

Dystopia¹ in focus: Perspective of life between the clouds in *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), by José Eduardo Agualusa / *Distopia em foco: Perspectiva de vida entre as nuvens em A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), de José Eduardo Agualusa

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary juvenile narratives attract many readers, move the publishing market, and innovate both the format of the diagram and the literary content. Among the works that stand out, there are the dystopias, which attract a considerable number of admirers and are recognized with literary prizes. *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), by José Eduardo Agualusa, for example, was awarded the ALIJA (Children's and Juvenile Book Association of Argentina) Prize 2016, in the category of translation, and the FNLIJ (National Foundation of Children's and Youth Book) 2016, in the category of Portuguese Literature. This paper aims at analyzing the aforementioned work, by investigating how the narrative is constructed, the characteristics of the genre dystopia, and the dialogue articulated by this narrative, capturing the reader's attention and winning prizes of great importance in the publishing market. As a theoretical framework, works by Russel Jacoby (2001), Antônio Candido (2006), Tzvetan Todorov (2009), among others, were used.

KEYWORDS: Literature; Dystopia; *A vida no céu* (2015).

RESUMO

Narrativas juvenis contemporâneas atraem muitos leitores, movimentam o mercado editorial e inovam tanto no formato da diagramação quanto no conteúdo literário. Em meio às obras que se destacam, estão as distopias, as quais atraem um número considerável de admiradores e são reconhecidas em premiações de caráter literário. A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores (2015), de José Eduardo Agualusa, por exemplo, recebeu os Prêmios da ALIJA (Asociación del Libro Infantil y Juvenil de la Argentina) 2016, categoria tradução e da FNLIJ (Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil) 2016, categoria Literatura Portuguesa. Neste artigo, busca-se analisar a obra supracitada, com intuito de investigar como se constrói a narrativa, bem como características do gênero distopia e o diálogo que a mesma articula prendendo a atenção do leitor e conquistando prêmios de suma importância no mercado editorial. Como referencial teórico, foram utilizadas obras de Russel Jacoby (2001), Antônio Candido (2006), Tzvetan Todorov (2009), dentre outras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Literatura; Distopia; *A vida no céu*.

¹ Dystopia: "Term usually interpreted as synonymous with 'anti-utopia' and applied to a work that calls into question or satirizes some utopia or that demystifies attempts at totalitarian appropriation of a utopian scenario" (CEIA, EDTL, 2017).

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1 Dystopian narratives in contemporary times

Among the best-selling literary works are dystopias, which have gained prominence, not only in bookstore windows, but also in reading preferences, especially among young readers. In this way, repercussion in the Internet influences the publishing market and drives a considerable number of dystopian narratives, and, by this, the mediation occurs through different mediums, forms and/or formats.

According to Valente (2010, p. 70, tradução minha)², "Because it is Literature, the genre opens itself to other possibilities of experiencing reality, be it understood by its more subjective world, or broadened to questions on a world scale." In this sense, dystopian narratives are a gateway for the reader to delve into the literary universe that is innovated by writers of all ages, who attract many fans.

An infinite number of dystopias are consumed constantly, since the genre is recurrent in several artistic productions, as in cinematographic productions, for example. Thus, in order to better understand the characteristics of the genre dystopia, it is used, in this study, the theorist Russell Jacoby's works *Imagem Imperfeita* (2007) and *O fim da utopia* (2001) in which he presents reflections that illuminate the understanding of this genre, which stands out in contemporaneity.

Jacoby (2007) presents the reader the paradox that persists in contemporaneity, which in a sense is also represented in fiction:

All generalization is false. We live in an age of hope and transformation. We also live in an age of resignation, routine, and perhaps alarm. We predict that the world will improve, we fear it will get worse. We exist amid incredibly rich and paralyzing poverty. We lead our lives in peace and we are surrounded by violence. The wealthy, in spacious condominiums, care about keeping their sports cars without scratches. The poor, in filthy ghettos, dream of clean water, while refugees from endless civil wars dream of four walls and a roof. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 25, tradução minha)³.

² De acordo com Valente (2010, p. 70), "Por se tratar de Literatura, o gênero abre-se a outras possibilidades de vivência da realidade, seja ela compreendida pelo seu mundo mais subjetivo, seja ampliada a questões em escala mundial".

