

CINDERELLA IN THE BELLY OF BRAZIL: MONTEIRO LOBATO AND HIS PRE-  
MODERNIST VOICE

by

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(Under the Direction of ROBERT H. MOSER)

ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate that more than four years preceding the crystallization of the Modernist movement with the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo (1922) and at least ten years preceding Oswald De Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago* (1928), Brazilian novelist and short story writer Monteiro Lobato had already perceived the need for, and expressed in his writings the ideals of, anthropophagy as defined by Andrade and as utilized by the Modernists. This work will specifically analyze Lobato's use of the European folktale "Cinderella" in his short story "A colcha de retalhos" (1918) and discuss his proto-anthropophagous agenda as manifested in this work of fiction.

INDEX WORDS: Monteiro Lobato, Pre-modernism, Modernism, Anthropophagy, *Urupês*, "A colcha de retalhos," Cinderella

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## **DEDICATION**

For my grandfather Harold Columbus Brown - whose footsteps I have followed by coming to the University of Georgia. For my father - John - whose affinity for history and culture I inherited. For my son - Columbus Brown - may you discover your future by understanding the past.

And finally, I dedicate this thesis to my wife and best friend - Alaina - for everything.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

*Econômica, espiritual, mental e cientificamente, continuamos colônia. Damo-nos pressa em adotar tudo quanto vem das várias metrópoles que nos seguram pelo barbicacho - Paris, Berlim, Nova York, Londres. Mal surge entre nós uma criação original, olhamo-nos desconfiados uns para os outros, incapacitados de formular juízo até que das metrópoles venha o placet.<sup>1</sup>*

- Monteiro Lobato

Monteiro Lobato is one of the key pre-Modernist figures of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazil. He helped lay the groundwork for Brazilian literature to flourish under the autochthonous philosophies of Modernism in this country. Preceding the Week of Modern Art (1922) by 4 years, Monteiro Lobato's "pre-Modernist" collection of short stories and essays entitled *Urupês* (1918) is an important precursor to the Brazilian Modernist movement. Specifically, I contend that the artistic production and theoretical framework of *Urupês* precociously anticipate the ideals of the *Manifesto antropófago* put forth by Oswald De



Andrade in 1928. An analysis of the short story "A colcha de retalhos" shows evidence of Lobato's proto-anthropophagous conceptualization. Contrary to views of Lobato promulgated by the Modernists, a look into the historical context of Lobato's work reveals his ability to identify and conscientiously combat, in a fashion similar to the Modernists, the colonial legacy that had long beleaguered Brazilian art and society. Although Monteiro Lobato was never recognized as a formal part of the Modernist movement, there is ample evidence of Lobato's proto-anthropophagic conceptualization in his fiction. The subsequent Modernists may or may not have conscientiously drawn from Lobato's proposed ideals. According to Wilson Martins in his book *The Modernist Idea*, however, Lobato was the first true leader of what the author describes as the first Modernist movement. Citing many key figures in the pre-Modernist period such as Léo Vaz, Hilário Tácito, and Godofredo Rangel, to name only a few, Martins places Monteiro Lobato at the head of the list:

The center of that first generation, which today - given the direction taken by literary history - we can see only as a pre-Modernist generation transformed by the force of things into an anti-Modernist generation, was Monteiro Lobato. (53-54)

Lobato was the principal figure of a group of writers who began the process of identifying the shortcomings of Brazilian literature and hypothesized ways to counteract the literature's European dependence. An analysis of the short story "A colcha de retalhos" from *Urupês* together with a careful consideration of other "pre-Modern" evidence in Lobato's writing demonstrate his ability to recognize these deficiencies and develop an autonomous Brazilian ideal not unlike Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago*. To understand the anthropophagy of Lobato, one must separate it from any of the 20<sup>th</sup> century stylistic *-isms* generally associated with the Brazilian Modernist movement. One must consider anthropophagy in its most basic form as the act of digesting foreign ideals and assimilating them in order to create something uniquely Brazilian. Lobato's proto-anthropophagy, like the Modernist's anthropophagy, although stylistically different, was also an act of synthesis, not of mimesis. In no way detracting from the success of the Brazilian Modernist movement, I propose that, while Monteiro Lobato was not considered a Modernist, he, in fact, understood the importance of synthesis within Brazilian art and culture. This synthesis was the way for Brazil to develop its own identity artistically and socially, thus helping the country to both break away from its imitative dependence on Europe as well as combat its colonial legacy.

## CHAPTER 2

### Pre-Modernism in Brazil

Pre-Modernist writers such as Euclides da Cunha, Lima Barreto, and Monteiro Lobato faithfully represented, through their writings, the tumult experienced by a nation in transition. They contemplated the appropriate paths by which Brazil could gain solidarity and independence at all levels of society. Most of Brazilian literature, such as the writings of some of the Romanticists, Parnassianists and Brazilian Naturalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mimetically utilized ideology and form dictated by current literary trends in Europe, by submitting any uniquely Brazilian theme to the dictates of these European trends. Coincident with the decline of the empire and the disruption of colonial modes of existence in the Brazilian interior, impending modernization required the literature of Brazil to begin to question its dependence on Europe and to attempt to define Brazil's identity from a new perspective. Many key events in the history of Brazil propelled the country towards modernization and Modernism. An understanding of these events and their influence on Brazilian literature is important so that one may contextualize the ideological and artistic

ideals proposed by Monteiro Lobato as well as other pre-Modernists in their search to define and advance the cause of Brazil through their work.

The literary period known as pre-Modernism is characterized by a manifestation of original and revolutionary ideas that led up to the Modernist movement. This inclination began to manifest itself in Brazil at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in accompaniment with the advent of historical phenomena such as the industrialization and growth of the middle class in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, as well as the establishment of the First Republic. The title pre-Modernism is actually a problematic term that does not refer to a clearly defined movement in Brazilian literature or to a specific ideological school. The pre-Modernist concept emanates from a handful of writers who were dissatisfied with the Brazilian political, social, and artistic realities. Wilson Martins, in his study *Historia da inteligência brasileira*, states that Monteiro Lobato was "no campo da ação e das idéias sociais, econômicas e políticas, o praticante mais sistemático e característico do programa modernista" (14).

Lobato was the embodiment of a Brazil in transition. He unceasingly sought ways to create a prosperous and independent Brazil. The work of Lobato along with that of other pre-Modernists demonstrated characteristics that helped to distance Brazilian literature from the recognized literary trends of the

period. The pre-Modernists questioned with equal fervor Brazilian art as well as established modes within Brazilian society and culture. They demonstrated a sincere concern for the advancement of the country and for its rebirth from the ashes of colonialism and imperialism as Brazil transitioned from a monarchy to a New Republic. For their political irreverence, their revolutionary attitude, and their acute criticism of the times, these writers would help to open the path to Modernism and modernization, thus "revelando, antes dos modernistas, as tensões que sofria a vida nacional" as stated by Alfredo Bosi in *História concisa da literatura brasileira* (307).

