

A BRAZILIAN WRITER (MONTEIRO LOBATO)
IN NEW YORK¹

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Resumo: Entre maio de 1927 e março de 1931 o escritor brasileiro Monteiro Lobato (1882-1948) viveu nos Estados Unidos, onde desempenhava a função de Adido Comercial do Consulado Brasileiro em Nova York. O texto focaliza relações de Lobato com a cidade, manifestadas em cartas, livros, artigos do *New York Times*, documentos consulares e correspondência lobatiana.

Palavras-chave: Monteiro Lobato; Estados Unidos; cinema; feminismo; correspondência.

Manhattan stands on live rock.
Which is highly meaningful.²

From June 1927 to March 1931 the Brazilian writer Monteiro Lobato (1882-1948), his wife and kids lived in New York City, where he held the post of Commercial Attaché to the Brazilian Consulate. During these forty-five months, Monteiro Lobato had time to grasp the United States. Upon his return to Brazil, he wrote *America* (1932),³ a book which sold six thousand copies in the first year and three thousand more two years later.

This paper intends to discuss the North American experience of Monteiro Lobato as it can be grasped throughout different textual genders.

Letters he wrote to his friends, diplomatic documents issued during his New York period, some *New York Times* articles he might have read and passages from his book *America* can suggest to us glimpses of a New York available to a distinguished Brazilian in the last years of the second decade of the twentieth century.

Let's start with the world of movies, a subject that seems to have impressed Monteiro Lobato very much during his stay in New York, although even before living in the United States he was already converted to the beauty and importance of cinema as a new language, to the point of discussing it in the short story *Marabá*, first published in *O Macaco que se Fez Homem* (1923). It is a short story in which different narrative languages – theater and novel – are successively tested and abandoned by a narrator that finally sticks to the movie, considering it the language of modernity. The story includes – as characters – Cecil B. de Mille and Annette Kellerman, popular names of the contemporary cinematographic scene.⁴

In his book *America*, he refers to the cinema in different passages. His mentions range from personal experiences (like the day he went to Rialto Theater to see *The Trespasser*, starring Gloria Swanson [117. Cap. V]) to general and abstract considerations like the death of the novel and its replacement by film or the wrongs of censorship. Monteiro Lobato himself encompasses both the particular and the general perspectives when he praises a magnificent and luxurious theater building, as a kind of metonymy of the importance and strength of the new art. He points several reasons: the polyphonic nature of its language, the different expertise it requires and its economic importance.

The elements available for the cinema are really incredible [...]. In order to create a movie, there is the gathering of many artists from different fields: the author that writes the script, the director, the continuist, the painter, the musician, the architect. For the first time humanity has been able to create an art that partakes of all the others [...] it also has at its service what all the others have always lacked: countless millions [...].⁵

This enthusiasm is somewhat refrained when Monteiro Lobato realizes how the North American censorship – very active in the late twenties – might represent a hindrance to the new art since it embodies:

[...] the tyranny of religion and politics, agents of mass domination that benefit only those that turn religion and politics into business. The trick is to convince the masses that the censorship measures are taken in the general interest, when they are really taken to the sole advantage of the ruling elite.⁶

Lobato's love for the cinema lasts his whole life. In 1941 (the date is not completely accurate) he wrote a passionate article about the masterpiece *Fantasia* (Disney, 1941), one of the first and less figurative cartoons, and so, one of the first cinematographic works to take full advantage of the language of the new media :

Fantasia let me astonished [...], unable to talk about it, to define it. It is so fresh, so original that the usual critic vocabulary is completely impotent. Disney is a new kind of genius and his art is an art total and completely fresh/new, never before dreamed of not even by the most delirious imagination. Until Disney, cinema was nothing but a mix of theater and photography. It was a theatrical representation photographed in all its movements, colors and sounds. Disney has created a big new thing: the conjunction of photography and imagination.

[...]

Walt Disney is the supreme compensation for the horrors that war is bringing to humankind. There is the war, yes. There is random air bombing. There is the slashing of innocents. There is Hell. But humankind saves itself by creating in this tragic instant the high compensation of Disney, the Great Creator.

[...]

