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The Utopian Unconscious: Literary Utopias and the Refashioning of Political Identities in 1920s Portugal

In this chapter, I will analyse four literary works written in Portugal in the 1920s. Such analysis will be based on a series of thematic combinations I will establish among the four. The reasoning behind this articulation is simple: despite the differences (at many levels, as we will see) between the authors, all these works coincided in the use of political utopias to imagine, one could argue, their own political situation, or better still, the whole range of political expectations available in the historical context of the 1920s. My approach thus assumes that the utopian drive in these fictions is not only closely bound to their contemporary political imaginary, but that it can be used as a privileged perspective on the political situation of a historical moment experienced as being in rapid transformation.

In other words, the utopian imaginary gave these literary works a degree of autonomy in relation to the historical context that allowed them to overcome a strictly indexical relation with their referents. The utopian form may in this sense broaden the period's political picture, for in fact it opens up two distinct, but complementary, layers of analysis: the historical experience of a given moment proper, on the one hand; and the horizon of expectations opened up by some of the most dramatic events in that same context, on the other. This means two things. First, that utopias are not mere fantasies, but fictional forms that are particularly immersed in historical experience, for they not only respond to specific historical events but allow us to represent (or map, as Fredric Jameson puts it)¹ the ensemble of perceptions those same historical events give rise to.

Secondly, and as importantly, these specific utopias were written and published at a moment marked by the sharp sense of a historical break that gave rise to all kinds of prospective thought. I am here, of course, thinking of World War I and the Russian Revolution, immediately perceived and articulated as the end of a recognizable social order and the consequent opening to an unknown era. What came next is usually explained by historiography as both the material consequence of these events (the relation between the war and social and economic crises in the 1920s and the 1930s) and the outcome of the impact these same events had on the social imaginary. The very concrete political divide between Fascism and Communism, for example, can in this sense be seen

¹ 'Yet in order for representability to be achieved, the social or historical moment must somehow offer itself as a situation, allow itself to be read in terms of effects and causes, or problems and solutions, questions and answers. It must have reached a level of shaped complexity that seems to foreground some fundamental ill, and that tempts the social theorist into producing an overview organized around a specific theme. The social totality is always unrepresentable (...) but it can sometimes be mapped and allow a small-scale model to be constructed on which the fundamental tendencies and the lines of flight can more clearly be read.' Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 13-4.

as clash between *dreamworlds*,² political forms that existed simultaneously, and as strongly, in institutions and regimes, on the one hand, and in debates, images, ideologies and narratives, on the other.³

A double set of expectations is at stake in this context. The early twentieth century, and the post-war period in particular, was perceived by many as the ‘winter time’ of Faustian civilization described by Oswald Spengler in his *The Decline of the West*, a moment threatened by what Ortega y Gasset referred to as *The Revolt of the Masses* (to mention only two of the many manifestations of *kulturpessimismus* proliferating throughout the period): a moment when sheer number, that is, massification, was apparently taking over in what could only mean, from the conservative perspective shared by Spengler and Ortega, the corruption of established political, social and cultural orders based on the individual (orders organized, on the other hand, around the written word, which specified the key impact of massification in the intellectual and cultural fields).

And yet, if the West was declining and the masses were rebelling at the exact same moment our contemporary utopias were published, the process could also be perceived from an opposite perspective: the rebellion of the masses as the emancipation of the proletariat and the decline of, not exactly the West, but rather its capitalist version, thus opening the way for its replacement by communism. Either way, this seemed to be a propitious time for utopian thought. Not only because war and revolution (more specifically, the historical breaks represented by World War I and the Russian Revolution) had just changed historical perception, but also inasmuch as these political events already seemed a consequence of deeper phenomena: the emergence of a massified public sphere (with its new machines of reproduction of words and images) with a new ability to create perceptions, multiply expectations and thus determine the outcome of political events in the first place.

