

The Pioneer of Medical Climatology in Brazil



"It Dust, Modest, It Snow, Pure: They Had Given A Little of Mud. In Puddle of Mud as in the Divine Sky, also passes the Moon".

Júlio Afrânio Peixoto (1876-1947)

This our honored was who better interpreted, as none another one, so deeply the relationship between climate, humanity, culture and medicine in Brazil. Furthermore, he was a multiple man, alienist, medical legal expert, politician, professor, literary critic, essayist, novelist, historian, academic and polemicist.

Biography of Afrânio Peixoto

On December 14, 1876, was born in Lençóis, in the Lavras Diamantinas at Bahia, Júlio Afrânio Peixoto. The picture shows the house where he was born and which nowadays is the Afrânio Peixoto Museum.

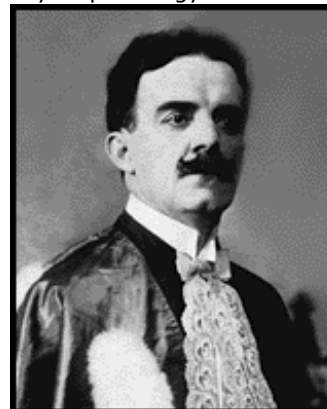
His parents were Captain Francisco Afrânio Peixoto and Ms. Virgínia de Moraes Peixoto. The father, Portuguese ancestry, came from Recôncavo Baiano and was diamond merchant, self-taught person, transmitted to the son the knowledge that gained throughout his life. Here in Bahia could not even imagine that in 1910 his son was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters in the chair of Euclides da Cunha.



House where Afrânio Peixoto was born in Lençóis/BA.

Due to the diamond exploration crisis, the family moved to Canavieiras city. Thus, Peixoto spent his childhood in the interior at Canavieiras (where exist a library and streets with his name), where he concluded primary school, beyond living deeply situations and landscapes that would influence his intellectual education and many of his novels.

In 1892 he joined at the Bahia Medicine Faculty, Salvador, and graduated in 1897. His inaugural thesis "*Epilepsy and Crime*" aroused great interest among scientists of Brazil and exterior. Prof. Isaías Paim in an article published in the journal *Brasiliense of Psychiatry* (1971) named Development of Forensic Psychopathology in Brazil, considers Afrânio Peixoto as "Founder of the Forensic Psychopathology in our Country".



Afrânio Peixoto in the official photo of his graduation in Medicine, 1897. Photo: www.biblio.com.br.



Doctor, Literary, Professor and Politician

In the Medicine Faculty of Bahia approached of Juliano Moreira and 1902 Juliano invites him to move to the country's capital, at the time, Rio de Janeiro, where he was Public Health overseer (1902) and Director of the National Hospital of Mentally (1904). His life, like so many other doctors, changed between practical clinic and the literary inclinations.

His premiere was given in literature within the atmosphere of symbolism, with publication, 1900, of the Mystic Rose Drama, curious and original drama in five acts, luxuriously printed in Leipzig (Germany), with a color for each act. The author himself disowned this workmanship, writing down, in the existing copy in the Library of Academy, the comment: "Incorrigible. Only the fire".

Between 1904 and 1906 he traveled for some European countries in order to improve knowledge in his specialty field, combining also the curiosity of art and tourism to the interest of the study. On this first trip by Europe he took knowledge, on board, the presence of the Alberto de Faria family, which would be part, seven years later, when he married with Frances Peixoto de Faria.

In 1906, he was submitted to tests of competition of the Medicine Faculty of Rio de Janeiro, and then was appointed as professor of the chairs Forensic Medical and Hygiene (1907), and assumed the position of extraordinary professor of the Faculty of Medicine (1911); Director of the Normal School of Rio de Janeiro (1915) and Director of Public Instruction of the Federal District in the following year.

When Euclides da Cunha (1909) died was Afrânio Peixoto who examined the body of the slain writer and signed the relevant finding. Held Chair No. 7 of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL), which was elected on May 7, 1910, succeeding Euclides da Cunha; and Chair No. 2 of the Brazilian Academy of Philology, which he founded.

When he came to Rio de Janeiro, his thought was only to be a doctor, who both failed to tread the literature after publication of the Mystic Rose. His medical-legal-scientific workmanship augmented. The novel was an implication that author was taken due to his election for the ABL, for which he was chosen in absentia when he was in Egypt on his second trip abroad.