We, people from today, are troglodytes from the Stone Age facing the creature that shows us the wonders of a still remote future: Disney, Disney, the troglodytes hail thee!⁷

While in NY, the world of movies is also present in his family life, if we are to credit a letter he writes to his wife⁸ when he was away in a short trip to Detroit:

Dear Purity

I am here and begin to visit the Ford plant. Too big! Today I have seen 1/1000, and I must spend one thousand days to see all. But don't worry. I will see only 5/1000...

Go to the movies and don't worry about me

Juca

Till to Monday or 3ça.

Funny that he writes in English to his wife, nicknamed Purezinha... Lobato starts the letter by translating her name – *Maria da Pureza* to *Purity*, translation that gives it a kind of Victorian accent. Monteiro Lobato closes the letter by mixing up English and Portuguese to name the weekdays and comments very good humouredly on the length of his absence, promising his wife – supposedly worried by her husband's absence? – he will abbreviate the visit to the Ford plant; the Ford family and their business are a recurrent theme in Lobato's correspondence but he spares his wife the praise of what – in Economics – has become known as Fordism.

Unfortunately it has so far been impossible to discover if “dear Purity” accepted the suggestion of her husband. Actually this evanescent figure of the wife in Lobato's life, particularly in his New York period is so far a complete mystery: which New York was available for a Brazilian housewife, with a poor English, probably short of money since Lobato's salary seems to have been around 400 dollars to support a five persons family. How was her daily life?

Although it has not been possible yet to determine any of the movies Monteiro Lobato and his family might have seen in the United States, one affair in the Brazilian-New York community deserves our attention. In July 1927, Francisco Silva Jr, a Brazilian citizen presumably living in New York wrote an indignant letter to the *New York Times* complaining about movies that – according to him – denigrated the image of Brazil as a modern country. The newspaper published his letter under the title *Faults of the movies*:

[...] most of motion pictures nowadays are composed of childish yarns, vulgar scenes and depraved titles.

Foreigners and traveled persons see the need for more information in the making of scenes of foreign countries and foreign people. The idea of ridiculing other nationalities and showing only their faults is very irritating. It not only creates a bitter feeling abroad toward this country but also becomes partially responsible for the erroneous idea the average American has of the rest of the world.

Yesterday I saw a picture supposed to show scenes of Brazil. It is a brand new picture, of a reputable make and directed by Charles Brabin. Once more Brazil was shown on screen as a Spanish-like colony, semi-civilized and disgraced by poverty and fevers.

[...]

Let the hero in all pictures be an American, but at least stop showing the rest of the world as a filthy horrid hell on Earth. Francisco Silva Jr. July 11, 1927.⁹

Three months later, Mr. Silva Jr. rides again. Another letter addressed to the editor of *The New York Times* is published under the title *Film slight is protested by Brazilian* and reads that

Nothing seems to satisfy so much the average movie fan in this country as a feature ridiculing a foreign land. The producers, therefore, obey this salesmanship commandment and are always on the safe side as the picture is never shown without the necessary changes in its subtitles when exported to the country so malicious portrayed. But here in this country remains the erroneous conception created by the Hollywood settings and many millions of Americans continue believing that civilization of mankind was begun in Manhattan and has not yet gone beyond the boundaries of the United States.

It is for this reason that once more I bring to the columns of your paper my protest against a motion picture depicting my country in the usual pernicious way. It is a yarn entitled "The girl from Rio " in which Rio de Janeiro is again presented with the irritating environment of a Spanish village, where Spanish is spoken and the tango is the sole occupations of his inhabitants.

The story is about a British merchant who goes to Brazil to close a transaction of millions bags of coffee. Although he goes there in such an important mission we see him in the capital of Brazil in the most humble and miserable surroundings apparently because Rio de Janeiro has no

hotels as if that modern city did not have all the up-to-date comforts for those who can afford them. While no actual scenes from Rio are shown, some dark, narrow, slummy alleys depict the streets of the Brazilian Capital.

The main character in this picture – the biggest man in Rio – bears the name of an authentic prominent Brazilian of that city, well known in the coffee business circles. It seems to be too much coincidence that this choice of name was incidental and owing to the role he plays this point is very much harmful to his good reputation.