Well before the crystallization of the Modernist movement with the occurrence of the Week of Modern Art - A Semana de Arte Moderna in 1922, many events had already taken place to change the social and artistic climate in Brazil. Pre-Modernism is indispensably interrelated with these events. Historically, a new dynamic developed in Brazil. With the creation of the Republican Party in 1870, Brazil symbolically took the first steps towards modernity. Also, slavery was eventually abolished in 1888 with the "Lei Áurea" and through a succession of laws, beginning in 1850, such as *A Lei do Ventre Livre* (1871) and *A Lei da Saraiva-Cotegipe* (1885). These laws, among others, freed specific groups of the slave population based on certain criteria, such as age or date of birth. Likewise, a military

coup (1889) put an end to the second Brazilian empire of Dom Pedro II and then, in 1891, Brazil adopted a version of the Constitution of the United States of America (Levine xvi). The harvest of café in São Paulo progressed towards its apogee and the advancement of industrial engineering together with intense immigration from Europe and migration from the interior of Brazil astronomically increased the population of São Paulo. Yet, while Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo progressed rapidly, the interior, especially the Northeast, resisted with Brazil's move towards modernization. Monteiro Lobato and the other pre-Modernists found themselves between "dois Brasis." As described by Marisa Lajolo in her introduction to a compilation of Lobato's short stories, *Contos Escolhidos*, "O Brasil de Lobato era um Brasil onde duas tradições se cruzavam, cada qual lutando pela hegemonia. . ." (10). As we look at the work of the pre-Modernists this conflict between two opposing Brazils becomes apparent.

Euclides da Cunha is one of the most important pre-Modernist figures. His book *Os sertões* (1902) specifically addresses the situation of the Northeast by documenting the tragic outcome of a religious revolt against the New Republic incited by Antonio Conselheiro and his followers in Canudos, Bahia in 1897. The confrontation that resulted in the massacre of the inhabitants of Canudos was a symptom of a Brazil

resistant to change. The revolt of the Conselheiro and his followers, along with other uprisings such as the revolt of the Contestado, showed that many Brazilians, especially in rural areas, preferred the monarchy to the republic and the church over the state. With respect to these revolts José Murilo de Carvalho in his article "Brazil 1817-1914. The force of tradition" confirms that, "They were reacting against a government that offended their values, their traditions and their centuries old customs" (Carvalho 150).

With *Os sertões*, Euclides da Cunha defined some of the common elements shared by the pre-Modernists, thereby signaling a crucial moment in Brazilian history. As Antônio Cândido called it in *Literatura e sociedade*, this period constituted both a beginning and an end:

Livro posto entre a literatura e a sociologia naturalista, *Os Sertões* assinalam um fim e um começo: o fim do imperialismo literário, o começo da análise científica aplicada aos aspectos mais importantes da sociedade brasileira (no caso, as contradições contidas na diferença de cultura entre as regiões litorâneas e o interior). (246)

*Os sertões* marked the beginning and end of significant trends in Brazilian literature. *Os sertões* brings into question the

challenges that confronted Brazilian literature and society in this period.

The pre-Modernists were involved in conceiving new artistic ideals. Lima Barreto portrayed a Brazil in transition, not from the standpoint of the backlands, as in *Os sertões*, but from that of the city, especially Rio de Janeiro. Stylistically and philosophically Barreto's novel, *Triste fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (1911) stands as an original work of the period endowed with noteworthy attributes. First, its style of prose is simplified in comparison to that of the Parnassianists or Romanticists and, secondly, its Brazilianness beckons a new ideal since the protagonist no longer is an idealized Brazilian figure imbued with European aristocratic qualities (Bosi 319-21). Concerning Barreto's novel, Bosi observes: "[O] que é todo o enredo do romance senão a procura malograda de viver mais brasileiromente em um Brasil que já estava deixando de ser. . .?" (320). Barreto embodied, with his protagonist Policarpo Quaresma, a frustrated Brazil in search of its own identity.

Brazil's sense of identity especially as expressed through its literature was one of the major concerns for the forthcoming Modernists, who struggled with the long suffered effects of Brazil's colonial dependence on Europe. Before the Modernists, the pre-Modernists began to consider this transoceanic dependency a pitfall for other Brazilian intellectuals and



artists, such as the Parnassianists, like Alberto de Oliveira and Olavo Bilac, and Alphonsus de Guimaraens. Speaking of the initial Modernist period in Brazilian Literature, referred to as Heroic Modernism (1922 to 1930), Bosi states:

Nessa fase tentou-se, com mais ímpeto que coerência, uma síntese de correntes opostas: a *centrípeta*, de volta ao Brasil real, que vinha do Euclides sertanejo, do Lobato rural, e do Lima Barreto urbano; e a *centrífuga*, o velho transoceanismo, que continuava selando a nossa condição de país periférico a valorizar fatalmente tudo o que chegava da Europa.

(304)

On the threshold of a new Brazil, Euclides da Cunha, Lima Barreto and Monteiro Lobato opened the door to this new synthesis of opposing centripetal and centrifugal forces by recognizing the importance of establishing new stylistic and literary paradigms that would more precisely reflect Brazil's reality. These paradigms would only be possible through the creation of a literature that created meaning and professed ideologies that combined the various oral, written, transplanted and indigenous traditions found in Brazil. This was primarily a Modernist objective formulated most concisely by Oswald de Andrade in his *Manifesto antropófago*. Brazilian Modernism sought to incorporate the sum total of Brazil's disparate cultural

influences: European, African, and indigenous. Oswald de Andrade proposed in the *Manifesto antropófago* that there should be a cannibalization of all value systems, philosophical trends, and artistic movements that influenced Brazil, just as the Brazilian indigenous tribes, like the Tupi, cannibalized their vanquished enemies. The result would be a singular Brazil empowered with all the various cultures found within it. He proposed that this process would produce an autochthonous Brazil: socially, economically, and philosophically. "Tupi or not Tupi that [was] the question" (Oswald de Andrade, 13).

But, before there was Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago*, there was Monteiro Lobato's *Urupês*.

