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By José Dino Costa Cavalcante, Naiara Sales Araújo & Ivane Santos Diniz
Federal University of Maranhão

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Pain and Death in *O Monstro* by Humberto de Campos

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Abstract- This article aims to investigate the construction of Pain and Death in *O Monstro* by Humberto de Campos. In the narrative, there are three dominant characters: Pain, Death and Man. Death is present in literature since ancient civilization, as can be seen in Gilgamesh, written in Mesopotamia, probably around the years 2150 - 1400 BCE, to the present days, as a driving force of narratives. Therefore, we will look for authors who dealt with the relationship between death, pain and man in the literary universe. As a theoretical support we will build on the literary scholarship of Edgar Morin (1997) and Philippe Ariès (2012), Hoggard (2022) and Sonja Loidl (2010).

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I. Introduction

Death is a wildly discussed phenomenon in all spheres of knowledge (Loidl, 2010; Hoggard, 2022). Nevertheless, such an event is a matter of concern for all human beings, since in the face of such a situation we present a myriad of behaviors. We can say the same of pain. We are born from pain: childbirth represents to the mother the sacrifice, defined by Genesis, the first book of the Christian Bible, as a punishment for the sin committed in the Garden of Eden. And, for the child, the awareness of the life outside of the womb, that is, the arrival in a new world. Although for different reasons, the mother and child feel pain.

The awareness of pain and death always provoked incredibly diverse representations and practices, since these are events features in the life of every living creature since prehistoric times. In addition to the certainty that every individual has that they will not escape death, there is also the conviction that the human being is a living being conscious of their death, even though they not always accept this fact easily.

In Literature, pain and death at no time stopped being discussed, constantly this existential thematic is discussed and presented in its many aspects and there are innumerous literary works that portray these events. The many interpretations of death and pain in the literary context pass through the angst and the fear that surround the man in the face of death, from childhood to old age. In this perspective, this study aims to analyze the presence of these two "enemies of life" in the most famous tale of Humberto de Campos: *O Monstro* (The Monster).

II. Pain and Death in Literature

Literature is a social living institution that can be understood as a historical, political, and philosophical process, that is also semiotic and linguistic, in addition to being individual and social, and related to one single period in time. Thus, its reality surpasses the text to assume the discourse, which thoroughly counts on the dimensions of the utterer, utterance, and interpreter.

Thereby, it is a fact that literature is quite often fictional, and does not portray characters who existed, but there is no doubt that it is, above all, an artistic product, whose role is to touch and please the reader. However, in the same way, there is no tree without roots and that we cannot imagine the quality of its fruits without taking into account the conditions of its soil, of the climate and the environmental conditions, literature is a product of the period in which the work was produced and it is a reflection of the sociocultural conditions of the environment of the authors. About this,

> The fine-tuning of an epoch, providing a reading of the gift of writing, can be found in the works of Balzac or Machado, without worrying about whether Capitu, Uncle Goriot, or Eugène de Rastignac existed or not. They existed as possibilities, as profiles that retrace sensibilities. They were real in the "truth of the symbolic" that they express, not in the reality of life. (PESAVENTO, 2006, p. 3).

Therefore, even if a fiction book portrays characters that existed, what is often observed are books that bring situations that were very common at the time the events of the book take place or even characters based on one or more people who existed. But it is necessary to understand that literary texts are not static, and in this interim, Literature itself is not only in the text, or in the author, or the reader. The author Roger Chartier reiterates this question stating that,

> The works – even the big ones, especially, the big ones – do not a static, universal, and fixed meaning. They are invested with plural and movable meanings, which are built in the encounter of a proposition with a reception. The meanings attributed to their forms and their motives depend on the competences and expectations of different audiences who appropriate them. Certainly, the creators, the powers that be, and the experts always want to fix meaning. (CHARTIER, 2009, p. 9).

Author α: Ph.D in Literature and professor at the Federal University of Maranhão- Brazil.
Author σ: Ph.D in Comparative Literature and professor at the Federal University of Maranhão- Brazil. e-mail: naiara.sas@ufma.br
Author ρ: Master in Literature and professor at Santa Fé College.

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Thus, Literature is one of the most powerful tools to explain and represent death, and has, since always, death as one of its favorite themes – even when it is not related to the theme of love. Considering that death is a phenomenon that immediately provokes an interpretative effort to be susceptible to being assimilated by human beings.