Non-Places in the Portuguese 1920s Literary Field

To say that something changed the world, or that the world changed at a certain moment, is the ultimate commonsensical aphorism in historiography, the usual trope of naive historians when confronted with an era’s own hopes and anxieties. In the specific tension between what changed and what remained in the 1920s, it is in fact particularly problematic to distinguish changes in society and politics from social and political perceptions of change. The worldviews of modernism or of cinema are probably the examples that first come to mind of forms that most effectively dramatized, or enhanced, the perception of historical transformation during that period. However, I will not be speaking of modernism or cinema. After the war, newspapers and popular literature probably still played a hegemonic role in organizing perceptions and in defining for the

² Cf. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe. The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

³ Antagonism is in this sense key to understanding what is being affirmed in these utopias: ‘industrialism versus anti-industrialism; private property versus common ownership; religion versus secularization; revolution versus gradualism; statism versus communitarism; and democratic versus authoritarian organization.’ Jameson, Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, 146. See also Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia. A Study in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009).

era the horizons of expectation I have been insisting upon.⁴ This is an important point in my analysis, for to choose popular literature and the intellectual field organized around the press – rather than what survived more visibly in the literary and artistic canons – may allow us to get closer to social perceptions of political transformation, at least in the most politicized fringes of Portuguese society.

In fact, the only thing in common between the four authors of these utopias was their strong visibility in a public sphere dominated by literature and the press. Newspapers, in particular, were still the main organizing apparatuses of public life in the 1920s. Accordingly, both writers and politicians circulated through their pages composing a republic of letters where the distinction between literature and politics, on the one hand, and politics and journalism on the other was seldom clear. The nuances of this literary system will allow us to establish a first distinction between two sets of writers in our analysis, according to their position in relation to politics. Among other differences that I will explore later, it can thus be said from the outset that the two writers with a stronger literary profile were also the ones less explicitly committed to particular political ideologies. These were the cases of Júlio Dantas and Ferreira de Castro.

Júlio Dantas was more than a distinguished member of the literary community. When his name was chosen for the title and target of one of the decisive texts of Portuguese futurism, the *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* [Anti-Dantas Manifesto], it was clear for its author, Almada Negreiros, that Dantas, due to his position in cultural and political institutions and to the success of his literary and theatrical melodramas, was the true symbol of the literary system as such. Among the young writers who used him to attack the establishment and affirm their own literary position was Ferreira de Castro. Castro would eventually become much more successful than Dantas, especially after 1927 and the publication of *A Selva* [The Jungle], a major best seller translated into many different languages and repeatedly reprinted. At the beginning of the decade, however, he was still becoming famous through a hybrid genre of modernist journalism practiced by newspaper reporters with literary ambitions and in whose work fiction and reality mixed in reportage and short stories.

The two remaining authors had a different literary profile. In fact, both Manuel Ribeiro and Campos Lima came from political anarchism, and the novels they wrote were always very bound up with their political ideologies. However, whereas Campos Lima remained a discreet name on the edge of what was politically and literarily acceptable, Manuel Ribeiro achieved a spectacular, albeit brief, moment of success when he wrote a fictional trilogy in the early 1920s abandoning his former revolutionary aspirations and embracing Catholicism. His utopia concludes with the narrative of *Ressurreição* [Resurrection], the trilogy's third volume. A couple of years later, Campos Lima wrote his own trilogy, *Via Dolorosa* [Road of Pain], where an opposite utopia is staged in the first volume, *Gente Devota* [Devout People]. Whereas in Ribeiro the utopian community was formed by people who, like himself, had abandoned revolution for religion, in Campos Lima, a very similar commune was built by ex-priests and other Catholics who had meanwhile

⁴ '[...] expectation also takes place in the today; it is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the non experienced, to that which is to be revealed. Hope and fear, wishes and desires, cares and rational analysis, receptive display and curiosity: all enter into expectation and constitute it.' Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press), 259.

converted to communism. Symptomatically, Ribeiro's immense success was not matched by Lima's novels, which remained somewhat marginal. This was not due to any major formal differences between the two – almost nothing in these four literary works is highly elaborated at the level of form – but because readers, and public opinion, were at that time probably much more inclined to read about ex-revolutionaries discovering the truth of faith than the other way around.