## CHAPTER 3

### Monteiro and Modernism

Born in 1884 in Taubaté, São Paulo, Monteiro Lobato exemplified a dichotomous Brazil. To borrow from Antônio Cândido's phrase, Lobato, like Euclides da Cunha, was historically positioned at the beginning and the end of two worlds. He experienced both the life of a farmer and that of an intellectual. After completing his doctorate in São Paulo in 1904, Lobato worked as a prosecutor in Taubaté. After marrying, he moved to Areias, São Paulo and continued his work as a prosecutor; until he eventually inherited his grandfather's farm, São José do Buquira, in 1911. In his new occupation as a farmer, Lobato also continued his intellectual pursuits. As a writer, Lobato expressed a desire to artistically create "*algo nuevo*" as he put it in a letter to his good friend and schoolmate Godofredo Rangel:

Quantos elementos cá na roça encontro para uma arte nova! Quantos filões! E muito naturalmente eu gesto coisas, ou deixo que se gestem dentro de mim num processo inconsciente, que é o melhor: gesto uma obra literária, Rangel, que, realizada será *algo nuevo*

neste país vítima de uma coisa: entre os olhos dos  
brasileiros cultos e as coisas da terra há um maldito  
prisma que desnatura as realidades. (*A barca de Gleyre*  
*I*, 362)

In contrast to previous periods of Brazilian literature, Lobato would seek to open a direct line of vision between the cultured Brazilian and the land. Through the creation of "*algo nuevo*", he sought to produce writing that would no longer "desnatura(r) as realidades" of Brazil. He pursued a realistic view of Brazil that could function independently from imported European intellectual paradigms. Lobato, himself, represented both sides of the dichotomy that produced this distorted literary view of Brazil. He was an intellectual, schooled in São Paulo and well versed in European ideals; yet, he was also a legitimate farmer devoted to the land. He was internally developing plans for a literature that would consume the characteristics of European ideals and divulge them in a Brazilian light. Lobato embodied Europe and Brazil. He carried both the spade and the quill. He was representative of a new breed of Brazilian intellectual. His interest in economy, anthropology and philosophy, his scientific nature, and his skill in writing would all be expressed by his desire for a better Brazil. Metaphorically, Lobato the farmer would cultivate and harvest Lobato the intellectual and vice versa. In this germinal period at Buquira,

concerned with the success of his farm, Lobato would publish two important essays: "Uma velha praga"(1914) and, shortly thereafter, "Urupês" (1914). "Uma velha praga" criticized Brazil's indifference to its own agricultural problems and introduced the caboclo figure of Jeca Tatu to Brazil. In "Urupês," this figure was further developed. Carmen Lúcia de Azevedo, Marcia Camargos, and Vladimir Saccheta, in their study *Monteiro Lobato: furacão na botocúndia*, describe Jeca as "o personagem-símbolo. . . de toda uma fase da literatura brasileira" (58). Marisa Lajolo further explains the importance of Jeca Tatu when she states that:

...o Jeca contradizia frontalmente não só a retórica patrioteira, mas também o processo de idealização das minorias - índios, caboclos, negros e caipiras - às quais a tradição literária romântica atribuía perfil épico e idealizado. (26)

Jeca represented the ironies of Brazilian art and society. He replaced Alencar's robust "bom selvagem" with his unwieldiness and laziness. Socially, he represented both the ineptness of Brazil to capitalize on its vast natural resources and the country's complacency towards its generally unhealthy and poor populace. According to Vasda Bonafini Landers, Jeca Tatu, along with Mário de Andrade's Macunaíma, became:

Um. . . definitivamente descendente do outro, pois o extrato que os compõe vem a ser constituído do mesmo material nacional caracteristicamente doentio... as duas figuras menos lapidadas, em suas feições, da nossa literatura. (49)

Jeca, followed by Macunaíma, was the first anti-hero of the modern generation.

The success of Lobato's polemic essays would eventually help propel him from his failing farm into his destined career of writer and editor. He moved from his farm to São Paulo in 1917. During this period on the farm, a new Lobato was born, one that constituted a synthesis of contrasting Brazils. He would spend the rest of his life in the pursuit of advancing the cause of Brazil.

In São Paulo the synthesis of intellect and personal experience on the farm continued. *O saci-pererê (1918)*, his first book, would research Brazilian folklore, namely the mythical one-legged creature - o saci. Like the Modernists who would follow him, Lobato had an interest in anthropology. In the early twentieth century, anthropology was a new science formulated in Europe that, as Rosa Maria Melloni states in her study *Monteiro Lobato: a saga imaginária de uma vida*, served as a "fonte de meditação sobre o homem, a sociedade, e a história"

(30-32). This anthropological pursuit was a thread that would course through Lobato's entire catalog of work.

Lobato focused on divulging explicit Brazilian mythical types. As Azevedo, Camargos and Saccheta explain in their biography, Lobato, partly instigated by sculptures of mythical European figures in a public park in São Paulo, Jardim da Luz, indignantly initiates an anthropological study of *o saci*. He began to collect stories and descriptions of the mythical Brazilian figure from readers all over Brazil (64). He hoped, with this study, to counteract Brazil's reliance on Europe by fostering an appreciation of its own mythical legends. He would use this information to publish *O saci-pererê*, one of the first serious folkloric studies in Brazil. In essence, this study implicitly questioned "o conceito de civilização a la francesa," emphasizing the necessity to investigate Brazilian folk culture (Azevedo 74).

Early on in Lobato's intellectual career, he recognized the importance of finding his own individual path and adapted this idea to Brazil. Lobato was a great admirer of the philosopher Nietzsche, who, according to Lobato, in contrast to many other European philosophers that he had studied, proposed that one must find one's own path in life. In another letter to Godofredo Rangel published posthumously in *A barca de Gleyre I*, Lobato states:

Da obra de Spencer saímos spencerianos; da de Kant saímos kantistas; da de Comte saímos comtistas - da de Nietzsche saímos tremendamente nós mesmos. O meio de segui-lo é seguir-nos. "Queres seguir-me, Segue-te."

(66)

Lobato's digestion of Nietzsche's philosophical ideas led to his personal vision of an autonomous individual and, on a broader level, an autonomous Brazil. Lobato would try to implement Nietzschean philosophy to bring about social change and progress. However, as Melloni has stated:

Adiantado demais para seu tempo, Lobato viu um a um dos seus projetos, por exemplo, a grande Editora Nacional; uma a uma das suas bandeiras: a da ferrovia, a do petróleo, a do nacionalismo, entre outros, ruírem. . . (20)

Lobato continually promoted the modernization of his country. He proposed a number of socio-economic programs (few fully realized in his day) that catalyzed the process of modernization in Brazil. Some of these were the exploration of petroleum, a national editorial press, and an expansive railway to connect the vast countryside of Brazil. All these projects based themselves on patterns he had studied in other countries, especially Europe and the United States.



In the second decade of the twentieth century, Lobato emerged as the avant-garde of social and artistic change in Brazil. As an already established and respected writer within the literary circles of São Paulo, he watched as a young group of artist-revolutionaries advanced towards the Week of Modern Art. The group that organized The Week of Modern Art began to define itself six years prior to this event in the city São Paulo (Mário de Andrade, 232). Before their appearance on the scene in São Paulo, Lobato had been the flag-bearer for a new Brazilian artistic paradigm. He watched as the Modernists slowly emerged and eventually took over the reigns of the modern Brazilian literary aesthetic.

