



# Spanish Anarchism and the Utopian Novel in the 1930s: The Libertarian Society of the Future in *El amor dentro de 200 años* (*Love in 200 Years*) by Alfonso Martínez Rizo

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## Abstract

The concept of critical utopia has been widely accepted since Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), which is more a utopian novel than a typically descriptive utopia. In *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin also touched upon anarchist utopian science fiction, which had already been cultivated much earlier in the context of Spain's thriving anarchist movement in the 1930s. *Love in 200 Years* (*El amor dentro de 200 años*; 1932) by Alfonso Martínez Rizo presents a society following libertarian communist principles in a technologically advanced future. This is a consumerist society, fully democratic and sexually liberated—homosexuality is not an issue, and even one of the love interests in the novel is queer—but it is not a truly anarchist utopia. The shortcomings of libertarian communism, which Salvio Valentí criticized in his contemporary Spanish dystopia, *From Exodus to Paradise* (*Del éxodo al paraíso*; 1933), are presented with wry humor through plot devices reminiscent of those frequently encountered in modern dystopias. *Love in 200 Years*, an original popular modernist scientific romance, is an early critical utopian novel which deserves to be rescued from oblivion.

**Keywords:** *Utopian novel, libertarian communism, anarchist science fiction, Martínez Rizo*

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According to Trousson (1998), "utopia is an essentially descriptive genre"<sup>1</sup> (*l'utopie est un genre essentiellement descriptive*; p. 31), meant to display the imagined place—whose intended perfection excludes any change, as any modification would dialectically imply that the perfection, in reality, has not been achieved—to a traveler visiting the utopia and, through this traveler's records, to the

reader. In the unquestioned and unquestionable utopian world, the figure of the visitor only serves to advance the description of the ideal society through their questions regarding its workings. Any event that could distract the reader's attention and stress individual experience, thus undermining the exclusive focus on the collective, is reduced to the barest minimum, so that "the description literally dismisses the narration" (*la description évacue littéralement la narration*; Trousson, 1998, p. 31). In the utopian landscape, plot-related action remains suspended and the figure of the hero remains empty of any believable characterization through his or her actions. The narrative framework is reduced to a mere afterthought by the description, even disappearing entirely, as occurs in some

<sup>1</sup> All translations to English in this article were performed by its author.

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nineteenth century anarchist utopias such as Ricardo Mella's *The New Utopia* (*La Nueva Utopia*; 1890).<sup>2</sup>

Utopia as a literary genre is, therefore, distinct from the utopian novel. If their raw material is analogous (i.e., an imaginary society whose plausible and rational appearance is presented in dialectic relation to a real society that serves as a point of reference), their verbal construction tends to be opposite: static and descriptive in utopia, but dynamic and narrative in the utopian novel. In the latter, the "utopian" element is adjective, while the narrative (the "novel") is substantive. A utopian novel can very well be studied for its ideological contents, for its potential usefulness as a blueprint for a utopian order, but such a reading would be reductive. As a novel, its main point is to tell a story that presents a particular utopian (either *eutopian* or dystopian<sup>3</sup>) society and its relationship with its denizens so that the deeds and thoughts of the characters reflect and reveal how they negotiate conflicts that arise in this society. Conflicts cannot exist in classic utopias because a being perfect society means it has achieved full harmony, but the inner and outer conflicts of men and women are the core of traditional storytelling. This lack of action and defined conflict may explain why *eutopian* novels rarely make satisfactory narratives while dystopian novels, which thrive in conflict, include several masterpieces. This is also perhaps why an ambiguously utopian real novel such as Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974) received both critical acclaim and quite a few ideologically-

charged criticisms for not having portrayed a fully positive, utopian, anarchist social order, in spite of her personal commitment to anarchism at the time she wrote the novel. In *Political Theory, Science Fiction and Utopian Literature: Ursula K. Le Guin and The Dispossessed*, Burns (2008) argued that Le Guin was first and foremost a novelist (pp. 19-55). *The Dispossessed* was significant not for its doctrine, but for its effective presentation of a society that appeared as much *eutopian* as real. Though Le Guin's anarchist world seems close to the ideal harmony of freedom and equality, its failures and inadequacies make it all the more credible and human. Le Guin's utopia is inhabited by fellow beings, not by the one-dimensional allegorical figures characteristic of (descriptive) utopia.

