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UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA IN *THE HOST*

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UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA IN *THE HOST*

por

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I dedicate this work to my beloved fiancé,
who is always trying to calm me down and
showing me that I can do this; to my
incredible and loving family, who always
supports me; my amazing friends, who
make me laugh even when I want to cry;
to my dedicated and rocking teachers,
who help me and listen to me no matter
what.

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“Utopía está en el horizonte. Me acerco dos pasos, ella se aleja dos pasos. Camino diez pasos y el horizonte se corre diez pasos más allá. Por mucho que yo camine, nunca la alcanzaré. Para que sirve la utopía? Para eso sirve: para caminar.”

Eduardo Galeano

ABSTRACT

MACHADO, Bruna Dias. **Utopia and Dystopia in *The Host***. 2014. 41 folhas. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (Licenciatura em Letras Português-Inglês) - Federal Technology University - Parana. Curitiba, 2014.

To live in a utopia is an old human desire. Its earliest literary representation is probably the story of The Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve living in Paradise. Nevertheless, the word Utopia was only coined in 1516 by Sir Thomas More in his book called *Utopia*. The twentieth century was a time of many social, political and economic changes in Great Britain. Arguably, those changes influenced literature and enabled the rise of a kind of novel that is known today as dystopian, which has emerged from that socio-historical background and is considered a modern way of looking at literary utopias. In the present thesis, we analyse utopian and dystopian features in the book *The Host* in order to create an understanding of how these energies shape the two main groups of characters in the novel: the society of the souls and the society of human living in the cave. In order to perform this research, we used the bibliographic and the exploratory methods.

Keywords: Utopian literature. Dystopian literature. *The Host*. Souls. Stephenie Meyer.

RESUMO

MACHADO, Bruna Dias. **Utopia and Dystopia in *The Host***. 2014. 41 folhas. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (Licenciatura em Letras Português-Inglês) - Federal Technology University - Parana. Curitiba, 2014.

Viver em utopia é um desejo humano. A representação literária mais antiga de utopia provavelmente é a história do Jardim do Éden, com Adão e Eva vivendo no Paraíso. Porém, a palavra Utopia foi inventada apenas em 1516 por Sir Thomas More, em seu livro chamado *Utopia*. O século XX foi um tempo de diversas mudanças sociais, políticas e econômicas na Grã-Bretanha. Conseqüentemente, essas mudanças influenciaram a literatura e deram espaço para um tipo de romance que hoje é conhecido como romance distópico, que surgiu a partir desse contexto sócio histórico e é considerado um jeito moderno de olhar para os romances utópicos. No presente trabalho, analisamos características utópicas e distópicas no livro *The Host* com o objetivo de promover entendimento sobre como essas energias modelam os dois principais grupos do romance: a sociedade das almas e a sociedade dos humanos vivendo na caverna. Para escrever esse trabalho, utilizamos os métodos bibliográfico e exploratório.

Palavras-chave: Utopia literária. Distopia literária. *A Hospedeira*. Almas. Stephenie Meyer.

SUMÁRIO

1 INTRODUCTION	12
2 THEORETICAL BASIS	14
2.1 UTOPIAN LITERATURE.....	14
2.2 DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE	17
3 ANALYSIS.....	20
3.1 THE UTOPIAN SOCIETY OF SOULS	20
3.2 THE HOSTS	26
3.3 THE UNCOUNCIOUS ATTEMPT OF A UTOPIAN HUMAN SOCIETY	32
4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	35
5 REFERENCES	39

1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of utopia has been present in Literature since very early. The first known work written about it is probably Plato's *Republic* (PLATO, 380 B.C.), but the word was made famous by Sir Thomas More with his book *Utopia* (MORE, 1516), released in 1516. Sir Thomas More created the word to describe a perfect place that does not exist, a perfect condition to humankind unknown to us. He wrote the book *Utopia* about an island where people were happy and society did not know any poverty or diseases. They did not search for gold or aspire to be rich; they were simply safe.

The idea became very popular in literature and later works like Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (BACON, 1627) and H. G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (WELLS, 1905) were published. Both of them appear in our theoretical basis. As well as the *Bible*, these works are approached as literary representations of utopian thought in the present work.

A modern way of looking at literary utopias generated the idea of dystopia as a reaction to utopian thought, especially in the twentieth century, when Western society was faced with several conflicts of social changes. The twentieth century in Britain was a century of transformations, marked by its changes in social organization, politics and technology. Among all the changes, the advancement of technology was one of the most notable facts. People were worried that with all the modifications, they would lose their jobs to machines. The rapid growth in technology occasioned a number of social problems that technology itself remained unable to solve. So, as any literary work, the dystopian novels that became popular at the period were a reflection of the social historical situation of the time. Booker (1994, p. 03) observes that to find alternatives to change the social and political issues, a people can resort to imaginative literature and this is the role played by dystopian novels in the twentieth century.

As *The Host* is recent and does not have its proven literary merit yet, there are not many academic works about the book.¹ This may have happened because Stephenie Meyer is the writer of *Twilight*, a series that became very famous,

¹ We searched for works in the PERIÓDICOS DA CAPES page and could not find any articles, just ten reviews. When searching for *Twilight*, we found eighty-five results, being 45 articles.

especially with teenagers. With the success of this other series, *The Host* might be unknown for many people or people judged the book by the content of *Twilight* and, because of literary prejudice, do not consider *The Host* a book to be academically analyzed. This book we are analyzing is contemporary and not considered canonic. We work with the hypothesis that it is part of a tendency in literature that grew stronger by the middle of the twentieth century.

In this thesis, we are considering *The Host* as an example inside a certain period of time that covers utopian and dystopian literature. Because this book is not canonic, the relevance of this work may be questioned. It is important to state that the book combines utopian and dystopian thought in many ways and is a rich complement to the study of utopian and dystopian literature. Therefore, the main goal of this thesis is to promote a deeper understanding of *The Host* by analysing utopian and dystopian characteristics in the society of souls and their actions, especially when they are inside human hosts. These characteristics are also explored as belonging to the human society inside the cave and their true nature.

The first stage of this research was to study the concept and background of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Pasold's *Utopia x Satire In English Literature* (1999) in order to define utopia. After that, we studied the socio-historical context of Britain in the twentieth century through Michael Alexander's *A History of English Literature* (2000). We relied on M. Keith Booker's *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide* (1994) and on Pasold's *Utopia x Satire In English Literature* (1999) to create a definition of dystopia. The next stage was to analyse the book *The Host* (MEYER, 2008) based on those definitions. Therefore, in order to perform this research, we used the bibliographic and the exploratory methods.

This work is divided into four parts: in the introduction, we present the main themes discussed here, the state of art and the significance of this work. In the theoretical basis, we explain the theories we use to support our analysis. In the analysis, we explain our work with *The Host* and try to demonstrate how the story of the book contains utopian and dystopian energies² and how these energies work together and affect each other. After that, in the last part, the Final Considerations, we conclude this work and premeditate a continuation.

² M. Keith Booker (1994) refers to utopian and dystopian features also as "energies", "thoughts" and "critiques". Therefore, the expressions "utopian/dystopian energies/thoughts/critiques" are often used in this work to refer to the utopian and dystopian features of *The Host*.

2 THEORETICAL BASIS

The utopian and dystopian thoughts are interrelated. These types of literature, as many others, are related to their historical context. Even though the reasons why these literary tendencies started oppose each other – utopian stories seem to have been created to show people how the world could be a better place, while dystopias started to warn people about the dangers ahead – both are a reflection of what was happening during their authors' times. Each of them corresponds to their time's issues. However, theoretically speaking, utopian literature exists before dystopian. Besides the fact that dystopian books started to appear as a pessimistic opposition to utopian thought, by reading some of those utopian books, you can see that they also have dystopian features, as in Well's *A Modern Utopia* that deformed or diseased babies are killed, for example. Therefore, utopian and dystopian literature are separated in two different but correlated literary tendencies.