³ Toda generalização é falsa. Vivemos em uma época de esperança e transformação. Também vivemos em uma época de resignação, rotina e talvez alarme. Prevemos que o mundo vai melhorar, tememos que ele piore. Existimos em meio a inacreditavelmente ricos e a uma pobreza paralisante. Conduzimos nossas vidas em paz e somos cercados pela violência. Os ricos, em condomínios espaçosos, preocupam-se em manter seus carros esportivos sem arranhões. Os pobres, em guetos imundos, sonham com água limpa, enquanto os refugiados das infimas guerras civis, com quatro paredes e um teto. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 25)

Social inequality, which perpetuates itself in the course of time, is also considered in the dystopian work to be analyzed in this paper, since the characters of Agualusa (2015), ascending to sky, also represent/experience the survival conditions determined by the social class to which they belong. Questions regarding dystopia are considered in Jacoby's (2007) studies, taking into account the definitions of utopia, since the terms are interconnected, although they are not the same or the opposites: "[...] Is dystopia the opposite of utopia - in the same way that slavery is the opposite of liberty, or cold is the opposite of hot - or does it emerge from utopia itself?" (JACOBY, 2007, p. 33, tradução minha)⁴.

In this way, some comparisons are considered to exemplify:

Few would be able to hold that freedom leads to slavery or that the iced water will boil, but many, indeed, argue that utopia leads to dystopia – or, at least, that there is subtle differences that distinguishes the them.

Dystopia is not for utopia just as dyslexia is for reading.

The other words composed from the prefix "dis-", derived from a Greek root meaning disease or imperfection, are distorted forms of something healthy or desirable, but dystopia is considered less as a deteriorated utopia, than as a developed utopia. Dystopias are usually seen not as opposed to utopias, but as their logical complement. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 33, tradução minha)⁵.

Therefore, José Eduardo Agualusa's *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhos* (2015) is characterized as a dystopia, for projecting a possibility of a worse future, and, in this case, after a natural disaster, which occurred as a consequence of the global warming, bringing in an intolerable temperature on the surface of the earth (now turned into sea); the world population being forced to ascend to the skies, literally surviving in the clouds. According to Jacoby (2007):

Here lies the difference between utopia and dystopia: utopias seek emancipation by visualizing a world based on new ideas, neglected or rejected ones; dystopias seek astonishment by accentuating

⁴ “[...] Será a distopia o oposto da utopia – do mesmo modo em que a escravidão é o oposto da liberdade ou o frio é o oposto do quente – ou será que ela emerge da própria utopia?...” (JACOBY, 2007, p. 33).

⁵ Poucos seriam capazes de sustentar que a liberdade leva à escravidão ou que a água gelada ferverá, mas muitos de fato argumentam que a utopia leva à distopia – ou, pelo menos, que há muito pouco que distinga as duas.

A distopia não está para a utopia assim como a dislexia está para a leitura.

As outras palavras compostas a partir do prefixo “dis-”, derivadas de uma raiz grega que significa doença ou imperfeição, são formas distorcidas de algo saudável ou desejável, mas a distopia é considerada menos como uma utopia deteriorada, do que como uma utopia desenvolvida. As distopias são habitualmente vistas não como oposto das utopias, mas como o seu complemento lógico. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 33).

contemporary tendencies that threaten freedom. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 40, tradução minha)⁶

Written with the children and dedicated to them, according to the author's testimony, the work is intended for young readers, who, taken by the interest of new discoveries, navigate between the pages, allowing themselves to see the sky from another perspective, because "utopias and dystopias trigger aspects of the human imagination that function simultaneously as a critic of the present time and the projection of future possibilities." (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 07).⁷ Furthermore,

It is important to emphasize the recognition that is established between the protagonist and the reader from the text, since, by sharing the thoughts of the character and joining his journey through the universe of dystopia, we become part of his conscience and, to some extent, we reshape our own way of understanding the world in which we are inserted. (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 14, tradução minha)⁸

In this way, "it draws attention to the ability of these texts to fictionalize the future and promote reflections on the course of history itself." (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 192, tradução minha)⁹.

The dystopian work problematizes a possible reality on earth, bringing into the scene the consequences of global warming that, not only in fiction, but also in reality, has its impacts that threaten the lives of the beings that inhabit this same planet.