The literary success of *The Dispossessed*, a primarily *eutopian* novel, was comparable with that of classic dystopian novels such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (*Mb*; 1920; 1924) and is now rarely questioned. Although *The Dispossessed* was not a utopia *stricto sensu*, it was arguably the first masterpiece of its genre, having also contributed to suggest the concept of "critical utopia" (Moylan, 1980). In any event, *The Dispossessed's* literary value facilitated a welcome broadening of utopianism in fiction. The contents ("critical utopia") and writing ("*eutopian* novel") of Le Guin's novel were the successful culmination of a battle begun much earlier by other writers who did not wish to give up the human perspective of the novel when presenting their readers with

<sup>2</sup> On this significant Spanish anarchist utopia, see Ramos-Gorostiza (2009).

<sup>3</sup> "Eutopia or positive utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. Dystopia or negative utopia: a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived" (Sargent, 2005, p. 154).

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utopias that were still-to-be-perfected, yet already much-improved societies. Alfonso Martínez Rizo,<sup>4</sup> a Spanish engineer, author, and distinguished anarchist intellectual, can be considered an overlooked forerunner to Le Guin for his novelistic approach to anarchist utopianism in *Love in 200 Years* (*El amor dentro de 200 años*; 1932).

*El amor dentro de 200 años* was not the first anarchist utopian novel, as French writers had used this genre since the late nineteenth century to present the workings of an anarchist society. For instance, in *The Pacifists*<sup>5</sup> (*Les Pacifiques*; 1914), Han Ryner imagined such a society on an island whose pacifist inhabitants are confronted by some Western castaways. These Westerners murder the pacifists in order to impose colonial authority, but are ultimately defeated, and pardoned, by the sheer number of non-violent islanders (Grenier, 2005, pp. 294-297). In this work, as well as in a Brazilian anarchist utopian novel with a very similar plot (Afonso Schmidt's *Zanzalá*, 1938),<sup>6</sup> there is no conflict within the anarchist society itself, which remains starkly utopian in its unchanging balance. Martínez Rizo, on the other hand, does not present an exterior foe with a compact utopia. As in *The Dispossessed*, his anarchist world has its own shortcomings that inspire the main characters of *El amor dentro de 200 años* to question the prevailing order in a manner similar to contemporary dystopias. Furthermore, unlike Ryner or Schmidt, Martínez Rizo does not place his utopia

on an island or in a secluded place during present times, but instead follows a tradition set forth by Zamyatin and similar setting it in a technologically advanced future, far-removed from any pastoral stasis. However, Martínez Rizo's portrayal of the future libertarian society is quite different from the oppressive organization made possible by industrial technology in modern European dystopias, as a more detailed description of *El amor dentro de 200 años* will show.

The population of Martínez Rizo's novel is not centered in a technologically-advanced megacity surrounded by countryside filled with a spontaneous wild population and untamed nature, an otherwise common population distribution in dystopian fiction.<sup>7</sup> The anarchist preference for a decentralized organization that breaks with capitalist production made possible by concentrating large proletarian masses around enormous factories corresponds with a preference for a similarly decentralized pattern of urbanism in anarchist utopias. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, communes are populated by a few thousand inhabitants maximum, in which collective control and the genuine participation of each and everybody in public affairs is guaranteed and the distinction between city and countryside has disappeared. Similar to Argentine author Pierre Quitoulet's former anarchist utopia, *The Anarchist American City* (*La ciudad anarquista Americana*; 1914)<sup>8</sup>. Martínez Rizo himself was a strenuous

<sup>4</sup> Alfonso Martínez Rizo (1877-1951) is still a relatively unknown figure in Spanish utopian and science fiction literature. Nevertheless, a historian of anarchism has discussed his political activity (Paniagua, 1982, pp. 190-197) and, in a volume dedicated to Spanish libertarian utopias, his anticipation 1945 (1932) and a selection from *El amor dentro de 200 años* were reedited in 1991. *El amor dentro de 200 años* is also briefly discussed in a history of Spanish science fiction (Sáiz Cidoncha, 1988, pp. 100-101).