In this chapter, we discuss the theoretical concepts that support this thesis. First, we consider utopian literature and look at its classical definition by Sir Thomas More. Then, we proceed to analyze dystopian literature as a reaction and a complement to utopian thought. Besides the work of Thomas More, we also rely on the researches done by Bernadete Pasold (1999) and M. Keith Booker (1994).

2.1 UTOPIAN LITERATURE

Utopias have long been in the minds of people and have shown themselves through art and literature. One of the first literary productions considered utopian was probably Plato's *Republic*, although it was not entitled "utopia" (PLATO, 380 B.C.). The term itself was coined by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 book called *Utopia*. In that work, More reflects upon the existence of an island called Utopia, where there is a society characterized by religious tolerance and absence of poverty. There, people do not aspire to be rich. They believe and live in communal properties and have no necessity of gold. At the end of the book, a character named More, probably an alter-ego of the author, concludes that those utopian features are impossible to achieve and are absurd although some of them could be wished for:

In the meantime, as I cannot agree and consent to all things that be said, being else without doubt a man singularly well learned and also in all worldly

matters exactly and profoundly experienced, so must I needs confess and grant that many things be in the Utopian weal public, which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope. (MORE, 1516, p. 146)

The conclusion of our reading of the book is that, for Sir Thomas More, the utopian features presented in the book are not possible to achieve, even though he would like to use some of them to improve England's cities, as we can realize in his words: "...rather wish for than hope." (MORE, 1516, p. 146). The previous passage, demonstrates a want More has. Why does he wish but does not expect any of those improvements to happen in Britain? He would just like them to become real, but knows it is not going to happen. That is why the book and the island in it are called *Utopia*. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the name utopia originated from the Greek *ou* (not) + *topos* (place) and originally means nowhere or no place, so we can assume that the writer, a very catholic man, created an ironic name for a society that can be considered perfect.

If we consider the early chapters of the Book of Genesis in the *Bible*, the story of the *Garden of Eden* is an early example of a utopia, which is at the genesis of one of the mainstream traditions that has shaped Western society: the Christian tradition. Even in those early chapters of the *Genesis*, utopia is impossible to maintain, since Adam and Eve were expelled from *Paradise*. The search for something unknown but supposedly good is a constant characteristic of human beings. Even Adam and Eve felt they needed to search for something which could be found in the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This quest has remained as an inherent human characteristic and represents the endless human hope for utopia, which, in its turn, has been developed in literature. This concept of utopia can be seen in books such as Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), in which the author takes the readers to a mysterious island called Bensalem. The island is dominated by scientists and it is highly technological. It seems as though the author is trying to create a perfect society that does not know poverty or fornication, similar to More's but more technological, as its perfection depends on technology. In addition, the novel *A Modern Utopia*, written in 1905 by H. G. Wells, is also a utopian novel that portrays a supposedly perfect society, in which people are happy and good, and are safe because of technology. The setting of the story is another planet which resembles an improved Earth.

An interesting fact to be observed is that those utopian stories previously mentioned, except the story of the Garden of Eden, happen in a distant place, very similar to the authors' background, but improved. The narrator is usually an average human being that arrives in a utopian place and is overwhelmed about everything. All the works [cited in this thesis] present a comparison with the "real world" of the character, that is a reference to the actual world of the author. In *A Modern Utopia*, for example, the narrator, in the end of the book, evinces that he sees in some people some things he saw in the utopian planet he had been to.

As we can see, these three authors try to create societies that are flawless in comparison to the authors' actual societies. Erich Fromm, in the Afterword section of *1984*, affirms that works like More's

do not speak in general terms of principles, but give an imaginative picture of the concrete details of a society which corresponds to the deepest longings of man. In contrast to prophetic thought, these perfect societies are not at "the end of the days" but exist already – though in a geographic distance rather than in the distance of time. (FROMM, 1961, p. 314)

These authors' definitions of utopia are similar for the three of them consider literary utopias a representation of an improved society of one's time. For example, the society created by Francis Bacon in *New Atlantis* is a reflection of the society he was part of. It was as the reality he lived in, but improved. In another, distant place. Although the three authors presented in this thesis have different types of writing, different beliefs, lived in different times and the rules of their utopic places are not exactly the same, their ideas are very much alike and utopian.

According to Pasold (1999, p. 15) "it [utopia] can be approached by the historian, the literary scholar, the philosopher, the sociologist, etc., each emphasizing specific aspects related to their main concerns". This could explain why it is so hard to find a precise definition of utopia. Although utopia is a philosophical abstraction about humanity and although its related issues lead to numerous discussions from different areas, in this work, we deal with the term from the perspective of literature only. To write her book, Pasold created her own definition, which is "Utopia is to be considered that literary piece which describes a perfectly organized and happy world from the point of view of the author, in an imaginary place and/or time." (PASOLD, 1997, p. 18)

After reading and analyzing the works and definitions previously cited, for the purposes of the present work, we define utopia as a literary representation of an imaginary idealized society in which every citizen collaborates to a greater communal good so every member of that society has what is necessary to live and have a good quality of life. As they are good citizens by heart, they do not lie, they do not steal, they do not envy, they are not ambitious, they are not violent, they only do things that will, somehow, help to achieve the greater good with kindness. Even if these societies have punishments for the “law breakers”, they are hardly ever used, because people know, like and respect the way of living they have in this kind of society. The analysis presented in chapter 3 relies on this definition of utopia.

2.2 DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

As a reaction to the common idea of a literary utopian society, dystopian literature rises from the utopian to present a more pessimistic and more critical view. This kind of literature has long existed, but it became increasingly popular in the twentieth century as a result of Britain’s turbulent historical and technological developments. Although dystopian novels have long existed, the second half of the twentieth century produced several of the most widely acknowledged dystopian novels in English, such as *1984* (ORWELL, 1949), *Animal Farm* (ORWELL, 1945), *Brave New World* (HUXLEY, 1932), *A Clockwork Orange* (BURGESS, 1962) and *Lord of the Flies* (GOLDING, 1954). According to Michael Alexander (2000)

In 1910 the accession of George V again promised fresh beginnings: the new Georgian era would differ from the Edwardian ... but all is dwarfed in retrospect by how the Great War altered everything. The old world of social rank, of (unequal) prosperity, and of horses and railways, had a liberal hope: the way of life of Britain, of Europe and America, and of the Empire, would gradually improve - materially, politically, morally. The world would grow more civilized. It did not. (ALEXANDER, 2000, p. 311)

Since things did not improve as was expected, literature would express the contemporary fear, enthusiasm and pessimism regarding the ongoing change. That was when dystopias became very popular. Booker (1994) is very specific when explaining that

the rise of science as a discourse of authority in the Enlightenment directly inspired both an explosion in utopian thought and a corresponding wave of dystopian reactions. It is thus in the course of the nineteenth century--in

which technological utopianism reached its peak--that dystopian literature becomes an important and identifiable cultural force. (BOOKER, 1994, p.7)

People were excited about the technological advances, they had utopian thoughts and hopes about these advances. That is when dystopias started to appear as a reflection on potentially dangerous behaviour, such as an exaggerated veneration of science and technology, for instance. Therefore, in the twentieth century dystopian literature would grow strong as a result of the period's turbulent historical background. The authors were trying to warn people that, depending on the way and what these technologies would be used for, the country would not become a utopia, but it would be just the start of a dystopia.

