



## LITERARY LITERACY: HOW READERS CAN BE LITERATE AS OF GRAPHIC NOVEL ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST.<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores literary literacy as a process that goes beyond word decoding. It involves the ability to interpret a set of literary elements and enables readers to develop their holistic formation. Thus, the aim of this article is to promote literary literacy through the graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman, using the reading circle practice proposed by Rildo Cosson. The research adopts a qualitative approach, with data collected through bibliographic sources. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how readers can develop literary literacy through a graphic novel about the Holocaust. The findings highlight the importance of literary literacy for the effective development of the reader.

**Keywords:** Literary literacy; Graphic novel; Reading circle.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo explora o letramento literário como um processo que vai além da decodificação de palavras, tem a capacidade de interpretar o conjunto de elementos literários, e permite que os leitores desenvolvam sua formação integral. Dessa forma, o objetivo deste artigo é promover o letramento literário a partir da obra em graphic novel “Maus - A história de um sobrevivente” de Art Spiegelman, utilizando a prática “círculo de leitura” de Rildo Cosson. A pesquisa utiliza uma abordagem qualitativa, sendo, a coleta de dados por meio bibliográfico. Logo, este estudo busca compreender como os leitores podem ser letrados a partir de uma obra em graphic novel sobre o holocausto. As conclusões demonstram a importância do letramento literário para o desenvolvimento do leitor de forma eficaz.

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**Palavra-chave:** Letramento literário; Graphic Novel; Círculo de leitura.

## INTRODUÇÃO

Literary literacy goes beyond merely decoding words, it is closely linked to the ability to foster intellectual development and shape the reader's capacity to interpret the various literary elements in a work, such as plot, characters, style, and symbolism. Furthermore, literary literacy enables the engagement with the language, the words, and the written form through the reading of literary works, as these works expose records of human interactions within society. Therefore, it becomes clear that literature is deeply connected to knowledge about humanity, society, and the world.

According to Cosson (2009, p. 16), “The body of language, the body of words, and the body of writing find their most perfect expression in literature. Literature not only has words as its material constitution, but writing is also its predominant vehicle.”<sup>3</sup>

Literary works enable readers to build, develop, and refine their language, vocabulary, and writing skills. Through their narratives, these works contribute to the growth of language, communication, and foster social, personal, and cognitive development. As a result, it is evident that literature plays a crucial and irreplaceable role in shaping readers within our society.

Literary education has been developed since ancient times. As a result, today, the reading of both internal and external literary texts occupies a privileged position in education. However, over the decades, literary texts have lost some of their credibility and have been replaced by other types of texts, primarily of journalistic origin. This shift was the result of a struggle between traditional teaching methods and social interactionism, leading to significant changes, particularly in the National Curriculum Guidelines (PCNs), (SEGABINAZI, 2023) .

Thus, the reading of literary works, when effectively integrated into education, offers numerous benefits for the development of the reader, such as the enhancement of their linguistic abilities, symbolic understanding, and humanization. Therefore, the demand for literary literacy is crucial not only for the development of the reader but also for the holistic formation of the individual, or, in educational terms, *bildung* (SEGABINAZI, 2023).

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<sup>3</sup> O corpo linguagem, o corpo palavra, o corpo escrita encontra na literatura seu mais perfeito exercício. A literatura não apenas tem a palavra em sua constituição material, como também a escrita é seu veículo predominante.

The term *bildung* originates from the German verb "bilden," meaning "to form," "to mold," or "to shape." This linguistic root reflects the core idea of the concept: a process of formation and development. The notion of *bildung* emerged in the 18th century during the German Enlightenment, where it came to represent more than just formal education. It encompasses the holistic development of the individual, allowing for an ongoing process of self-formation.

As a result, reading literary works through their language offers numerous benefits for the development of the reader, including the concept of *bildung*, which fosters humanization, cultural formation, and autonomy.

Moreover, the role of literary education has not been fully integrated into the daily lives of individuals due to the limitations and pedagogical definitions of various aspects of reading, resulting in a society that struggles to recognize the importance of literary formation.

The motivation behind this article stems from the prominent role of literature in fostering transformation and knowledge for the development of readers. Furthermore, literary works in the form of graphic novels have been growing in popularity, offering complex narratives and exploring mature themes. With this in mind, the article aims to contribute to the field of literary literacy.

Therefore, the article is divided into five interconnected sections, forming an analytical framework that links various factors to the general objective of this research: promoting literary literacy among readers through the graphic novel "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" by Art Spiegelman. This will be approached through the lens of cultural resistance and a totalitarian context, using the literary literacy practice of the Reading Circle by Rildo Cosson.