<sup>5</sup> There is an English translation of this novel (Ryner, 2014, pp.183-325).

<sup>6</sup> For a description of this work, see Meneghello (2009).

<sup>7</sup> "Science fiction's romantic polarization of the organic-rural and the mechanical-urban tends to generate plots in which there is no middle ground; there is such a wholesale rejection of the 'urbanization of the territory' that the only option, other than giving in, is to renounce urban life altogether, either seeking an escape route or trying to break down the walls which hold nature at bay" (Horsley, 1995, p. 250).

<sup>8</sup> For a description of this utopia, see Ainsa (1986).



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defender of ecological urbanism, as evident in the garden cities of his essay *The Urban Development of the Future* (*La urbanística del porvenir*, 1932).<sup>9</sup> In *El amor dentro de 200 años* “the population of the Earth was spread across its surface” (*la población de la Tierra estaba diseminada en toda su superficie*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 18), because people could build wherever and however each person wanted, no matter the climate zone. In the society of the future, there is no need to adopt a pastoral or Luddite lifestyle to enjoy the natural landscape, fulfilling the dream of many current urbanites. On the contrary, it is “thanks to the telecommunication advances and the ease of transport” (*gracias a los adelantos de la telecomunicación y a la facilidad de los transportes*, Martínez Rizo, p. 18) that the inhabitants of the communist libertarian world-city system described in the novel have reached this ideal. With an engineer’s delight, Martínez Rizo describes fast journeys made possible thanks to “estereonautic” (*estereonáutica*) travel, which features flying ships employing aeromagnetic propulsion (pp. 44-46), and such advanced communication technology that everyone enjoys not only television, but also “retrotelevision” (*retrotelevisión*)—a visualizer of the past (1932, pp. 38-40).

In addition, technology has even allowed abolishing the local assemblies that, in anarchist utopias, often meet to make decisions because “every man decided daily upon all things with his direct and secret vote via the immediate totalization of statistical devices” (*todos los hombres decidían diariamente sobre todas las cosas con su voto directo y secreto, mediante la totalización*

*inmediata de los aparatos de estadística*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19), i.e. personal devices that allow the individual to immediately give his opinion on topics of common interest from any place at any time.

Technology in *El amor dentro de 200 años* has also allowed labor and work traditionally accomplished in anarchist utopias through free solidarity of the society’s membership to disappear. No one tends to do anything useful because “machines do everything better” (*todo lo hacen las máquinas mejor*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19) and produce everything. The mechanization of the world is absolute and humans perform labor activities for recreation. The machines, capable of auto-perfecting themselves, are powered by inexhaustible “intraatomic” (*intraatómica*) energy, which is based on a form of nuclear fission. Some citizens even engage in ‘army’ play acting, complete with uniforms and military parades comprised of a real armed force of “automatic soldiers” (*soldados automáticos*). These soldiers are anthropomorphic automatons created to battle possible extraterrestrial threats and, more importantly, to distract people who are nostalgic for martial arts, a sport of which the author amusingly makes fun.

In the decentralized landscape of *El amor dentro de 200 años*, common urban spaces are very scarce, limited in fact to a gigantic stadium that seats hundreds of thousands of spectators, highlighting the future libertarians’ passion for sports and, in particular, the so-called “Love-Gardens” (*Jardines del Amor*). The Love Gardens are outdoor places among the greenery where people can dance and engage in sexual activities with the same

<sup>9</sup> “This project of the city-countryside surpasses this dichotomy by creating an integrated fabric in nature with a distance, between each house, of one hundred meters of countryside” (*Su proyecto de ciudad-campo supera esta dicotomía al formar un tejido integrado en la naturaleza con una distancia, entre casa y casa, de cien metros de campo*; Roselló, 2005, p. 3). Masjuan (2000, pp. 176-187) discusses in detail Martínez Rizo’s ideas on urban development.