Nowadays, death has become something unmentionable, "everything happens as if neither I nor the people who are precious to me were mortals. Technically, we admit that we can die, but, deep down, we feel as if we are immortal" (Ariès, 2012; Hoggard, 2022). However, it is interesting to think that the life experienced by me, that is, my life, it is not possible to be conscious of the events of my birth and death. We live, mainly, at the pace of dreams and our upcoming projects, ignoring when, after all, we will perish. Mikhail Bakhtin links to the scope of people's lives and deaths, the meaning, and relevance of life, "my life is the existence that encompasses the existence of others in time" (BAKHTIN, 2006, p. 96).

Taking into account that this event is revealed as a problem in relation to how it is inscribed deeply into our lives, as a result, the study of death is of great relevance and the frequency of these studies has been happening at different levels, particularly the literary one. According to Philippe Ariès, "literature has never stopped talking about death, even though ordinary men behave as if it does not exist" (ARIÈS, 2012, p. 212). Therefore, literature is one of the means of great relevance of representation, or even of explanation of this phenomenon that always had room in its narratives.

Death is an eminently verbal phenomenon, a being of language, whose use manifests itself more vigorously and insightfully, to the extent that in literary fiction it occurs more symbolically. Emphasizing the intimate relationship between death and literature, Edgar Morin points out:

> The ghost of death harass literature. Death, until then surrounded by the magical themes that exorcise it, or recollected in the aesthetic participation, or camouflaged under the veil of decency, appears naked. […] Entire Works such as the ones from Barris, Loti, Maeterlinck, Mallarmé, and Rilke are tainted by the obsession of death (MORIN, 1997, 265-266).

Death can, likewise, be conceived as an impossibility, as in the works of literary criticism, but also in the fiction of Maurice Blanchot, whose fictional characters seem to hover, uncertainly, over death and life or admit a spectral existence after death.

In the literary sphere, several examples of death appear over time: natural death, death in combat, immolation, homicide, suicide, anthropophagy, among others. Death is a subject that afflicts the human being from the ancient times to the present day, hence the use of funeral rituals and the intense need to represent death and "the afterlife" in literature, in painting, or any other form of expression, with the aim of alleviating fear, pain, and thus, granting a new impetus to this issue. Therefore, the extermination of some human beings by others becomes the norm, which modifies the perception of life and death itself.

Thereby, Death is present in literature from Greek Culture (In the epics, tragedies, etc) to the present days, as a driving force of narratives, of lyric poetry and theater. The character of the lyrical self (in the case of poetry) appear to build themselves departing from the idea of death. The end of life outlines its path.

The tragedy related to the human condition in *Oedipus Rex*, written by Sophocles, tells the fatality of a man who, persecuted by the Gods, murders his father and marries his mother. Oedipus was initially outraged that Creon, his brother-in-law, accused him of murdering his wife's first husband. Jocasta intervenes referring to the prophecy that led Laius to abandon his newborn son, who was destined to kill his father. The description of this death – in Phonics, where the road of Delphi intersects with the road of Dahlia – disturbs Oedipus, and makes him remember the man he killed at that crossroad, and asks Jocasta to summon the only witness still alive, a shepherd, who can answer all the questions and ease his conscience.

After the information provided by the shepherd, Oedipus understands his entire past and feels he was cursed at birth, at marriage, and at the act of unintentionally shedding the blood of his father. With the revelation of his unfortunate destiny as an incestuous parricide and before the sight of the corpse of his wife/mother – who had committed suicide – his despair is so overwhelming that he plucks his eyes out with Jocasta's gold pins, leaving his face impregnated with blood.

> MESSENGER – […] He rips off her brooches, the long gold pins holding her robes—and lifting them high, looking straight up into the points, he digs them down the sockets of his eyes, […] (SOPHOCLES, 2020, 237)

In the literature of the Middle Ages, the acceptance of the idea of eternal life preached by the Christian church transformed death into a lesser fear when compared with the condemnation to eternal damnation in Hell, as a consequence for the sins committed during earthly existence. In the Middle Ages, the concept of Purgatory also emerges. According to the scholar Jacques Le Goff,

> The Church creates for this new society a Christian humanism that rescue humble folks like Job, by reference to the image of God, transforms devotion thanks to the development of the Marian devotion and the humanization of the Christological model, alters the geography of the afterlife introducing the Purgatory between Heaven and Hell, thereby favoring death and individual judgment. (LE GOFF, 2016, p.11).