In fact, in everything else, the two novels describe rigorously similar processes of conversion. In Ribeiro's *Ressurreição*, Luciano, the protagonist, is a young atheist architect who, after a closer contact with religious life (which started in the first volume, *A Catedral* [The Cathedral], when he was responsible for the restoration of Lisbon's medieval cathedral), has a mystical experience that ultimately leads to his conversion in Rome. Some Catholic friends of his, explicitly challenging religious authorities, are engaged in a process of reinventing Christianity by going back to the catacombs and refusing any participation in worldly materialism. Two of these friends, a countess and a prince, have given some land to create a commune where rural workers organize themselves autonomously. The results have been impressive: 'This communal regime made better men, happier and sincere. Calmly, they all gave their best efforts to the common work.'⁵ Suddenly, twentieth-century Italian Campania looks like Jesus' Palestine, 'through the sobriety, austerity and simplicity of its life.'⁶ This is something that has been triggered by faith: a spiritual, non-ideological form of communism.

A very similar commune is depicted in *Gente Devota*. In Minho, a conservative and ultra-Catholic region of northern Portugal, an aristocrat has decided to create a rural colony managed by workers. The result, here too, is very impressive: 'the vast domains would be transformed into a centre of constant activity, of life and beauty, within a growing aspiration for the glorious future prophesized by these new apostles.'⁷ The reference to the 'apostles' suggests that religion also plays an important role in Campos Lima's novel. However, the rhetoric of detachment from material values and of spiritual virtue is what allows the author to depict a rigorous reverse process of conversion. Mário, an idealist priest, refuses to participate in the system of power that he is expected to maintain with the local political and economic powers (the traditional role of the priest in the system of *caciquismo*) and decides to join the community. For him, the place is 'an ideal country of purified souls [...], where the integral accomplishment of natural destiny, freedom and love dismissed any doubt and tortuous thoughts.'⁸ What triggers this change is, of course, not faith, but revolutionary doctrines, although the process, drawing on prophecies and conversion, seems very close to a spiritual revelation.

Everything in these novels thus depends on the political commitment of the authors. The absolute control of the narratives by doctrine (we will leave the word ideology as something more complex to be analyzed later) binds them to a very predictable worldview that undermines its utopian potential. The image of these happy communes seems very familiar. In fact, despite their status in the narrative as *non-places*, their imaginary matches the most recognizable images of what was by then one of the most recognizable genres in popular literature: realism.

⁵ Manuel Ribeiro, *A Ressurreição* (Lisboa: Livraria Editora Guimarães e C.^a, 1923), 240.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ João Campos Lima, *Via Dolorosa - Gente Devota* (Coimbra: 'Atlântida' Livraria Editora, 1927), 337.

⁸ Idem, 459.

In this sense, we can deploy the concept of genre to start distinguishing the worlds depicted in these two rural utopias from those created by Júlio Dantas and Ferreira de Castro. The latter use satire to distance their narratives from reality and end up creating such absurd political situations that one could argue that utopia ceases to be the most accurate genre in which to classify them. In fact, in contrast to the ideal rural communities inspired by Catholicism and anarchism in the previous novels, the authoritarian regimes founded by women in power in Júlio Dantas's *Motivo de Aristophanes* [A Motif from Aristophanes] and Ferreira de Castro's *A Ditadura Feminista* [The Feminist Dictatorship] are probably better described as dystopias.

In his short story (published first as a newspaper feuilleton and later as a chapter in a book), Dantas rewrote Aristophanes's *Assemblywomen*.⁹ As in the ancient Greek comedy, Praxagoras founds a communist regime dominated by women. Unlike Aristophanes, however, Dantas does not use this specific narrative structure to present a utopian alternative to the corruption of the political system, but rather to reduce it to an equalitarian sharing of sexual relations, where the absence of money in communism has a counterpart in the disappearance of all forms of personal fidelity and commitment. In the works of both Aristophanes and Dantas a politics of free sexual distribution is established, where every woman – young, old, beautiful or ugly – is expected to have intercourse with every man – young, old, beautiful or ugly. However, whereas in the Greek comedy this is used to criticize male power, Dantas reverses the critique to mock feminist politics. The problem of such a regime, which – according to the writer's romantic point of view – would be the problem with any feminization of politics, is the mixing of emotional and private matters with politics and economics, a situation in which the latter would necessarily corrupt the former. The outcome of this would thus be a female dystopia.