In the introduction section, the concept of literary literacy is introduced, emphasizing the importance of this study and laying the foundation for the development of this article. In the second section, titled 'Literary Literacy,' a detailed overview of the topic is provided, situating it within the broader framework of the article, supported by theoretical references, and offering a contextual background for the study. The third section, titled 'Graphic Novel,' discusses the historical context and development of comic books over time, highlighting how they became a significant tool for contributing to literary literacy. It also introduces "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" by Art Spiegelman, which serves as a key resource for the development of the article. The fourth section, titled 'Literacy Practice,' presents the literary literacy practice 'Reading Circle' by Rildo Cosson and outlines the steps involved in its implementation. The fifth and final section presents the conclusion, summarizing the article's key findings and

objectives, and consolidating the concepts and information developed throughout the research.

## **LITERARY LITERACY**

Literary literacy has the ability to develop and shape the reader's skill to interpret the set of literary elements, in addition to enabling the exercise of the language body, word body, and written body through the reading of literary works. Furthermore, through interaction with human society, all forms of expression are exercised, tapping into the full potential of language. The use of words happens simultaneously on both individual and collective levels, extending to the written word, where every literate society documents its expressions in various forms, from newspapers to folk literature. According to Cosson (2009):

In a literate society like ours, the possibilities for exercising the body of language through the use of words are innumerable. However, there is one that occupies a central place: writing. Almost all human transactions in our literate society go through writing, in one way or another, even those that are seemingly oral or visual. (Cosson, 2009, p.16).<sup>4</sup>

Literary works serve as records of human interactions within society, encompassing knowledge of humanity, society, and the world. The language used in these works is a creation designed for human communication. The practice of reading plays a crucial role in the development of literary literacy. Moreover, reading is essential in our society, as it is regarded as a valuable skill, while the lack of reading is seen as a disadvantage, leading to difficulties in communication and access to information. This is because everything around us is permeated by written content, from reading a newspaper to sending an email. According to Souza and Cosson (2017):

Of all cultural competencies, reading is perhaps the most valued among us. In our society, the presence of reading is always seen in a positive light, while its absence is viewed negatively. There are countless programs and actions aimed at eradicating illiteracy, even using that very word, because not knowing how to read is considered a plague, and the illiterate is a species whose extinction no one mourns. From an adult, it is acceptable that they don't know how to perform the four basic operations

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<sup>4</sup> Em uma sociedade letrada como a nossa, as possibilidades de exercício do corpo de linguagem pelo uso das palavras são inumeráveis. Há, entretanto, uma que ocupa o lugar central. Trata-se da escrita. Praticamente todas as transações humanas de nossa sociedade letrada passam, de uma maneira ou de outra, pela escrita, mesmo aquelas que aparentemente são orais e imagéticas.

with numbers, since when necessary, there is always a calculator at hand, but not the lack of reading. (Souza; Cosson, 2017, p. 206).<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, reading literary works, when integrated with education, contributes to the reader's development while fostering the growth of their language skills, symbolic understanding, and humanization. Literature plays a crucial humanizing role, with the power to explore its full potential. Additionally, literary literacy is vital not only for the development of the reader but also for the holistic formation of the individual, as seen in the concept of *bildung* in education.

The concept of *bildung* gained prominence in the 18th century during the German Enlightenment, discussed by German philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Bildung* is a German term that encompasses the idea of the formation and holistic development of the human being, or humanistic formation. This concept extends beyond knowledge, values, and critical judgment. According to Cosson (2009):

Literature tells us what we are and encourages us to desire and express the world for ourselves. And this happens because literature is an experience to be lived. It is more than a knowledge to be reworked; it is the incorporation of the other within me without renouncing my own identity. (Cosson, 2009, p.17).<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the concept of *bildung* in the field of education goes beyond the mere acquisition of technical and professional knowledge; it aims to foster the development of the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and social dimensions of the reader through reading. In this sense, reading literary works offers numerous benefits for the reader's development. Among these, the concept of *bildung* supports growth that encompasses humanization, the strengthening of cultural identity, and the cultivation of autonomy. According to Segabinazi and Cosson (2023):

Initially, *bildung* referred to a sort of translation of the Greek ideal of *kalokagathia*, an aristocratic project of humanistic formation in contrast to the excessively

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<sup>5</sup> De todas as competências culturais, ler é, talvez, a mais valorizada entre nós. Em nossa sociedade, a presença da leitura é sempre vista de maneira positiva e sua ausência de maneira negativa. Inúmeros são os programas e as ações destinadas a erradicar o analfabetismo, com este verbo mesmo, pois não saber ler é uma praga e o analfabeto uma espécie que ninguém lamenta a extinção. De um adulto, aceita-se o fato de não saber realizar com os números as quatro operações, afinal na hora do aperto há sempre uma calculadora à mão, mas não a falta da leitura.

