

Abstract

Ideal Cities-Marred Individuals: J. M. Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and José Saramago's *A Caverna*

In the final pages of J. M. Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* and José Saramago's *A Caverna*, the main protagonists flee to an unknown destination from their respective "utopias." Both allegorical novels expose the ills of two guarded and structured communities. *A Caverna*, a parable of Plato's cave, depicts the story of the lives of 64-year-old Algor, a third-generation earthenware potter, and his family. When Algor is no longer able to sell his earthenware products, the family is forced to reside at the Center. Coetzee's novel begins with the arrival of Simón and the child David at the Spanish-speaking city of Novilla. Simón assumes guardianship of the boy. Although the concept of "utopia" is presented differently in these two novels, the place operates in the same way; both places function through a faceless controlling bureaucratic authority, claiming that the welfare of the inhabitants is its driving force. A rebirth of the human is required for surviving in the new surroundings. In this article, I would like to compare how both authorities function under the pretext of creating the ideal world, which ultimately results in safeguarding their own interests, and consequently perpetuating the sterile and anesthetized existence of their citizens.