One of the first crucial events to define the Modernist movement, creating an irreconcilable fissure between Lobato and the Modernists, was Monteiro Lobato's critique of Anita Malfatti's art exposition in December of 1917. Monteiro Lobato, as a contributor to the paper *O Estado de São Paulo*, was a frequent critic of the arts including the visual arts. He himself had painted from an early age and had initially wanted to study art in college instead of law. At the time, he was considered to be "o mais capacitado e original dos críticos" in São Paulo (Chiarelli 33). His critique of Anita Malfatti's exposition in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* on December 20<sup>th</sup> stated that she did possess "talento vigoroso fora do

comum," but at the same time criticized her for imitating European artistic trends (Lobato, *Idéias de Jeca Tatu*, 61). What Lobato most disliked about the exposition was not necessarily the talent or production of the artist but her manifestation of continued dependence on Europe for artistic form. Nevertheless, his harsh criticism severely offended the burgeoning Modernists group that included Anita Malfatti. Azevedo, Camargos, and Sacchetta comment specifically about the activities of the Week of Modern Art:

Repelindo aquela modernidade vestida de *ismos* e visto com desconfiança por seus principais protagonistas, ele (Lobato) ficara de fora da Semana de Arte Moderna, realizada no Teatro Municipal de São Paulo em fevereiro de 1922. (170)

Although, Monteiro Lobato had a dislike for any *ismos*, as he described it, and did not take part in the Modernist movement, there was much amicable correspondence and mutual respect between Lobato and the Modernists. Much of this correspondence was private. As Azevedo, Camargos, and Sacchetta explain, Lobato published and edited much of the Modernists work. But his relationship with the Modernists was not without conflict. In 1926, Mário de Andrade, with "o coração sangrando e os olhos 'mojados' de lágrimas," went so far as to sardonically "assassinate" Lobato because of his inability to produce any

other significant work of art after *Urupês* (Azevedo 180-81). With the emergence of the Modernists, the nature of Lobato's work began to change. His output re-routes itself from adult literature to the realm of children's literature in which he authors the most influential and most popular series of children's literature in Brazilian history - *O Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo*.

After the Week of Modern Art, the Modernists, led by Mário de Andrade, Tarsila de Amaral and Oswald de Andrade, paved the way towards defining a new literature for Brazil. As Wilson Martins states in *The Modernist Idea*, the Modernist's "nationalist content. . . which had been developing since 1916" was very similar to that of Lobato, and like him, the Modernists were trying to create something intrinsically Brazilian (40). Nevertheless, there was a great difference in style, as the Modernists chose ". . . expressionism [as] their natural form of artistic fulfillment" (40). They borrowed greatly from European styles associated with many of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century European movements, such as expressionism, cubism, futurism, and others. For example, many of Tarsila de Amaral's paintings, although containing expressly Brazilian themes, showed cubistic tendencies. Mário de Andrade's surrealist modern work published in 1922, *Paulicéia desvairada*, as well as Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago*, were influenced heavily by European

style, but, like Lobato's *Urupês*, their subject matter dealt mainly with portraying the modern age of Brazil and the conflicts associated with it.

Although stylistically different, Wilson Martins recognized that in the article "Urupês" (1914) one encounters many similarities with Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto antropófago* (1928). Martins draws attention to this point by showing the similarities between the two documents. Speaking of Lobato, Martins states:

From his pen we have our first documents against traditionalism. Word for word, his famous article of 1915, *Urupês*, could and should have been the first Modernist manifesto. . . (15)

Martins then quotes from Lobato's "Urupês:"

*The balsamic Indianism of Alencar has crumbled to dust with the advent of the Rondons who, quite the contrary of depicting Indians in a drawing room with reminiscences of Chateaubriand in their heads and with Iracema open on their knees, rather to take trudging through the backlands while clutching a Winchester. Peri has died, the incomparable idealization of natural man as Rousseau conceived him, the prototype of such great human perfection who, in the novel, shoulder to shoulder with the highest civilized types,*

*surpasses them all in beauty of soul and body. The cruel ethnology of the present-day backlanders has set a true savage over against him, ugly and brutal, angular and uninteresting, as incapable physically of uprooting a palm tree as he is morally incapable of loving Ceci. To our joy - and to that of D. Antônio de Mariz - Alencar did not see these creatures. He dreamed them as did Rousseau. Otherwise we would have Araré's son roasting the beauteous maiden on a pyre of good Brazilwood instead of following her adoringly through the jungle like the beneficent Ariel of the Paquequer. (16)*

Martins continues:

Who would fail to recognize in these words the immediate source of Oswald de Andrade's Cannibal manifesto of 1928? That well-known document, which set out at that time to represent the artistic vanguard, was quite obviously nearly fifteen years behind the times. The expressionistic style of the manifesto was at several junctures a mere paraphrase of Lobato's text: "Only cannibalism unites us... Against all catechisms... Against the indian bearing a firebrand. The indian who is the son of Mary, godson

of Catherine de Medicis and son-in-law of D. Antônio de Mariz." (16)

In these passages Lobato's pre-Modernist voice is evident. Although not as clearly formulated as Oswald's *Manifesto antropófago*, this excerpt from Lobato's "Urupês" delineates one of the first Modernist objectives - to combat traditionalism - by calling attention to the flawed Romantic portrayal of the Indian by Alencar. Brazilian literature, prior to the pre-Modernists, was incapable of depicting the realities of Brazil because of its disproportionate estimation of European literature. Adversely, Lobato elaborates a realistic depiction of Brazil with Jeca Tatu. He portrays, in "Urupês," a mal-nourished caboclo as "incapable physically of uprooting a palm tree as he is morally incapable of loving Ceci." Lobato further proposed that, had Alencar correctly depicted the Indian figure, he would not have loved Ceci but actually roasted her on a pyre of Brazilwood. This primitive depiction of a cannibalistic Indian was indicative of Lobato's awareness that, to accurately depict Brazil, one had to look deep within its history and culture. This would enable Brazilian art to uncover the primordial material necessary to convey a uniquely Brazilian aesthetic.

Jeca Tatu, a "personagem-símbolo. . . de toda uma fase da literatura brasileira," shares many similarities with the

protagonist of Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* published in 1928 (Azevedo 58). The celebrated protagonist Macunaíma, "herói sem caráter" and the embodiment of anthropophagist ideals, was presaged by Lobato's character Jeca Tatu. In the study *A história da inteligência brasileira*, Wilson Martins states that Jeca Tatu is "o primeiro manifesto da literatura desmistificante, mas nacional" (14). Vasda Bonafini Landers qualifies this comparison:

Quatorze anos depois da publicação de *Urupês*, Mário de Andrade publicaria *Macunaíma* e o seu protagonista teria todos os traços "desmistificantes" iguais aos de Jeca. A coincidência de características comuns aos demais é alarmante e isso nos faz lembrar o que disse Paulo Dantas sobre a importância e o impacto de Monteiro Lobato como escritor, que o tornou o centro de irradiação "de um movimento cultural muito significativo". . . Disse Monteiro Lobato: "Jeca Tatu é um piraquara do Paraíba, maravilhoso epítome de carne onde se resumem todas as características da espécie." Como o piraquara, Macunaíma leva dentro de si múltiplas características que o deixam, ao final, sem nenhuma definitiva ou pessoal. . . (47-49)

Fourteen years before the debut of *Macunaíma*, Monteiro Lobato personified, with Jeca Tatu, Brazil's social and artistic

dilemma. This weak mal-nourished Brazilian figure - Jeca Tatu - was indicative of the state of Brazilian literature and society.