Dystopian novels are the opposite of utopian ones and they embody the political and social issues happening during the writing and reflect about them, revealing their imperfections (BOOKER, 1994, p. 03). In novels like Huxley's *Brave New World*, the critique of societies' struggle to reach perfection is notable. The author takes the readers to rethink their real desires and needs. Aldous Huxley, for example, portrays a society and a kind of government that seems to be idealized, but the fact is that people in this novel do not notice they are manipulated, they think they are happy. In fact, people do not have any freedom or right. They are not allowed to have opinions. The author makes the readers think: is humankind fit for this "perfection"? In his novel *1984*, Orwell demonstrates how we can be (and probably are) manipulated by the simple idea of achieving our deepest hopes and dreams of security, love, stability, health and happiness.

For the discussion of dystopian literature presented here, one of the concepts this work relies on is M. K. Booker's definition. He states that a literary dystopia is

specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions.

By this definition, dystopian literature is not so much a specific genre as a particular kind of oppositional and critical energy or spirit. (BOOKER, 1994, p. 03)

Booker explains dystopian literature through a historical perspective focusing on its historical context. To complement the present study, we resort to Bernadete Pasold's 1999 research on utopia and satire. According to Pasold:

There are other ways of criticizing or questioning Utopia than the critical essay, and the most efficient and creative of these is probably the “negative utopia”, or “utopian satire”, or “satirical utopia”, or “dystopia”, or “anti-utopia”. These terms do not designate the same kind of fiction necessarily, but they all seem to question the utopian idea as presented in utopian literature, through different means and in differing degrees of attack. (PASOLD, 1999, p. 47)

As we can see, according to her studies, there are several ways of critically thinking about literary utopias, dystopian literature being the most frequent one. On her book, she evinces that a literary dystopia “may be defined as a term to be applied ‘to accounts of imaginary worlds, usually in the future, in which present tendencies are carried out to their intensely unpleasant culminations.’” (HOLMAN, C. Hugh apud. PASOLD 1999, p.52). She considers *1984* and *Brave New World* dystopias or reversed utopias.

Finally, for the purposes of this thesis, we work with our definition of dystopian literature, based on its historical context, the dystopian books we have read and/or mentioned on this thesis and Booker’s and Pasold’s definitions. For us, dystopian literature is a literary worsened version of the author’s society that was created to warn people against the danger of following blindly and/or idealistically (with utopian blindness) an ideology just because it seems as if it is a trial to reach a utopian condition. The dystopian stories are usually carried out by the technological advances being used as a way of controlling people and resulting in a totalitarian government that only seeks for power.

3 ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first, we describe the characteristics that make the society of souls utopic according to our definition of utopia. In the second section, we analyse the impact that human hosts have upon the souls who live in their bodies. In the last part, we analyse the humans in the cave, how they organize themselves as a resistance force and their relation with the society of souls. The first part is used as context for the other two and that is why we analyse the society of souls, in it, to use as the base of comparisons between their society and the humans' society. In addition, in the last part, the humans are analysed in relation to the society of souls as it is presented in the first section.

3.1 THE UTOPIAN SOCIETY OF SOULS

Even though there were other works about utopia before Thomas More's, *Utopia* is the base of works about this subject. It is the book we use to compare and analyse the other literary utopias. In Thomas More's book, the representation of an idealized society was attached to the religious, political and social issues of his time, such as The Tudor's domination and the opposition between the church and the king. Thomas More was deeply catholic, he was even canonized by the Catholic Church after his death. So, the characteristics of his utopian society probably have a religious background. He was also Henry VIII's counsellor; he was always well informed about everything that happened in his society. As described in the beginning of this thesis, More's book is closely related to what was happening during his time. His religious and political background is what differs between this utopian society and the society of souls. Meyer's book was written in the 2000's, so the issues of the twenty-first century are portrayed in *The Host*. The society of souls has the qualities and characteristics that we do not have. More's society on the island of Utopia also has different characteristics from Francis Bacon's, H. G. Wells' and Plato's utopia. That is because this kind of literature is very attached to its time of writing, as explained in the previous chapter.

The characteristics that qualify the society of souls in *The Host* as utopian can be seen throughout the book. There is not a separated and clear description. So

we separated some characteristics of the society of souls that we believe are the main utopian features of *The Host*. The scenario of the book has its beginning when planet Earth has been invaded by a species that calls themselves souls, – “the unseen force that guides the body” (MEYER, 2008, p. 17) – which inhabits and controls human bodies, supposedly, extinguishing the human soul from the body. The book is called *The Host* because the souls call the human bodies they inhabit *hosts*. The story is about Melanie, a rebel – part of the resistance, and Wanderer, a soul, and how they manage to live in the same body. The human protagonist, Melanie, is caught by Seekers and her body receives a soul called Wanderer. Differently from most of the hosts, Melanie’s original soul continues in her body, sharing it with Wanderer. The two go (in the same body) after Melanie’s brother Jamie and lover Jared, who still resist and are expected to have found other survivors. This group of survivors, called the Resistance force by the Seekers, found a cave and Jeb, the leader and Melanie’s uncle, adapted it so they could live there. When the girls are in the cave with the big group of humans, they learn many things about each other and about their different species.

First, the name *souls* is explained: “On every planet we took a different name. *Soul*. I suppose it was an apt description. The unseen force that guides the body” (MEYER, 2008, p. 17). The choice of the name was probably influenced by religion. There is a book called *Book of Alma* that refers to *Alma, the Young* in the *Book of Mormon*. In Mormonism, *Alma, the Young*, was a very important character when Jesus came to Earth. The Mormons believe that, when we die, our spirits (or souls) leave our bodies and go to another dimension, where we can still learn and meet the people who were already dead until the day when Jesus will come to Earth and all of us will come together and return to our human bodies. It is the equivalent of the Catholic idea of resurrection³. The importance of the soul for the Mormons and the name of one of the most important characters – Alma, which means soul – might be an indicator that our souls are pure and our bodies are making them impure. The *souls* in Stephenie Meyer’s book are pure and even naïve because they had never been in a human body before. In addition, the author could have chosen other names and still keep the idea that the society of souls is in control of the body, as “Mind”, or “Controllers”. Although, the choice for the name souls is deeply coherent for us,

³ This information can be found at the official website of Mormon religion available at www.mormon.org/eng.

because, according to common knowledge, when a person dies, his/her body stays on Earth putrefying while the soul goes somewhere else. By that, we understand that when the soul leaves the body the person dies. In the book, the hosts are supposed to die and leave their bodies for other beings, other *souls*.

The main perception we have of the society of souls is that everything they do is with the purpose of achieving the greater good for all: “Though the Healer was trying to buy me time to adjust to my new body, I knew I would do my best to help the Seeker. Good citizenship was quintessential to every soul.” (MEYER, 2008, p. 22). In this statement, Wanderer is admitting that, even though she was not ready, she would do whatever she could to try to help the Seeker, because it is part of a soul’s nature. In the beginning of the book, the narrator gives us an outline of the society of souls when describing one of them: “Because he was a soul, by nature he was all things good: compassionate, patient, honest, virtuous, and full of love” (MEYER, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, we learn from the beginning, even if indirectly, that the souls are a kind species, good citizens by heart. This description is essentially utopian, because those are needed features in individuals in order to compose an idealized society. Another characteristic that qualifies the souls as utopian is that “Souls did not, as a rule, speak anything but the truth (...) between souls, there was never reason for a lie.” (MEYER, 2008, p. 21). Citizens in a utopian society are not expected to lie.