2 What would the world be like if we suddenly had no chance to live on earth?

The layout of the book, from Melhoramentos publishing house, is innovative in relation to colors, textures, illustrations, cover, and in the work as a whole that suggests

⁶ Aqui reside a diferença entre utopia e distopia: as utopias buscam a emancipação ao visualizar um mundo baseado em ideias novas, negligenciadas ou rejeitadas; as distopias buscam o assombro, ao acentuar tendências contemporâneas que ameaçam a liberdade. (JACOBY, 2007, p. 40).

⁷ "as utopias e as distopias acionam aspectos do imaginário humano que funcionam simultaneamente como crítica do tempo presente e projeção das possibilidades futuras". (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 07).

⁸ É importante salientar o reconhecimento que se estabelece entre o protagonista e o leitor a partir do texto, uma vez que ao partilharmos os pensamentos da personagem e nos juntarmos à sua jornada pelo universo da distopia, nos tornamos parte de sua consciência e, em certa medida, redimensionamos o nosso próprio modo de compreender o mundo no qual estamos inseridos. (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 14).

⁹ "chama a atenção no que se refere à capacidade desses textos em ficcionalizar o futuro e promover reflexões sobre os rumos da própria história". (PAVLOSKI, 2005, p. 192).

a lightness, allowing the reader to embark on the journey between the pages that evoke the sky itself, the setting of the narrative.

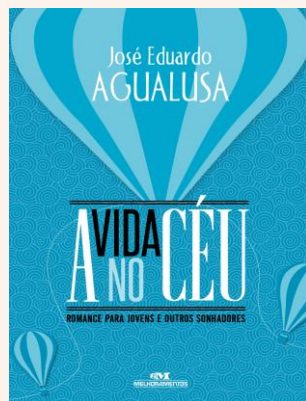


Fig. 1 Cover of José Eduardo Agualusa's *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015)

The chapters are separated by colored pages, which contain keywords (sky, trip, night, land, magic, sea, fly, identity, dream, clouds, hope, life, epiphany, light and freedom) and their definitions, according to the *Dicionário Filosófico do Mundo Flutuante*, and in the cover itself, invites the reader, to access the *Book Trailer*¹⁰ reading a passage and synopsis of this work in the site of *Editora Melhoramentos*.

The narrative is led by the narrator-protagonist Carlos, a 16-year-old Angolan teenager who lives in Luanda, in a set of ferries whose source of income becomes the rent, as well as loan of the works, and his mother, the librarian- head of village library.

In *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), the flood caused by global warming, forces human beings to seek new means of survival, as the building of floating societies, since it led to the disappearance of land countries. However, the socioeconomic condition is crucial in relation to the possibilities of survival,

Only one percent of mankind was able to ascend to the heavens, escaping from hell, down there. Around six million sailors. Most of the ferries, unfortunately, withstood only for a short period of time. They fell. They sank into the sea. Ten years after the Flood, only two million people remained among the clouds. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 08, tradução minha)¹¹.

¹⁰ *Book Trailer*, synopsis and excerpt from the work available at: <http://editoramelhoramentos.com.br/v2/titulos/a-vida-no-ceu/>

¹¹ Apenas um por cento da humanidade conseguiu ascender aos céus, escapando do inferno, lá em baixo. Uns seis milhões de navegantes. A maioria das balsas resistiu, infelizmente, pouco tempo. Caíram.

Among the largest cities that ascended to the skies are Sao Paulo, Tokyo, and New York airships. The smallest ones, with inferior financial conditions, were organized in balloons, forming villages, according to the Table 1.

Macro space - sky			
Micro spaces			
Scenery		Nature	
Means of transport = housing			
City ships	Shanghai	Land	Green Island
	New York	River	
	São Paulo	Forest	
	Tokio	Sea	
	Paris	Library "of paper books"	
	Room		
	Apartment		
	Pools		
	Disco Bars		
	Bars		
	Coffee houses		
Baloons - suspended villages	Library-village (Luanda)		
	Workshop-village (Manila and Marrakesh)		
	Villages specialized in communication (Apple e Facebook)		
	Casino-village		
	Zoo Garden-village (Nairobi)		
	Indonsia-village (Jakarta)		
Autonomous ferries	Maianga (protagonist housing)		
	Fishing ferries		

Table 1 ¹²: Synthesis of spatial categorization.

By citing the names of cities and the existing and known places, in fiction, the narrative involves the reader, broadening the world view, that is, coming into contact with another perspective of life.