He started to write the novel "A Esfinge" (The Sphinx in english), what did in three months before the entrance on August 14th, 1911. Egypt inspired him the title and woof of the novel, the eternal conflict between man and woman that are wanted, transposed for the refined environment of the carioca society, with then traditional summering in Petrópolis, mundaneness conversations, treating of politics, stock Business, literary and artistic subjects and trips abroad. The novel, published in 1911, obtained an uncommon success and put the author in highlight position in the Brazilian fictionist gallery. In the novels regionalist trilogy Maria Bonita (1914), Fruta do Mato (1920) and Bugrinha (1922), perhaps his more famous novel. Among urban novels wrote "As Razões do Coração" (1925), "Uma Mulher como as Outras" (1928) and "Sinhazinha" (1929).

Endowed of fascinating personality, irradiating, exciting, besides being a fable great bookkeeper and an excellent lecturer, conquered people and auditoriums by the intelligent and charming word. Like criticism success and popular prestige, few writers equaled at that time to Afrânio Peixoto.

At the Academy he also had intense activity. He belonged to Magazine Editorship Commission (1911-1920); to the Bibliography Commission (1918) and to the Lexicography Commission (1920 and 1922). House President of the Machado de Assis, in 1923 promoted, next to the ambassador of France, Alexandre Conty, donation by the French government of the Petit Trianon palace, built for France's Exhibition in the Independence Centenary of Brazil. Still in 1923, he gave beginning to the Academy publications, in a collection that, in his homage, since 1931, has the Collection name Afrânio Peixoto.

Like essayist wrote important studies about Camões, Castro Alves and Euclides da Cunha. In 1941 visited his homeland, Bahia, after 30 years of absence and published 2 books: "Breviário da Bahia" (1945) and "Livro de Horas" (1947).

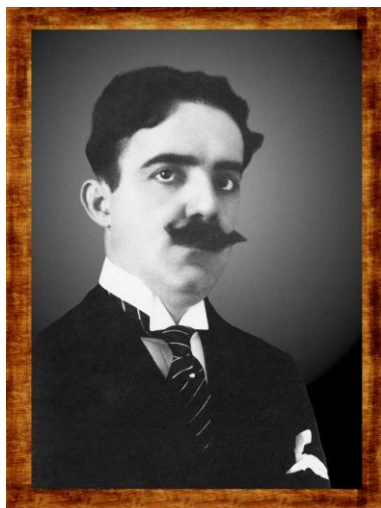
Beyond of these, he published workmanship of other authors and numerous books of medicine, history, speeches and forewords. Afrânio Peixoto tried to summarize in its biography his intense intellectual labor exercised in the cathedra and in the hundreds of workmanship that published in two verses: "He studied and Wrote, Nothing more happened Him".

He had a passage by politics when was chosen federal deputy by Bahia, staying in the at post from 1924 to 1930.

After this, he came back to the educational activity being professor of Education History of Education Institute of Rio de Janeiro (1932). In the mastership, he arrived to Rector of the Distrito Federal University (Rio de Janeiro), in 1935. After 40 years of considerable services to the new generation formation of his country, he retired.

He was member of the Historical and Geographical Institute Brazilian (IBGE), Sciences Academy of Lisbon; National Academy of Legal Medicine, Medicine Institute of Madrid and of other important institutions.

Afrânio Peixoto Contribution by Biometeorology



Of the first studies on Brazil's Climate in the middle of XIX Century, he was from the paradigms of wholesomeness, adaptation, hygiene and public health, that climatology gave its first steps towards the institutionalization as knowledge field.

Among doctors and hygienists Brazilian, no other interpreted so deeply the relationships between climate, humanity and culture how much Afrânio Peixoto. By the ensemble of his work, would not be exaggerated affirm that he has been the precursor of Geography and Medical Climatology in our country.

Professor of Rio de Janeiro Medicine Faculty, Peixoto was an ardent defender of the tropical world against detractors of which prejudice this environment, that divulged the "peoples natural" inferiority of the Torrid Zone.

Yet in 1907, was published one of his first papers that cared for the relation between climate and diseases in Brazil "Climate and Health".

In this paper, he thrills with possibilities to think the Brazil starting from internal solutions for overcoming of the Brazilian problems. In the foreword of his capital workmanship, the author's speech revealed the guns that he disposed, when trying to interpret the national reality of XX Century beginning, when he affirmed:

"Brazil is the unique great country, of occidental civilization, situated in the tropics. Therefore, not comparable to none of named 'cultured countries', tempered and cold. With India and Egypt would not want to seem... It has, because, right to think and to find its solutions, for the own problems: Brazilian solutions, for Brazilian problems. It is today the only colonial country', or of raw materials, that does not have metropolis, to protect: has, therefore, obligation of care of itself, searching own economic solutions, for the particular Brazilian problems. In the meditation, and in the current actions of these postulates, that imposes the climate, and the topography, and people, and education, is the happiness and even is national survival itself. Cannot be empty spaces such protests. To love, that is great, will forgive the vehemence that comes of the apprehensions... It cannot be bland, if is much love force".