The way souls are born already says much about their utopian features. During a conversation, Wanderer accidentally says that she is female according to human definition, because she is the one who bears the young. Some humans on the cave could not hide their curiosity and asked her about how souls are born in her species.

‘The Mothers...divide. Every...cell, I guess you could call it, though our structure isn’t the same as yours, becomes a new soul. Each new soul has a little of the Mother’s memory, a piece of her that remains.’ ‘How many cells?’ Doc asked, curious. ‘How many young?’ I shrugged. ‘A million or so.’ (...) ‘When does that happen? Is there a catalyst?’ Doc asked. ‘It’s a choice. A voluntary choice,’ I told him. ‘It’s the only way we ever willingly choose to die. A trade, for a new generation.’ ‘You could choose now, to divide all your cells, just like that?’ ‘Not quite just like that, but yes.’ ‘Is it complicated?’ ‘The decision is. The process is...painful.’ ‘Painful?’ (...) ‘Excruciating,’ I told him. ‘We all remember how it was for our Mothers.’ Doc was stroking his chin, entranced. ‘I wonder what the evolutionary track would be...to produce a hive society with suiciding queens...’ He was lost on another plane of thought. ‘Altruism,’ Wes murmured. ‘Hmm,’ Doc said. ‘Yes, that.’ (MEYER, 2008, p. 457 and 458.)

Although this passage is about pain, sacrifice and suicide, it represents the essence of utopia according to the concept outlined in this thesis. A soul has to willingly give her life away in order to create a new generation of souls. This is altruism: one gives up on something that is very important for him/her for the benefit of another. Altruism seems to be the main trace of this society and it does not happen by accident. This quality is very much related to the Mormons' beliefs. As the book is filled with Mormons' ideas, this is nothing but expected. After all, according to the definition of utopia we built on this thesis, altruism is on the base of utopianism.

Besides that, the souls have their *Calling*, which is something as the profession they were born to have. For example, there are *Healers*, *Seekers* and *Comforters*. The author does not explain what the *Calling* is and how does it work exactly, much information is indirectly transmitted by inference. However, there are a few comments on this matter that help the readers to understand what *Calling* is, like a phrase the Healer says to the Seeker in the beginning of the book: "Maybe you missed your Calling. (...) 'Perhaps you were meant to be a Healer, like me.'" (MEYER, 2008, p. 15). There was also a moment when the Comforter asks Wanderer about her *Calling*, that is teaching: "Do you continue to enjoy your Calling?' 'I do.' (...) 'I wondered if it would get tiresome, repeating the same material, but so far it doesn't.'" (MEYER, 2008, p. 50 and 51). Each of these professions is responsible for something. The *Healers* are like the human doctors, they heal whoever needs treatment. The *Comforters* are like human's psychologists, following the idea that a psychologist helps someone to achieve comfort. The *Seeker* is the responsible to look for hosts. They are the first souls that get to the planets they are about to take over. The main *Seeker* of the story states that her *Calling* entails "Long hours hunched over files and maps. Mostly desk work. Not very often the conflict or violence you seem to think it is." (MEYER, 2008, p. 18 and 19). She was arguing with a *Healer* about whether her vocation was too violent or not for the souls. Ultimately, all the names have a reason to be as they are: the name of the *Calling* explains what the person does. As any utopia, each person has his/her profession and have to work, to collaborate.

Still considering the topic of healing, the souls also have highly advanced medicines that help them to keep everything and everyone perfect. Once in the story,

Wanderer goes to a healing center – what humans would call a hospital – to get some injuries healed:

I saw the label again as she twisted the lid off. Two short words. *No Pain?* Was that what it said? ‘Open your mouth, Glass Spires [a name Wanderer used to have].’ I obeyed. She took a small, thin square – it looked like tissue paper – and laid it on my tongue. It dissolved at once. There was no flavour. I swallowed automatically. ‘Better?’ the Healer asked. And it was. Already. My head was clear – I could concentrate without difficulty. The pain had melted away with the tiny square. Disappeared. I blinked, shocked. ‘Yes’. ‘I know you feel fine now, but please don’t move. Your injuries are not treated yet.’ ‘Of course’. ‘Cerulean, could you get us some water? Her mouth seems dry.’ ‘At once, Healer Knits.’ The older woman left the room. The Healer turned back to her cabinets, opening a different one at this time. This, too, was filled with white containers. ‘Here we are.’ She pulled one from the top of a stack, then took another from the other side. (...) she listed the names as she reached for them. ‘Clean – inside and out... Heal...Seal...And where is...ah, Smooth. Don’t want a scar on that pretty face, do we?’ ‘Ah...no.’ ‘Don’t worry. You’ll be perfect again.’ ‘Thank you.’ ‘You are very welcome’. (MEYER, 2008, p. 592 and 593)

When affirming that when the scar disappears, Wanderer will look perfect again, the Healer is also stating the imperfection of humans. It can be noticed by the fact that almost everyone in the cave has a scar. Humans can be healed, but the scar remains. The souls, a perfect society, do not have scars, they have perfect faces and bodies, without any trace of brutality and violence. If, somehow, it happens to any soul, they have *Smooth*, as we saw in the above quotation from the book, to make it disappear and they will look *perfect* again.

Another important feature is that they do not use money. There is a situation in the book, in which Wanderer and Melanie were at a convenience store and when they left with food, water and a map, they did not have to pay, although the employee of the store scanned all the products she was taking with her. Melanie stated – inside the body

‘I can’t get used to not paying for things’, she said, changing the subject. ‘What’s the point of scanning them?’ ‘Inventory, of course. Is he supposed to remember everything we took when he needs to order more? Besides, what’s the point of money when everyone is perfectly honest?’ (MEYER, 2008, p. 120).

They are altruist by heart, they pay with their work, their help. When Wanderer was trying to help the humans of the cave, she had to take many things from stores and she would not be able to give anything in return, to help with some voluntary activity to pay for her products: “The hard part, the part I really minded [...] was all the taking without giving anything back.” (MEYER, 2008, p. 625). Wanderer

said that reflecting about how wrong that feels for her. The system works perfectly with their society because each one of them feels responsible for what they have taken from the stores. When Wanda⁴ had to go through that situation, she felt bad for not giving anything back and she remembered her days in San Diego, before she went after Jared and Jamie and found the resistance force:

It had never bothered me to shop in San Diego. I took what I needed and nothing more. Then I spent my days at the university giving back to the community by sharing my knowledge. Not a taxing Calling, but one I took seriously. I took my turns at the less-appealing chores. I did my day collecting garbage and cleaning streets. We all did. (MEYER, 2008, p. 625)

As they do not work with money, they pay what they take with their voluntary work. This is not their daily profession, it is something they do besides their Calling, just to help. They feel the need because they are altruist. If they took things, how can they not return them with their work? In Wanda's case, she helped by cleaning the streets. It is important to have everything perfectly organized, and the souls respect that, they all want everything to be perfectly fitting.

