Miguel Real’s *O Último Europeu 2284*, or a utopian questioning of our individual and collective freedom

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**Abstract**

In *O Último Europeu 2284* [The Last European 2284] (2015), Miguel Real inserts into the fictional narrative both literary and philosophical theory. Thus, he abandons the historiographical metafiction and adopts the utopian novel structure. The rereading of the past gave way to a vision of the future - a Utopia (with dystopic touches) that turns out as an invention of the sensible (post)modern humanism. After a brief incursion into the history of literary Utopias beginning with Plato (2001; 2000), Thomas More (1965; 1978; 2009), Francis Bacon (2002; 2008), Jonathan Swift (2005), Aldous Huxley (2004; 2006), George Orwell (1998; 2004), J. V. Pina Martins (1989; 2005), the narrative reveals an (im)perfect society: Nova Europa [New Europe]. This New Europe is defined by an unrestrained technological progress, democratic crises, alienation, and the erasure of basic human features. The Headmaster, as a new Raphael Hythlodaeus, experiences a Utopia. After having suffered the attack from the Barbarians of the Westlands, The Headmaster sails to Azores to recreate the old European democracy. The last surviving European citizen and his work (a synecdoche of both Author and the novel *O Último Europeu*) by sharing with the islanders the tasks of repopulating the islands and restructuring its civilization, giving a testimony of an ethical responsibility for individual and collective freedom. The utopian “happy ending”, however, is not possible, because the American Technological Democracy reclaims the rights for the creation of another “brave new world”. Miguel Real’s utopian metafiction is marked by the reiterative historicism in the image of the repopulation of the Azorean Archipelago. This is a multifaceted novel, with a strong character, the brave Headmaster, possible avatar of a new King Sebastian and the “last European”.

**Keywords:** Historiographic Metafiction, Utopia vs dystopia, (post)modernity; democratic crises, ideas, beliefs and religions

A novel continuously assumes new forms and expresses new contents in a singular manifestation of the perennial aesthetical and spiritual human restlessness. (AGUIAR e SILVA 2007: 684)

We took pride in the vast progress performed in ten years, endowed with an excellent moral plan and a quite solid historical optimism. [...] To expand and continue our ancestors’ civilization. Noble the responsibility, huge the will, grand the road travelled.]

(REAL 2015: 204)

Portuguese literature does not have many examples of successful or renown ed utopias, though having many readers of utopias, judging by the number of published translations. There are several reasons that may explain this phenomenon (...), one, and probably the most self-evident, being the almost continuous strong exercise of religious and/or political censorship imposed in Portugal from the late sixteenth century to the last quarter of the twentieth century.

(MONTEIRO 2015: 280)

1. Presenting the author

(Miguel Real’s brief bio-bibliographic sketch)

Miguel Real (Luís Martins’ literary pseudonym) was born in Lisbon in 1953. Graduated in Philosophy by Universidade de Lisboa, and later Master of Portuguese Studies by Universidade Aberta, where he presented a dissertation on Eduardo Lourenço. This dissertation was afterwards divided in two bio-bibliographic books (REAL 2003b; REAL
2007). His first novel, O Outro e o Mesmo, earned him the Prize Revelation in Fiction, awarded by APE/IPLB. From then onward he is known as writer of fiction and essays, and as philosophy teacher.

In 1998 Miguel Real won another award by APE/IPBL, this time for his literary essay Portugal; Ser e Representação (1998). Another important award was won in 2000, Prémio LER/Círculo de Leitores, to the book A visão de Túndalo por Eça de Queirós (REAL 2000).

In 2001, Miguel Real received a scholarship given by Centro Nacional de Cultura (Centre for National Culture), which allowed him to follow Father António Vieira itinerary through Brazil. The writer kept a diary he named Atlântico: a viagem e os escravos (REAL 2005b), as well as a “tribute”, recently published with Filomena Vieira (2015).

From 2003 onward, with the novel Memórias de Branca Dias (REAL 2003a), Miguel Real started writing separately novels and essays thus avoiding mixing philosophical and literary theory inside the fiction. In O Último Europeu, the author abandons this practice.

Miguel Real’s novels fit into the concept of historiographic metafiction defined by Linda Hutcheon (1988). Therefore one can base critical analysis of most of Miguel Real’s novels using the concept that views modern historical novels as critical reinterpretations of the past.

One can consider that historiographic metafiction started, in Portugal, with Saramago’s O Levantado do Chão (1980) where fictional action takes place between “history and fiction” developing itself on a vast scenery displaying the life peasants in Alentejo, exhibiting a clear antifascist connotation.

After the publication of Saramago’s book, Portuguese writers had a new point of view for figures until then either marginalized or deleted from historical narratives. In O Último Europeu 2284, Miguel Real instead of focusing directly his fiction on present times or history, uses them as the foundations, focusing on the future, on ethical options, on political tendencies, on human divergences, on ethnic differences, on war and on cultural contradictions.

In 2005, Miguel Real published A Voz da Terra [The Earth’s Voice], a historical novel on Marquis of Pombal and the 1755 Earthquake. This novel was well received by both readers and critics. There he fictionalizes the historical transformation of Lisbon from a superstitious, naval, and imperial capital, that of the Discoveries - the city of Saint Anthony governed by the Voice from Heaven - to a bourgeois Lisbon, rational and geometrically rebuilt according to Marquis of Pombal’s planning. In the old Lisbon, image of Portugal, pullulating with black slaves, Moors, Galician, calhandreiras [washerwomen], colarejas [Lisbon market-women], artisans with their shops always opened, the workers of the dockyards in Ribeira das Naus, nobles, friars and priests surrounding the King, buying English flour, iron and coal, French fabrics and paying with golden doubloon mined in Brazil. In the New Lisbon reborn from the earthquake, under the control of Marquis of Pombal, pullulate the civil servants, the magistrates, the purveyors, the new public teachers, politicians and intellectuals educated under the Enlightenment philosophy.

The focus of Real’s narrative is the earthquake as it was lived by each of the characters in this remarkable historical novel: Júlio Telles Fernandes (known as Julinho), a wealthy Brazilian widower, secret messenger for the mascates [Brazilian wandering seller of jewels and fabrics], herald of Pernambuco’s independence, Father Malagrida, (burnt to death in an auto-de-fé in Rossio in 1761), Violante Dias (a Brazilian jewess who mysteriously disappears among the ruins), Miss Smith, daughter of the purveyor of the English trading-station in Lisbon. There is also the widow Passarinho who suffers from night ailment and the greedy canon, always seeking money and power.