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Whereas William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was and has been admired, innumerable times, for having written for different historical epochs and connecting European cultures. In his extensive body of work, deaths often happen in many ways, notably in the form of murders. However, among his tragedies, we will distinguish the occurrence of this theme in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. In the first one, we are faced with Italian nature and its passionate vehemence.

The contrast between this and other Shakespearean works is surprising when it comes to language, customs, personalities, and passions. In the majority of the tragedies of Shakespeare the nature of the characters is gradually discovered, since their feelings are previously hidden, repressed and are – usually – just revealed against their will, under the form of hallucinations and visions. In *Romeo and Juliet*, there is no effort to disguise the externalization of passions, since the two main characters are two juveniles whose actions and feelings reveal a great intensity and courage. Before the paternal imposition that obligates Juliet to marry Paris, she confesses to Friar Lawrence that she would rather put an end to her life.

> ROMEO – O my love, my wife, Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath, Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty. […] Shall I believe That unsubstantial death is amorous. And that the lean abhorred monster keeps Thee here in dark to be his paramour? For fear of that I still will stay with thee […] Here's to my love. Drinking. O, true apothecary. Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss, I die (He dies) (SHAKESPEARE, 2011, p. 227).

Of all the tragedies of Shakespeare, Hamlet is the most melancholic, the one in which the action takes place at a slower pace, and in which the analysis prevail, while still being intensely dramatic. The protagonist lives tormented by countless competing feelings: the respect and the protection that he owns to his mother, the concern for the future destinies of his country. In addition to that, he also feels persecuted by the ghost of his father, who begs for revenge, as he was the victim of an atrocious betrayal:

> GHOST – Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder
>
> HAMLET – Murder!
>
> GHOST – Murder most foul […] Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand, of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched: Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled (SHAKESPEARE, 2012, p. 57-61).

For the romantics, love and death become an almost inseparable pair: it is only true love the one that stands out in death. It is possible to mention as an example, the couple Tristan and Isolde whose death free them from a life that forbid the realization of the feeling that unites them and also free them from the torments imposed by their separation, and determined by the will of the human beings and by the laws of the Christian God, but justifies their self-love, accomplishing the union that was denied to them in life. In the novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Ernest Hemingway describes a similar feeling of the victory of love over death.

Therefore, death has also manifested itself and still appears in Brazilian Literature time and again revealing itself as an event of great relevance and influence to Brazilian authors. Death has been represented since the times of colonization, the Jesuits were the ones to start it through reenactments of José de Anchieta and many literary works published throughout the XIX century up to the current date.

In Brazilian Romantic Literature, Álvares de Azevedo (1831-1852) disseminate, in a singular way, the human being who has given up on life, is a work in which the morbid pessimism, related to a total indifference to existence and a continuous exaltation of death. In *Macário*, his dramatic work, there is a permanent obsession with death and we can observe that it – death, that is – does not establish the end of everything, but reaches the value of life and self-affirmation, when in the face of existential despair.

The public opinion exerts upon the characters of Machado de Assis (1839-1908) a sharp strength and one of the mechanisms that he resorts to criticize, vigorously, the principles that conduct the structure of the society that he portrays is to seek in death the permission to make explicit the aspects that remained hidden. That way, death works as an excellent and final strategy of the unveiling, through which it is permissible to proceed to the creation.

The use of this strategy is clear in the novel *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* (1891), in which Machado de Assis removes death from its usual stillness and puts the protagonist, who is dead, to narrate his adventures and misadventures, as well as some dishonesties that sustain human actions. By belonging to the community of the dead, Brás Cubas benefits from the excellent opportunity to convert himself in a mere spectator of the staging led by those who are still alive, hence he can exert the power of an informer over the world of the living, along with his detachment to announce to us, through his memories, everything that was concealed by the appearances and to proceed to the unveiling of, once, inaccessible truths. Thus, he becomes a privileged observer who is immune to criticism and who can also disassociate – and distance himself – from the aspects he narrates.