Although the society of souls is utopian, some problems may occasionally happen. For that, they have punishments. Even though they do not consider it a punishment, they "send the soul away" if it has any problems in their hosts' planet, for example. As Meyer describes in her book in a passage where Wanda, the main soul of the book, is explaining to Ian, a human, what would happen if the souls would discover her living with humans:

'They would take me out and put me in another host. Someone young, tractable. They would hope that I would be able to be myself again. Maybe they would ship me off-planet – get me away from the bad influences.' (...) 'They would discard you?' 'Not a soul. We have no capital punishment for our kind. Or any punishment, really. Whatever they did, it would be to save me. I used to think there was no need for any other way, but now I have myself as proof against that theory. It would probably right to discard me. I'm a traitor, aren't I?'. (MEYER, 2008, p. 375)

Therefore, the society of souls matches with the definition of utopia that we use in this work. The souls are a literary representation of an imaginary idealized society in which every entity collaborates to a greater communal good. As they are good creatures by heart, they do not lie, they do not steal, they do not envy, they are not ambitious, they are not violent, and they are kind, gentle and supportive with each other. They only do things that will, somehow, help to achieve the greater good

⁴ An affectionate nickname for Wanderer that Jeb, the leader of the cave, invented.

with kindness. People know, like and respect the way of living they have in this kind of society. Even when Wanda understands and likes being a human, she still has and honors her *soul* character.

In the book, after the souls have taken control of humans, planet Earth had finally reached a supposedly utopian situation:

Hostilities with the few remaining pockets of humans were all but over. The planet called Earth was as peaceful and serene as it looked from space, invitingly green and blue, wreathed in its harmless white vapors. As the way of the soul, harmony was universal now. (MEYER, 2008, p. 20)

The goal of the souls' invasion of planet Earth was supposedly achieved: they had made the planet a better place. Their motive to invade the planet and take over humans' lives is that human beings did not take good care of their planet and were living in chaos, in a world filled with violence and pollution. The souls' intention was to deal with the problem – get rid of the humans – and save the planet.

The society of souls took over human bodies, though. That is the reason why the souls acted slightly different in Earth: they are occupying human bodies. On Earth, they are not a hundred per cent utopian as they normally are because they are in human hosts. Our species is characterized by having very strong emotions. Not even the souls could resist it: "Anxiety was an unusual emotion for Fords Deep Waters. Irritation was even rarer. However, because Fords Deep Waters lived inside a human body, irritation was sometimes inescapable." (MEYER, 2008, p. 3). Fords Deep Waters is a soul in the book. In the next sub-chapter, the particular characteristics of the human hosts and their effect on the souls are analyzed.

3.2 THE HOSTS

As we could see in the last part of this thesis, the society of souls is a utopian society, which indicates that they only do things in order to benefit the greater good. Not an exclusivity of planet Earth, they have dominated other worlds before:

'How many planets have you lived on?' Jamie asked in a hushed voice. (...) 'This is my ninth', I told him, squeezing his finger gently.' 'Wow, nine!' he breathed. 'That's why they wanted me to teach. Anybody can tell our statistics, but I have personal experience from most of the planets we've...taken.' I hesitated at that word, but it didn't seem to bother Jamie. 'There are only three I've never been to – well, now four. They just opened a new world.' (MEYER, 2008, p. 285 and 286)

Through Wanda's talk, we can notice the existence of, at least thirteen, other planets occupied by the souls. She was explaining why her name is Wanderer and why she used to teach History of the souls for the souls.

Not all the planets had to be invaded, in some of them, the souls were welcomed, like the Spiders' planet. During a conversation between Wanderer and Jamie, he asked her if the souls corresponded to the common image of the Extra-Terrestrial creature with green skin and triangular heads:

'What about the little green guys with the triangle heads and the big black eyes? The ones who crashed in Roswell and all that. Was that you guys?' 'Nope, not us.' 'Was it all fake?' 'I don't know – maybe not. It's a big universe, and there's a lot of company out there.' 'How did you come here, then – if you weren't the little green guys, who were you? You have to have bodies to move and stuff, right?' 'Right,' I agreed, (...). 'We used our Spider selves in the very beginning, to get things started.' 'Spiders?' I told him about the Spiders – a fascinating species. Brilliant, the most incredible minds we'd ever come across, and each Spider had three of them. Three brains, one in each section of their segmented bodies. We'd yet to find a problem they couldn't solve for us. (...) Of all our hosts, the Spiders welcomed our occupation the most. They barely noticed the difference, and when they did, they seemed to appreciate the direction we provided. The few souls who had walked on the surface of the Spiders' planet before implantation told us that it was cold and gray – no wonder the Spiders only saw in black and white and had a limited sense of temperature. (...) I started to tell Jamie how the offensive had been launched here. The Spiders were our best engineers – the ships they made for us danced nimbly and undetectably through the stars. The Spiders' bodies were almost as useful as their minds: four long legs to each segment – from each they'd earned their nickname on this planet. – and twelve-fingered hands on each leg. These six-jointed fingers were as slender and strong as steel threads, capable of the most delicate procedures. About the mass of a cow, but short and lean, the Spiders had no trouble with the first insertions. They were stronger than humans, smarter than humans, and prepared, which the humans were not...' (MEYER, 2008, pp. 271-273)

This conversation is a literary device that the author uses to give the readers information. This passage also gives an outline of how the souls started the invasion on Earth. They used another host, supposedly more intelligent than humans, to get to know the planet and prepare the beginning of the invasion. If the Spiders welcomed the souls and did not disappear when they were invaded, the utopia was finally reached in that planet. Both species were helping each other and improving themselves mutually. Their experience on the planet of Spiders is one of the probable sources for the point of view of the souls that their occupation of Earth was essentially good and utopian. Even if they took human lives away, by taking their bodies, they never thought of their action as harmful.

Besides that, when inside human hosts, the souls started to feel the strong emotions that are part of all human beings. With that, the more non-utopian feelings and actions began to appear:

(...) But there were whispers of this: of human hosts so strong that the souls were forced to abandon them. Hosts whose minds could not be completely suppressed. Souls who took on the personality of the body, rather than the other way around. (...) (MEYER, 2008, p. 21)

'Ilan's going to ask you questions tomorrow when you are weeding the spinach. Jeb's not making him – he wants to.' 'Well, that's wonderful.' 'You're pretty good with sarcasm. I thought the parasites – I mean the souls – didn't like negative humor. Just the happy stuff.' 'They'd learn pretty quick in here, kid.' (MEYER, 2008, p. 333)

During that conversation between Wanda and Jamie, Wanda does not only sound like a human by making sarcasm so naturally, but includes herself in the human species by referring to the souls in the third person plural. She tells Jamie the souls would learn quickly, excluding herself from the souls society. In the story, there is a moment when Wanda, Jared and Ian see a scene they find hard to believe:

A little family was taking advantage of the cooler evening air. The father had some silver in his dark hair at the temples; the mother looked many years his junior. Her red brown hair was pulled back in a long ponytail that bobbed when she moved. They had a little boy, no more than a year old. The father pushed the child in the swing from behind, while the mother stood in front, leaning in to kiss his forehead when he swung her way, making him giggle so hard that his chubby little face was bright red. This had her laughing, too – I could see her body shake with it, her hair dancing. 'What are you staring at, Wanda?' Jared's question wasn't anxious, because I was smiling softly at the surprising scene. 'Something I've never seen in all my lives. I'm staring at... hope.' Jared came to stand behind me, peeking out over my shoulder. 'What do you mean?' His eyes swept across the buildings and the road, not pausing on the playing family. I caught his chin and pointed his face in the right direction. He didn't so much as flinch at my unexpected touch, and that gave me a strange jolt of warmth in the pit of my stomach. 'Look,' I said. 'What am I looking at?' 'The only hope for survival I've ever seen for a host species.' 'Where?' he demanded, bewildered. I was aware of Ian close behind us now, listening silently. 'See?' I pointed at the laughing mother. 'See how she loves her human child?' At that moment, the woman snatched her son from the swing and squeezed him in a tight embrace, covering his face with kisses. He cooed and flailed – just a baby. Not the miniature adult he would have been if he carried one of my kind. Jared gasped. 'The baby is human? How? Why? For how long?' I shrugged. 'I've never seen this before – I don't know. She has not given him up for a host. I can't imagine that she would be... forced. Motherhood is all but worshipped among my kind. If she is unwilling...' I shook my head. 'I have no idea how that will be handled. This doesn't happen elsewhere. The emotions of these bodies are so much stronger than logic.' I glanced up at Jared and Ian. They were both staring open mouthed at the interspecies family in the park. 'No,' I murmured to myself. 'No one would force the parents if they wanted the child. And just look at them.' The father had his arms around both the mother and the child now. He looked down at his host body's biological son with staggering tenderness in his eyes. 'Aside from ourselves, this is the first planet we've discovered with live births. Yours certainly isn't the easiest or most prolific system. I wonder if that's the difference... or if it's the helplessness of your