Monteiro Lobato, beginning with *O saci-pererê*, already exhibited an aptitude for synthesizing the contrasts and conflicts found in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian culture. Lobato would create his "arte nova" with the short stories of *Urupês*. Even Oswald de Andrade felt that *Urupês* was representative of a new Brazilian artistic paradigm. In March of 1923, Andrade requested that Lobato send to him in France "diversos volumes de *Urupês*, *Cidades Mortas*, e *A Onda Verde*" so that he could share them with French artists and intellectuals (Azevedo 175).

Lobato's *Urupês*, along with these other works requested by Andrade, were exemplary Brazilian fiction. Lobato used the short story as his primary artistic outlet. In the early part of the twentieth century, the short story became increasingly popular. It was one of the genres most adequate to the demands of the modern era. Fábio Lucas confirms the importance of the short story in modern times in his article titled *O conto no Brasil moderno*:

O gênero *conto* constitui um dos que mais se adequaram às exigências da era moderna. Trata-se da narrativa que acompanhou a evolução da imprensa e das publicações periódicas. (Lucas 105)



Monteiro Lobato was one of the principal advocates of the short story in pre-Modernist Brazil and published his works widely and successfully by use of creative marketing as proprietor of his own publishing company. As a precursor by ten years to the *Manifesto antropófago* of Oswald de Andrade, *Urupês* was published in Brazil in 1918. This collection of short stories and essays by Monteiro Lobato was an instant modern classic in Brazil that greatly influenced the publishing industry as well as Brazilian language and literature. Through an analysis of *Urupês* one may encounter many of the ideologies of the Modernist movement already formulated by Monteiro Lobato years before the Week of Modern Art. Nevertheless, Lobato differed greatly from the Modernists in style and was generally disregarded as old-fashioned by them. This was a view instigated by his review of Anita Malfatti. This Modernist caricature of Lobato was a mischaracterization that positioned him at odds with the Brazilian avant-garde Modernist movement. Although Monteiro Lobato was never a recognized part of the Modernist movement, *Urupês* provides clear examples of Lobato's proto-anthropophagic ideals. An acute analysis of the short story "A colcha de retalhos" reveals more precisely these ideals.

## CHAPTER 4

### "A Colcha de Retalhos"

The short story "A colcha de retalhos" takes "Cinderella," a fairy tale brought to Brazil via Europe, and cannibalizes and subjugates its distinguishing plot and characteristic traits to criticize Brazil's dependency on Europe. "A colcha de retalhos" is a multi-leveled story of disapproval. The story criticizes Brazil's reluctance to leave behind the vestiges of its colonial and imperial past for a new and modern way and disapproves of Brazil's current literary trends. This criticism is qualified by a three-fold metaphorical interpretation of the text that relates the following: Zé Alvorada's family to Brazil as a nation, the unproductive *roça* Periquitos to Brazil's unfertile mimesis of European paradigms, and Pingo d'Água's elopement to the city to the new path Brazil needed to follow in order to create an autochthonous artistic paradigm and make progress towards eradicating its social ills. This interpretation is justified when we consider Marisa Lajolo's comment about the metaphorical quality of the short stories compiled in *Contos Escolhidos*. "A colcha de retalhos" is included in this

compilation as one of Lobato's most exemplary short stories.

Lajolo states:

A paisagem que serve de horizonte para estes contos lobatianos é de decadência: as terras são estéreis; as casas estão se transformando em tapera; os jardins estão invadidos de plantas daninhas; as pessoas são mutiladas; falência e pobreza espreitam as personagens, a violência vinca relações familiares e os ambientes físicos - abafados e mesquinhos - prefiguram e prolongam o abandono. (8)

After this description she explains the symbolic meaning of the stories:

Se acreditarmos que a literatura exprime simbolicamente impasses da comunidade que a produz e por onde ela circula, fica fácil supor-se que a decadência que marca o círculo destes contos de Lobato articula-se bem com a transição brusca por que passava a sociedade brasileira ao tempo em que Lobato escrevia e publicava estes contos. . . (8)

It is on this premise described by Lajolo that "A colcha de retalhos" functions on a symbolic level for Brazil. One may extract from all the intricacies of the plot a functional metaphor for Brazilian art and society that not only depicts Brazil's artistic and social woes but also affords a proto-

anthropophagic solution. This does not presuppose that this interpretation is the only possible reading of the text, but that it is one of many possible interpretations. The complexity and universal appeal of "A colcha de retalhos" allows for a multiplicity of readings.

"A colcha de retalhos" is the story of a farming family in the early 1900's living in the interior of the state of São Paulo in a sítio named Periquitos. A friend of the family that visits them on horseback from the city serves as narrator. The story is composed of internal narration by this friend and dialogue between him and the individual characters. "A colcha de retalhos," which translated means "the patchwork quilt," is composed of many individual "patches" of dialogue and character descriptions that make up the story. The story is a patchwork of lives that make up one collective entity. Each character's life is integrated with the others to create one complete narrative. The style of narration supports the image of a patchwork quilt as the narrator presents the patches or rather characters to the story in separate fragments and weaves them together.

There are seven characters in all: the anonymous narrator, the father Zé Alvorada, the mother Sinh'ana, the grandmother Mecê, the daughter Pingo d'Água (Maria das Dores), and a peripheral character, the young anonymous son of a neighboring

family, who plays an integral part in the *dénouement* of the story.

According to a general definition, *dénouement* is the "untying" of the conflict in a plot. Pertinent to the analysis of "A colcha de retalhos" and as defined by Edgar Allan Poe in his pioneering article on the theory of short story composition, "Philosophy of Composition", the *dénouement* is the "intention" of the story. And as Edgar Allan Poe theorized:

It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention. (50)

This intention, which pertains to many different interpretive levels within "A colcha de retalhos," is made clear as each character performs an indispensable role in achieving the overall effectiveness of the story as a proponent for a new artistic and social ideal. These different levels of interpretation are undoubtedly a result of careful planning by Monteiro Lobato. The short story is in essence very similar to a folktale. In Stith Thompson's work *The Folktale*, he states that the folktale genre, "include(s) all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years" (4). Although "A colcha de retalhos" can be defined as a

story with an "original plot and treatment," elements according to Thompson that differentiate the "modernist" story from the traditional folktale, it is framed by the Cinderella story thus allowing it to function in the much more universal realm of the folktale. The use of the "Cinderella" metaphor in "A colcha de retalhos" gives it the "authority of antiquity" that is an attribute of the traditional folktale. Aligned with the discourse of the folktale, Lobato short story obtains a universal function (3-4). In this function, "A colcha de retalhos" gains its authority from age-old traditions related to beliefs and customs of the Brazilian people preempting the need for literary or scholarly authority. This idea is significant in revealing the purposes of Lobato as he incorporates the Cinderella story into the plot. "A colcha de retalhos" is replete with answers unique to Brazil's social and literary dilemma. It draws on the influence of a folktale brought to Brazil via Europe while transforming this tale into something uniquely Brazilian. Thus, the use of "Cinderella" in "A colcha de retalhos" authorizes Lobato to blaze a path that future Modernists would follow.