While Belfort de Mattos and Henrique Morize (already cited in Cirrus previous issues), to the treated of the Brazilian climates, where defended the ideas that, even accepting the thesis of the geographical determinism, great part of the Brazilian territory (center-south) would be inside limits of sub-tropical and tempered climates, presenting "favorable climates" to the human and economic development and, thus, in this portion of our territory would be free of these limitations of climatic order, Peixoto, on the other side, did not accept this reasoning line.



By Peixoto (1938), first, was fundamental that if threw down and unmasked the thesis deterministic and if built a land and man analysis new perspective of the tropics. In the whole his work evidences defense's possibilitism thesis enormous effort, demonstrating that, in reality, the climatic influences generated adaptations and new arrangements in the relation society-nature.

But, besides the speech in the field of the philosophical ideas, that Afrânio Peixoto was building by more than three decades, dedicating to the environment influences in the societies behavior, this author also had interest, and too much, by the aspects of climatic order, to such an extent that, leaving aside his academic formation in the medicine field, he thoroughly dived in the theoretical and methodological discussion of the Climatology arriving, inclusive, to present a critical evaluation of the scientific production of this knowledge area.

In "Climate and Health", Peixoto (1938) accomplished an excellent analysis of the climatic terms associated to the illnesses and public health, demonstrating that more than climate influences, are hygiene and wholesomeness conditions, therefore, socioeconomic aspects, that proceed to define new endemic areas. Dismounting the ideas pre-concepts on "tropical diseases", author argues:

"Climatic diseases were formerly cholera, malaria, and sleep disease: today they have a well-known etiology, without no subordination to the climate; invade places on all the latitudes; In the zones of a same climate, they have been retreating ahead from that whose hygiene has them been known how to preserve. And this true so simple, and of such great consequences - because territorial and economic conquest of the world there is, - that does not exist climatic diseases - therefore does not exist tropical diseases - imposes, replacing old beliefs for this other scientific by the observation and by the experience: just there are avoidable diseases, against which ones the hygiene has safe means of defense and reaction".

In this same work, the author analyzed the questions on "Meteoropathology", relating climate kinds and its seasonal variations, with the morbidity, epidemics and endemics cases. He concluded that, starting from some climatic conditions, some pathology are facilitated and another inhibited, however, once detected and diagnosed, many just let there being. They can, however, reappear in other climatic environments, due to the hygiene and health conditions.

Retaking his interest by the more particular matters of the Climatology, Peixoto (1908), when proposing a new climatic classification for Brazil; he considered three climatic types, as well as Morize and Delgado de Carvalho, however, on the other side of the other two, emphasized tropicality character of our territory. Peixoto climatic classification, firstly published in 1908, and lightly modified in 1938 and 1942, it is thus structured:

Climates	Types (Generals)	Region
Equatorial	Hot and Wet	High Amazonas
	Hot and Sub-Wet	Countryside of the States of North, Northeast and Center-West (PA, MA, MT)
	Sub-Hot and Wet	Coast of the State of North and Northeast
Tropical	Coastland	Littoral of BA and SE
	Coastland Hot and Wet	Littoral of BA, ES and RJ
	Continental	Paraguay Valley (MT/MS)
	Altitude	Region Heights of BA, MG, ES, RJ e SP
Tempered	Coastland	Littoral of SP, PR, SC e RS
	Continental and Altitude	Stats of SP, PR, SC e RS

Source: Santana Neto, 1998.

The main differences among Henrique Morize, Delgado de Carvalho and Afrânio Peixoto classifications refer to much more to the delimitation question of the tropical zone than to the geographical and meteorological elements considered in the climates space distribution proposal.

If on one side, Draenert, Morize and Delgado de Carvalho were responsible persons for the first more systematic studies of the Brazilian climatology in passing of the centuries XIX to XX, on the other hand, fell to Afrânio Peixoto, in these history first pages of this wonderful science, the establishment of a procedures set of more conjunctive and humanistic analysis. In a way, he introduced a new paradigm for the geographical studies of the climate in Brazil.

After 40 years of important services to the new generation formation of its country Afrânio Peixoto retired. He died in the Rio de Janeiro city on January 12nd, 1947, with 70 years old.

By all that was described here we show that contribution of Afrânio Peixoto was essential by Biometeorology or Meteoropathology in Brazil.



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