Ferreira de Castro's short story was published as the twelfth volume of a dime novel series, 'Novela Contemporânea' [Contemporary Novel]. Located in 1920s Lisbon, the plot describes a similar process of women taking power. In this case, Portuguese feminists, under the direct influence of an English feminist organization, implement an equally authoritarian and absurd political regime. The problem repeats itself: once in charge of public matters, women bring domestic and intimate affairs into political institutions. What happens in the first meeting of the revolutionary committee is a good example of this: 'After dealing with the distribution of places in the cabinet, the revolutionaries relaxed for a moment, cooled themselves with their fans and then moved to what was really important in the revolution: should women wear trousers or skirts.'¹⁰

To Castro, the question did not really have any political meaning. To decide what to wear was not a question of gender equality and bodily emancipation but a clear example of female futility. Feminized politics would be complemented by the corruption of politicized women: women would bring their frivolous materialism into politics while at the same time losing the sentimental specificity of their gender. In both cases, the decisive development seemed to be a loss in the realm of sentiment and the reification of privacy.

⁹ Júlio Dantas, *Como elas Amam* (Lisbon: Sociedade Editora Portugal-Brasil, nd).

¹⁰ Ferreira de Castro [Silvestre Valente], *A Ditadura Feminista* (Lisbon: 'Novela Contemporânea', n° 12), 12.

Interestingly, this allows us to go back to the first two novels and identify a common critique in all the four fictions: from different perspectives, what is at stake seems to be materialism, or, more concretely, the threat posed by modern society (*gesellschaft*) to the traditional sense of community (*gemeinschaft*) – and in particular the impact on the concept of traditional family. Materialism would then have been the general form of what was most threatening in the period's perception of change. But before trying to unpick some of the more particular threats felt by these authors to their ideal notion of community, and thus understand more concretely what this materialism was really about, it may be necessary to explore the relationship between these products of literature and their historical context further.

The Utopian Unconscious

If we read these fictions as 'symbolic action', as Fredric Jameson suggests in *The Political Unconscious*, and thus as 'a way of doing something to the world' by bringing 'into being that very situation to which it is also [...] a reaction',¹¹ then it may be suggested that all our utopias and dystopias are trying equally to resolve contemporary social contradictions. However, according to Jameson, these social contradictions, that is, history proper, must remain concealed, as the 'absent cause, which cannot be directly or immediately conceptualized by the text'.¹² 'It seems useful, therefore', continues Jameson, 'to distinguish, from this ultimate subtext, which is the place of social contradiction, a secondary one, which is more properly the place of ideology, and which takes the form of the *aporia* or the *antinomy*'.¹³ I said above that the politics of *Ressurreição* and *Gente Devota* were merely doctrinal, and not ideological, precisely because they extract any possible contradiction from society and history and relocate it in the inner consciousness of the protagonists, Luciano and Mário, in their process of conversion. In the circumstances of both narratives, doctrine simplifies the writers' procedures and leaves no margin for contradiction. The harmony of the communes, the perfect endings as the consequence of intimate revelations (in which what is revealed is truth itself), may then be said to be already at work in the writers' creative process.

An inverse, but ultimately similar process can also be seen in the narratives of *Motivo de Aristophanes* and *A Ditadura Feminista*. However different 'absurd' and 'harmony' may be, satire here achieves the same result as realism. There is no contradiction in negativity. This brings us back to the question of genre as a central element in these narrative processes. Whereas utopia is made obvious by realism, dystopia becomes undisputable by satire. The lack of contradiction¹⁴ in the novels is what allows us to suspect their narratives and move the analysis to its historical situation, in order, not exactly to contextualize what they say, but to identify what they hide.

¹¹ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 67.

¹² Idem, 68.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Literary contradiction is defined by Jacques Rancière as a kind of disagreement between a certain referent and its representation. In Proust, for instance, the contradiction assumes the form of a gap between the 'gravity of the expression' and the 'frivolity of the subject'. Cf. Jacques Rancière, *Mute Speech. Literature, critical theory and politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 155.