After the earthquake, Lisbon’s social organization changed, as did the politics and the scientific academies, and the same happened to Julinho and to the younger Portuguese generations.

... learn French and laws, Descartes’
analytical geometry, Leibniz and Newton’s infinitesimal calculus would be taught for the first time in Portugal. Teachers were allowed to teach that the earth is a sphere, but planets’ orbits are elliptical, just as Kepler had proved two hundred years before [...]. Everything changed in less than ten years everything kept on changing. Lisbon spread itself, became geometrical, rational, industrial, learned how to read and write. Lisbon put on another skin, bourgeois, rich, European. But regardless of what skin she put on, she would never stop being faithful, rude, superstitious, the city of St. Anthony, homeland of jealousy, always sighing for an enlightened elite to guide her. (REAL 2005a: 364)

A Voz da Terra earned Miguel Real the Prémio Literário Fernando Namora 2006 [Literary Award Fernando Namora], one of the most prestigious Portuguese literary awards. The solid historical knowledge behind this historical novel is based on four excellent books: Lisboa Seiscentista (BRANCO 1990), Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo (FRANÇA 1983), O Mal sobre a Terra; Uma História do Terramoto de Lisboa (PRIORE 2003) e A Vida Quotidiana em Portugal no Tempo do Terramoto (CHANTAL 1986). Equally important were paintings and images that inspired the author to describe Lisbon in the 17th century: the characters, their expressions, the personality, and behaviour of Marquis of Pombal, as well as the bullfights, the attempted assassination of king D. José I, the sermons of Father Gabriel Malagrida in the streets of Lisbon after the earthquake, the auto-de-fé where Father Malagrida was executed and Violante Dias and the Knight of Oliveira burnt in effigies, the execution of the Marquis and Marquise of Távora, etc. All this information reveals a thorough research, uniting the historian’s labour and literary imagination of one of the best contemporary Portuguese writers.

Simultaneously with the edition of A Voz da Terra, Miguel Real published the essay O Marquês de Pombal e a Cultura Portuguesa [Marquis of Pombal and Portuguese Culture] (2006b). By the end of the same year is published O Último Negreiro [The Last Slave Trader] (REAL 2006b) a novel focusing on the slave trader Francisco de Félix de Sousa, who lived in São Salvador da Bahia and in Ajudá, in Benin.

Miguel Real writing activities expand, regularly, from the areas of fiction and essays to writing textbooks on history, philosophy, cultural studies, as well as theatre adaptation, in collaboration with Filomena Oliveira. Since the year 2000, he has been writing regularly in the literary journal JL - Jornal de Letras, artes e ideias. He also took part in a radio program (“Um certo Olhar” in Antena 2), with other authors and critics.

Real’s opus magnum is the novel O Último Europeu 2284, simultaneously a novel and a philosophical essay “dedicated to Thomas More celebrating the 500 years of Utopia, 1516” (2015: 7), as can be read in one of the three dedications. In it, the reader finds a harsh portrait of modern societies and the dangers they engender. The historical metafictionality is achieved through the critic imagination of the future. The intellectual and biographical evolution of the main character and fictional author of a Chronic of New Europe is the narrative central focus. He may even be considered an alter ego of Miguel Real, who visited the Warsaw University during the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of Portuguese revolution, 25th April 2014.

2. Utopia, the essential motif of postmodern humanism

Written in Latin, More’s Utopia, according to José V. Pina Martins, is a fundamental book produced by the humanist movement and the text that instituted Thomas More as an undisputed Renaissance figure, in the sense of a promoter of the studia humanitatis and as a defender of civic rights.

More’s utopian society or new republic was inspired in Plato’s Republic, imagining that only a different place or island in the New World would be able to ensure a life different from that of the unfair polis. A place where citizens would cooperate, where intolerance and fanatics would be punished with exile and slavery, and where “owning nothing all were rich”. The human being is placed
at the centre of the world, holding his/her destiny in his/her hands. No one would be oppressed in the name of religion and the people was free to choose different beliefs and cults, all living in ecumenical harmony.

According to several historians, More was fascinated with the narratives of Amerigo Vespucci about the recent discovery of Fernando de Noronha Island, in 1503.

More's *Utopia* is divided in two parts. In the first there is the criticism to his contemporary way of life in the city of London; the second part, influenced by Plato's *Republic*, presents and an alternative society.

However, More's aim was not to defend the view of the Portuguese sailor Raphael Hythlodaeus and the utopian society as models, but to encourage the reader to exercise a critical reflection on both the positive and the negative aspects of the alternative society. The word Utopia, was created using two Greek radicals, one being a suffix of negation and topos meaning place: “no” topos, a place that does not exist, a nowhere. Moreover, this is an example of how More played with irony. From 1516 onward the word “utopia” became synonym for ideal society, though of impossible existence, or a generous idea, though unrealizable.

In *O Último Europeu* 2284 Portuguese readers may find echoes of Agostinho da Silva's philosophy, or a mythic V Empire Europe is looking for so that its citizens will not need to work, but might always be active.

Not to work but always be busy - the lemma of another philosopher, born in Portugal, when the nations and the languages were considered first priorities in the education of any citizen - this became one of our essential mottos for our collective living. (33)7

In 2016, we celebrate the 500 years of More's Utopia. This small book continues to be read, discussed, and interpreted. More's imaginative and criticism model as well as the book's message(s) still makes sense today. There are alternatives to the social-political world order being imposed. Just as the island of Utopia offered an antithetical society to the sixteenth century Europe. According to Pina Martins, More's work is the product of “renaissance humanism”. I believe that *O Último Europeu* 2284 is a novel-essay of contemporary humanism, being inspired in the same ideas of alterity in what concerns the concepts of citizenship, nationality, social organization, and philosophical message. The New Utopia is a project of social transformation and it represents crucial aspects of contemporary humanism. There is still the two-party division between the description of Old Europe, in which the first person narrator lived, and the New Europe that faces its definite decline in 2284. However, there is also the vision of a possible future Europe, an alternative society surviving in Azores, after the attack of Great Asia, which is destroyed by the cynical American Empire. There is food and houses for all, schools for the children, work, or activities that fulfil everybody's needs, hospitals for the elderly and a kind teacher, former Headmaster:

I volunteer myself as teacher, Ancient word that designates the one who has the prior task of educating the new generations from the moment they are weaned. There are no fractions among us; we are not a fragmented society... (180)8

Miguel Real's contemporary humanism has its foundation on Thomas More's Renaissance humanism. To have a better understanding of the ideas, structure and problems raised by the novel, one must make use of the basic concepts of utopias and utopianism.

