

A Prefatory Note

Márcia Lemos

The current issue of *Via Panoramica* revolves significantly, but not exclusively, around utopian and dystopian visions of the world. In “Ativismo literário - Ecotopia”, Marcus Vinícius Matias provides an outstanding example of how literature and the arts can inspire engaged actions and projects. Matias focuses on the response from literary activism and utopian thinking to environmental problems, a major global concern nowadays, by analysing literary works such as *MaddAddam*, by Margaret Atwood, or *Ecotopia*, by Ernest Callenbach.

Furthermore, Matias presents a project implemented at Universidade Federal de Alagoas (Brazil), titled *Campus utopicus - imaginativismo e utopia* (2019-2020), which aimed to make an imaginative structural intervention on the University Campus, through the participation of its teachers, students and administrative technicians, with the goal of creating a sustainable, welcoming and utopia-driven university model.

Jéssica Bispo’s article, revealingly titled “2 + 2 = 5: A ideologia em *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, de George Orwell”, takes us far away from the utopian ideals presented by Matias into the canonical Orwellian dystopia and its nightmarish society dominated by the Party’s repressive powers. Indeed, based on Louis Althusser’s theory of ideology, Bispo provides the reader not only with an interesting analysis of the tools used by the ruling government of Oceania to guarantee the enforcement of its ideology, but also a view of the subversive strategies employed by dissenters.

In “‘Quis voar a uma alta torre’: para uma leitura hubrística de *The Spire* (1964), de William Golding”, Miguel Alarcão focuses his analysis on the novel’s protagonist, dean Jocelin, whom Alarcão defines as a man obsessed with the dream of building a giant spire, not so much as a tribute to God (as Jocelin himself purports) but as a self-eulogy for being God’s chosen one. As Alarcão recalls, Good, in general, and God, in particular, are invariably associated with heights, thus Jocelin’s ambition is to reach the highest point possible to show intimacy with the divine spheres, regardless of all warnings and presages, such as heavy rains, the construction foreman’s doubts and concerns, the lack of solid ground for the foundations of the spire or the death of several construction workers during the process.

João Sottomayor Fernandes's contribution to the issue, "Do Cachimbo à Gabardine: O Mito do Detetive em Sherlock Holmes e Philip Marlowe", establishes a bridge between British and American culture and literature by means of a comparative analysis of two famous representatives of law and justice in the realm of fiction: detectives Holmes and Marlowe. Fernandes emphasises that both detectives mirror the thoughts and beliefs of their creators regarding their own societies. However, whereas Holmes generally authorizes the Victorian *status quo*, Marlowe presents the American society as being ultimately corrupt. In their quest for justice and defence of moral values, both men acquire a mythical quality, according to Fernandes.

From literature to cinema, "Rua Americana" (September 2020) describes a stimulating cinema cycle organised by KINO-DOC (www.kino-doc.pt) in a partnership with the University of Porto, held outdoors, at Pátio do Museu de História Natural e da Ciência da Universidade do Porto, with programme and text by Jorge de Carvalho. It was the second edition of the event, featuring, this time, films that portrayed marginal fringes of the American continent. For various reasons those are the ones that were excluded from the American Dream.

Back to literature, the issue is brought into an excellent conclusion with a plunge into Irish poetry through Rui Carvalho Homem's translation of seven poems from Derek Mahon's *New Collected Poems* (The Gallery Press, 2011).