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# Transatlantic Football Exchanges and European Self-Representation: Rioplatense Tours, Discourse, and Claims of Supremacy (1925–1952)

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## Résumé

This paper – developed under the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship *FAITHBALL: Narratives, Myths, and Religious Rituals in Football under the Franco Regime and the Shifting Powers in Argentina (1939–1976)* (funded by the EU) – investigates how Transatlantic football exchanges, particularly the European tours of Boca Juniors (1925), Peñarol (1927), San Lorenzo (1946–47, 1950–51), and River Plate (1951–52), became discursive devices through which Europe defined itself. The study employs an integrated methodology combining comparative historical inquiry with discourse analysis. It draws on Maingueneau’s notion of discursive ethos (2022) and Alabarces’ interpretation of the “*Rioplatense style*” as a journalistic invention with identity-shaping consequences (2014). The empirical basis rests on European press archives and club records, complemented by visual materials such as posters and photographs. Given the scarcity of audiovisual documentation from the 1920s–1940s, journalistic chronicles and radio broadcasts emerge not only as descriptive sources but as performative texts that actively constructed the style they claimed to portray. Preliminary findings reveal a recurring grammar: Rioplatense football was labelled “*passionate*,” “*artistic*,” and “*undisciplined*,” in contrast to an imagined European ethos of rationality, discipline, and modernity (Orton, 2023). These narratives did not simply describe a style; they invented one to articulate global hierarchies. The supposed European tactical order, set against the flamboyant *Rioplatense* game, became a mirror through which two distant worlds were narrated. Journalistic accounts reworked cultural stereotypes, reinforcing the supremacy of European rationalism over Latin American passion and echoing colonial legacies that positioned Europe as centre and South America as exotic periphery. Yet the performances of River, Boca, and Peñarol unsettled these categories, enabling recognition and the transnational circulation of playing models. For the European press, telling the story of *Rioplatense football* was both a mode of self-representation and a way to assert Europe’s claims to international supremacy.

**Mots-Clés:** European Press, Latin America Football, Discourse Analysis, Postcolonial Studies, Global History.

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