Utopia has as common meaning the idea of an ideal, imaginary, and fantastic civilization. It may be centred in a city or in a whole world. It may be placed in the future or in the present. Either way in Real's novel utopia is achieved through the succession of past memories that took place in the future. However, the time movement in the novel is not linear. Instead, there are several variations of present/past and future/present information.

Utopia may also be defined as a fantasy, a strong hope, a dream cherished for a very long time. In Real's novel it is a dream that came true in the future (2294), with the building of a Base, a school, a community of new settlers and, at last, the conclusion and improvement
of the *Crónica da Criação e Extinção da Nova Europa* [Chronicle of the creation and extinction of New Europe], concluded at Pico island, in Azores.

We performed a new colonization of the Island; a scientific colonization [...] after the Portuguese had done, in Ancient times, a human colonization, a geographical one, aiming only to people it. (197)

These narrative threads tie historical, utopian, and narrative time to the Island of Newest Europe [Ilha da Novíssima Europa]. It is a new utopia, based on democratic principles, with the alternatives, freedom of expression, of reunion, and even the peculiar election of three new companions to replace the old Headmaster.

Each of the three [companions] does not represent a third of the whole Assembly, as if we were back to the Ancient proportional representation in use in the 20th century democracies, as if each were to represent a fraction of the whole, or a “part” of the whole... (180)

More’s *Utopia* has marks left by contemporary reality, but it is a fiction. More draws a very critical picture of his contemporary England [and Europe] in what concerns its society, politic practises, economic structure, and religious acting. These are the true causes for promoting poverty, theft, and hunger. Book II is dedicated to describing the island of Utopia, its organization, and principles. The hero and traveller to Utopia, Raphael Hythlodaeus, as almost every word used throughout the narrative, is full of connotative meanings: while the name “Raphael” points to the Archangel who carried the divine cure for blindness, the name Hythlodaeus means he is an “expert in trifles” or “well-learned in nonsense” (MORE 1965: 301). The structure, the contradictions, the products of the imagination, they all place *Utopia* in the realm of ideas.

Several basic principles of the island of Utopia are part of our common heritage and goals western societies strive to maintain. In spite of the closeness and dictatorial practises, it was a democracy, with free access to education, respect for the law and the restrictions on private property did not deprive people of whatever they needed and avoided social inequalities.

Miguel Real breaks from this paradigm, as well as from the idea of an Old or a New Europe founded on the historical idea of creating a society completely communitarian, equalitarian and fair (2015: 41).

In the island of Utopia there is religious freedom, peace is privileged over war, this being used as a last resource but considered as contrary to human, social and common good. In *The Last European*, the Headmaster explains that:

> Everything in Newest Europe flowed normally, according to the resources available, the basic needs already supplied and the desire to build the most advanced society one could from the technological point of view. (207)

It took Europeans two hundred years to build a new society, but it collapsed because the pre-historical barbarians, inhabitants of the Waste Lands, proved to be resistant and untameable (2015: 21)

Though not being the first text on the utopian ideal, More’s *Utopia* is the first of a long tradition of texts with a common origin: the proposal of alternative social projects. The first person narrator in *The Last European*, assuming the quality of *vox populi*, presents a somewhat naïve proposal of a new alternative social order unquestionably utopian:

> We favour leisure, the pleasure of waking and being available, with nothing to do except what one decides to do, a delightful feeling of the existence of a time permanently empty, filled in a singular way each day, outcome of the wise and selected choice of our actions, which correspond intrinsically to our desires, even though being accomplished only mentally. (32)

Literary utopia, due to its narrative strategies (shared in Portugal by J. V. Pina Martins (1989) and Miguel Real) made possible, in the last five hundred years, the criticism of the authors’ contemporary society and the transmission of subversive messages, either in times of oppression, under totalitarian governments, or in the time of crises in parliamentary democracies. The latter situation made possible, in *The
of O Último Europeu, the Headmaster is one hundred and thirty years old. He had put an end to his mission of being Counsellor of the Pantocrates and recreating the Newest Europe. He is about to die after resurrecting the humanist Europe in a small island in Azores. His only friend is Jorge Tomás Evangelista, a descendant of the first Portuguese to live in the island, in the 16th century: Fernã Álvares Evangelista.

What the Headmaster has to leave as legacy is the manuscript he wrote on paper and with a pen, telling the history of humanity and the remembrance of a European utopian democracy. The Chronicle of New Europe, entrusted to the daughter-in-law of the islander Jorge Tomás, will be a living legacy of “the last European citizen”, the only one who remained always faithful to the civilizational, cultural, and ethical principles of a humanist Europe.

However, O Último Europeu 2284 is also a narrative on the process of writing a literary text. Therefore, it belongs to the long tradition of discursive dialogical novels, inviting the reader to take part in the discussion. This way, the narrative becomes an evidence that modernity is not over yet, idea defended by Jürgen Habermas, Zygmunt Bauman, Onésimo Teutônio Almeida and Miguel Real (ALMEIDA, RIBEIRO and REAL 2015).

3. The fall of the myth of “a New Europe invincible by sea, earth or air”, or the not so admirable new world

Maria de Fátima Marinho presents a study concerning the evolution of this contemporary epic subgenre, from Romanticism to the present, clarifying concepts, themes, and categories (MARINHO 1999). The Portuguese researcher starts her analysis with Georg Lukacs’ The Historical Novel (LUKÁCS 1983), and then proceeds to the present Portuguese writers in whose novels one can find a new point of view that distinguishes them in what regards the debate, the re-reading, the commentary (sometimes ironical) of traditional historiographic discourse. This was
considered only as a starting point for the elaboration of a world simultaneously real and fictional: the novel. Following this reasoning, authors as Miguel Real, Fernando Campos, Pedro Almeida Vieira, Mário de Carvalho, Agustina Bessa-Luís, António Cândido Franco, and Carlos Alberto Machado⁰⁰ all consider the past as a kind of legitimator of the present¹⁷ for they frequently imply the reconstruction of characters’ lives that have their counterpart in history. That is what happens, for instance, in Real’s novels depicting characters as King Sebastian, Queen Amélia, and Marquis of Pombal.

While contemporary historical novels display, each on its own way, an original form of reworking the past, integrating it in the present and playing with the need to contest it, the utopian novel invents a future and plays with the need of belonging felt by the reader, the main character, or the first-person narrator. The imponderability of past time gives way to the philosophical invention of the future, in an attempt to denounce (or to exorcise) the present through a future that is perceived as a technological tyranny where all social systems and invented ideologies have already exhaust all their potentials.