After falling from the raft in a storm, Carlos's father is missing. Unhappy with the possibility of losing his father, Carlos decides to go look for him, and follows a clue that leads him to land on the most beautiful of the zeppelins, Paris, where he meets Aimée, a 14-year-old girl who becomes his companion of adventures.

Afundaram-se no mar. Dez anos depois do Dilúvio já só permaneciam entre as nuvens uns dois milhões de pessoas. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 08)

¹² Available at:

http://repositorio.ipv.pt/bitstream/10400.19/2605/1/Dulce_%26_Balula%20%282014%29.pdf.

Agualusa (2015) uses a simple language, with many dialogues between the characters, slang, regionalisms, proverbs, scientific terms, metaphors, among other resources, which require the reader to pay attention to the several details on a same page, that, in a way, draws attention to occurrences that, although do not extend, are significant for the understanding of the whole narrative.

Although today's dramas threaten harmony, memory is valued in the work, since the characters are moved by the desire to find land again whose smell and stability only the older ones remember.

"What do you miss the most about the land?"

I already knew the answer. The answer is always the same:

- I wanted to run. What I miss the most is running, walking, walking, walking, being able to move everywhere. And the trees, yes, I miss the trees a lot.

Aimée was interested:

"They say there were gigantic trees."

"Yes, daughter," the old man confirmed. There were huge and very old trees. The trees were the oldest beings on the planet. They all died. I think they all died.

"We have trees, in Paris ..."

- Trees?! The old man laughed, faithless. - Oh, the trees! Trees are not like men, they need roots. They do not take roots in the clouds. No one takes roots in the clouds. Sometimes I dream of trees. I dream of oaks and olive trees. I even dream of eucalyptus. There, on earth, I disliked the eucalyptus. Now, if I found a eucalyptus again, I would embrace it. I would beg it for forgiveness. (AGUALUSA, 2017, p. 53, tradução minha).¹³

It is noted that the literature problematizes issues related to sustainability, allowing the reader to reflect on the context in which he/she is inserted. It is a linear narrative, marked by memories.

¹³ – Do que tem mais saudades, lá, da terra?

Já sabia a resposta. A resposta é sempre a mesma:

– Queria correr. Do que tenho mais saudades é de correr, de andar, andar, de me poder mover para toda a parte. E das árvores, sim, tenho muitas saudades das árvores.

Aimée interessou-se:

– Dizem que havia árvores gigantescas.

– Sim, filha – confirmou o velho. – Havia árvores enormes e muito, muito velhas. As árvores eram os seres mais velhos do planeta. Morreram todas.

Acho que morreram todas.

– Nós temos árvores, lá no Paris...

– Árvores?! – O velho riu-se, descrente. – Oh, as árvores! As árvores não são como os homens, precisam de raízes. Não fincam raízes nas nuvens. Ninguém finca raízes nas nuvens. Às vezes sonho com árvores. Sonho com carvalhos, com oliveiras. Sonho até com eucaliptos. Lá, na terra, eu antipatizava com os eucaliptos. Agora, se voltasse a encontrar um eucalipto, abraçar-me-ia a ele. Pedia-lhe perdão.

(AGUALUSA, 2017, p. 53)

It is observed that the characters of the work are of all the ages and have a rich cultural diversity. The socioeconomic condition also has a role in the personality of these characters: while the poorest ones are considered adventurers, the richest ones are condemned to boredom, according to the narrator-protagonist, although they may enjoy better survival conditions

I do not envy the lives of the rich people. Yes, they feed themselves better than we do. They can expect a different meal every day. They do not suffer with the cold nor face the terror of the severe storms. On the other hand, they suffer from an endless boredom, which seems to me to be the worst condemnation. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 33, tradução minha).¹⁴

According to Carlos, "The young Parisians on the upper floors are almost as empty and sterile as a sea without fish" (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 33, tradução minha).¹⁵ Social criticism falls under the assumption that wealth does not guarantee happiness. Although Aimé, like her brother, is rich, they are exceptions in the narrative, because the teenager is the one who takes initiative in the main events of history, especially in the rescue plan of Carlos's father, and she is also brave, intelligent and independent. Carlos, in turn, although independent and adventurous, is subject to exhaustive work and to the condition of inferiority "In the kitchens there was always much to do. He peeled potatoes, washed dishes, swept the floor. I could never lie down before two in the morning. I would return exhausted to the old raft, let myself fall on my bed and fall asleep." (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 10, tradução minha).¹⁶

