on the foot. In the June 8 column, Tostão points out: “almost everything is perfect, very few questions the lineup, the team is becoming more deified every day, the training sessions are always the same, the main news is Ronaldo’s foot and the sponsor’s mockery who made the boot [...]” (Tostão, 2006b, p. D3)⁶.

The category “feet of labor” was coined by Damo (2007) to indicate the transformation of athletes into merchandise and their exchange value for spectacle football. As this author demonstrates, athletes enter a circuit of exchanges that includes them as goods produced for the show, just as symbolic goods and material goods are produced – such as football boots. Taking as a parameter the multiple production and feedback of goods where the value of the player (monetary and symbolic) boosts the value of the boot (the desire for the product and its sales) is how the chronicle about Ronaldo’s feet is built.

It is important to highlight that the feet in a value hierarchy of human body development have a lower technical value than the hands. In this sense, the feet were less valued in their effectiveness to know the world around and a “culture on the ground” is neglected by Western society (Ingold, 2015). However, in the field of the soccer market, feet are valued, making the category “feet of work” very opportune to think of this part of the body as a working instrument, as well as symbolic and monetary differentiation between athletes. There are feet that are worth more than others, cause more concern to the market and fans than others, for what they represent as symbolic and financial capital. In all these senses, the blisters on the player’s foot, resulting from an imperfect sewing of his boot, become news to be debated with concern by the actors involved in this sport.

Foot blisters cause discomfort, restriction of movement and speed when running. The balance is compromised, as well as the concentration to perform the actions in the game. The effectiveness of shooting and passing lose accuracy. In a sport where the inaccuracies of the use of healthy feet, in mastery and control of the ball, make the game acquire a high degree of unpredictability, imagine with the added difficulty of playing with blisters on the foot. Therefore, the bubbles present a series of obstacles to motor coordination that would impair the player’s performance.

When Roberto DaMatta thinks about the uses and images of the body, he indicates that:

Another element linked to the uses of the foot is that the feet lead to a subordination of the whole body to the legs, hips and waist, those lower parts of the human anatomy which, in the case of Brazilian society, are central to national dances such as samba and target of an elaborate symbolism (DaMatta, 2006, p.156).

⁶ In the final stretch of preparation, the player Ronaldo had problems with the boot specially developed for him to use during the 2006 World Cup. The shoe caused blisters on one of his feet, putting the manufacturer in a delicate position against one of his main “poster boys”.

This author points to a series of meanings of the feet in the Brazilian social space. Meanings that go through humility and submission and emphasize the hierarchization and morality linked to the corporal high and low. What interests us here is the association that DaMatta establishes between the feet and the “flexibility”. This association refers to trickery, the wit to navigate Brazilian social reality, dance, sex and dribbling in soccer.

In this sense, the blisters on Ronaldo Fenômeno’s foot cannot be read as peripheral and anecdotal news in the context of World Cup preparations. At that moment, the bubbles imply the loss of “hands-on”, they also imply the possibility of mischaracterizing the typical-ideal representation of playing Brazilian style and, not least, imply a denunciation of the material goods market that, due to a “restrictive technology” (Ingold, 2015, p.76), how the boot, in this case defective, places its emblem above the main commodity of this circuit – the player. For this reason, Tostão talks about the “mico” and blames the sponsor for the blisters on this foot of work, exempting the player from any responsibility.

The body returns to the debate at the beginning of the World Cup. The body weight of the same player, which was previously the center of debate due to blisters on the foot, now suffers from “suppleness” and mobility due to excess fat around the waist.

The hope is to see Ronaldo better and more mobile. I have the impression, as I wrote in another column, that Ronaldo’s slowness is not only due to his poor physical and technical form, but also to his overconfidence, almost arrogance, and that he will naturally shine, as in other times. Upset and challenged by criticism, Ronaldo could be another player today. He had taken it! (Tostão, 2006f, p. D3).

In this excerpt from Tostão’s chronicle, Ronaldo’s poor physical shape suggests inconsistencies between the work performed by the player and the image of his corporeality (Fischler, 1995). It is known that it is in the Training Center that the governing devices over the body are carried out. It is through technical and scientific rationality that bring together nutrition, biomedicine and physical preparation that the professional athlete allows “[...] a complete invasion of their corporeality, singularly transformed into an object of investigation, knowledge, intervention and investment” (Bitencourt, 2020, p.140).

These are the circumstances both for training players and for preparing for important competitions. It is essential to remember that it was not only the strong style of play, but also the use of a whole military apparatus and scientific technical devices that led to the successful campaign of the selection that won in Mexico in 1970 (Soares et al., 2006).

If Ronaldo was in poor physical shape, something was transgressed in that player’s preparation. On the one hand, it can be assumed that the disciplinary and control system governing the body and dietary regime (Turner, 2014) were not effective. The next step is to hold the coaching staff responsible for not fulfilling what was expected, but at that moment Tostão does not make any association between the player and his physical preparation – later on, the coaching staff’s culpability is evidenced through the inability to maintain authority.