This intention of the story becomes more apparent as we analyze the oral style of narration chosen by Lobato. The readers feel as if they are at the feet of some great storyteller. As the narrator weaves the fragments of lives and

ideas into the patchwork quilt, one begins to see how every dialogue, every thought, every word, and every character plays a vital role in the story's progress and *dénouement*. In the story it is the grandmother Mecê who actually weaves a patchwork quilt, but for the reader it is the narrator who constructs the separate character/narrator dialogues into a functional whole. Thus, all parts in the story move towards a common goal and hypothesis. The narrator has come from the city of São Paulo in order to talk business 'exp(or)-lhe o negocio'(48) with Zé Alvorada, to visit Zé's family, and apparently try to convince him to move back to the city. The narrator appears genuinely concerned about the welfare of Zé Alvorada and his family. Although he never completely discloses the motives for his visit, it appears that the narrator visits out of sympathy for the family wishing that they return to the city so they can escape the harshness of life in the *roça*. Thus, the reader is presented with the basis for an underlying dichotomy: the city is good, the country is bad. The city represents progress and impending modernity and the country adversely represents despair and backwardness.

Zé Alvorada and his family are in a state of regression. According to the narrator, life on the farm is making them savage. The narrator proclaims, after running into the first of the Alvoradas, Pingo d'Água:

Como a vida no mato asselvaja estas veadinhas! Note-se  
que os Alvoradas não são caipiras. Quando comprou a  
situação dos Periquitos, o velho vinha da cidade;  
lembro-me até que entrava em sua casa um jornal. (46)

When first arriving at the farm, Zé maintained his subscription to a city paper that symbolizes a desire for him and his family to remain connected with the modern progress and amenities of the city. Eventually, as life becomes harsh, he stops receiving the paper, and the family begins to distance itself from the perceived forwardness of city life as suggested by the story. Zé's time spent on the farm and regression go hand in hand according to the narrator. Moving from the city to be a farmer for reasons unknown to the reader is a fatal error that catalyzes the family's retrogression towards poverty and despair. The *seca* (drought), *geada* (frost), and *sapos* (frogs) replace the newspaper and leisure time, which Zé Alvorada had hoped for on his farm, with increased labor and decreased harvest. Moreover, the narrator conveys a parasitic relationship of the family to the farm by stating that, as the farm was in a dilapidated state, even more so were the state of its tenant's souls. In regards to the land, it was "tapera quase, e nela, o que é mais triste, almas humanas em tapera" (47). The narrator's negative viewpoint of the Alvorada's family quality of life constitutes a challenge to the validity of a traditional single-



family agrarian existence, in favor of the evolving modernization and industrialization of São Paulo, as Brazil confronts the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A drought-ridden, frog-infested farmland maintained by ill equipped and ill-prepared farmers cannot lead to Brazilian progress or to a new Brazilian ideal. In so many words, according to the narrator, the city is the future.

The next patch to view in the narrative quilt is the mother: Sinh'Ana. After the narrator's first encounter with the daughter, Pingo d'Água, at a creek, he arrives by shortcut to the house where a strange and sickly woman appears in the doorway. The narrator is immediately taken aback by the appearance of the mother who then states, "Estou no fim. Estômago, fígado, uma dor aqui no peito que responde na cacunda. Casa velha, é o que é" (47). As the mother has grown older and suffered under the hardship of an unforgiving domestic existence in the country, her health has deteriorated. She states that she is dying and blames her health problems on the old house in which they live. As one of the many subtle hints carefully placed throughout the story this excerpt of dialogue offers a valuable metaphor thereby giving the reader an opportunity to extricate an alternative meaning from the subtext. On a metaphorical level, the blame that the mother places on the old house for her sickly state underscores Brazil's necessity for

self-renovation. An old house indeed, an old way of life, an old way of being, an old way of seeing the world, and an old way of being seen, as the story teaches, are illnesses, that can only be combated by people like Pingo D'Agua, who, as the story shows, can venture outside of tradition and circumstance to seek out a new way of life, a modern way.

The matriarch of the family, Pingo's grandmother, is another character who, in many respects, is the focus of the story but not necessarily the protagonist. She serves in the capacity of a witness. She also serves as an artifact of traditional farm life portrayed by her excellent health and preservation. Throughout the narration, the grandmother Mecê emerges in relief as a centerpiece in the rustic landscape of the narrative quilt. A constant in ZÉ's family, and in contrast to the mother, she is the personification of good health at 70 years of age. She is still able to cook, wash, and sew while she raises Pingo and cares for the rest of the family. The grandmother Mecê, like the narrator, is a witness. Unlike the narrator, whose allegiance lies with the city, the grandmother serves circumstantially as a proponent of farm life traditions that are inextricably related to the backwardness of Periquitos. Mecê dictates among other things that traditionally women only go to the city three times: 'uma a batizar, outra a casar, terceira a enterrar' (46). This is yet another one of the

manifestations underlying life in the *roça* disputed by the *dénouement*. The grandmother, representative of these ideals, is left alone to die suggesting that the traditional limitations placed on women in the *roça*, or rather in the old Brazil, could not satisfy the demands of a new modern Brazil. This scene with Mecê concludes the short story in classic Lobato fashion, reminiscent of his short story "Negrinha" among other stories. Mecê, personifying the consequences of remaining in a static state, dies an ignominious death in the *roça* having her dying wish frustrated. She had wished to be buried with the quilt she wove for Pingo. Further discussion might yield that the story here even challenges the traditional roles of women in Brazilian society during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Speaking of the grandmother, the narrator states:

Um mês depois morria. Vim a saber que lhe não  
cumpriram a última vontade.  
Que importa ao mundo a vontade última duma pobre  
velhinha da roça?  
Pieguices... (53)

The grandmother Mecê, who represents an antiquated Brazil passes away as her dying wish is belittled by a narrator, who represents the future of Brazil. This suggests that a new era was on the horizon and the only way for Brazil to progress was to bury the old paradigms in hope of developing new ones.

Even though Mecê represents antiquated traditions that can no longer function in a modern Brazil, the reader cannot help but to sympathize with her. The love and "carinho" that she had for Pingo suggests that the transition that Brazil would need to undergo would require the sacrifice of traditions deeply ingrained in the make-up of Brazil, just as Pingo would have to leave behind her own flesh and blood. Paradoxically, Pingo and Brazil would need to glean from the past the justification needed to dispute it.

