

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 Hythlodæus, 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, given 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