young. Everywhere else, reproduction is through some form of eggs or seeds. Many parents never even meet their young. I wonder...' I trailed off, my thoughts full of speculation. The mother lifted her face to her partner, and he kissed her lips. The human child crowed with delight. 'Hmm. Perhaps, someday, some of my kind and some of yours will live in peace. Wouldn't that be...strange?' Neither man could tear his eyes from the miracle in front of them. The family was leaving. The mother dusted the sand off her jeans while the father took the boy. Then, holding hands that they swung between them, the souls strolled toward the apartments with their human child. Ian swallowed loudly. We didn't speak for the rest of the evening, all of us made thoughtful by what we'd seen. (MEYER, 2008, pp. 628-630)

Although this is such a long quotation, the passage is important for conveying valuable information for the understanding of possible future developments in the relationship between humans and souls. Can the emotions on this planet be so strong that they are starting to change such a utopian species as the souls are? It is possible to see that, from the souls' interaction with humans, they start to become passionate with strong emotions, such as paternal and maternal love. Melanie's uncle Jeb gets to point of stating that the souls are actually becoming human:

'[I] Spent a lot of time watching your kind. I was always waiting for them to change, you know, when they didn't have to act like us anymore, because there was no one to act for. I kept on watching and waiting, but they just kept on actin' like humans. Staying with their bodies' families, going out for picnics in good weather, plantin' flowers and paintin' pictures and all the rest of it. I've been wondering if you all aren't turning sort of human. If we don't have some real influence, in the end.' (MEYER, 2008, p. 279)

Jeb is probably right. The souls are acquiring such strikingly human characteristics that the couple observed by Wanderer has started to protect their human child from the very souls. It is not only their emotions that are closer and closer to human emotions. Their perspective of the souls' occupation of Earth is starting to be the human perspective. Why does the couple want to prevent souls from occupying their human child in the same way they have occupied other human hosts? It is probably because they start to see the occupation from the human perspective.

At the end of the book, it is notable that Wanderer had changed a lot while living with the humans of the cave, but she still had her soul's characteristics. She understands that she loves Melanie too much to occupy her body, thus depriving this young human of her freedom in her own body, so she decides to leave her. Doc, the human responsible for the procedure, could take her – the soul, that looks like a shiny worm – out of Melanie's body and send her to another planet. But Wanda has experienced too much love in this world and she finally found a place where she would like to stay forever. She loved her human friends and specially Melanie and

Ian. So she would not want to live anymore if she could not stay on this planet. When Melanie found out about Wanda's plan she tried to stop her:

'Wanda, I...' Melanie struggled for words. Still, the joy I expected from her did not come. Again, this touched me. 'I don't think I can let you do this. You're more important than that. In the bigger picture, you are of much more value to them than I am. You can help them; you can save them. I can't do any of that. You have to stay.' 'I can't see any other way, Mel. I wonder how I didn't see it sooner. It seems so completely obvious. Of course I have to go. Of course I have to give you yourself back. I already knew we souls were wrong to come here. So I don't have any choice now but to do the right thing, and leave. You all survived without me before; you'll do it again. You've learned so much about the souls from me – you'll help them. Can't you see? This is the happy ending. It's the way they all need the story to finish. I can give them hope. I can give them... not a future. Maybe not that. But as much as I can. Everything I can.' 'No, Wanda, no.' She was crying, becoming incoherent. Her sorrow brought tears to my eyes. I'd no idea that she cared so much for me. Almost as much as I cared for her. I hadn't realized that we loved each other. (MEYER, 2008, p. 666 and 667)

Melanie and Wanderer had been in the same body for a long time, their relationship is unique and it is not easy for both of them to say goodbye. Each of them changed a lot inside the other. But most of all, Melanie made Wanda love the humans and Wanda made Melanie understand the souls' reasons better and to truly love one of them. Ian, on the other hand, made Wanda discover human love. She felt what she never thought she would feel, so much that she realized her real self had changed because of him:

'I did it to save Mel, Ian.' His nostrils flared, and he said nothing. 'She's trapped in here, Ian. It's like a prison – worse than that; I can't even describe it. She's like a ghost. And I can free her. I can give her herself back.' 'You deserve a life, too, Wanda. You deserve to stay.' 'But I love her, Ian.' He closed his eyes, and his pale lips went dead white. 'But I love you,' he whispered. 'Doesn't that matter?' 'Of course it matters. So much. Can't you see? That only makes it more... necessary.' His eyes flashed open. 'Is it so unbearable to have me love you? Is that it? I can keep my mouth shut, Wanda. I won't say it again. You can be with Jared, if that's what you want. Just stay.' 'No, Ian!' I took his face between my hands – his skin felt hard, strained tight over the bones. 'No. I – I love you, too. Me, the little silver worm in the back of her head. But my body doesn't love you. It can't love you. I can never love you in this body, Ian. It pulls me in two. It's unbearable.' I could have borne it. But watching him suffer because of my body's limitations? Not that. (...) I wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled myself closer to him until my lips touched his. He curled his arms around me, pulling me tighter against his chest. Our lips moved together, fusing as if they would never divide, as if separation was not the inevitable thing it was, (...) Something began to change. When Melanie's body touched Jared's body, it was like a wildfire – a fast burn that raced across the surface of the desert and consumed everything in its path. With Ian it was different, so very different, because Melanie didn't love him the way I did. So when he touched me, it was deeper and slower than the wildfire, like the flow of molten rock far beneath the surface of the earth. Too deep to feel the heat of it, but it moved inexorably, changing the very foundations of the world with its advance. My unwilling body was a fog between us – a thick curtain, but

gauzy enough that I could see through it, could see what was happening. It changed me, not her. It was almost a metallurgical process deep inside the core of who I was, something that had already begun, was already nearly forged. But this long, unbroken kiss finished it, searing and sharp edged – it shoved this new creation, all hissing, into the cold water that made it hard and final. Unbreakable. And I started to cry again, realizing that it must be changing him, too, this man who was kind enough to be a soul but strong as only a human could be. He moved his lips to my eyes, but it was too late. It was done. ‘Don’t cry, Wanda. Don’t cry. You’re staying with me.’ ‘Eight full lives,’ I whispered against his jaw, my voice breaking. ‘Eight full lives and I never found anyone I would stay on a planet for, anyone I would follow when they left. I never found a partner. Why now? Why you? You’re not of my species. How can you be my partner?’ ‘It’s a strange universe,’ he murmured. ‘It’s not fair,’ I complained, (...) It wasn’t fair. How could I find this, find love – now, in this eleventh hour—and have to leave it? Was it fair that my soul and body couldn’t reconcile? Was it fair that I had to love Melanie, too? Was it fair that Ian would suffer? He deserved happiness if anyone did. It wasn’t fair or right or even...sane. How could I do this to him? ‘I love you,’ I whispered. ‘Don’t say that like you’re saying goodbye.’ But I had to. ‘I, the soul called Wanderer, love you, human Ian. And that will never change, no matter what I might become.’ (...) ‘If I were a Dolphin or a Bear or a Flower, it wouldn’t matter. I would always love you, always remember you. You will be my only partner.’ His arms stiffened, then constricted tighter around me, and I could feel the anger in them again. It was hard to breathe. ‘You’re not wandering off anywhere. You’re staying here.’ ‘Ian (...). You’re a part of this community, and you aren’t getting kicked out without discussion. You are far too important to us all – even to the ones who would never admit it. We need you.’ (MEYER, 2008, pp. 750-752)