Commencing with the birth of Maria das Dores, known to her family as Pingo d'Água or just Pingo, the grandmother, Mecê, had carefully woven her life's work, the patchwork quilt, from patches of dresses worn by Pingo in certain stages of her life. The quilt was to be given to Pingo as a wedding gift, but because Pingo eloped, she never received the quilt. There is a distinct dialogue between the old and new represented by the relationship and events that occur with Pingo and Mecê. Pingo is the true protagonist of the story and symbolizes the future of a Brazil on the cusp of modernization yet confronted with the dilemma of whether to embrace this change or try to maintain the established social and artistic paradigms. There is a similar current in much pre-Modern literature, such as Euclides da Cunha's *Os sertões* and Lima Barreto's *Triste fim de Policarpo Quaresma*, which portrays the hardships and challenges of a

Brazil in transition from a colony/empire to a republic. Ironically, it is because of Pingo that the family stays in the *roça*. Her father, Zé Alvorada, seems to think that life on the farm is better for Pingo. On a subtextual level, Pingo represents the challenges of Brazil's future and Zé represents Brazil's reluctance to forfeit its dependence on European paradigms. Embodying a paradox, Zé Alvorada states his concern for Pingo's future as a principal reason for not leaving the *roça*. If it were not for Pingo, Zé says that he would give in completely to the harshness of farm life and backslide to savageness by returning to the forest to live. Thus, the present becomes the intermediary or *vinculum* that reluctantly binds the past represented by Zé and the matriarchs, to the future, represented by Pingo. Ultimately, this temporal bind stymies progress. The story reads:

Se ainda me teimo neste sapezal amaldiçoado é por via da menina; senão, largava tudo e ia viver no mato, como bicho. É Pingo que ainda me dá um pouco de coragem, concluiu com ternura. (49)

Therefore, Pingo becomes paradoxically the hope for a better future that compels Zé to maintain his life on the farm incapacitating, by way of tradition, any chance that Pingo may have for a 'better' life in the city as suggested by the story.

Pingo is the focus of the story and the intended recipient of the quilt. Her actions are the threads that bind the narrative together. The *dénouement* suggests that this vinculum would need to be broken between Pingo and the *roça* so that she could find her own identity, just as Brazil would need to separate itself artistically from its dependence on Europe. Wilson Martins states in his introduction to Vasda Bonafini Landers' book, *De Jeca a Macunaíma: Monteiro Lobato e o Modernismo*, that the necessity to repudiate the past and at the same time search for justification within it, is an attribute of all new schools of art. Martins comments that:

[T]odas as novas escolas literárias e artísticas vivem por necessidade a neurose de repudiar o passado ao mesmo tempo em que nele procuram a própria justificação. (14)

Pingo found within her past through the Cinderella story the justification necessary to flee from the *roça* in search of "*algo nuevo*." The story contained the knowledge she needed to physically and psychologically rupture the vinculum with the *roça*. She leaves behind her family for the city. She also leaves behind any future comfort and warmth from her grandmother's quilt which was a symbolic representation of her life up to that point. Rupturing this vinculum and leaving behind her family, Pingo internally carries to the city knowledge gained on the

farm from her grandmother's stories and other life experiences. Likewise, Lobato was suggesting that Brazil also needed to rupture its *vinculum* with European paradigms in favor of an "arte nova" as Lobato called it in his letter to Rangel.

The story introduces Pingo as a shy solitary farm girl accustomed to hard labor and the outdoors. She is portrayed as an obedient, servile, unassuming daughter who has a strong and playful fraternal relationship with her father Zé, according to him. This relationship is metaphorical of both a maturing Brazilian literature as well as its continuing dependence on Europe. She is presented first as a young teen, 14 years old, who has not become aware of her femininity or own identity outside of the family. As the narrator approaches the farm he sees Pingo fetching water at a small stream and describes her in the following manner:

É a filha única. Pelo jeito não vai além de quatorze anos. Que frescura! Lembra os pés d'avenca viçados nas grotas noruegas. Mas arredia e itê como a fruta do gravatá. Olhem como se acanhou. D'olhos baixos, finge arrumar a rodilha. Veio pegar água a este cor'go e é milagre não se haver esgueirado por detrás daquela moita de taquaris, ao ver-me. (46)

As the story unfolds, the narrator's initial impressions of Pingo are brought into question. After the narrator's

unsuccessful attempt to convince Zé to leave the farm, he mounts his horse and returns to the city where he forgets about the family, until two years later when he hears a rumor that Pingo has run away with the anonymous son of the neighboring family. This episode in the story reveals a previously hidden side of Pingo's character, as the narrator indicates in the following passage:

E não mais me aflorava à memória a imagem daqueles humildes urupês, quando me chegou aos ouvidos o zunzum corrente no bairro, uma coisa apenas crível: o filho de um sitiante vizinho, rapaz de todo pancada, furtara Pingo d'Água aos Periquitos.

"Como isso? Uma menina tão acanhada! . . ."

"É para ver! Desconfiem das sonsas. . . Fugiu e lá rodou com ele para a cidade - não para casar, nem para enterrar. Foi ser 'moça', a pombinha. . ."(50)

Therefore, as we approach the *dénouement*, the dichotomy presented to us in the beginning of the story by the narrator is personified by Pingo. Externally, Pingo was an unquestioning, unassuming, almost mechanical mimesis of what her family thought of her, of what her community expected of her, and of what was demanded of her in terms of farm labor. She performed the role of daughter relegated to life on the farm. Yet, internally, she was becoming self-aware and beginning to discover the power to



define herself as an individual and as a female. During this process of self-recognition, she discovered that the life given to her by circumstance no longer was sufficient to define her. Thus, she ventures out with the neighbor's son to seek out a new and different way of life in the city. Brazil was in a similar situation seeking *algo nuevo* as Lobato described it. Brazil could only move forward by looking inside itself to find the resources to sever its artistic dependency on Europe and separate itself from its colonial legacy. As we piece together Pingo's patchwork quilt, the episode weaves together the relationship between Pingo and Brazil. Facilitated by this strong allegorical relation between Pingo and Brazil, the story suggests that Brazil was terminating an early, less-mature, phase of its development, characterized by its reliance on the past traditions defined primarily by European paradigms. Although Pingo carried the *roça* within her, she looked to the city for self-definition just as Brazil would distance itself from an unhealthy dependency on Europe by looking to modernity and a cannibalization of European ideals for new modes of defining itself.

As Bosi suggested, the Modernists were synthesizing two opposing centrifugal and centripetal forces through their work. These same opposing forces are synthesized within this story. The story develops a seemingly fleeting yet actually crucial

comparison and intertextual dialogue between Pingo and Cinderella that creates a fruitful proto-anthropophagic metaphor. This metaphor is mobilized by a scene near the end of the story in which the grandmother, Mecê, describes the individual patches of the quilt. The narrator, after hearing the news of Pingo's disappearance, returns to the farm to visit the family. As Mecê describes each patch of the quilt, she comes upon a patch that is from a dress that Pingo wore when she was ten years old and fell sick with the measles. Mecê states:

"Este cor de batata fiz quando tinha dez anos e caiu com sarampo, muito malzinha. Os dias e as noites que passei ao pé dela, a contar histórias! Como gostava da Gata Borralheira!..."