To the director of this picture and to those that may have their minds swayed by these reels of absurdity, I wish to say the following: Rio de Janeiro is a city of nearly a million and a half inhabitants, a very large business center as modern as any city in this or in any other country.

[...]

The motion picture could be used as the best medium for the building of international good will, I for one, however, regret that a few mercenary minds looking only for box office profits overlook the fact that they create an erroneous conception in millions of minds and foster a feeling of antagonism toward this whole country. Francisco Silva Jr. New York , Sept. 27.¹⁰

If we add to Francisco Silva's analysis of North American movies the fact that some contemporary pictures present Brazil – as well as other Latin American countries – as a paradise for crooks from all over the world, we must agree with Mr. Silva Jr. In Mel Brook's *The Producers* (ironically, the bad men in the second letter of Mr. Silva Jr. ...), the closing scene is the escape of the villains to Brazil where they can leisurely enjoy their fortune.

Although Monteiro Lobato seems to have nothing to say concerning this issue – in June 1927 he had just arrived in New York – the question was important enough to be dealt with by the Brazilian Consul himself, Sebastião Sampaio. In July 29, he sends a cable to the Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister reporting how he had set the matter in a way that shared with Mr. Silva Jr. what today would be rightly denounced as racist prejudice:

[...] I have verified the film presents Brazil as a land of Negroes, deathly climate and barbaric habits with no reference to the true Brazil. I talked at length to the president of *First National* [Pictures, ml]. He promised me they will cut all the references to Brazil from all the copies, even the ones already distributed. The board of Directors apologized and declared they had no intention to offend and promised to avoid future mistakes. I preferred this solution instead of official complaints to the press, which are always risky [...] A Brazilian citizen had already written to a newspaper and I was afraid other Brazilian newsmen could write or cable Brazilian newspapers.¹¹

Another aspect of North American life – at least of New York's life – that very much impressed Monteiro Lobato was the growing and strengthening of a new female identity. The subject is mentioned in different passages of *America* and one of the longest chapters of the book (Chapt. XXVIII, 217-235) discusses the Freudian psychologist Fritz Wittels.¹²

Inspired by Wittels' article, *Flaming youth should be encouraged, not lambasted*, Lobato discusses the psychologist's opinion regarding the new woman. Monteiro Lobato seems to approve (as well as Wittels) women's new behavior and role in society. This approval, however, acquires a funny tone when presented in a book – Monteiro Lobato's *America* – that reproduces cartoons originally published in the *New York American* (the first North American newspaper to publish color cartoons) that might be considered inconsistent with women's liberation. The cartoons mock new female attitudes regarding life in general, particularly women's independence and new sexual role in love relationships. So, apparently, the visual image contradicts the verbal one.

It might be interesting to note that the feminine question has already appeared in Monteiro Lobato's polemical novel *O Presidente Negro* (*The Clash of Races*) published in 1926. The plot depicts a presidential election in the year of 2228 with three candidates: two males (a black one and a white one) and a female, the white and beautiful Miss Astor who ends up marrying Kellog, the white male, so they can beat Roy, the black candidate. Monteiro Lobato tried very hard to publish this book in America.

So, new roles ascribed to women were already in Lobato's mind when he went to the United States. We may think, however, that his experience of the new female protagonism in America might be responsible for the *matriarchal* point of view of his children books, which gains definite features after the writer returns from the United States in 1931. In the stories written and re-written thereafter, the main character is a rag doll (Emília) and the only male protagonist (the young boy Pedrinho) very seldom plays the role of hero.

Many years later, gender issues appear in a curious passage of a letter Monteiro Lobato wrote to his life long friend Cândido Fontoura.¹³ After considering his North American period "the most interesting five years of my life", he makes a cryptic comment : "I still belonged to the male sex and took advantage of this".¹⁴ It remains to us – his later readers, or even better, to *dear Purity* – to decide (or to imagine) what advantages he was talking about.