From the 20th century onwards, a new type of literature and philosophical thought emerges in Europe. Together, they try to embellish the meaning of existence and the overcoming of the feeling of absurd, all this in the face of the crisis of values caused by the war and by the constant presence of death. In the 60s and 70s, dictatorial regimes started to erupt in Latin America, using terror and death as instruments of social control.

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In all his works, what we can observe is that Death never seems to come alone. It always comes followed by another force: Pain. Oedipus chooses punishment and to be submitted to pain and suffering instead of death. It is the penalty of sacrifice for the redemption of the crime or sin – in the context of the Christian tradition. Romeo, to relieve his pain, chooses death. In the place of suffering, the rupture with life. In Hamlet, the prince lives with the pain of losing his father. In his quest for revenge, he kills his uncle – and even though he does this because of his desire for revenge, he also does it because of the immense pain he was feeling.

Therefore, the conviviality of Pain and Death becomes one single force, capable of building and molding the character of a person and – since we are talking about fiction -of characters.

III. Stories about Pain and Death

Humberto de Campos was born in the small district of Miritiba – which was later renamed Humbert de Campos, in his honor – in 1886, and exceedingly early discovered his propensity for writing. He initiated his writing process in the city of Parnaíba, where he went to, with his mother and sister, after the death of his father. He started with verses and then wrote journalistic pieces until he started to write tales, memoirs, diaries, etc.

His infancy and adult life were full of mishaps. But the way he faced certain situations of sadness may surprise some because this distinguished author brings in his memories meticulous details filled with spiritedness.

> One night, already in Miritiba, we played my sister and I, over a mat, in the sleeping room. She was cutting and sewing small pieces of cloth to make a new dress for her doll. I, don't remember what I was doing. Next to us, over the mat, a kerosene lamp glowed and fumed, stretching out the red and restless flame, as if it was the Devil's tongue inviting to sin. (CAMPOS, 2009, p.59).

At the age of seventeen, he started his journalistic career in the State of Pará – located in the north of Brazil. He dedicated years of his life to his profession and with extreme excellency, worked for many newspapers – the bulk of them were from Rio de Janeiro. In addition to him being a great journalist, he was also a great writer and wrote throughout his life several works, among them, novels, tales, chronicles, memoirs, and poetry. He also had an intense political career. He was a Federal Deputy of the state of Maranhão for a long time due to his visibility in the political and literary scenarios.

He published his first book of verses in 1911, entitled *Poeira* – which can be translated literally to *Dust* – at the age of 24. In 1919, he entered the Brazilian Academy of Letters, succeeding Emílio de Menezes and occupying the chair no. 8. He was welcomed to take his place at the Academy by the scholar Luís Murat on May 8, 1920.

Humberto de Campos wrote pieces for several newspapers, including the following ones from Rio de Janeiro: *O jornal, Gazeta de Notícias, O Imparcial* and *Correio da Manhã*. In São Paulo, he worked at *São Paulo Jornal, Correio Paulistano* and *A Gazeta*; In the state of Bahia, in the newspaper *Tarde*; In the city of Recife at the *Jornal do Recife;* and, in the city of Porto Alegre, at the *Diário de Notícias*. In the volume I of his book *Diário Secreto* (Secret Diary), he even states that he used to write everyday:

> An article, every day, signed, to the newspaper *O Jornal*; another, anonymously written, also daily, about communism, to the same paper; and yet another one, daily, to the newspaper *Diário da Noite*; three pages a week for the small humor newspaper *Não pode*!; commercial advertisements for the *A Capital*; and, every night, 400 words for the Academy's Orthographic Vocabulary (CAMPOS, 2010, p. 162).

In the middle of a political turmoil, in 1917, Campos wrote the second volume of his poetry book entitled *Poeira* (Dust). After, in 1918, he launched *Da seara do Booz* (From the cornfield of Booz), his book of chronicles, and, in 1919, *Vale de Josaphat* (Josaphat's Valley), a collection of humorous tales. Not satisfied with his promising career as a journalist and writer, in 1920, he was elected a federal deputy for the state of Maranhão and, in this period, wrote the book of humorous tales *Tonel de Diógenes* (Diógenes' Barrel). In the same period, he also released *Mealheiro de Agripa (*Agrippa's vault), work with political and literary commentaries. In 1921, under the pen name "Conselheiro XX", he wrote one of his most famous works, *A serpente de bronze (*The bronze serpent*),* a collection of chronicles and tales in which he talks about everyday situations using his acid sense of humor, like in the following excerpt from the chronicle *O Troco* (The Change), present in the compilation "- It was a disgrace, chief! Imagine it yourself, that I was coming here with the money on my hand, a 20 thousand réis bill and the dog attacked me and ate it!" (Campos, 1921, p. 16).