A velha enxugou na colcha uma lágrima perdida e calouse. (52)

The potency of this episode leads the reader to ponder the role of Cinderella in the story. The pause symbolized by the ". . ." and the tears of the grandmother give way to reflection so that one can piece together the Cinderella story with "A colcha de retalhos." Of all the fairy tales and children's stories that were circulating in Brazil at this time, of all the stories that her grandmother told her from the foot of her bed, it is the Cinderella story that Pingo likes best. It is not by chance that

this story was elected as her favorite. The comparisons are numerous between Pingo and Cinderella.

Peripherally, there is an instant connection that we can make with Pingo d'Água and Cinderella through a comparison of their names. Cinderella was nicknamed for the type of labor she performed around the house. She cleaned the cinders or ashes from the fireplace. Pingo was also nicknamed for a chore she performed. She fetched water from the stream for the family. They also both had Maria as their given names. According to the Brazilian version of the fairy-tale, Cinderella is known as Maria Borralheira as well as Gata Borralheira. Gilberto Freyre would make mention of the regularity of Pingo's given name, Maria das Dores. In *Casa Grande e Senzala*, he states that it was a common name in colonial Brazil:

Atendido o pedido por Nossa Senhora, pagava-se a promessa, constituindo se muitas vezes em tomar a criança o nome de Maria; donde as muitas Marias no Brasil: Maria das Dores, dos Anjos, da Conceição, de Lurdes, das Graças. (380)

The given name for Pingo d'Água, Maria das Dores, suggests, because of its commonness, the universality of Pingo's story. As a common denominator, the name metaphorically ties Pingo to Brazil.

Cinderella is one of the best-loved fairy tales of the western world. Anna Rooth, in her book *The Cinderella Cycle*, explains that the fairy tale most likely arrived in the Iberian Peninsula from Indo-China and continued its diaspora to Brazil via the Portuguese (67-81). By using this fairy-tale, Lobato suggests that, Pingo was able to learn from Cinderella, whether subconsciously or not, that outside of her life on the *roça* there was a whole new world, a kingdom that could be her own, and a prince that would save her from her circumstances. Pingo, like Brazil and Cinderella, was trapped in a world of contradictions. In her own house, denied of any true family relations as a result of the absence of her father, Cinderella found herself ruled by a foreign entity - a stepmother. This metaphorical relationship between the *roça* and Cinderella's stepmother is suggested by Rosa Maria Melloni who states that in *Urupês* the arquetipal mother is related to the land:

[E]mbora Lobato fale da terra, daquela que se cultivava, perpassa pelos textos do *Urupês* que ela se vincula à substância imaginária mais universal e mais profunda: a Mãe, talvez. (360)

Although Melloni explains that throughout much of *Urupês* the land is "sempre como solo familiar, acolhedor, nutriz, de que o homem não deve se desatrelar as raízes. . .," "A colcha de retalhos" offers a different perspective (360). The *roça*, like

Europe and Cinderella's stepmother, is the polar opposite of "familiar," "acolhedor," and "nutriz". Pingo under the distress of life on the *roça* and Brazil under the imbalanced influence of European ideals needed to find a way out. As Pingo becomes more self-aware, she discovered her own personal power to decide her future and found in the neighbor's son a prince that would lead her far from the unfertile soil of the *roça*. The story suggests that thus it should be with Brazil and its 'prince' – modernity. Utilizing what she had learned from her grandmother, or metaphorically, old Brazil, Pingo ventured out to discover a new self carrying with her the stories and traditions she had learned at the knee of her grandmother. In the story, life on the farm represents a mimetic reliance on Europe for ideals. The city represents a synthetic symbiotic modern relationship with Europe and "*tudo quanto vem das várias metrópoles*" as Lobato describes it (Landers 111). Pingo carried the *roça* internalized within her, so that, as the Modernists, she could go forward while looking back to the past.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

"A colcha de retalhos," drawing on the nature of all fairy tales qualifies itself as a folktale. Even though it has an "original plot and treatment," "A colcha de retalhos" maintains its fairy tale-like authority to teach "life lessons" (Thompson 3-4). Based on the reactions of Pingo to the Cinderella story, "A colcha de retalhos," through "protean transformations," acts as a new version of the Cinderella story existing in time and space and affected by the nature and historic changes of the land and people where it is told (Thompson 10-13). It takes on metaphoric significance for Brazil by drawing on the universal nature of the Cinderella fairy tale and synthesizing its plot within Brazilian culture. Lobato's ability in "A colcha de retalhos" to transform the Cinderella story into a genuine Brazilian tale is a proto-anthropophagic statement, as it were, that suggests the way for Brazil to find its own identity. The story suggests that Brazil will not achieve this by remaining on the periphery as a "colonial" entity dependent on Europe for ideals. It suggests that the way for Brazil to find its identity is to synthesize all the varying influences found in Brazil,

just as Oswald de Andrade suggests in his *Manifesto antropófago*. Therefore, as the Tupy of old took on the power of their enemies through cannibalizing the strongest bodily parts of them, so may Brazil take on the power of opposing forces by synthesizing what best represents Brazil into its culture and collective identity.

As a precursor to Modernist Brazilian fiction, "A colcha de retalhos" contains ideologies much akin to those of Heroic Modernism. The romantic portrayal of the city and of modernization found in "A colcha de retalhos" did not clearly define the method or parameters by which the artistic and social problems of pre-Modern Brazil could be rectified. However, the story served to incite the early twentieth century generation reading *Urupês* to have hope for the future, a hope for something new, something different. Just as Pingo took the lessons learned from the intrinsically European tale "Cinderella" and adapted them to her life, Brazil was to take the European paradigms promulgated in Brazil and transform them and adapt them through modernization into a new standard that would allow for Brazil to establish its own identity and exercise its own will; socially, economically, and philosophically. "A colcha de retalhos" digests what is explicitly imported from Europe and gives it a distinct Brazilian identity, thus absorbing Cinderella in the belly of Brazil. Reinterpreting Mecê's pivotal observation about Pingo under the guise of Oswald de Andrade's

*Manifesto antropófago*, it might lightheartedly be translated to read: 'O, How she liked the taste of Cinderella. . .'

Lobato, like Pingo, embodied the *roça* and the city found in "A colcha de Retalhos," representing throughout his life and work *algo nuevo*. *Urupês*, and especially its short story "A colcha de retalhos," is an example of some of Brazil's seminal Modern literature. As Lobato desired in his letter to his good friend Rangel, this story acts as a new line of vision "entre os olhos dos brasileiros cultos e as coisas da terra" that no longer would "desnatura(r) as realidades" of Brazil (*A barca de Gleyre I*, 362).



#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Quote from Hélió Bruma, a pseudonym of Monteiro Lobato circa 1903-1907, in the publication *Minarete*. Vasda Bonafini Landers, *De Jeca a Macunaíma: Monteiro Lobato e o modernismo* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1988) 111

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