The fact that Wanda and Ian fall in love is the famous cliché of the human and non-human relationship, as in movies that are adapted from literary text like *Blade Runner*,⁵ *The Bicentennial Man*⁶, *Artificial Intelligence*⁷ and many others. Nevertheless, this scene has an important role in the story and also proposes a reflection about the possibility of utopia and about the inseparability of utopia and dystopia. In this quotation, we can notice how Ian changed Wanda and how Wanda changed Ian. It is as if each of them influenced the other. These characters are literary representations of the utopian and dystopian energies and of their interaction. Wanda is more humanized and felt a love that can be compared to Jared and Melanie’s. It is a humanized love. And Ian is more kind than usually. He was already a kind person but with some violent traces that were not part of him anymore. He learnt that with Wanda. In addition, Ian makes it very clear at the end of the passage that she is part of their human community, so she no longer belongs entirely to the

⁵ 1982 film directed by Ridley Scott. For more information see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083658/>.

⁶ 1999 film directed by Chris Columbus, adapted from the short story by Isaac Asimov. For more information see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0182789/>.

⁷ 2001 film directed by Stephen Spielberg, adapted from the short story “Supertoys last all Summer Long”, by Brian Aldiss. For more information see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0212720/>.

utopian society of souls. She has been “corrupted” – for each good and bad influences – by the humans.

In this part of the thesis, we realize that there is not a clear difference between Melanie and Wanderer anymore. Their opposition, very clear since the beginning for obvious reasons, has disappeared. Even though they are different individuals, they are of the same kind now. Their relation is very similar to the relation seen by Wanderer between the soul parents and the human baby. From that, we learnt that the souls are becoming so humanized that they are starting to protect their human babies from their very own kind. If this really happens, the human babies will be raised by souls, the hosts of these souls parents will die one day and the domination of souls will disappear from Earth. And so will their utopian society. This leads us to think that a supposedly utopian system, from the human point of view, would be a system where emotions considered good, as maternal love, for example, would happen in a free, natural and intense way. However, the feeling of love makes people who love vulnerable, because they do not want to lose the object of their affection. In the passage that Wanda, Ian and Jared are observing the couple with a human baby, what calls our attention is that the beautiful feeling of love may be the end of the souls’ domination on Earth. This is probably right, because if comparing to Orwell’s *1984*, The Party seeks to systematically destroy all kinds of human relationships. They even created the Junior Anti-Sex League and the Youth League and the Spies, in order to undermine human relations because this could lead to a love-based relationship. Thus, they avoided love so much that it must be dangerous for the domination.

3.3 THE UNCOUNCIOUS ATTEMPT OF A UTOPIAN HUMAN SOCIETY

The humans in the cave constitute a micro society: they have rules, obligations and needs. Probably because of their complicated situation – they are a resistance force, resisting from being captured by the souls – these humans start to live in a well-organized society. As they have to live in hiding, – they cannot be seen “in the outside world” – these humans have to have most of their necessities attended to inside the cave. This is similar to what happens in Golding’s *Lord Of The Flies* (1954), in which the children form a micro society in the island, just like the

humans of the cave. Even though these two micro societies were created in different ways and for different reasons, both of them are human societies that were forcedly created and naturally began to look for utopia. Creating a fictional micro society as these two authors do, helps the reader to analyse the characteristics of human societies, being these characteristics good or bad, because they are easier to notice when the number of people is relatively small. In *The Host*, the society of the cave have to live in a specific regime, Jeb, Melanie's uncle and leader of the humans of the cave, adapted the place:

(...) No wonder no one stood on this space. It was a garden. 'Carrots?' I whispered. He answered at normal volume. 'This half that's greening up. The other half is spinach. Should be up in a few days.' The people in the room had gone back to work, still peeking at me now and then but mostly concentrating on what they were doing. It was easy enough to understand their actions—and the big barrel on wheels, and the hoses—now that I recognized the garden. 'Irrigating?' I whispered again. 'That's right. Dries out pretty quick in this heat.' I nodded in agreement. It was still early, I guessed, but I was already sweaty. The heat from the intense radiance overhead was stifling in the caves. I tried to examine the ceiling again, but it was too bright to stare at. I tugged Jeb's sleeve and squinted up at the dazzling light. 'How?' Jeb smiled, seeming thrilled with my curiosity. 'Same way the magicians do it—with mirrors, kid. Hundreds of 'em. Took me long enough to get them all up there. It's nice to have extra hands around here when they need cleaning. See, there's only four small vents in the ceiling here, and that wasn't enough light for what I had in mind. What do you think of it?' He pulled his shoulders back, proud again. 'Brilliant,' I whispered. 'Astonishing.' Jeb grinned and nodded, enjoying my reaction. 'Let's keep on,' he suggested. 'Got a lot to do today.' He led me to a new tunnel, a wide, naturally shaped tube that ran off from the big cave. This was new territory. My muscles all locked up; I moved forward with stiff legs, unbending knees. Jeb patted my hand but otherwise ignored my nerves. 'This is mostly sleeping quarters and some storage. The tubes are closer to the surface here, so it was easier to get some light.' (...) (MEYER, 2008, p. 252 and 253)

In comparison to the society of souls, the humans of the cave worked for their greater good. They took care of each one of them, always helping each other. The humans try to continue alive, to keep them safe from the souls. It is practically the idea of a utopian society, but as there are humans, it is not so perfect. During a conversation, Wanderer said to Wes, a boy who

asked not about other planets but about this one. How did it work? No money, no recompense for work - why did our souls' society not fall apart? I tried to explain that it was not so different from life in the caves. Did we not all work without money and share in the products of our labor equally? 'Yes,' he interrupted me, shaking his head. 'But it's different here - Jeb has a gun for the slackers.' (MEYER, 2008, p. 336)

That small difference between life in the caves and the society of souls states something bigger: Wes was curious about those questions because humans have

tried to live like that before, in communism and other kinds of communities, but the attempt has not produced any long lasting good results. He wanted to understand why it worked for souls but made no sense for humans anymore. This is the idea of utopia: it is not reachable. When Wanda tries to explain that they are living a kind of utopia, as the souls, Wes is fast with his answer because Meyer is eliciting that, for humans, not even the closest to being utopian is actually utopian. Even in the cave, in a time when humans needed to stuck together, they had relationships problems. The leader, Jeb, besides walking around with a gun, has to, sometimes, give “the last word”: “My house, my rules,’ Jeb interrupted harshly. ‘No more discussion on this. No more votes. No more execution attempts. You three spread the word – this is how it works from now on. New rule.’” (MEYER, 2008, p. 193). Therefore, humans do not fit utopianism.