On the other hand, apparently, as only Ronaldo had mobility difficulties, the evocation of fat can acquire moral connotations. In this case, fat, more than a physical condition, reveals a moral issue. The chronicler suggests this relationship by associating bad physical shape and slowness with overconfidence and arrogance. Being a moral issue, the responsibility for his own physical condition lies with the player. He is the only culprit, unable to control his (food) desires and govern his body (Vigarello, 2012).

The transgression is elucidated by a failure to commit to the sporting ethos of fitness and a lack of investment in one’s athletic abilities. Thus, everything leads one to believe that there were no renunciations and sacrifices to perform an activity in which the body becomes an instrument of work. These renunciations of food and sexual pleasures and rigorous discipline are what are expected of these types of athletes, as Wacquant (2002) clearly shows, in the context of preparation for boxing tournaments.

Furthermore, regarding the lack of investment and rigor in physical form, Goldenberg and Ramos

(2006, p. 31) argue that when they identify the body as a civilization value on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, “fat, sagging or softness are taken as a tangible symbol of indiscipline, carelessness, laziness, lack of a certain virtue, that is, the lack of investment by the individual in himself”. Therefore, under the player lies the moral accusation and consequently the responsibility for the lack of investment in himself and for the lack of commitment to the competition. All this is revealed by their body shapes and their performance on the field.

The lack of courage and guilt for defeat

From their defeat in the 1998 World Cup final, the team experienced a troubled situation, with the passage of four coaches until 2002. From the 2002 title onwards, the situation was different: climbing, training and managing the team in the 2006 cycle was the task of Carlos Alberto Parreira and his technical commission. The winning coach in 1994, he took over the team after Felipão left at the end of 2002.

Parreira was never a national unanimity, not even in 1994 and much less in 2006. The style of play that he adopted in his teams and in the Brazilian National Team did not excel in “aggressiveness” or incessant pursuit of the goal, on the contrary, he preferred to manage possession of the ball and make it go around and around and around: “[...]Parreira is a historic defender, who had in his hands the trump cards that everyone – except, perhaps, himself – would like to have” (Wisnik, 2008, p. 391).

In Germany, despite the two initial victories, criticism pointed to the difficulties of leaving some players out of the starting lineup and the coach’s insistence on supporting an idealized scheme, subsidized by the victories that, according to Tostão, were not convincing.

The chronicler asked for courage:

At the end of the match, the TV showed Parreira and Zagallo serious and worried. They must have been thinking about the problems they created with the lineup of new players. Juninho, Robinho and Gilberto Silva deserve to be in the starting XI, not only for that game, but for what they know how to play. Heck, courage. (Tostão, 2006h, p. D3). (Our emphasis).

Anticipating the coach’s sense of guilt, he already emphasized the need for courage:

I have old opinions [...] But I’m not sure of anything [...] If Brazil is disqualified in one of the next three games and the team plays with the formation of the first two matches, it’s already decided by the majority that, regardless of the players’ performances, it will be Parreira’s fault, who did not have the courage to stop some former starters, such as Roberto Carlos, Caf e and Ronaldo. If Brazil plays well and wins with these experienced athletes, playing well or badly, they will say that Parreira was prudent when choosing the players (Tostão, 2006i, p. D3). (Our emphasis).

In the sporting context, the insistence on courage is related to virility, “sports virility is oriented towards more intimate aspects: courage, obstinacy, selflessness” (Vigarello, 2013, p. 287). Courage is an emotion that communicates moral values and is closely linked to heroic virtue (Le Breton, 2009; Rabieh, 2006). Therefore, courage, being a moral virtue, presupposes taking risks (Putman, 2001). Being virile and daring – taking risks – merge as a moral quality of those in command: boldness can lead to failure, but not being daring indicates impotence, this indeed a greater fear than failure (Haroche, 2013). It is in this sense that Le Breton (2011b, p.24) recalls that not taking risks in certain circumstances can be risky, as there is always the danger of being identified as impotent, passive and effeminate, as indicated by the literature that focuses on the construction process of masculinity, in different latitudes (Almeida, 1995; Connell, 2000; Gilmore, 1990; Messner, 1992).

Now, in the case of Parreira, impotence and passivity are related not only to his lack of daring and courage, but also to his hesitant authority and inability to govern the athletes on and off the field. These

are the aspects that Tostão's chronicles emphasize to determine the coach's guilt, even if not all, for the defeat. "Parreira is responsible for the team's line-up and the tactical scheme, but he is not the only one to blame" (Tostão, 2006, p. D3).