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freedom (or more so, thanks to universal nudism)<sup>10</sup> found decades later in the sexual revolution in the Western cultures. “The new sexual morality” (*la nueva moral sexual*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, pp. 15-17), clearly supported by the author, focuses on pure pleasure, contrasting with the sexual puritanism prevalent in contemporary utopias. The title “*El amor dentro de 200 años*” indicates the importance of eroticism in the novel. Sex is a physiological need that is freely satisfied, without consideration for traditional taboos such as the obligation of fidelity, in Martín Rizo’s anarchist utopia because “exclusivism was an absurdity against Nature” (*el exclusivismo era un absurdo contra la Naturaleza*; 1932, p. 56). Homosexuality is also embraced because “each one satisfies their sexuality in accordance to their character” (*cada uno da satisfacción a su sexualidad como su temperamento le aconseja*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 27), thus offering a true utopia for contemporary queer people who were rarely accepted in such natural way even in anarchist circles.<sup>11</sup> This anarchist world is, therefore, endowed with not just utopian, but also prophetic features: the then-infant consumerist and sexually liberated society has reached a level of tolerance and acceptance beyond that of our own times. Not even the phenomenon of sexual tourism is missing in Martínez Rizo’s world: the progress in transportation has made pleasure trips to other planets, such as Mars, possible despite the “intelligent arachnids” (*arácnidos inteligentes*; 1932, p. 93) hindering any access to the planet’s surface.

In spite of all of these positive characteristics, the future united anarchist Earth is not a full utopia

yet. Commodity-induced political passivity of the consumerist society and the growing conformism in the exercise of democracy as mere routine poses a danger felt by the narrator, who reacts using the rhetoric and structural devices of contemporary dystopia to advance his individualistic and eminently dynamic concept of anarchism.

The subtitle of *Love in 200 Years* is eloquent: “Fictional vision of future rebellions” (*Visión novelesca de rebeldías futuras*). The allusion to “rebellions” links *El amor dentro de 200 años* to Martínez Rizo’s previous novel, 1945. *The Coming of Libertarian Communism. A Fictional Vision of Things to Come* (1945. *El advenimiento del comunismo libertario. Una visión novelesca del porvenir*; 1991). This short political novel narrates the peaceful triumph of libertarian communism in Spain following a general strike declared by anarcho-sindicalist unions, which represent most of the population, thus expanding the already large base of Spanish anarchists at that time. Money, private property, and all prior institutions are peacefully extinguished as anarchist unions take over their functions. The end of the book promises a sequel, suggesting a possible dystopian development of the society born in 1945:

I have limited myself to narrating the coming of libertarian communism and leaving it in its infancy. Perhaps at another time I will indulge in narrating something concerning the said regime which will be powerful, too powerful perhaps, since it will hinder the progress of anarchy, by narrating a love story in two centuries[...] (*Me he limitado a contar el advenimiento del comunismo*

<sup>10</sup> Martínez Rizo was, in fact, an enthusiastic supporter of naturism, which he would later also defend in his 1936 novel *Death* (*Óbito*), which “shows us the role of nakedness alongside naturist practices through a new model of society freed from capitalism, where there are small populations comprised of freely sterile couples living alongside ones with three or more children, putting into practice the free expression of human aptitudes” (*nos muestra el papel del desnudo conjuntamente con las prácticas naturistas en un nuevo modelo de sociedad liberada del capitalismo, donde existen pequeñas poblaciones en las que hay parejas libremente estériles, y otras con tres o más hijos, y se pone en práctica la libre expresión de las aptitudes humanas*; Masjuan, 2000, p. 440).

<sup>11</sup> On the issue of anarchism and homosexuality in Spain during this period, see Cleminson (1995).