Although Carlos and Aimé belong to opposite social classes, they maintain a great friendship and fall in love for each other. However, Carlos, being an immigrant, suffers prejudice and physical violence from other characters, in the great airship:

- Is it allowed to immigrants enter this dump?
I looked at him in astonishment. I was born in a small village, and I know I can sometimes seem a bit simple and naive. However, I got

¹⁴ Não invejo a vida dos ricos. Sim, eles alimentam-se melhor do que nós. Podem esperar, a cada dia, uma refeição diferente. Não sofrem com o frio nem enfrentam o terror das grandes tempestades. Em contrapartida, padecem de um tédio infundo, o que se afigura, para mim, a pior das condenações. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p.33).

¹⁵ "Os jovens parisienses dos andares superiores são, quase todos, tão vazios e estereis quanto um mar sem peixes" (AGUALUSA, 2015, p.33).

¹⁶ "Nas cozinhas havia sempre muito que fazer. Descascava batatas, lavava pratos, varria o chão. Nunca me conseguia deitar antes das duas da manhã. Regressava exausto à velha balsa, deixava-me cair na cama e adormecia". (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 10).

used to storms early on. I stood up and faced the imbecile. I asked him the name. He hesitated. He turned to a group of very arrogant boys who whispered among themselves and shouted,

- The parrot wants to know what my name is.

I controlled the irritation, and sat down again, determined to ignore him. I was not lucky. The skinny man grabbed me by the collar of my shirt:

- Go back to your raft. Paris is for the Parisians. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 28, tradução minha)¹⁷.

For Patrick Maciel, a character from the same narrative, a solitary, Parisian navigator who visited several villages and wrote books about his travels, "Every Parisian should flee from time to time. They would return richer and, at the same time, more humble." (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 32, tradução minha).¹⁸

The reader of *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), as if ascended to the sky next to the villages and great airships, gets in touch with adventures, mysteries, ironies, conflicts, legends, romances and diverse subjects, within a single work, which suggests a representation of reality itself, also marked by the intensity of information that marks the contemporaneity.

Virtual friends, social networks and scientific terms refer to the technological world, however, do not mean a futuristic projection, because the technological resources mentioned are already used in today's young people lives, such as *Facebook*. The virtual research is part of the narrative, such as *Skypedia*, "an exhaustive dictionary of villages, big cities (airships), company balloons, fishing balloons, helium filling stations, petrol stations, and almost everything that flies or floats, except legitimate birds and paper kites" (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 41, tradução minha).¹⁹

The use of the Internet is frequent, and when the characters, looking for the *green island*, leave the route and lose the connection, they suffer the consequences for

¹⁷ – Já deixam entrar imigrantes nesta espelunca?

Olhei-o, atônito. Nasci numa pequena aldeia, e sei que posso parecer às vezes um tanto simplório e ingênuo. Contudo, habituei-me desde cedo a enfrentar tempestades. Ergui-me e encarei o imbecil. Perguntei-lhe o nome. Ele hesitou. Voltou-se na direção de um grupo de garotos, muito emproados, que cochichavam entre si, e gritou:

– O parolo quer saber como me chamo.

Dominei a irritação, e voltei a sentar-me, decidido a ignorá-lo. Não tive sorte. O magricela agarrou-me pela gola da camisa:

– Volta para a tua balsa. Paris é para os parisienses. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p.28)

¹⁸ “Todos os parisienses deviam fugir, de vez em quando. Voltariam mais ricos e, ao mesmo tempo, mais humildes.” (AGUALUSA, 2015, p.32).

¹⁹ “um dicionário exaustivo de aldeias, grandes cidades (dirigíveis), balões empresa, balões-pesqueiros, postos de abastecimento de hélio, gasolineiras, e quase tudo quanto voe ou flutue, exceto aves legítimas e papagaios de papel” (AGUALUSA, 2015, p 41).

the lack of communication. It is at this moment that the visually impaired character, Patrick, is valued by having developed auditory abilities that enable him to be located through the winds.