This is not a question of truth or falsification, of course, but rather of how ideology works. According to Slavoj Žižek,

Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as support for our 'reality' itself: an illusion which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel (conceptualized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as 'antagonism': a traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized).¹⁵

If we develop this idea further, it can be suggested that what Júlio Dantas and Ferreira de Castro, Manuel Ribeiro and Campos Lima are doing here resembles the ideological move Žižek defines as 'positing presuppositions', which is what contextualizes the work of ideology in the first place:

[...] in his particular-empirical activity, the subject of course presupposes the 'world', the objectivity on which he performs his activity, as something given in advance, as a positive condition of his activity; but his positive-empirical activity is possible only if he structures his perception of the world in advance in a way that opens the space for his intervention.¹⁶

In other words, it can be said that every fictional narrative is, to some extent, utopian, or dystopian, since it always posits a particular perception that constitutes the range of possibilities, and impossibilities, in a given circumstance. How does this help in our analysis? I believe it allows us to suspect that the social contradictions explicitly dramatized by the plots are not the real historical contradictions faced by our four authors, or at least that these contradictions are not exactly where the novels situate them. Either way, what is missing and must be found is the 'traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized' that Žižek talks about. More specifically: both the political revolutions and the social communities dramatized in these works either turn away from more threatening political struggles or hide other utopian collective forms of the period.

And yet, such a hypothesis is immediately confronted by what seems to be a major problem: the two explicit political topics here represented, feminism and religion, were far from irrelevant in 1920s Portugal. On the contrary, they were among the most dramatic ideological challenges faced by the Republican regime installed in 1910. It is no coincidence that all the characters in *A Dictadura Feminista* were named after real activists of the Portuguese feminist movement (not very subtly, by the way, as the shifts from Ana Castro Osório to Ana Costa Onofre, and from Maria Veleda to Maria Velada, demonstrate). Feminism was one issue the treatment of which was perplexing within a political regime that proved progressive in many other areas.

The exclusion of women's suffrage from the new regime's list of reforms was not just a conservative atavism: it showed a political pragmatism based on a fear of the strong influence of the Catholic Church still prevalent in early twentieth-century Portuguese society. Women, according to the Republicans, would represent a conservative, if not indeed a reactionary, electorate, and thus one hostile to the new regime. This was the reason why the Republicans chose the church as one of their main targets. The separation

¹⁵ Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 45.

¹⁶ Idem, 218.

of church and state, the legalization of divorce, the expulsion of the Jesuits and the closure of religious schools were truly revolutionary acts in the Portuguese society of the time – radical moves which would eventually play a decisive role both in the fall of the regime and in the ideological priorities of the authoritarian politics that followed the nationalist revolution of 1926.

Therefore, to state that the treatment of religion and feminism turned away from, or hid, the country's political situation is not enough. Religion and feminism rather seem to somehow act as forms of synecdoche for other contemporary issues within a constellation of dominant and subsidiary political questions.¹⁷ In this sense, if we take into account what was undoubtedly the most traumatic (or encouraging, if seen from the proletarian perspective) political event of the post-war period, the Russian Revolution, it may be suggested that the particular narrative forms used to stage pressing political questions, our utopias and dystopias, were somehow displaced in relation to what was the main political issue in the period's horizon of expectations. In *A Dictadura Feminista*, the revolutionary women maintained all class privileges and reacted fiercely when the revolution spread to the colonies and their cause was followed by black women: 'What happens now? Who will send us coffee, cocoa, all those things we need?'¹⁸ Similarly, in *Motivo de Aristophanes*, it is the equalitarian structure of communism that makes feminism absurd, and not the other way around. Other forms of displacement can also be seen at work in both *Ressurreição* and *Gente Devota*, where the land is never taken, but donated by aristocratic landowners.