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*libertario dejándolo en su cuna. Quizá otro día me complazca en cantaros algo de dicho regimen ya fuerte, tal vez demasiado fuerte, obstaculizando la marcha de la anarquía, al narrar una historia de amor dentro de dos siglos[...];* Martínez Rizo, 1991, p. 303)

After showing how libertarian communism is superior to the replaced capitalist order in its consideration of the utopian body's material needs, which classic utopias (including the ones mentioned by Ryner and Schmidt) usually overlook, *El amor dentro de 200 años* describes the nature of the future obstacles anarchy will face. In spite of its clear utopian results, the triumphant libertarian communism across the world has evolved toward a mockery of democracy, in which the machine has also assumed the managing functions, replacing trade unions: "the federal system had disappeared thanks to the imposition by the Automatic"<sup>12</sup> (*había desaparecido el Sistema federal por imposición de la Automática*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 19), which is a "governing machine" (*máquina gubernativa*; p. 19) that seems to work as a huge central computer administering the planet instead of mankind. Individual voting is meaningless because "making suggestions is prohibited as they would be inferior to those made and disseminated daily by the governing machine" (*está prohibido hacer sugerencias, porque serían inferiores a las que la máquina gubernativa hace y difunde todos los días*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 20). Moreover, the "governing function" (*función gubernamental*) is based on a series of ruling principles that are universally enforced, such as the "prohibition of every harmful thing, subordination of the individual to the collective and, with these

exclusive limitations, absolute individual and collective freedom" (*prohibición de todo lo nocivo, subordinación del individuo a la colectividad y, con estas exclusivas limitaciones, libertad absoluta individual y colectiva*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 66). In the name of these principles, the organization of mechanical libertarian communism imposes, among other things, radical eugenics in accordance with some prevalent tendencies in Spanish anarchism.<sup>13</sup> The expected result is achieved: "all of the factions were nobly beautiful and all of the bodies were graceful and all of the movements were rhythmical" (*todas las facciones eran noblemente bellas y todos los cuerpos armoniosos y todos los movimientos rítmicos*); Martínez Rizo adds with wry humor, "the few ugly ones were almost proud of it" (*los pocos feos que había, casi se enorgullecían de ello*; 1932, p. 62). However, this improvement of nature comes with a price. Only couples with eugenic compatibility endorsed by the central computer's automatic program are allowed to have children. Breeding without this prior approval immediately entails a sentence of destruction carried out, literally, by the collective. If the computer so determines or if a sufficient number of people believe that any other person or group presents a danger for the libertarian community, rays emerging from the voting device are focused upon the victim(s). These rays, when isolated, are harmless, but their large scale convergence from several devices causes "a death that seemed fair for to the plebiscite" (*una muerte que parecía justa por lo plebiscitaria*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 58). Fair or not, Martínez Rizo makes clear that to him, the repression of inalienable freedom is just as decentralized, and even as personalized, as extreme

<sup>12</sup> The Automatic is a mechanical system based on the theories of engineer Leonardo Torres Quevedo, who is a forerunner to modern cybernetics.

<sup>13</sup> "Eugenics, the improvement of physical human conditions and birth control grounded in a reading of Malthusianism was one of the main axes of libertarian ideology in Spain" (*El eugenismo, la mejora de las condiciones físicas de la humanidad y el control de la natalidad fundamentado en una lectura del malthusianismo fueron uno de los ejes principales de la ideología libertaria en España*; Barona, 2004, p. 16).



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manifestations of control in classic dystopias. Unlike the modern Internet, the *Automática* operates from a uniquely physical place in a center separated by a symbolic wall from the rest of the world: “the Bedaón laboratories and the great governing machine were surrounded by high walls” (*los laboratorios de Beda y la gran máquina gubernativa estaban rodeados por altas tapias*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 101). These walls, meant to protect the computer or statistical machine, also indicate the real power core of the alleged libertarian society of the future. Bedaón’s machine and laboratories (the scientist who has created it and, consequently, also created the ruling governing system)<sup>14</sup> are the places where the citizens’ fates are decided in the name of (eugenic) common good and, from this point of view, “the architecture of the city is presented as conterminous with the machine and with its attendant power structure” (Horsley, 1995, p. 248).