Conselheiro XX – literally Counselor XX- was a famous pen name Campos used to have. The writer used the pseudonym to expose his strong criticism of the society of Rio de Janeiro. The traditional families of the period even tended to forbid their daughters from reading the author (SCHEIBE, 2008, p. 54).

But the professional success as a chronicler would still give him many honors in the 1920s, a time in which he no longer hid his given name and signed his works with it. Thus, even though he had a short life span, Campos wrote many books.

> In 1923, while he was writing the review *Carvalhos e roseiras* (Oaks and Rose Bushes), the author replaced Múcio Leão in the review column of the newspaper Correio da Manhã. Before the 1930's revolution, Campos wrote the book of

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short stories *A bacia de Pilatos* (Pilate's basin), still in 1923. In the following year, he wrote *A funda de Davi* (David's Sling), which contained humorous tales; and, in 1925 *Pombos de Maomé* (Mohammed's Pigeons) and *Grãos de mostarda* (Mustard Seeds), books composed of comic tales. In 1926 he published the Anthology of Gallant Humorists and *O arco de Esopo* (The Bow of Aesop), two short storybooks. In 1927, he launched *Alcova e salão* (Alcove and Saloon), a book of tales; and in 1928, the book of anecdotes *O Brasil anedótico* (Anecdotal Brazil). (SCHEIBE, 2008, p.38).

Already in a debilitated state of health, Humberto de Campos published *Memórias* (1886-1900) – Memories (1886-1900) – in 1933, in which he describes his memories from his infancy and youth. The work attained immediate success with the critics and the public, getting numerous editions in the following decades. The author was writing a second part of the work but died during the process. This second part was later published posthumously with the title of *Memórias Inacabadas* (Unfinished Memories).

In 1934, he wrote his last 4 books: *Sombra das tamareiras (Shadow of the date palms)*, a tales collection; and *Sombras que sofrem (Shadows that suffer)*, a volume of chronicles. Thereby, the talent of Campos was rushed by the hypertrophy of the pituitary gland, a degenerative disease diagnosed in 1928, that would eventually kill him. With the worsening of his pain, after many years of disease – which caused him to lose his sight almost completely and severe problems in his urinary system – Campos dies in Rio de Janeiro, on December 5, 1934, at the age of 48.

> Forty-eight years today! I try not to look back, but I cannot. The path I came from is, in such a way, so obstructed that I do not see, even a trace of my journey. I only know that got here battered, almost blind, and so tired that I cannot, almost, go on. Who gives a cane to a sick pilgrim, and only that? (CAMPOS, 2010, p. 544)

In *O Monstro e outros Contos (The Monster and other Tales),* 19 narratives address the relationship that humankind has with Pain and Death, in such a way that these two elements are the backbone of the whole book. In *O Furto* (*The Theft*), for example, the narrator introduces us to the tough life of Seferino, who has a sick child – in a hammock, close to breathing his last breath – and does not have any money, food and, above all, kerosene to light up the small lamp in his dark house. The son will certainly die without a spark that can "illuminate his soul", something painful for that simple man with a rude soul in that jungle almost empty of human feelings. At night, with the certainty that he was not committing a crime, he goes to the street and looks at a public lamppost, climbs it with his lamp and, when taking a little kerosene from the street lamp to put in his lamp, he is caught by a guard and taken to jail. He stays in jail until the next day and late in the afternoon is released by the delegate. He runs to his house but when he arrives, he encounters a tragic scene "Through the handle of the hammock, entering his mouth, nose, ears, the first ants descended in a row, in long seething rosaries…" (CAMPOS, 1983, 94). Seferino is guided by these two forces: Pain and Death. These two shape the narrative and determine the actions of the individual.