The same Cândido Fontoura to whom Monteiro Lobato wrote the letter we comment on above may introduce us to the last section of this paper: Monteiro Lobato and the United States. Cândido Fontoura is the addressee of one of the first letters Monteiro Lobato wrote after his arrival in New York. In a letter of June 24, 1927 crowded with exclamation marks, Monteiro Lobato had eyes to nothing but wealth and happiness in America

Here am I, in the biggest city in the world. Really the biggest! Everything is enormous, gigantic, beyond imagination. Only by seeing it can our Brazilian mind understand the proportion of this endless city. Everything [here] is different from there [Brazil]. Order, discipline, an easy life, the wealth of the people [...] Everybody has a car and not just a Ford. People are so, but so much rich that Ford has fallen down: it is too cheap a car. Today's newspaper carries sensational news: Ford has stopped producing the cheap models to launch the *Edsel Model*. Imagine that even the porter of our apartment has a Cadillac [...] We see poverty nowhere. [...] Money rolls. Restaurants, hotels, theaters and stores are crowded. In short, everything in here is the opposite of what it is in Brazil. Poor Brazil, deluded by the idea that God is Brazilian... no way: God is every inch North American! [...] ¹⁵

In this letter we find a Monteiro Lobato that sees only the bright side of New York life with its city line of skyscrapers and rows of cars. It seems that, at least right after their arrival in New York, Monteiro Lobato and his family participated to some extent in this golden America: they lived in “The Towers”, a very new and elegant building at 205 – 24th Street – Jackson Heights, L. and they owned an automobile of which he boasts about to his friends.

Two days later, in June 26, 1927 in a letter to his brother-in-law Lobato insists on this paradise-like description of New York. His sociological appraisal of well-to-do people is, however, more finely tuned. He does mention different classes and different income levels. But his enthusiasm remains, and the example of the building concierge is used again:

We sense in everything the amazing wealth of the country. There are no poor people, a poor man here is the equivalent to an average middle class. Even the porter of our apartment has a Cadillac,¹⁶

But in 1927 New York was not only this charming and rich city Lobato describes; there was an inner city that maybe Lobato could not (or did not want to) see even though it was available to his eyes: a few days before he wrote these enthusiastic accounts of New York, an official document signed by the Brazilian General Consul in New York, Sebastião Sampaio, depicted a New York scenery much less optimistic than the one described by Lobato.

In June of 1927 – just a few days after Monteiro Lobato’s arrival in New York City – the Brazilian Consul communicates to his superiors the need to repatriate Brazilian indigents:

Mr. Minister, I am honored to inform you that accordingly to the current legislation I will repatriate on the 23rd of this month by the ship “Pan America” the Brazilian citizens Georgette de Almeida Cardoso and Carlos Pinheiro, that lived in indigent conditions in this city, as it was found in investigations made by the Consulate.¹⁷

So the city crossed by rich people riding luxurious cars that take them to fine restaurants and shops has a counterpart in an inner city where Brazilians find no way to live decently and have to be repatriated, in a kind of early rehearsal of the present situation of so many Latin American immigrants in the United States.

But by then, Monteiro Lobato was not only fascinated by America, he was also – as he had always been – disillusioned with Brazil. Whenever he compares Brazil with the United States – and he does so in almost every letter he writes from there – his conclusions are always pessimistic. Brazil is always seen as a rude, out-of-date and conservative society.

If it is true that it is constitutive of the imperialistic age of Capitalism that poor countries are to be maintained so in order to allow the wealth of others,¹⁸ it took Monteiro Lobato a long time to understand it, and so to understand the double face of America, to realize the contradictory role played by the United States in the political and economic context of Latin America. But he finally does understand it. In 1941, after being in jail for four months as a result of his campaigns pro Brazilian exploration of petroleum, he broke the spell that, in his youth, made him worship the United States.

In 1944 he cancels his membership of a North American Agency, “União Cultural Brasil – Estados Unidos”, and explains his gesture to a friend arguing that he has finally realized the role played by the USA: “North Americans bravely fight fascism in Europe”¹⁹ while giving “moral and material support to Brazilian fascism”.