What makes Parreira guilty in the defeat narratives is related to the style of play adopted by the coach and his difficulty in organizing the team and extracting the best from each player. Tostão shows reticence in prioritizing the attack, even having players with characteristics and abilities that would allow the option for an aggressive game scheme. Furthermore, there was concern about changing the team's formation and favoring players who were not originally in the starting line-up, but who were in better conditions than the "more experienced" athletes.

Another aspect of guilt refers to the lack of authority and ascendancy over off-field players. Military discipline and consequently obedience to the coach's orders is what governs the power and hierarchy relationships between coaches and athletes. As Florenzano (1998) makes believe, the authority to govern the conduct of the players exercised by the coaching staff assumes monitoring of physical conditioning and docility to the coach's orders. It is known that the preparation for the World Cup was a media spectacle highlighted by the lack of privacy in training, rumors of night outs and consumption of alcoholic beverages in concentration by athletes.

Therefore, in the field, tactical obedience predominated, making it impossible for the athletes to exercise their skills, outside of it, the transgression of the expected behaviors predominated. Docile and servile in the field; disobedient and insubordinate outside it. Hence the deletion of the stars and their improvisations in favor of obedience to a cowardly tactical scheme. Hence the excesses and exposures that resulted in the poor physical shape of players and the lack of commitment to competition. In both cases, the biggest part of the blame for the failure in Germany has name and surname: lack of courage and fragility in maintaining authority. This is what the narratives unleashed in Tostão's chronicles show.

Final remarks

It was the intention of this paper to reflect on themes highlighted in the chronicles written by former player Tostão as a result of the soccer World Cup held in Germany in 2006. One of the themes that it revisits is that of authorized speech to issue opinions about social reality, in this case the defeat of the Brazilian selection and its culprits. This context is highlighted by a game of disputes between social actors where the former player, even having specialized speech based on practice and his victorious career, has the legitimacy of his speech threatened by some members of the field of sports journalism. A threat that wanes while the support of big names in sports journalism authorizes him to write chronicles about football and compare his style with the canons of Brazilian literature. In this power relationship, Tostão occupies an ambivalent position. He can be considered an outsider for not being a child of sports journalism, but at the same time he can be considered an established (Elias & Scotson, 2000) for occupying a position of former player and having won the glory of world champion in the most memorable, for practicing the Brazilian style of practicing art football; the 1970 selection. The position is ambivalent because, historically, the columnist's space is not occupied by active or retired players. The sports chronicle is a place occupied mostly by journalists, writers, jurists and top hats. During World Cup periods, this space is exceptionally occupied by other actors in a special section. Thus, it is a concession to issue statements that, in principle, do not destabilize power relations in sports journalism. Tostão does not occupy this space in an exceptional way, he has had a weekly column in the newspaper since at least 1996 and this makes the ambivalence more visible and noisier, requiring the consent of renowned journalists so that their speeches acquire due importance.

It is important to highlight that the categories mobilized by Tostão are not new to understand Brazilian defeats in World Cups. Both bodily issues, emotions, and masculinity and authority have already

been topics of debate in chronicles such as José Lins do Rego, Mário Filho and Nelson Rodrigues. Certainly, these chroniclers were concerned with issues that were directly connected with national character and national identity. This does not seem to us to be the main focus of Tostão's gaze, even though these issues are to some extent in his chronicles.

Corporeity is the highlighted theme to deal with the performance of the player Ronaldo Fenômeno. The blisters on his feet and excess fat are reasons for discussion in Tostão's chronicles. In each of the cases, responsibilities associated with the fault of the sporting failure are chosen. If, in the case of foot blisters, the fault lies with the "market" entity, represented by the brand that sponsors his boot, in the case of fat, the (ir)responsibility lies with the player himself. Not only irresponsibility, but moral failure and transgression are suggested. In this context, fat becomes a category of accusation (Velho, 2004) exposing the lack of commitment and the transgression of the body discipline required of a high-performance athlete. It is significant to think about how the chronicles help in blaming the player, becoming a "Norm Court" (Florenzano, 1998 and 2009) and showing their subversion of the governing device of the body, of the concentration and its norms in favor of the conquest of your personal goals.

In the same direction, the moral accusation that focuses on blaming coach Parreira, the lack of courage to dare and take risks to transform the situations that were imposed on him by the circumstances of the matches, added to the impotence of disciplining his athletes and instilling in them a competitive mentality made the coach the main culprit for the Brazilian failure in this World Cup. The chronicles written by Tostão focus on the absence of courage and authority during and after the competition. Absences that remove the characteristic of virility from what is expected of a football coach – a father figure or an aggressive-military figure (Florenzano, 1998; Messner, 1992) – and accentuate weakening, weakness and laxity. Characteristics that should be avoided, under any circumstances, in male speeches and practices (Almeida, 1995).

In the end, even though he was not the only culprit, Parreira is the villain of the failure for relying on a style of play that won in 1994, despite being contested, it did not repeat with the same success with more qualified players: there was a lack of courage, boldness and authority. These characteristics are decisive for the choice of its replacement.

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