In *O Caldo* (The Broth), revenge is the inner core of the narrative. The son of Maria Rosa – who was, at 15 years old, raped by Antônio Solano, a wealthy farmer, and owner of the land where the teenager girl lived with her sick mother – kills his father, as thirst as he was for revenge, because the old farmer, in addition to violating his mother back in the day, denied him broth:

> (…) And the colonel had his mouth full of the fourth spoonful, when a big hand pushed, violently, his face in the plate, at the same time that a blade cut his head off completely with one single blow.
>
> When his servant came back with the stew, he dropped it on the floor, frightened: the dish with the broth was full of blood, which had spread to the towels, table and the grimy floor; and in the plate, immersed in the bloody broth, was the face of his master. (ID. IBID. p. 107)

As we can notice, the narrator describes, with dark details, the head inside the broth, the one he denied to the son of Maria Rosa when the child was still small, without the milk of his mother to nourish him. The metaphor of the broth, now red with the blood of the head inside the plate. Death, in this case, seems to suffocate an endless pain. The thirst for revenge is quenched by the death of his father.

IV. Pain and Death in *O Monstro*

Humans are, nowadays, inclined to find pleasure and run away from pain, and is through the criterion of pleasure that we evaluate all other things. Therefore, human beings are always finding a way to escape or not face pain and, consequently, death. But in the tale *O Monstro*, from Humberto de Campos, these two – pain and death – are of utmost importance and possess central roles.

Thus, *O Monstro*, not by chance, is a tale that initiates the anthology *O Monstro e outros contos* (The Monster and other tales) from Humberto de Campos. A story a little intriguing, since the two main characters, Death and Pain, are elements that are part of human history since the first steps of mankind. In *O Monstro*, Pain and Death, appear before the Creation of humankind, because the two of them created our species.

Therefore, in the tale, there is a desire to capture nature at the moment that follows the Creation. Revealing a narrative that refers to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, its language is related to a particularity of the fantasy of myths. In this case, the author reveals to the reader a pessimistic myth, in which Pain and Death are the creators of humankind. The somber tone is emphasized in much of the narration.

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> Death and Pain walked on the sacred shores of the Euphrates, which flowed without any waves or foam, in the wonderful infancy of Earth. They were two long and vague ghosts, without a clear form, whose feet did not leave any trace on the sand. Where they came from, they did not even know themselves. They kept silent and marched soundlessly looking at the newly created things. (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 9).

Although there is a reference to the book of Genesis, from the point of Creation, we cannot compare both materials, because the biblical book, which comes from the Latin "nascimento", portrays the beginning of everything. In this way, throughout the chapters, we can understand the history and events in the creation of the world, that is, how everything was created. God, after creating the skies and the Earth, creates man in His image. In contrast, in *O Monstro*, Death and Pain create humans. And as the story goes on, this creation starts to be seen with a certain fear by the other creatures, its appearance is more similar to that of a monster than that of a human being.

Then, this allusion to man being a monstrous creation is the author criticizing humanity, a creation that – we could say – is full of flaws and that, according to the author, is a failure. Campos has a very pessimistic view, especially when it comes to himself. And as if asserting his thoughts, we have the ending of the tale, that ends with the annihilation of humankind.

Like that, the two characters, Death and Pain, walk side by side in the same attunement, so we can consider them sisters, where one depends on the other to have its full completeness and both provoke feelings of fear in the other creatures of the Creation. They are considered enemies of life, the villains. Because their crossings agonize, terrorize and sadden the whole scenario of Heaven, the same happens with the presence of their son, the creatures feel the same reactions when they see him.

In some moments, Pain lets her companion gets close to her in a more intimate and friendly way, to the point that they extend their arms cordially as if giving each other a fraternal embrace – "Suddenly, as if holding her in an invisible hug, Pain staked out, letting her companion get close" (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 11). With their sad countenances, they warn their arrival with goosebumps and shivers, and even the wind seems to blow a little faster and wail a little louder with their slow presence.

> In a sad pace, Pain and Death walk, watching, without interest, the wonders of the Creation. They rarely march side by side. Pain always walks in front of Death, sometimes more quickly; the other, always at the same pace, does not rush or be late. Guessing, from afar, the march of the two goblins, all things shiver, taken by an agonizing terror (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 11).