Martínez Rizo introduces original nuances to the dystopian theme of the opposition between the organic-rural and the mechanic-urban. Thus, Bedaón, the scientist who holds the real power, is not a stereotypical dictator. He is rather a mythical figure venerated for the comfort and pleasures he has provided his subjects. A part of the population is, indeed, more than happy with the system, while the true anarchists fight to end this type of libertarian communism because they consider it oppressive, particularly the collective executions

implemented as a form of technologically-enabled mob justice. Their dissent is purely political and based on the development of the same principles that inspired the velvet revolution Martínez Rizo described in 1945. Here, there is no nostalgia for a bygone pastoral, simpler way of life; instead, in keeping with Spanish anarchist tradition,<sup>15</sup> the author believes a technological civilization and the full enjoyment of human freedom are compatible and possible.

As in contemporary dystopias, love is the uncontrollable force that threatens to overthrow the system in *El amor dentro de 200 años*. The main plot device in the novel is love, which unites its protagonists within the framework of their society. The outside witness plays the typical role of the traveler-to-utopia. Through Martínez Rizo’s adaptation of the chronotope of a sleeper awakened centuries later in the future, he enables his contemporary readers to identify with the character who comes from the past and is confronted, just as the readers are, with the posited future. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, the sleeper is a soldier named Fulgencio Chapitel, but his function as a docile admirer of utopia is comically negated when he is shown the libertarian world-city. His utopian guide performs his task with little enthusiasm, while Chapitel spends half of the novel running away from the authorized cicerone instead of taking all the utopian propaganda at face value. Chapitel

<sup>14</sup> “He was the last of the wise men of the heroic age of science and, precisely, the greatest amongst them and the one who had most contributed to the triumph of the machine ideology” (*Era el último de los sabios de la edad heroica de la ciencia y, precisamente, el más grande de todos y el que más había contribuido a entronizar el maquinismo*). He also “decreed the supremacy of the governing machine he invented” (*hizo decretar la supremacía de la máquina gubernativa de su invención*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 34).

<sup>15</sup> Spanish libertarian utopia engages perfectly with the characteristic vision of great technological power, of the trust in science and the machine expressed in numerous contemporary European utopias: a constant vision of the positive role of science and technology, all aimed exclusively at human liberation” (*Le utopie libertarie spagnole si innestano perfettamente nella caratteristica visione del grande potere tecnologico, della fiducia nella scienza e nella macchina espresso da numerosissime utopie europee a loro contemporanee: una visione costante del ruolo positivo della scienza e della tecnica, tutte tese esclusivamente alla liberazione umana*; Zane, 2007, p. 9). Here, Zane refers to the libertarian utopianism of the nineteenth century that, in a country as backward as Spain at that time, was reticent about condemning industrialism, evidenced by William Morris’s pastoral style of making such condemnations. For such influential anarchists like Ricardo Mella, “the new order is fundamentally urban. New Utopia is a ‘great city’ and a modern one. It has solid and functional aesthetics and iron and electrical forces that are its defining features” (Ramos-Gorostiza, 2009, p. 16). Martínez Rizo’s city is located, evidently, in the wake of Mella’s.

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also falls in love with his guide's daughter, Dasnay Paratanasia, with whom he eventually visits the libertarian communist planet of Mars. Chapitel's role in *El amor dentro de 200 años* allows Martínez Rizo to adopt a critical perspective regarding the love interests the utopia (and the sleeper chronotope) similar to that found in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888). Upon each featured wonder of the future, the ironic, or decidedly controversial commentary of the companion invites the reader to adopt a nonconformist stance. Chapitel embraces Dasnay's individualist anarchy as their relationship deepens in accordance with the concept of love as an impulse oriented toward forming a family, rather than libertarian hedonism, "uniting it to reproduction desires, distinct from physiological pleasure" (*vinculándolo en los anhelos de reproducción, con distinción del placer fisiológico*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 68). This couple, as well as the one composed of Zaráito, Dasnay's teenage nephew, and a "most ugly" (*feísima*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 62) girl of thirteen, are living expressions of dissidence against the eugenic canon and rules because the *Automática* forbids their union harmful to the human race. Both couples, however, have children, placing them outside their society's system and, in the end, exposing them to the dangerous collective ray.