All these displacements seem to suggest we have reached a first real contradiction at work within our narratives. On the one hand, all four political fictions coincide with the recent narrative of bolshevism, according to which a revolution took power by force and triggered a process of land collectivization. This is exactly what has happened in these utopias and dystopias. On the other hand, however, the protagonists do not seem to be exactly where one would expect them to be in that context: there is no proletariat in *A Dictadura Feminista* and *Motivo de Aristophanes*, nor any bourgeoisie in *Ressurreição* and *Gente Devota*. Apparently, then, the traumatic antagonism these authors have trouble symbolizing is class struggle. In fact, where political struggle takes place there is no class, and where a class assumes protagonism there is no struggle.

Moreover, what this set of displacements, read in combination, show is an apparent unwillingness to deliberate on capitalist relations in general. Again, if we take a look at the rural utopias of Manuel Ribeiro and Campos Lima, it is not that production is given a subsidiary role. In fact, the moral dimension of the protagonists' conversion depends on the harmony achieved in the equalitarian arrangement of labour relations. On the other hand, the core of the critique in both feminist dystopias is precisely the reification of relations between women and men. To Júlio Dantas as well as Ferreira de Castro, it is not so much that women aspire to sexual emancipation – which they view rather nonchalantly – but the fact that they take political power and thus submit the realm of

¹⁷ '[...] the grand Utopian idea of wish [...] is always conceived as a situation-specific resolution of a concrete historical dilemma. The viability of the utopian fantasy assuredly finds its test and its verification in the way in which it promises to solve all the other concomitant problems as well. But each of these will reshuffle its primary and secondary terms, its dominants and its subordinates, its combined practice of imagination and fancy, its structurally original ways.' Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 145.

¹⁸ De Castro, *A Dictadura Feminista*, 25.

social affection and intimacy – which women traditionally represent – to the public sphere and to the instrumental relations of capitalism. Therefore, and again, it is not that instrumental reason is absent. It simply is displaced. Where production enters the narrative, social relations are pre-modern and political power vanishes from sight. Where power is instrumental and relations reified, production remains carefully absent.

And yet, genre is, once again, where the absence of contemporary historical tropes becomes more dramatic in unveiling the existence of traumatic contradictions that cannot be symbolized. The absence, or neutralization, of capitalist class struggle and communist revolution from fictions filled with communitarian production and revolutionary politics is to a large extent achieved by the structure of literary representation. Looking at the ways realism or satire intervene in these fictions' worldview may then allow us to specify in more detail how these writers experienced the threats of the historical context.

As we have seen, realism has a positive resonance in depicting utopias whereas satire acts negatively in creating dystopias. On the other hand, in both cases absences play a constitutive role, namely by depoliticizing the economic process that leads to utopia and by taking the economy away from the political construction of dystopias. In schematic terms, it could be said that whereas the economy is the positive presence of realism, politics are the negative presence of satire; conversely, whereas politics' absence in realism is what allows for the constitution of positive utopias, the absence of the economy is what allows for the constitution of negative dystopias.

But we need to unveil these internal contradictions further, for however helpful schemes may be, they are never sufficient if not fully explored in all their variables. More specifically, to say that capitalist contradictions are the absent cause of what goes on in the works we have been analyzing can only make some sense if capitalism is not reduced to an economic process. Accordingly, we must broaden our definition of capitalism and read the threat of modern materialism at work in the fictions of Dantas, Castro, Ribeiro and Lima, as a product of Weberian disenchantment, a general reification invading all realms of human existence. Only then will we be able to introduce a final and decisive element into our search for the 'traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized': the modern State.

The New State

According to Michael Mann, the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries were deeply transformed by the growth of state functions in society and government. In his narrative of the process, it is very difficult to grasp any primacy between the political and the economic:

States were largely responding to the needs of industrialism, as articulated primarily by capitalists, but also by other classes, by militaries, and by state elites. Because almost all valued the increasing collective powers of an industrial society, they urged the state on toward greater social coordination. In turn, state infrastructures enhanced the density of social interaction, but bounded by the state's territorial reach. We saw that social behaviour - even intimate social behaviour such as sexual mores – became 'naturalized', more nationally homogeneous. Quite unconsciously, most state activities furthered the

nation as an experienced community, linking the intensive and emotional organizations of family and neighborhood with more extensive and instrumental power organizations.¹⁹

From the perspective of the combined development of state and national societies, where economic processes and political histories are equated with the social unconscious, the state may suddenly be made to appear the inescapable ideological protagonist of modern fictions in general, and in particular the absent cause that determines the form of our narratives as an ideological position adopted in response to the threats of modernity. To start with, this is because the state determines which of these novels are utopias and which are dystopias. *Motivo de Aristophanes* and *A Dictadura Feminista*, in this sense, can be labelled dystopias not just because women take power, but because of the extent to which they take it in the form of state power. On the other hand, the rural communities of *Resurreição* and *Gente Devota* are utopias because they are created outside, or as an alternative to, the state as such.