However, the two partners could not see the appeal or feel any interest in the wonders of the Creation. So, they have the idea to create, with their own hands, a being shaped by them, without the interference of anyone else. And Pain, as if she was the most responsible one, plans everything and Death only goes with it. Furthermore, they close a deal, in which is established that when Pain gets tired of the creature, Death is allowed to take responsibility for it. With a reached agreement, they start their creation:

> - What if we made, with our own hands, a creature that was, on Earth, the loving object of our care? Modeled by ourselves, our son would certainly be different from wild bulls, bears, mastodons, runaway birds from the sky, and large sea whales (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 12).

Pain contributes with water and Death contributes with clay for their creation, but this clay comes from a putrid mud, which reveals to us immediately that the creature is a copy of the divine creation, and therefore, a dark and macabre being. And they worked for hours and hours before finishing their horrifying work.

> Hours later, Creation ended up with an unknown animal. A copy of the Divine Work, the new inhabitant of Earth did not look like the others, although, in his particularities, he is reminiscent of all of them. His mane was that of a lion; his teeth, those of the wolf; his eyes, those of the hyena; he walked on two feet, like birds, and climbed, fast, like howler monkeys (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 13-14).

The creature – that is, the son of Pain and Death – has their facial features, that is, their semblance. Albeit the creature has a reminiscence of all beings, it did not look like the others, this new inhabitant of the Earth. "What unknown animal was that?" The other inhabitants started to ask themselves, who was capable of causing the same reactions of his creators, generated sometimes by his air of superiority and by his physiognomy, of a non-seen before uniqueness, and other times by his freedom and by his mysterious and enigmatic gaze.

With an appearance completely different from any creature ever seen before, he is described as a monster, with the characteristics and abilities of an animal, although he is a being that exhibits superiority. The creature of the two sisters, Pain and Death, is rejected by the other creatures, or, we could say, by the other animals.

Rejected by the other beings, Man marched along the riverbank, under the custody of Pain and Death. In his insecure spirit, disturbing questions would sometimes arise. Certainly, if those beings were intimidated when he approached them, it was because they unanimously recognized his superior condition (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 14).

The harmony that characterizes the relationship of the inseparable sisters is destroyed by an enigmatic ending, in which the man, at the center of a complicated and possessive dispute, transforms himself into a pile of

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mud and is carried on the shoulders of Death. In a frantic dispute for the priority in the creation made them challenge themselves, leading to a never-ending discussion and since there was no one to make the reconciliation, they yelled at each other and the two of them decided to remove the part that each one has contributed to the creation of their son. Thus, the story ends with the same sobriety that it began with.

> Opening her arms, Pain threw herself against the monster, squeezing him violently with the tongs of her hands. The water, which the body contained, suddenly rose in the eyes of the Man and began to fall, drop by drop ... When there was no more water to squeeze, Pain was gone. Then Death approached the pile of mud, took it on her shoulders, and left ... (CAMPOS, 1983, p. 15).

The man, child of Pain and Death, let the tears drop from his eyes, tears that represent Pain. And then, all the pain vanishes, and Death takes him and carries him away. This is what Death and Pain are to us, one anticipates the other and we always fear them, because they represent our most profound and existential fears.

The creation of the man through Death and Pain, these two sisters, will be a metaphor that will last in the other tales of the author's anthology, since these two are intertwined and are revealed in all the narratives frighteningly, surprising the reader with the most harrowing situations. In spite of this first tale having a very somber beginning and ending, in the other stories, extraordinaire circumstances are presented, some that even seem inconceivable to us.

V. Final Considerations

In this paper, we analyzed how pain and death are the legacies of man while a creature of the universe, at the same time that humans are the enemy of all other animals since they see in them the two biggest enemies of life. Without humans on Earth, according to the tale, harmony would prevail. Everything was perfect without humans and everything played its part. With the creation of Abanstema, this natural harmony on Earth is ruined. Humans themselves seem to, little by little, discover that they carry within themselves their creators. Thereby, they can scare away even the lions, which, for sure, have an idea of what is the presence of both pain and death. They run away, not because they have a creature in front of themselves, but because the two strongest forces in the universe are closer to humans than to any other animal.

We know that Literature cannot change the social and political reality of the country, but it can play a role in the creation of discourses that provoke discussions. Therefore, it is our responsibility to reflect upon the possibilities of Literature in the face of social issues, whichever they are. Thus, by reading the tale *O Monstro*, from Humberto de Campos, although we cannot change the cycle of humans relationships, we can at least get a better look at this great machinery and understand the power of the man in the face of Pain and Death.

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