Martínez Rizo seems to share the underlying sentimental conservatism of dystopias such as Zamyatin's, Aldous Huxley's and George Orwell's, where "in the end, what is opposed to the massive tyranny of state is little more than a bourgeois domestic idyll, a brief, fragile dream of quasi-marital bliss" (Ferns, 1999, p. 124). In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, sex is definitely not subversive, but romantic love is. Nonetheless, Martínez Rizo resolves this conflict very differently than in those aforementioned dystopian examples, in accordance

with his own personal humorist approach. *Omnia vincit amor*: love is, indeed, what persuades the true controller of the machine, Bedaón, to deactivate its governing functions, which impede true anarchy. According to the rules, Bedaón would otherwise be forced to lose the object of his (platonic) love, Zaráito, the handsome boy involved in one of the couples practicing romantic, reproductive dissidence. This is not certainly the sort of romantic infatuation that most contemporary readers would expect as *deus ex machina*. Martínez Rizo uses the stereotypes of both utopias and dystopian novels, the two main genres of literary utopianism of his age, to deflate expectations. Despite its appearances, the world in *El amor dentro de 200 años* is not fully utopian, but Martínez Rizo ironically deconstructs the dystopian plot devices. The Big Brother, Bedaón, ends up being a Platonic philosopher in every respect, whose unrequited homosexual infatuation makes possible in a surprisingly unconventional way the happy ending that cancels the expected dystopian tragedy. Thanks to Bedaón's decision, the individual will not be crushed by the established system, and the anarchist ideals seem to have won the day. Martínez Rizo also, however ideologically deconstructs this reassuring ending.

The fight to achieve anarchy ultimately leads to an illustrated despotism: "The governing machine is dead! The voting and destruction devices have been rendered useless forever! The mechanical soldiers will never again attack men!" (*¡La máquina gubernativa ha muerto! ¡Los aparatos de votar y fulminar han quedado inutilizados para siempre! ¡Los soldados mecánicos no atacarán jamás a los hombres!*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 106). This, too, ends the attempt at democracy because Bedaón assumes total power. Although he claims to do so unwillingly, declaring to his lover, "you



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cannot imagine how abhorrent being a ruler is to me!" (*no puedes imaginarte lo violento que me es ser providencial*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 107), he assumes a "ruling role" (*papel providencial*) because most of the population is not prepared for the regimen of true anarchy. Therefore, he and his successors will have "humanity's civilized life" (*la vida civilizada de la Humanidad*; p. 107) in their hands until the society has sufficiently prepared itself. In the meantime, he tells the future anarchists: "You must make do with my immense power and fear my decisions" (*tenéis que contar con mi inmenso poder y temer mis decisiones*; Martínez Rizo, 1932, p. 107). Individualist revolution may have overthrown eugenics, but it also enthroned a kind of scientific superman whose government may not be benevolent. Through Bedaón's reclamation of power, was Martínez Rizo referring to the philosophical tradition that stems from Max Stirner's individualism and, through Friedrich Nietzsche, promotes an anarchism of *Übermenschen*<sup>16</sup>? Was he turning upside down former anarchist utopias such as Quiroulet's *La ciudad anarquista americana*?<sup>17</sup> His ironic approach to libertarian utopianism illustrates how his political commitment obscured neither his mind, his logic when it came to addressing the issues that fulfillment of any utopia entails, nor his duty as a novelist to produce an effective story. On both fronts, *El amor dentro de 200 años* is a critical novel in a similar way as is *The Dispossessed* and, therefore, despite the differences in their writing, it should be mentioned as an early example of the modes and genres that Le Guin's novel has

established in the utopian canon.