This would be a fitting ending to our analysis, one in which a final traumatic social division had been identified at the level where our narratives work relatively unconsciously: at the level of genre. However, despite all the efforts by Manuel Ribeiro and Campos Lima to situate their rural utopias at a distance from the urban environments where state institutions are more recognizable, a closer look shows that to remain outside the state is ultimately impossible (as if there were really nothing external to it). It is striking, in this sense, how not even the pastoral communities depicted in *A Ressurreição* and *Gente Devota* are able to remain completely isolated from the most tentacular forms of modern coercion.

In the placid community of Italian Campania, it was clear to everyone that

[...] any negligence affecting the community would hurt the negligent one himself. [...] Never was a responsibility felt so deeply. No selfishness could resist the reproach of fifty aggrieved people. The intuition of collectivity [...] came from this bloc of solidarity, this unity, plural and diverse, yet where the vibration of a single interest could be felt.²⁰

In Campos Lima's commune, on the other hand, utopia is described as a bureaucratized machine where transformation affects even the most intimate layers of its members' consciousness:

The ongoing radical transformation could not be limited to the theatrical operations of political revolutions, where only the protagonists and the scenario were replaced; it was necessary to stir all institutions, go deep into all prejudice, kill inside man man himself as he still is today.²¹

What is truly striking about these final excerpts is thus how a hidden governmentality is unconsciously assumed to permeate the spaces that should be kept beyond the state's reach. Hard to imagine as it may be, the rural communities of *Resurreição* and *Gente Devota* were conceived of as spaces protected from the modern world's materialism. Of course, technical modernization is accepted and even desirable; but it should remain

¹⁹ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Vol. II, *The Rise of Classes and Nation-States. 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 730.

²⁰ Ribeiro, *A Ressurreição*, 243.

²¹ Campos Lima, *Via Dolorosa - Gente Devota*, 413.

subordinate to a social project whose original aim was, above all, moral and spiritual. If the role of the state in the feminist dystopias is relatively straightforward, as a satirical reaction to the modern organization of any ‘experienced community’ around the state (as described by Michael Mann), in the rural utopias we can already see how unconscious this process is ‘linking the intensive and emotional organizations of family and neighbourhood with more extensive and instrumental power organizations.’

In other words, regardless of the explicit political ideologies dividing a Catholic like Manuel Ribeiro and an anarchist like Campos Lima, from this period on it seemed increasingly difficult to think of any form of political agency or social community outside the forms of biopolitics produced by the state. In this sense, it can be suggested that the critique of state institutions in the two dystopias and the escape from those same state institutions in the two utopias correspond to the historical formation of a modern political culture ruled by instrumental reason. This was, of course, historically traumatic, because what it meant was that there was no way out from an increasing reification of social relations, the spread of capitalism throughout the whole of society and a pervading presence of the state over the territory.

The ways in which our utopias and dystopias dramatized the threat was, in this sense, very significant in the broader historical context of early twentieth-century Portuguese politics. For if the forms of progress staged in these fictions were indeed threatening to the domestic status of women and the conservation of pre-modern forms of life, then a conservative response to this would have to somehow be able to politically deploy those same inescapable state forms to protect what was under threat. This was, one could argue to conclude, the historical meaning of salazarism, as a simultaneously modern and conservative political culture, reinforcing state power to mediate economic progress and social transformation. The role of rural life in the nation’s imaginary and that of the family as the cornerstone of society – and of mothers and wives as the cement of families – could not in this sense fail to occupy centre stage in the political order of the New State that replaced the First Portuguese Republic in the 1930s.