O Último Europeu 2284 is a long and descriptive fictional essay (with soliloquies and personal commentaries produced by the main character) that questions the possibility of building a Utopia in the third millennium. Nowadays, after two world wars, the publication of Brave New World (HUXLEY 2004; 2006), exploring the theme of individual freedom versus State authoritarianism, and Nineteen Eighty Four (ORWELL 1998), every utopia must come accompanied by the description of a dystopia, and express the need for demanding a third route by inventing future universes. Maria do Rosário Monteiro expressed this idea.

For some time, dystopia and contemporary culture seemed to have decreed a death penalty on utopia, the eutopia, the promise of happiness. Fortunately, several writers found a middle way, a third route, or a compromising position. (2015: 281)

Miguel Real follows this third route.

The long tradition of literary utopia still endures both the memory and practice of More’s Utopia, and of Bacon’s New Atlantis, the latter being the first scientific utopia. However, in O Último Europeu, there is also the construction of a phalanstery, an international community, harmonious and liberal as the one imagined by the French philosopher Charles Fourier. Miguel Real’s narrative echoes all these past literary and philosophical proposals, but there also echo some other contemporary literary utopias.

Using the long utopian tradition, Miguel Real mixed, shaped and recreated it to fictionalize the “Old” and the New Europe in a narrative that echoes More and Orwell. But the fictional Headmaster reminds readers (particularly Portuguese ones) of another first-person narrator, Miguel Marcos Hitlodeu, in Utopia III (PINA MARTINS 1989; 2005). The outcome of Real’s fictional and intertextual work is the daily portrait of a totalitarian and repressive regime, cherishing the memories of a still possible happiness, all this in the fateful year 2284, beginning of the narrative, ruled by futuristic prolepses and analepses.

Maybe tired of historical novel and readers and writers historiographic ignorance, Miguel Real took a temporary leave on his historical research and decided to jump to the future. Inspired by More’s Utopia, now celebrating 500 years. Therefore, sharing Maria do Rosário Monteiro opinion on More’s text defending it is “an open narrative avant la lettre” (MONTEIRO 2015), one may expand this to O Último Europeu. The last comments and the way the novel ends leave many questions unanswered, awaiting to continue the dialogue with the new Hythlodaeus and/or the new reader.

Every utopian narrative needs to be contextualized.

Every utopian text gains its full meaning when its reading is integrated in the political and cultural milieu that triggered it, for utopia presents implicit and explicit political differences meant as responses to the actual society the author lives in. Therefore, they become obvious targets for censorship. However, since the last quarter of the twentieth century, Portugal has become a democratic political system
enjoying freedom of speech. (2015: 280)

Moreover, in the Portuguese context, utopian fictions are still very rare.20

If censorship was the only reason for the scarcity of Portuguese utopias, the regained freedom of speech should have allowed for the development of Portuguese utopian literature, but unfortunately, it did not. (MONTEIRO 2015: 280)

Therefore, this paper has the intention of contributing to the study of the second utopian text written after 25 April 1974, the one that followed *Utopia III* (1989). Hence, its focus on the first-person narrator, the Headmaster, on his actions and ideas, in their implementation on an imagined future society, the endless search for a paradise on earth or a perfect democracy in Azores, pleading strongly for a humanist removal and the defence or European citizenship.

In *O Último Europeu*, he leaves the past that had been his field for many years, and creates a sinister vision of Europe divided in wastelands governed by martial clans that enslave starving populations, a “medieval” future. Among the wastelands, there is an isolated region that looks like a paradise amid hell, isolated due to highly advanced technology, a small enclave with only one hundred inhabitants called New Europe. Work was abolished and replaced by the activities each inhabitant chose according to his free will, aiming at the full development of the human being. Amusements, radical experiences, everything was allowed in a sort of virtual experience that all can accede and that leaves implanted in their brains the memories felt as being real.

The inhabitants of New Europe, connected to the Great Electronic Brain, give up their individuality to become a collective entity: there are no names, no birthdays. All citizens celebrate their birthday on the same day, a festivity that is meant to develop the notion of collective common good, to achieve kind of ethereal perfection in which all take part, without vanity or loftiness, enjoying stability, personal fulfilment, maintained through constant evolution and research.

Focusing on the egalitarian and utilitarian division of resources, as well as on the freedom of association that gives origin to different familiar models, life in New Europe elapses long and easily, in complete isolation from the other civilizations. Until Great Asia strikes.

In spite of all the evolution, this civilization is naïve in what concerns personal and collective military protection, placing their confidence on the protective shields, supported by the inexhaustible power of earth’s core. When Great Asia manages to disconnect that energy, New Europe is utterly defenceless.

Having eliminated their natural instincts of survival and self-preservation, the inhabitants cannot organize themselves to fight the Barbarians. They can but run, hide or be slaughtered.

Utopia or dystopia? This society is presented from a single point of view, that of the Headmaster. Therefore, it would be sufficient that one inhabitant might feel himself oppressed and this utopia would be a dystopia. However, for the inhabitants, New Europe is apparently a utopia. From the point of view of the reader, it might not be so. One can understand the way how instinctive behaviour are controlled, how conflict is minimized, but in this society there is no place for shared emotions or passions, the fuel that causes conflicts but also the one that promises intellectual and artistic evolution.

The New Europeans are peaceful, intelligent and rational in such a complete and superior way that they seem strange, maybe even plainly handicapped. This fictional future offers several choices, some possible within the concept of utopia, but some announcing dystopia, a dark warning about the future we are walking into, a tyrannical technocracy.

*O Último Europeu* portrays a civilization despising the self, a society based solely on the collective. Their main goal is the fulfilment of all possible individual desires, if and only if they never become a threat to common good. Nevertheless, to achieve such a rational perfection it was necessary to add an artificial
rationality (by introducing in each brain an electronic hyper-cortex), thus removing individual personality. Ironically, the inhabitants of this brave new world consider themselves as humanists. In fact, in this society that values freedom that freedom is under the control of a Great Brain, commanding, shaping, deciding.

The narrator of O Último Europeu is a Headmaster living in a small enclave surrounded by an enormous wasteland. In that small stronghold of peace, protected from the rest of the world, a group of scholars managed to build a perfect society, a bit cold, but whose inhabitants are provided for, free to desire and living a technological happiness. There are no problems, until the Great Asia, dealing with serious demographic problems decided to reclaim European territory to accommodate the exceeding Asians.

Founded in 2184, New Europe was a paradise governed by advanced technology, a space without “religious or metaphysical beliefs, different visions of the world, without systems of ideas or ideologies” (REAL 2015: 54). There is no end for leisure, controlled reproduction, a Great Brain with its electronic and neurological nets controlling “every buildings, streets, shops, houses and individual minds” (REAL 2015: 45), along with the Protective Hyper-atomic Bubble, the “safeguard shield”(REAL 2015: 31).