Three years later, in April 1947, in a letter written from Argentina²⁰ to a Brazilian friend (Nise Therezinha Antunes),²¹ Monteiro Lobato is even more radical in his judgment of North American political role in the post-Second War world. Commenting on the Vargas dictatorship that was then supported by the North American Government, Monteiro

Lobato strongly disapproves of the international politics of the United States and sounds completely disillusioned with the role to be played by the United States in world politics. He seems to consider the confrontation between the United States and Russia as the sole hope for world peace

[...] I see my dear friend, that the bastards go on with their sordid persecution and this tells me how things will be in this poor country (Brazil), now that Truman has launched the program of a Holy War... But fear nothing. Holy wars end up in disaster and this one will last up to the announcement by Russia that they also have the atomic bomb. Everything will then be settled. The problem now is that only the United States have the Bomb and this monopoly brings the world the same unbalance that happened when only the Germans had asphyxiating gases; as soon as every belligerent country had them, no one used them, not even the crazy and desperate Hitler.²²

In this final point of view – stated 14 months before his death – Monteiro Lobato seems to come to terms with the old Monteiro Lobato (his old self) that, even when enraptured by New York's standard of living he had glimpses of the international context from which North American wealth came from. In November 1927 writing to another friend – Alarico Silveira –²³ a letter (from which the epigraph to this paper was taken) he shows quite an interesting perception of Imperialism:

When I stop at Wall Street and think of those monstrous buildings as stations where the invisible wires of economic dependence of thousands and thousands of huge enterprises are connected, and now also of countries that before the war were creditors of this one, and see France, England, Germany, Brazil and *tutti quanti* tied to the US, I clearly see in my imagination the image of the third world dominator – third chronologically speaking, but first for the solidity of its base.²⁴

Monteiro Lobato does not dwell on the subject but the mention of it might be enough to suggest that contradictions are one of the most constant and important features of this polemical Brazilian that has lived for a while in New York City. The United States seem to have strongly

impressed both the citizen and the intellectual Monteiro Lobato, who was never afraid to review his positions and act accordingly. He does so regarding the figure of the Brazilian peasant, *Jeca Tatu*,²⁵ and he also does it regarding the political role played by the United States in the first half of twentieth century.

Not bad for a Brazilian like Monteiro Lobato, a man born in a pre-republican Brazil which still held slavery and who in 1926 translated into Portuguese Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* and in 1947 wrote the pamphlet *Zé Brazil*,²⁶ praising Luís Carlos Prestes, the leader of the Brazilian Communist Party...

NOTES

¹ Paper presented at 5th. International Conference of APSA. Minneapolis, October 05-08 2006. Travel funds were provided by Fapesp and CNPq.

² Unless otherwise indicated all translations are mine. Portuguese originals are in footnotes. "A base de Manhattan é uma rocha viva. Isso é um símbolo de alta significação" (LOBATO, 1970: 112-113).

³ Cf. LOBATO, 1956. The book has been first published in 1932.

⁴ Later on, the cinema seems to gain weight in Monteiro Lobato's work through the book *Memórias de Emília* (1936), a completely surrealistic fake memory book where the ragged doll Emilia goes to Hollywood and together with Shirley Temple enacts a parody of Quixote de La Mancha. Mixing together one of the most classic Western novels – D. Quixote – and the Hollywoodian scene Monteiro Lobato seems to re-write in this children's book the parody through which in the twenties' short story *Marabá* he had experienced the shift of modern narrative languages from one to another.

⁵ "– Os elementos de que dispõe o cinema são na realidade tremendos, adverti eu. Para a criação dum filme juntam-se numerosos artistas tirados de todos os campos. O autor do enredo, o encenador, o organizador da continuidade, o pintor, o músico, o arquiteto. Pela primeira vez a humanidade conseguiu criar uma arte que participa de todas as mais."

"– Não só participa de todas as mais, acrescentou Mr. Slang, como tem a seu serviço o que sempre faltou a cada uma delas individualmente: milhões sem conta para que se realize como fulgura na imaginação do artista" (Cf. LOBATO, 1956: 137).

⁶ "– A Censura, continuou Mr. Slang, é o meio insidioso com o qual a Moral – e por moral não quero dizer a moral natural ou filosófica, conjunto de princípios e normas de conduta que, sem infração das leis da natureza humana, permitem a vida em sociedade. Quero dizer a tirania da religião e da política, associadas em simbiose, com olho na dominação das massas em proveito dos que fazem da religião e da política um negócio. A esperteza está em arrastar as massas a se convencerem de que é de interesse social o que na realidade é do interesse apenas dessas elites dirigentes" (Cf. LOBATO, 1956: 133).