The analysis presented in this sub-chapter aims to argue that the humans in the cave, in *The Host*, make utopia turn into dystopia, by demonstrating how the resistance force, in the story, have a kind of utopian society but with its dystopian features that are revealed by the fact that they are humans. Thus, the potentially utopian societies created by humans tend to become dystopian precisely because of the presence of humans. *Lord Of The Flies* (GOLDING, 1954) is a good example, because the children start different kinds of government and try diverse ways of living, but they end killing each other, because they start to lose their naivety by living without any adult supervision in an island. They are humans. Another example is *Animal Farm* (ORWELL, 1945): the society in this book is formed by animals and is potentially utopian. It turns into a dystopia as the animals start to acquire human characteristics.

The twentieth century was a time of excitement with technology, which initially seemed utopian by the promise that it would solve all human’s problems. It, eventually, becomes dystopian by the usage of technology by humans, as we can see in *1984* (ORWELL, 1949) and *Brave New World* (HUXLEY, 1932). Therefore, even in the dystopian novels of the twentieth century, the human factor is the cause of the failed utopianism.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the analysis of *The Host* and the reading of several twentieth century novels, we can understand that utopia and dystopia appear in literature as different tendencies of thought that complement each other. As this is an academic work about literature, we are considering the two literary movements that coexist and are related. More than just an opposite, dystopia complements and modernizes utopia, offering not just the contrary, but also a critical reflection on utopia, which, without it, dystopia would not even exist. A good book is hardly ever a hundred percent utopian or a hundred percent dystopian. Precisely because of this, most of the novels about which we commented here contain utopian and dystopian energies. *The Host* is a great example of this. As discussed before, it has features and characteristics of both utopia and dystopia. In *1984*, the utopian features are harder to be found, but even though the country is ruled by The Party to benefit only themselves, people who are into their system are induced to think they are safe. However, in Thomas More's *Utopia*, there are some characteristics that seem dystopian for us in the twenty-first century, like "the sex is forbidden before marriage" rule. This is also a kind of totalitarian government, though it was utopic for Thomas More. Even More's book combines both utopian and dystopian characteristics, showing that the two ideas complement one another.

Although More's *Utopia* and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* are settled on Earth, they happen in a separated place. In all of the utopian books we have read, utopia only happens in certain places with certain people, not in the entire world. In *The Host*, the souls are not humans, they are aliens that take over the planet. As it was said before, in the end of *Utopia*, one of the characters evinces that we can only dream about utopian features, that it probably will not happen on Earth.

Besides that, in the humans' perspective in the book, even though the souls are kind and gentle, they kill human beings and because of that they are causing a dystopia on the planet. Now, the remaining humans are in a war against the souls. They do not want to be found and search for a way to help those who already were taken by the souls as hosts. For the souls, the invasion is not a problem, it is a way to work to achieve the greater good. The souls seem to mimic a process familiar to

human history: the colonization of several nations by the Europeans as the colonizer nations in the age of the great European discoveries. Just as the colonizers would come to civilize, catechise, educate and develop the dominated people, the souls use altruism to justify their cruelty: they are only taking this planet to save us from ourselves.

We conclude that, by the treatment given to the utopian theme in *The Host*, the book can be inserted in the dystopian novels tradition of the half of the twentieth century. Just like in *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, in which there are children living what they thought would be a utopian situation – isolated on an island without any supervision of adults – until they realize it was not working and never would be: they start killing each other and what began as a dream, ended as a terrifying nightmare. This is a great example of how utopia works with regular humans.

Despite that, the souls, even inside human bodies, have a pure heart and it remains pure until the end, as we can see at the end of the story, when Wanda is ready to die for Melanie and her beloved ones:

She was crying, becoming incoherent. Her sorrow brought tears to my eyes. I'd no idea that she cared so much for me. Almost as much as I cared for her. I hadn't realized that we loved each other. (...) I loved her that much. No wonder the success rate for resistant hosts was so low here on Earth. Once we learned to love our human host, what hope did we souls have? We could not exist at the expense of one we loved. Not a soul. A soul could not live that way. (MEYER, 2008, p. 667)

She had not willingly chosen to die for her own kind, by becoming a Mother – as we have seen before in this work, to become a mother she would have to choose to die to generate a million or more little souls – but she would die for those humans.

‘Don't you see? For millions of my own kind, I've never been able to do that. Not for my own...children. I was always too afraid to die that final time. But I can do it for one alien child.’ I laughed again. ‘It doesn't make any sense. Don't worry, tough. I can die to protect Jamie.’ (MEYER, 2008, p. 582)

No matter how she tries, Wanda is very altruistic. Sometimes she was scared by the violence humans can make, but most of times she was amazed with all the strong emotions these new hosts have. So many different things, sometimes good, sometimes bad, but the feelings are intense. She feels as if she found her home. Moreover, Wanderer reminds us of an enduring human characteristic: they do have their bad habits and faults, but when they are deeply good, they are passionately

good. Everything is intense on planet Earth. That is probably the reason why we cannot reach utopia.

Maybe because of that, utopian books are not easily found in modern times. After a research in three of the most famous book stores in the country, we could not find a book in which utopian ideas predominated. In fact, dystopias seem to be a very popular theme in books, especially for teenagers and young adults. This might be explained by the fact that people have more access to information, news are widely spread in seconds.

In *The Host*, the dystopia of the souls is not in the fact that they take human lives, but because they generalised and killed good people, innocent people. The problem with utopia is that it is not possible for us, because then we would have to change. There cannot be bad things in a utopian society and the human society needs the bad things. As Wanderer thinks in the middle of a reflexion:

‘I’d never lived on a planet where such atrocities could happen, even before the souls came. This place was truly the highest and the lowest of all worlds – the most beautiful senses, the most exquisite emotions...the most malevolent desires, the darkest deeds. Perhaps it was meant to be so. Perhaps, without the lows, the highs could not be reached. Were the souls the exception to that rule? Could they have the light without the darkness of this world?’ (MEYER, 2008, p. 183)

The souls have a perfect society, but they change a lot when inside human bodies, as we saw on the second part of chapter 3. When they get to know the intensity of planet Earth, of this planet’s love, they surrender: “I’d lived in so many bodies, but never one I loved like this. Never one that I craved in this way. Of course, this would be the one I’d have to give up.” (MEYER, 2008, p. 668)

They start to become passionate, as humans. So, as Wanda says: you only get the highs when you have the lows, no exceptions.

So then, we are now able to evince that the humans in the cave, in *The Host*, make utopia turn into dystopia, as demonstrated in the third part of the analysis chapter. The resistance force, in the story, have a kind of utopian society but with its dystopian features that are revealed by the fact they are humans. The humans are the ones who make the utopias impossible to achieve, as we saw in the analysis, and turn it into a kind of dystopia.

For further work, we could do a panorama of literary utopias and dystopias to see if this kind of literature is demonstrating something about the human behavior. Vicente (2013) cites Facina (2004) to explain why this could be possible: “literary

texts can contribute in research and analysis of society. It is possible to extract visions of the world, life stories, political opinions of writers and esthetical patterns from literary works that may help, epistemologically, the research.” (FACINA, 2004 apud VICENTE, 2013, p. 46 e 47). Therefore, it is pertinent to use literature to talk about human behavior. Based on this premise, we try to elucidate the idea that utopia does not work with our regular societies because we are humans.

With that reflexion, we get to the last conclusion. *The Host* is not recognized as a book of exceptional literary quality. Especially because of the commercial success of Meyer’s previous novels that compose the *Twilight* series, it is expected that *The Host* should also have an essentially commercial appeal. However, through the analysis done in this thesis and comparing the book with other novels of recognized literary value, *The Host* is part of a tradition that is becoming stronger since the middle of the twentieth century and that is increasingly finding more popular demand. Even though Meyer’s piece reproduces some clichés, the novel offers an interesting reflexion to think not only about the utopian and dystopian themes in literature, but mainly about their interdependence.

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