In 2284 utopia ends and becomes a locus horrendus, with pillaging, poverty, slavery and the erasing of basic human features.

Armed and pompous barbarian hordes from Old Europe, incited by primitive drums, flags hoisted and the roar of scowling captains, encircle our citizens, orderly grouped in the squares and invade our Depositaries of Nutrition, searching for food, trying to dissolve the nutritive powder in water, exploding the hermetically pressurized boxes where we preserve our vegetables, greens and natural fruits intact. (2015: 45)

Mournful and powerless, the Headmaster observed the result of “the Old European Barbarian’s attacks, due to the prevalence of their reptilian and mammal brains impulses, controlling their behaviours” (2015: 38): men being tortured, women raped, New European corpses rotting in the streets, forming anarchic piles.

Without the connection to the Great Electronic Brain, [Neo-European citizens] can only register an existential memory, the remembrance of actions, behaviours, and reasoning that constitute the unit of our personal identity, our biography not seldom fictionalized from the virtual realization of our desires.(46)

This means that it becomes impossible for them the only capacity of dreaming that the New European had, based on technology and nanoscience. Their identities as well as their individual and collective freedom fall down. The utopian vision of a future Europe disintegrates itself. The Headmaster is “as all the Neo-Europeans, absolutely normal, born, integrated and grown up within the rectorial institutions of New Europe […] later [became] Headmaster [one of the] two superior technical categories before the level of Pantocrate, this only accessible due to old age” (49) and unlike the inhabitants of Old Europe wastelands, he has neither mother nor father.

After the invasion of the Barbarians, the Asian Mandarins blocked the mega power centrals installed in Earth’s core, and reintroduced polygamy. The builders of New Europe “considered the monogamic family the most perverted institution of European civilization, spring of all educational, formative and existential perversions” (65), as well as the old “baseless myth of the existence of a permanent motherly instinct justification for the traditional family” (66). It is important to make note of the Headmaster’s complicity regarding the bureaucratic and technological mechanisms of New Europe.

Waiting for the eminent Asian attack, the Barbarians loot the shops, load their primitive trucks with their sack, sell the electronic equipment they find, for the Old Europeans live without electricity, starve, and pigeons, dogs and cats become the inhabitants food. Meanwhile in South America breaks the war between Brazil and Venezuela and three hundred million South-Americans are killed.
The Headmaster decides to dedicate all his energy to writing the *Chronicle of New Europe*, working night and day, sleepless, “because the writing of the book is crucial and its future survival even more” (78). It is as if the “last European” had a mission to accomplish, as a new King Sebastian, or a Marquis of Pombal, herald of science and progress in the midst of vilified crowds.

Relating the present and recording the past, this is the life of the Headmaster, simultaneously an apparatchik and a “golden citizen” of the technocratic system of New Europe. This imbibes in *O Último Europeu*, a slight biographic nature, the new Raphael Hythlodaeus acting as former abettor, then as dissident and refugee of the new democratic technological utopia.

The narrative unveiling itself for the reader is an insurance for the future, always more utopian than dystopian, because it will be entrusted to a young girl, guardian of the History of New Europe, mother of neo-Europeans, married with a descendant of the first settlers in Pico Island. Apparently, utopia and dystopia, past and future join in a continuous fight against the American Empire. In the last scene, the dying Headmaster closes his eyes and “opened his heart to the truth”, imagining another utopia, post-future, post-everything, sure there was no possible peaceful relationship between Americans and Europeans, for the latter would surely lose.

The chief technicians had concluded that the majority of the adolescents and adults Neo-Europeans would never be integrated in the American Empire, obeying scrupulously to every regulation. Due to their upbringing and personality, the Neo-Europeans become outcast citizens, contestats, disturbers of regulated normality, foundation of the Empire’s happiness.

Their privileged past in New Europe, and as fighters for survival in Newest Europe indicated that the majority would rebel, continuously demanding new conditions of life, better scientific instruments, eventually better equipped laboratories, contact with universities and even, probably, demands of freedom and social equality. These demands would never be accepted by the Empire, which decided for them not a life as chief technicians, but a life as regular citizens.

All evidence, assured by the best technicians in psychology, pointed to a scenario were the majority would become, eventually, a social problem; some, possibly stimulated by the difficulties, might become leaders of future regional insurrections [...].

Soldiers were ordered to kill - painlessly, assured me Jorge Tomás with an inadequate passion, raising the tone of his words - all the grown-ups and adolescents that boarded the military spacecraft. How they were killed, I do not know.

More than five hundred children would be delivered by the three militaries to an agency that would sell them to American families wishing to become parents without the sufferings of pregnancy and the worries of taking care of infants. They are white people families, said Jorge Tomás, comforting me.

The children will be all right, he said, softening my pain, scared by me raising my hand placing it over my heart.

In the new family, the younger will easily forget the Newest Europe and they will become happy adults, according to regulations.

There was no point in keeping on living. I asked to be left alone. I was harsh.

Leave me, I said.

I decided I would die that same day, at sunset, I, the last true European. Tomorrow I would not see the sun rising. (275-277)

This new (Portuguese, Azorean, someway dystopic) utopia was terminated by the American invasion. The time of discourse matching the time of the story, the year 2299, only in appearance resembles science fiction. *O Último Europeu* 2284 is an essay, with long narrative sections and many Headmaster’s ramblings, and this turns the novel into a philosophical reflection extremely present about what we can do now concerning our collective future. A novel/essay and an interesting utopian/dystopian philosophical dissertation, even if one does not agree with some cause/effect sequences or with the naïveté of the organization of some scenes. It is, for instance the case of The Flight, Azores, Moral Principles, The State of Nature, Jorge Tomás, Individual Identity, Formation of Families, Vegetarianism, etc. There are also disquieting diachronies in the working of the discourse in the future that become historical with intermittent
lapses. A scientific and philosophical novel, tout court, the Headmaster as philosopher and leader of the surviving Europeans in Azores, forces us to ask some questions and look for some answers. Sometimes the plot is a bit weak, and this does not allow us to make a quick reading of *O Último Europeu*, because the exposition of the several aspects of European, Asian, American and Azorean civilizations is developed slowly, in detail, methodical, but easily understood. Concluding, taking into account the values and the ancient historical references, the process of imagining the future on different layers seems much more important than the description of the past. In this novel, the future is extremely stimulating, since the references to the present (i.e. the time of the discourse) are vague, always overlapped by the biographical, scientific and technological innovation. The future promises what is new and has a romantic appeal, since it is a utopia deeply grounded on a social, political, and cultural analysis of the future. As Vítor Aguiar e Silva states:

> According to some critics, the novel today, after so many and profound metamorphoses and adventures, suffers an undisputable crises, approaching its own decline and exhaustion. Regardless of the value of such prophecies, one fact remains undisputable: the novel endures the most important literary form, due to the expressive possibilities it offers the author and to the dissemination, and influence it has in the public. (684)

Therefore, novels and essays based on utopianism had quite an important role during the 20th century, beginning with H. G. Wells *A Modern Utopia* (1905), one pioneer of science fiction, Lewis Mumford’s (1923; 2007), the already mentioned Huxley and Orwell’s novels, and more recently Herbert Marcuse’s *The End of Utopia*, Leopoldo Brizuela *Ingiaterra, una fábula* (1999), and *L’île des gauchers* de Alexandre Jardin (1995). More recently, Joe Oliver published *Uniorder: Faça você mesmo o paraíso* (2014), based on More’s Utopia and modern technology.

These works are meta-utopians, for they are rational mental exercises on utopian thinking, and they try to validate utopia as a strategy for building a future society. Without being necessarily negative dystopias, each work mentioned above results from a re-evaluation of previous utopias and their actualization. The outcome is the increased value of utopia as strategy, still as valid, when imagining alternative forms of social organization.

*O Último Europeu 2284*, being simultaneously utopian and dystopian, addresses Europe inciting it to build a society where technology might allow a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. May it ever be possible, with present technology to enlighten and free society, put an end to injustices and inequalities and the investment in future wars? Miguel Real does not seem pessimist, and his “old/new Europe” still has a future and some chances of survival as “classical Europe”, democratically governed and without the political interference from The Unites States of America.

## 4. The fictional author presents himself, or the theory of utopian novel

The critical assessment of *O Último Europeu* is guided by the utopian vision one has of the future, in actual Europe, and which gives birth to a new “construction” of historical novel (MEDEIROS 2015: 10). I believe this is a necessity in what concerns utopian novels, future vision of the future based on the same rules Linda Hutcheon established for the historiographic metafiction, but focusing in another direction, “for not all historical novels are historiographic metafiction” (MEDEIROS 2015: 11). In a utopian novel, the future is invented and commented on *a posteriori*. Meanwhile, contemporary historical novel presents a new point of view in what concerns either the winners’ history or the losers’. Therefore, there is clear difference between contemporary discourse and the narrative time - which is historicized in the Headmaster’s point of view and enunciation - and the previous futuristic
discourse in which the utopian historiographer relates events after the year 2284, until the moment he dies, in 2299.

The Headmaster’s metanarrative comments, his omnipresence, essence the future’s present and the future that becomes history, drawing nearer his writing to utopian metafiction, and this happens both in his narrative as in his *Chronicle of New Europe*, which ends his mission as kind of new King Sebastian.

In his typology of the novel, Vítor Manuel Aguiar e Silva, after having discussed the “novel of action or events” exemplifying if with Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas’ historical novels, analysis another category: “the novel of character”.

[This] novel presents, typically, one exclusive main character, who the author draws and studies lengthily and according to which the whole novel evolves. Frequently this type of novel tends to subjectivity and a confessional tone as, for instance, in Goethe’s *Werther*, Benjamin Constant’s *Adolphe*, Lamartine’s *Raphael*, etc. Usually, the title I quite expressive as to the nature of the kind of novel, for it is, frequently, the main character’s name. (2007: 685)

*O Último Europeu 2284* is very similar to the definition quoted above. The Headmaster is the character that structures the whole action; he is the commentator and the main character who coordinates the utopian repopling of the Azorean island, repeating in a future time Portuguese History, almost as if it were an anachronic historical novel.

However, one cannot say that contemporary utopian novel emerged from a complete rupture between utopia and historical novel. The model set after Walter Scott and the other authors mentioned above was object of variations in time. Writers altered the way to describe the characters, the narrators, the place, and this brought about several transformations within the genre. Language became more concise and swift, and description became less dynamic. In Real’s novel, it is frequent to find that a long descriptive reference springs from the Headmaster’s intention to criticize, and not so much from the mere description of a place, of characters or of events.

5. For a new future Europe

After having dominated the world for three thousand years, and looking at the political and social situation of present day Europe, it seems it is on the route of decadence. It is possible that, in the next centuries, Europe will not have a central role, if it cannot stand, decidedly, as a defender of two base pillars: human and ecological rights. This is the role that is left to Europe in world policy. Technological and ideological supremacy lie elsewhere. After glancing at what goes on in the world, it is not hard to imagine what will await us all in the end. There is “Arab Spring”, ceaseless wars, nugatory waves, terrorism. In the name of protection and fighting that terrorism, we are conditioned daily, accepting to change our conception of individual and collective freedom. There is a soothing acceptance regarding the loss of privacy, there is a moral decline and the reintroduction of the concept of “holy war”. Our politicians and the media deal with all this lightly, even when facing pure evil and unruly consumerism.

We cannot foresee what will be the future of China, ruled by cold and cruel “mandarins”. Neither can we know what will become of the American Empire with their false “infantile curiosity”. These were metaphors used in the narrative to give weight to the plot and the narrative discourse.

Democracy either is living a profound crisis or became an impossibility, replaced by a modern utopia, that is, a dictatorship, apparently happy, controlled by faceless ferocious and technologically regulated societies.

The future is opened. We cannot just follow lightly. The flock mentality and the slave morality referred by Nietzsche must be replaced by an ethical responsibility for our actions, our words, our individual and collective political decisions.

*O Último Europeu 2284* is an excellent novel about our individual and collective freedom. It is a utopia because it offers a positive vision of human resilience,
personified in the Headmaster, who opposes a dictatorial civilization, technocratic, even if almost technologically perfect. This is governed by a hyper-rational elite, planned disregarding the principles of life and death, as a new folly exercised centuries ago by Erasmus in the arguments exchanged with the master of Utopia, in 1516.

Miguel Real wants to point at some black holes that may mean the end of many European ideals that seemed to be the roots of western societies. A novel/essay startles and scares the reader, pursuing the analyses of Nova Teoria da Felicidade (REAL 2013), Nova Teoria do Mal (REAL 2012b), and of the suis generis return to Sebastianism (REAL 2014).