⁷ “FANTASIA deixou-me estarecido. É a expressão. Estarecido. E embaraçado para definir. Tudo tão novo, tudo tão inédito, que o vocabulário crítico usual mostra-se impotente. Disney é um tipo novo de gênio e sua arte é uma arte total e absolutamente nova, jamais prevista nem pelas mais delirantes imaginações. Até o aparecimento de Disney, o cinema não passava duma conjugação do teatro com a fotografia. Era uma representação teatral fotografada em todos os seus movimentos, cores e sons. Disney criou a grande coisa nova; a conjugação da fotografia com a imaginação. [...]”

“Walt Disney é a suprema compensação dos horrores que a guerra está trazendo para a humanidade. Há a guerra, sim. Há o bombardeio aéreo às cegas. Há o estraçoamento dos inocentes. Há o inferno. Mas a humanidade salva-se produzindo neste momento trágico a altíssima compensação dum Disney, o Grande Criador. [...]”

“Nós, gente de hoje, somos trogloditas da Pedra Lascada diante dessa criatura que nos entremostra maravilhas de um ainda remoto futuro.

“Disney, Disney, os trogloditas te saúdam” (Cf. LOBATO, 1956: 113-115).

⁸ MLb 3.1.00168 cx3. Originally written in English.

⁹ ProQuest Historical Newspapers. *The New York Times*, Jul. 13, 1927, p. 22. Originally written in English.

¹⁰ ProQuest Historical Newspapers. *The New York Times*, Oct. 9, 1927, p. 5. Originally written in English.

¹¹ Senhor Ministro, Tenho a honra de confirmar o seguinte telegrama: “48 – Reservado Cinematógrafos Nova York exibindo filme intitulado *Framed* representando Milton Sills fabricado First National Pictures maior fábrica mundial. Verifiquei filme passando-se Brasil expondo-nos terra negros clima mortífero costumes bárbaros sem querer dar vista alguma autêntica Brasil. Conferenciei demoradamente Presidente First National. Acabo obter todos milhares cópias inclusive todas já distribuídas serão cortadas todas referências Brasil. Diretoria excusou-se nenhuma intenção ofender prometeu providenciar evitar futuras inadvertências. Preferi semelhante solução incidente em vez protestos imprensa sempre contraproducentes. O meu telegrama tem detalhes que dispensam outras explicações. Telegrafei, e não pude ser mais resumido, porque já um brasileiro havia escrito a um jornal desta cidade e temi que outros brasileiros jornalistas escrevessem ou enviassem telegramas aos jornais do nosso país. Devo acentuar que o Sr. John McGuirk, Presidente e o Sr. J. A. Rowland, Vice-Presidente e General Manager, na First Nacional Pictures Incorporated, lamentaram sinceramente o fato e prometeram que semelhante fato nunca mais se reproduziria. Tenho a honra de reiterar, Senhor Ministro, os protestos da minha respeitosa consideração. Sebastião Sampaio À Sua Excelência o Senhor Doutor Octavio Mangabeira, Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores. 129. RESERVADO. Nova York, 29 de julho de 1927. Sobre um Film Deprimente para o Brasil.

¹² Fritz Wittels (1880-1950), Psychologist deeply impressed by Freud's ideas. His book *Sex Habits of the American Woman* was published in 1951.

¹³ Cândido Fontoura (1885-1974) invented and patented a very popular medicine aimed at improving appetite, the Biotonico Fontoura (what we would call today an energizer). The label of the flask was designed by Monteiro Lobato and in its composition there were large doses of alcohol. Other letters suggest that Lobato and Fontoura intended to introduce this medicine in the United States.

¹⁴ “Foram muito interessantes e ricos os anos que passei nesse país. Creio que foram os 5 anos mais interessantes da minha vida. Eu ainda pertencia ao sexo masculino e tirava partido disso”, carta de 09 de março de 1948 a Fontoura.