- Yes, you, who see, tend to devalue other senses, such as smell and hearing. I was born blind, but, of course, I also use navigation and Internet tools. However, I learned to listen to the wind. A large airship advancing in front of me, on a quiet night, produces a sound track quite easy to follow. Hence, I went after him and, while I did it, I informed Washington and other large cities. I did this, of course, before they plunged into this heaven without God. Then, to make matters worse, I was overcome by sleep. I fell asleep for a few minutes and when I woke up I had lost them. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 74, tradução minha).²⁰

The themes present in the literary work, such as: multiculturalism, disease, disabilities, environmental issues, prejudice with immigrants, borders, corruption, determination of women, struggle for dreams, valorization of memories, maturity, among others, are some examples of the diversity the reader can experience through this juvenile narrative.

In light of the foregoing, it is possible to observe that the characters, especially the narrator-character, are constituted according to the context in which they are inserted. Therefore, literature, according to Todorov:

[...] enlarges our universe, encourages us to imagine other ways of conceiving and organizing it. We are all made of what other human beings give us: first our parents, then those around us; literature expand to the infinite this possibility of interaction with others and, therefore, enriches us infinitely. It gives us irreplaceable sensations that make the real world more meaningful and more beautiful. Far from being a mere entertainment, a distraction reserved for educated people, it allows each one to better respond to the vocation of being human. (TODOROV, 2009, pp. 23-24, tradução minha).²¹

²⁰ – Sim, vocês, que veem, tendem a desvalorizar outros sentidos, como o olfato e a audição. Nasci cego, mas, é claro, também me sirvo de instrumentos de navegação e uso a Internet. Contudo, aprendi a ouvir o vento. Um grande dirigível avançando à minha frente, numa noite calma, produz um rasto sonoro bastante fácil de seguir. Assim, fui atrás dele e, enquanto o fazia, informei Washington e outras grandes cidades. Fiz isso, claro, antes de eles mergulharem neste céu sem Deus. A seguir, para piorar tudo, deixei-me vencer pelo sono. Adormeci durante alguns minutos e quando despertei tinha-os perdido. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 74)

²¹ [...] amplia o nosso universo, incita-nos a imaginar outras maneiras de concebê-lo e organizá-lo. Somos todos feitos do que os outros seres humanos nos dão: primeiro nossos pais, depois aqueles que nos cercam; a literatura abre ao infinito essa possibilidade de interação com os outros e, por isso, nos enriquece infinitamente. Ela nos proporciona sensações insubstituíveis que fazem o mundo real se tornar mais pleno de sentido e mais belo. Longe de ser um simples entretenimento, uma distração reservada às

While pursuing the *green island*, the Agualusa's (2015) characters also enhance their human nature, becoming more human and sensitive to themselves and to others. According to Todorov (2009), the reader seeks literature to better understand the world and himself and, thus, be personally fulfilled, broadening his expectations, forming and humanizing himself through literary reading.

At the end, the reader may also be surprised at his own expectations built up during the reading of the narrative, as well as seek his own island in the future: "It's in the Amazon, damn it! The *green island* is very close to São Gabriel da Cachoeira, where my father was born." (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 66, tradução minha).²²

For the reader, it is possible an identification with reality and, according to Aguiar and Martha (2006), by matching or not matching expectations, the text establishes dialogue, questioning and broadening cultural horizons, causing the pleasure of reading and the appropriation of the new and all that it establishes.

The formative role of literature is to be able to act in the reader, but not in an authoritarian and official way. As Candido (1972) affirms, it acts by provoking with the indiscriminate impact of life itself and, at the same time, it teaches, acting with the questioning and formative force. Thus,

As we can notice, it is not appropriate to separate the repercussion of the work from its composition, because it is only finished at the moment when it reverberates and acts, at least sociologically, since art is, sociologically, a symbolic system of interhuman communication, and as such interests the sociologist. Every communication process presupposes a communicator, the artist, in this case; a statement, that is to say, the work; a receiver that is the target audience; finally, it is defined the fourth element of the process, its effect.. (CANDIDO, 2006. p. 31, tradução minha).²³

peças educadas, ela permite que cada um responda melhor à sua vocação de ser humano. (TODOROV, 2009, p. 23-24).

²² “– É na Amazônia, caramba! A Ilha Verde fica muito próximo de São Gabriel da Cachoeira, onde o meu pai nasceu”. (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 66).