The author does not defend any solution, and neither do Old nor New Europe seem to be political and social models worth pursuing. He expects the reader to do his own thinking about the future and presents alternative sceneries. The reader, as “other” or “new” citizen - a “rectified” citizen, compared with the ignorant hero of Saramago’s Ensaio sobre a Lucidez (2004)- will have to vote carefully and his/her vote will decide who will govern in Europe and in the World and how happier society will be in the future. Choosing what the future will be like is everybody’s responsibility, following the road selected by the author in O Último Europeu 2284, the one that reaffirms the feeling of continuity of the plans of transformation started in Renaissance and followed thereafter.

The future of utopia is an open one, perhaps following the ideas of French philosopher Michel Maffesoli, who defends that today there are interstitial utopias, transformed in micro-utopias36. There are also individual utopias, referred by Gilles Lipovetsky, who believes it to be common, the existence of “individual utopias, resulting from the acknowledgment that collective transformation may result from the action of common people, building nets”37. All this may contribute for a utopian network connecting all the ideas of progress, in either technology or information theory - in the concept of analysis of social networks -, the history of empires past and present, human activity worldwide. All this may help us walk towards a possible, human, hopeful future, as our utopian reasoning can imagine, create, and produce.

Bibliography


Translation of the original paper from Portuguese to English by Maria do Rosário Monteiro; Revision Anabela Monteiro Nunes.

1 “Orgulhávamo-nos do amplo progresso realizado numa dezena de anos, dotados de um plano moral excelente e de um optimismo histórico muito sólido. [...] Prolongar e continuar a civilização dos nossos pais. Grande a responsabilidade, grande a vontade, óptimo o caminho percorrido”.

2 Eduardo Lourenço received the award Prémio Camões in 1996, among other other prestigious awards acknowledging his exceptional contribution to Portuguese Culture.


4 “... aprendia francês e leis, a geometria analítica de Descartes, o cálculo infinitesimal de Leibniz e Newton seriam pela primeira vez ensinados em Portugal, os professores podiam ensinar que a terra era uma esfera, como Kepler descobriria havia duzentos anos [...], tudo mudara em menos de dez anos, tudo ia mudando, Lisboa espraïara-se, geometrizara-se, racionalizara-se, industrializara-se, alfabetizara-se, modernizara-se, Lisboa vestia outra pele, burguesa, argentária, europeia, mas, qualquer que fosse a pele de que se vestisse, nunca deixaria de ser uma cidade crente, rude, supersticiosa, a cidade de S. António, pátira da inveja, sempre ansiando por uma elite iluminada que a venha salvar.”


6 See Pina Martins’ Introductory study to the Portuguese critical edition of More’s Utopia (2006). In 1531, Henry VIII, wanting to marry Anne Boleyn, broke the kingdom’s relationship with the Catholic Church, due to Pope’s refusal to concede the divorce to his marriage to queen Catherine. Thomas More refused to acknowledge Henry VIII as head of the Anglican Church. Therefore, he was condemned to death, charged with treason, and beheaded in July 6, 1535. Pope Pio XI canonized Thomas More in 1935. In 2000, Pope John Paul II declared More “patron of statesmen and politicians”. Thomas More, diplomat and Chancellor to Henry VIII was a close friend of the eminent humanist and pedagogue Erasmus (1466-1536). It is attested that The Praise of Folly was written in London, while Erasmus was living at More’s home. It was discussed between them, that important reformist text presenting a violent criticism to both 16th century society and papacy (PINA MARTINS 2006).

7 “Não trabalhar, mas estar sempre ocupado — o lema de um outro filósofo, de origem portuguesa, quando as nações e as línguas eram consideradas realidades primeiras na educação de um cidadão —, tornou-se um dos lemas essenciais do nosso viver colectivo”.

8 “... ofereço-me como professor, palavra antiga que designa aquele que tem a seu cargo prioritário a educação das novas gerações a partir do tempo do desname”.

9 “... operámos uma segunda colonização da ilha, uma colonização científica [...] depois de os portugueses terem feito, nos primórdios, uma colonização humana, geográfica, apenas de povoamento.

10 “Não que cada um dos três represente um terço da Assembleia, como se regressássemos à antiquíssima representação proporcional própria das democracias do século XX, como se cada um figurasse uma fração do todo, ou uma “parte” do todo. Não existem frações entre nós, não somos uma sociedade fragmentada...”.

11 “Tudo na Novíssima Europa corria normalmente, Segundo os recursos possíveis, as necessidades básicas que já tínhamos suprido e os desejos de construção de uma sociedade o mais avançada possível do ponto de vista tecnológico”.

12 “Privilegiamos o ócio, o prazer de acordar e estar disponível, nada ter que fazer senão o que se decidir fazer, a sensação deleitosa da existência de um tempo permanentemente vazio, preenchido de um modo singular em cada dia, produto de uma escolha e reflectida das nossas acções, que correspondem intrinsecamente aos nossos desejos, mesmo que realizados mentalmente”.

13 “Privilegiamos o prazer em detrimento do trabalho, eis uma das nossas divisas, que os Mandarins confucionistas desprezam tanto por desconhecerem a sua excelsa virtude como por incapacidade tecnológica, por atraso científico face à Nova Europa. [...] Nós, os neo-europeus, realizamo-nos pelo prazer lúdico, livre, sem horário nem outra finalidade senão o deleite e o gosto usufruídos pela própria acção, como fazer coleções, como é o meu caso enquanto alto organizador e dirigente de...”.
The Clusters are nameless cities, rebuilt in some European countries after the 2084 Great Hunger. This calamity led to the “desertion of the old cities, some with more than 20 million inhabitants, several divided in districts lacking electricity and potable water, decadent, unorganized, with minimal education and health facilities, controlled by monopolies belonging to clans. Most of the dead were thrown to dunghills, with no burials, only burnt bodies raised into pyres among the garbage”. [... abandonadas das velhas cidades, algumas com cerca de 20 milhões de habitantes, muitas divididas em bairros sem abastecimento de electricidade e água canalizada, decadentes, desorganizadas, com reduzidos serviços educativos e hospitalares, cobrados por empresas monopolistas pertencentes aos clãs, a maioria dos mortos atirados para monturos, sem enterro, simplesmente corpos queimados levantados em pira no seio do lixo... (2015: 39)]. Among the Clusters, the Ancient Lisbon had been one of the poorest cities of the continent. In the oriental part of the European continent, “there was Ancient Poland, a country that in the past had been continuously martyred by invasions from its Russian and German neighbours. [...] a antiga Polónia, país outrora martirizado por permanentes invasões dos seus vizinhos Russos e Alemães. (2015: 111)]. “Cities once prosperous and magnificent, as Bogotá, Caracas, Buenos Aires, La Paz, Quito, São Paulo were nowadays radioactive ruins inhabited by decayed people, moribund, burdened with genetic malformations.” [Cidades outrora florescentes e monumentais, como Bogotá, Caracas, Buenos Aires, La Paz, São Paulo, eram hoje ruínas radiactivas habitadas por povos decrépitos, moribundos, carregados de malformações genéticas. (2015: 110)].