¹⁵ “N. Y. 24.6.27 Fontoura: Cá estou, na maior cidade do mundo. É bem a maior! Tudo imenso, desconforme, acima de tudo quanto podemos imaginar. A nossa mentalidade brasileira só vendo é que pode alcançar a proporção/ desta cidade infinita. Tudo diferente dahi. A ordem, a disciplina, a facilidade da vida, a riqueza do povo [...] Todo o mundo tem automóvel, e não Ford. O povo enriqueceu tanto que o Ford cahiu. Tem o defeito de ser m^{to}. barato. Os jornaes de hoje dão a sensacional noticia de que H. Ford parou o fabrico de fordecos e vae lançar o Edsel. Imagine que o porteiro do nosso / bloco possui uma Cadillac! [...] Não se vê miséria por aqui. O povo é [assustadora^{ra}.] gastador. Vê-se o dinheiro rolar. [...] Em summa: isto é em tudo o contrario do nosso pobre Brasil, illudido com a historia de ser Deus brasileiro. Deus é norte-americanissimo!” (Biblioteca Infantil Monteiro Lobato. Pasta 33 – documento 3498 [xerox of original manuscript]. Transcript by Emerson Tin).

¹⁶ “Sente-se em tudo a riqueza espantosa do país. Não há pobres, o pobre daqui equivale ao remediado daí. Toda a gente possui auto. O porteiro cá da nossa casa possui uma (sic) cadillac” (Cf. LOBATO, 1970: 104).

¹⁷ “A Sua Excelência o Senhor Doutor Octavio Mangabeira Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores. Senhor Ministro : Tenho a honra de comunicar a Vossa excelência que, de acordo com a legislação vigente repatrio em data de 23 do corrente, pero vapor ‘Pan América’ os brasileiros Georgette de Almeida Cardoso e Carlos Pinheiro, que se achavam nesta capital em estado de indigência, conforme verifiquei em inquérito feito por este Consulado Geral [...]. A 22-6-27 Secretaria das Relações Exteriores 8 JUN 27 N^o de entrada J628X3”.

¹⁸ Cf., for instance, Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995), *Sociedade de Classes e Subdesenvolvimento* (1968) and *A Revolução Burguesa no Brasil* (1975), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1931), *Dependência e Desenvolvimento na América Latina*, and Octavio Ianni (1926-2004) *Estado e Capitalismo no Brasil* (1965); *Dialética e capitalismo* (1987).

¹⁹ “Os americanos fazem a maior das guerras ao fascismo na Europa e dão todo o apoio moral e material ao mesmo fascismo aqui” (Cf. LOBATO, 1970: 262).

²⁰ From 1946 to 1947 Monteiro Lobato lived in Argentina.

²¹ Cf. BL Ms00011, Centro de Documentação Alexandre Eulálio, Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem, UNICAMP.

²² B.A. 8.4.47

Terezinha:

[...] Minha cara amiga: vejo que os infames continuam na sórdida perseguição, e isso me dá medida do que vão ser as coisas nessa pobre terra, agora que o Truman lançou o programa da Guerra Santa. Mas não tenha medo. Todas as guerras santas acabam em desastre, e a de agora vai durar até o dia em que a Rússia anunciar que também tem bomba atômica. Imediatamente tudo endireitará. O mal atual é que a bomba está só com os E.U.; isso traz aquele mesmo estado de desequilíbrio de quando só os alemães tinham gases asfixiantes; no dia em que todos os beligerantes passaram a ter gases, nenhum os empregou – nem o louco Hitler no seu desespero.

²³ Cf. LOBATO, 1970: 112-113.

²⁴ Alarico

[...] quando paro na Wall Street e me ponho a considerar aqueles monstruosos prédios como estações onde vêm ter os fios invisíveis da dependência econômica de milhares e milhares de empresas gigantescas e também agora de países que antes da guerra eram credores deste, e vejo ali amarrados a França, a Inglaterra, a Alemanha, o Brasil e *tutti*

quanti , desenha-se-me, nítida na imaginação a imagem do terceiro dominador do mundo – terceiro em ordem cronológica, mas primeiro quanto à solidez de base. A base de Manhattan é uma rocha viva. Isso é um símbolo de alta significação (LOBATO,1970: 112-113).

²⁵ Cf. LAJOLO, 1983, p. xx.

²⁶ Cf. LOBATO, 1947.

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