²³ Como se vê, não convém separar a repercussão da obra da sua feitura, pois, sociologicamente ao menos, ela só está acabada no momento em que repercute e atua, porque, sociologicamente, a arte é um sistema simbólico de comunicação interhumana, e como tal interessa ao sociólogo. Ora, todo processo de comunicação pressupõe um comunicante, no caso o artista; um comunicado, ou seja, a obra; um comunicando, que é o público a que se dirige; graças a isso define-se o quarto elemento do processo, isto é, o seu efeito. (CANDIDO, 2006. p. 31).

In this sense, a dystopian work can provide the reader with a reflection on his or her own social context, since it can alert the reader about the social inequality, the interest of tyrants, the deprivation of liberty or even the disastrous consequences of his/her own actions towards the environment.

According to Candido,

Far from being an appendix to the moral and civic instruction, it acts with the indiscriminate impact of life itself, educating as life does - with ups and downs, lights and shadows. It does not corrupt nor edify, but freely brings with it what we call good and evil; it humanizes in the deep sense, because it makes us live. (CANDIDO, 1972, p. 805, tradução minha).²⁴

Consequently, Literature can act in a relevant way in the individual development, contributing to the construction of values different from those standardized and diffused in the course of time, as in this work, where Europe does not remain as the epicenter of the world and/or as the only cultural reference.

Final considerations

Based on Agualusa's (2015) dystopia, it is worth highlighting that the characters who inhabit literary texts are not different from those who live in the streets or in other spaces of society that are subject to subhuman conditions. These, which are not on suspended rafts, but live in communities without basic survival conditions, access to health and quality education, alienated in the economic system that reinforces inequality. Similarly, there are those who do not reside in great airships, but in a privileged social position. Besides, many readers also do not even know their parents, and may be looking for them, just like Carlos at the beginning of the narrative.

It is through literature that the representation of a perspective occurs, which will denounce the exercise of power, unmasking and broadening the horizons of the reader who starts to experience other lives or even to see himself/herself represented in the life portrayed in the literature.

²⁴ Longe de ser um apêndice de instrução moral e cívica, ela age com o impacto indiscriminado da própria vida e educa como ela, - com altos e baixos, luzes e sombras. Ela não corrompe nem edifica, portanto, mas, trazendo livremente em si o que chamamos o bem e o mal, humaniza no sentido profundo, porque faz viver. (CANDIDO, 1972, p.805).

This way, in producing the book with and for his children, the author of *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015), motivated by a dream, starts from the title previously defined, unlike other literary works, to produce this juvenile narrative capable of broadening horizons, whether the reader is young or adult.

Although the starting point of the is a flood, a disaster caused by humans, dystopias draw attention to a particular problem that may become reality in the future. So as a characteristic of the genre, the dialogue that *A vida no céu: Romance para jovens e outros sonhadores* (2015) articulates captures the attention of the reader, presenting the destruction of the world in which he or she is inserted.

It deconstructs a unique way of thinking the sky, according to the religious myths, that reinforce the belief of life after the death, and the sky as destiny of the good ones. Dystopian production, in this sense, goes beyond it, because it represents the paradoxes and the yearnings of the population, which are inversions of aspects of the factual world, besides presenting a dialogue with biblical passages, revisiting religious myths (Flood, Jonah and the whale, Locusts, etc).

The literary reading, as a basis for projecting a better future, was also considered in this narrative, because among the numerous villages, Luanda is the reference in books which, as described by the narrator-protagonist, under much effort were taken to the sky after the flood: "[...] Librarians, computer scientists, accountants and researchers. The latter have a mission to find and acquire new books. I envy them. I always wanted to be a researcher. My mother coordinates this little world. "

In this way, the characters' journey, in the sky, gives the reader the possibility to travel in the literary universe, and thus, makes clear that "The best of the trip is the dream" (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 183, tradução minha).²⁵ The narrative presents a perspective of life between the clouds, causing deep questions about the commitment to life, because an anti-utopia may become reality.

The novel enables a new look at what exists in the real world, establishing dialogues, whether humanizing or destabilizing. Finally, it instigates the reader, whether young or not, to look for its own *green island* that dwells in his/her dreams.

Finally, considering the aspects analyzed, it is noted that the novel leads the reader to a certain time and place that only existed in the author's imagination.

²⁵ "O melhor da viagem é o sonho" (AGUALUSA, 2015, p. 183).

Therefore, the dystopic literary work projects to the reader the representation of a future pessimist and at the same time peculiar.

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