15 “Gritos, estampidos de armas mecânicas de fogo, guinchos de casais fornecedores, gemidos de moribundos, toadas de música bárbara, assente na percussão, tudo chegava amortecido aos meus ouvidos”.

16 Carlos Alberto Machado’s novel Hipopótamos em Delagoa Bay [Hippopotamuses in Delagoa Bay] (MACHADO 2013) can be included in the mainstream of Portuguese postcolonial prose, as well as contemporary historical hybrid writing. The plot presents the anti-epic saga of the Quaresma family, telling the story of Portuguese immigrants in Mozambique. Living in Africa since the second half of the 19th century, their story is told through the prism of the Portuguese Carnation Revolution (1974), the liberation of Mozambique (1975) and the development of democracy in Portugal and Africa (or rather a credible, but unfortunate side of the phenomenon) up to the present moment of the fictional narration (c. 2010). As the protagonists feel feeble, menaced by the British and Dutch, uncertain in their relations with the Portuguese Metropolis and their new, African homeland, their mixed identity has not yet been fully expressed and leads to an inner conflict, social exclusion, and personal dramas. The novel can be read as a heterogenic, fragmentary, and hallucinatory Black Lusophone memoir (KALEWSKA 2015: 148).


18 Some critics consider Bacon’s New Atlantis as the foundation of another literary genre, quite close to the utopian: science fiction. Another possible ramification would be a satirical utopia, as, for instance, Swift’s The Voyages of Gulliver. Memoirs of Planets, written by Thomas Northmore (1795) presents a positive utopian perspective of a government that achieves the status of eutopia, or utronia, a future of general happiness.

19 Fourier’s idea was that communities should be able to achieve total cooperation and self-sufficiency. Some practical experiences were carried on based on Fourier’s ideas: the phalanstery of Sai (1841), in Santa Catarina (Brazil), and the Cecilia Colony (1890), in Paraná (Brazil). The same happened with La Réunion (1855), in Texas, and North American Phalanx (1841), in New Jersey (USA). Marx, in The Communist Manifesto (1848), criticized capitalism and called the attention of the so called “communists” to avoid “the savage socialism” fearing the natural “market capitalism” since there was the danger of falling into a reproachable utopia (this was proved by the political, social and economic practices in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989).

William Morris, in News from Nowhere (1995) still believed in a revolution that would abolish all forms of private property, which would free the human being and give him a more solidary kind of life. Among the dystopias, one can refer the narratives of such authors as H. G. Wells, Orwell, or Zamyatin (1924). During the twentieth century 60s and 70s there was a renewal utopian practise informed by feminism and ecology. Belong to this period the novels Ecotopia (CALLENBACH 1975), Woman on the edge of Time (PIERCY 1976) (Fátima Vieira, apud (COELHO 2016).

20 However, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, almost at the eve of the second millennium, an important Portuguese
utopia was published: *Utopia III*, written by Pina Martins (1998). This long novel is structured as being the sequel of More’s *Utopia*, presenting the history and actual status of the mother of all literary utopias. The question at the basis of the whole novel is, “What would More’s *Utopia* be like today?” (2015: 278).

21 “De facto, a História, a verdadeira História, só se iniciou em 2184, quando o homem se libertou definitivamente da sua animalidade, da recordação do cheiro e do sabor do sangue, do gosto da carne, crua ou cozinhada” [In fact, History, the true History, began only in 2184, when men freed himself definitely from his animalism, from the memory of the smell and taste of blood, the taste of meat either raw or cooked] (REAL 2015: 55).

22 “Hordas bárbaras armadas e aparatosas da Velha Europa, acicatadas por tambores primitivos, bandeiras hasteadas e brados dos chefes façanhudos, cercam os nossos cidadãos nas praças e invadem os nossos Depósitos Alimentícios, buscando comida, tentando dissolver o pó alimentício em água, fazendo explodir as caixas herméticas pressurizadas onde conservamos os legumes, vegetais e frutos naturais intactos”.

23 “Sem a conexão ao Grande Cérebro Electrónico, registamos apenas uma memória existencial, a recordação das acções, comportamentos e raciocínios que constituem a unidade da nossa identidade pessoal, a nossa biografia, não raro fictionada a partir da realização virtual dos nossos desejos”.

24 “Os técnicos superiores tinham concluído que a maioria dos neo-europeus e adolescentes nunca se integrariam no Império Americano cumprindo escrupulosamente os regulamentos. Devido à sua formação e à sua personalidade, os neo-europeus tornar-se-iam cidadãos marginais, seres contestatários, perturbadores da normalidade regulamentar, fundamento da felicidade do Império. O seu passado privilegiado na Nova Europa e de batalhadores pela sobrevivência na Novíssima Europa apontava para que a maioria se revolvasse, exigindo continuamente novas condições de vida, melhores instrumentos científicos, porventura laboratórios mais bem equipados, contactos com universidades e, até, quem sabe, condições de liberdade e de igualdade sociais - exigências não aceites pelo Império, que para eles estipulara, não uma vida de técnicos superiores, mas uma vida de cidadãos normais.

Com evidência, garantida pelos melhores técnicos de psicologia do império, a maioria tornar-se-ia, a breve ou a longo trecho, um problema social, quia alguns, estimulados pelos obstáculos, poderiam tornar-se líderes de futuras revoltas regionais. [...] Os militares foram encarregados de matar - sem dor, garantiu Jorge Tomás com força desproporcionada, subindo o tom das palavras - todos os adultos e adolescentes levados na nave militar. Como foram mortos, não sei.

O mais de meio milhar de crianças seria entregue pelos três militares a uma agência, que as venderia a famílias americanas que desejavam ser pais sem o sofrimento da gravidez e as preocupações do tratamento de um bebê. São famílias brancas, disse Jorge Tomás, consolando-me. As crianças ficarão bem, disse, mitigando-me a dor, assustado com a mão que eu levara ao coração.

Na nova família, os mais pequenos esquecerão definitivamente a Novíssima Europa e serão adultos felizes segundo os regulamentos. Não valia a pena continuar a viver. Pedi para ficar só, fui intempestivo. Morreria nesse dia ao poente, decidi, eu, o último verdadeiro europeu. Amanhã já não veria o sol nascer”.