While *The Dispossessed* is a serious novel that assumes and develops the great tradition of the nineteenth century realist novel, by adapting it to both utopian and science fiction, *El amor dentro de 200 años* becomes a popular modernist narrative. Martínez Rizo's skillfully concise style seems equivalent to the geometric architecture he featured in the buildings of his future libertarian city. One could argue his writing has an Art Deco flavor, since its simple functionality is compatible with the presence of some rhetorical devices that animate the text and, at the same time, contribute to its meaning, such as irony. Martínez Rizo's ironic perspective tends to blur the lines of the thematic opposition between eutopia and dystopia, creating a middle ground that allows the work to remain optimistic regarding the prospect of true anarchy despite the intermediary dictatorship imposed at the end of the novel. Therefore, *El amor dentro de 200 años* is rather tragicomic, thus following the trend set by other Spanish early dystopias<sup>18</sup> in which the author's voice softens the admonition with comedy, such as Ramón Pérez de Ayala's short play *Sentimental Club* (1909) and Miguel A. Calvo Roselló's *A Strange Country (Un país extraño*; 1919).<sup>19</sup> These works are all quite different from many of the canonical European dystopias. Perhaps the context in which Martínez Rizo wrote permitted him to craft a hopeful vision of the future. The peaceful 1931 proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic and the subsequent lifting of any bans against political activity as well as the expectations

<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche's *Übermenschen* were "overmen", super-human beings with otherworldly qualities.

<sup>17</sup> If he was familiar with the work, Martínez Rizo could have parodied Pierre Quiroulet's *La ciudad anarquista americana*, in which a scientist with pretensions to superhumanity is the one who has worked the most for the coming of the libertarian city in the new continent and who has invented a ray capable of ending all life within a determined radius that he intends to use against the enemies of anarchy in Europe. Such class genocide is not narrated in the work, which is a typical utopia and, therefore, almost fully descriptive, while Martínez Rizo has written a novel with a certain carnivalesque quality in it.

<sup>18</sup> On early Modernist Spanish dystopia and science fiction in general, see Martín Rodríguez (2010).

<sup>19</sup> In this short dystopia a telescreen appears with exactly the same functions as the one allegedly invented by Georges Orwell in *1984* (1948). If Orwell could have heard of this story during his Spanish stay is only matter for speculation.

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of change it elicited in the population must have favored belief in a possibly near libertarian victory, reflecting the daydreams about the future from both within and outside the anarchist movement.

Martínez Rizo's work is, perhaps, the most representative example of pro-anarchist speculative fiction in Spain, while the anarcho-syndicalist society of the future was described in fully dystopian terms in a further anticipation inspired by anarchism in Spain, entitled *From Exodus to Paradise* (*Del éxodo al paraíso*; 1933) by Salvio Valentí, whose literary production seems limited to this "essay of libertarian communism" (*ensayo de comunismo libertario*), in truth a novel. While Valentí's work shows a consistency of vision and literary expertise perhaps greater than that demonstrated by Martínez Rizo, he does so with less originality than Martínez Rizo. Although Valentí's *Del éxodo al paraíso* described a fully dystopian anarcho-syndicalist future society, *El amor dentro de 200 años* remains the best example of pro-anarchist Spanish speculative fiction because the denizens of Martínez Rizo's world lack creativity. They limit themselves to taking advantage of ancient achievements, especially the

weapon factories inherited from capitalists, which will be used to conquer new places to exploit and to distract the famished population subjected to an oppressive and inefficient politico-economic system. Valentí's novel is certainly well written, but its one-sidedness contrasts with Martínez Rizo's ironic approach to the future, which stresses the need for change and warns against blind devotion to any ideological cause, even if it is utopian. In *El amor dentro de 200 años*, Martínez Rizo maintains the important ideal of remaining critically pursued, against all biases of one's times and ideology, true to the genuine spirit of anarchist liberation from all chains, including the mental ones. This idea is effectively conveyed by novelistic means. *El amor dentro de 200 años* might not be a masterpiece, as it is sometimes quite heavy-handed in its humor and its unqualified praise of technology in manner reminiscent of contemporary Gernsbackian pulps and its writing might lack elegance. Nevertheless, it remains an excellent example of anarchist utopian novels, as well as one of the earliest examples of queer science fiction, and it deserves to be rescued from its current oblivion.



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