<sup>6</sup> A literatura nos diz o que somos e nos incentiva a desejar e a expressar o mundo por nós mesmos. E isso se dá porque a literatura é uma experiência a ser realizada. É mais que um conhecimento a ser reelaborado, ela é a incorporação do outro em mim sem renúncia da minha própria identidade.

pragmatic goals of bourgeois education. Nowadays, *bildung* is conceived, from the Nordic-German tradition, as “a combination of knowledge, ways of organizing thought, ways of understanding and relating to others, and ways of understanding oneself” (PIEPER, 2007, p. 7). (Segabinazi; Cosson, 2023, p. 11)<sup>7</sup>

Literary education plays a key role in shaping the reader's development, offering various opportunities such as reading materials, writing models, grammar studies, and more, positioning literature in a privileged place. However, over the decades, literary texts lost some of their credibility and were gradually replaced by other forms, particularly journalistic texts. However, the importance of reading literary works is indispensable, as these works store knowledge, understanding, and the transactions of the organization of our society, offering a reading through which we can free ourselves and explore our identity and autonomy. According to Cosson (2009):

This primacy of writing occurs because it is through it that we store our knowledge, organize our society, and free ourselves from the limits imposed by time and space. Writing is, thus, one of the most powerful instruments of liberation from the physical limitations of the human being. (Cosson, 2009, p.16).<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, literary literacy is a powerful tool for both individual and social development. By encouraging the reading of literary works, we invest in the creation of a literate, critical, and socially engaged reader, one who possesses a strong sense of autonomy in the world. The literary work chosen to promote literary literacy in this article is the graphic novel “*Maus: A Survivor's Tale*” by Art Spiegelman. The novel addresses a complex and profound theme, focusing on the Holocaust. It depicts the genocide of Jews during World War II, highlighting the horrors and traumas both inside and outside the concentration camps. In doing so, it creates a reading experience that fosters the reader's development and full formation, while also enhancing their ability to interpret various literary elements.

## GRAPHIC NOVEL

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<sup>7</sup> Atualmente, *bildung* é concebido, a partir da tradição nórdica-alemã, como “uma combinação de conhecimentos, modos de organizar o pensamento, modos de entender e se relacionar com outras pessoas e modos de entender a si mesmo” (PIEPER, 2007, p. 7).

<sup>8</sup> Essa primazia da escrita se dá porque é por meio dela que armazenamos nossos saberes, organizamos nossa sociedade e nos libertamos dos limites impostos pelo tempo e pelo espaço. A escrita é, assim, um dos mais poderosos instrumentos de libertação das limitações físicas do ser humano.

Literary works in the graphic novel format tend to feature long and complex narratives, often dealing with intense and profound themes. In this way, graphic novels display an admirable graphic quality, with elaborate illustrations and sophisticated finishes. The term "graphic novel" originated in the mid-1960s, but it was only in 1980 that the format gained prestige in the community, with the publication of the work *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. According to Frey and Fisher (2008):

In 1991 Art Spiegelman's comic-book-format, soft-covered book *Maus* (The story of his father's experience in the Holocaust) was released, and the term "graphic novel" was coined. *Maus* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, and since then the graphic novel's rise has been "faster than a speeding bullet". (Frey;Fisher, 2008, p.28).

Graphic novels have gained significant recognition in schools for their educational and developmental benefits. By combining text and images in a dynamic way, they encourage reading, particularly for those who may struggle with traditional texts. In addition, they enrich the reader's linguistic repertoire and tackle complex themes that prompt discussion and reflection.

However, the decision to promote literary literacy through the use of graphic novels offers immeasurable benefits in both verbal and non-verbal language, as these two forms of expression complement each other to construct a cohesive narrative that the reader can fully engage with. As a result, literary works in graphic novel format often lead to stronger performance in non-verbal storytelling, since images play a central role in conveying the narrative. The reader is encouraged to interpret the internal structures of these images, with each one telling a story on its own, while the sequence of images works together to advance the plot. According to Baetens (2008):

First of all, the image should be able to make its own contribution to the making of the story (not independently from the sequence, of course, but in a creative tension with it). In other words, the reader is supposed to infer the story not only from the textual and verbal indications that are given, but also from the internal structure of the image. (Baetens, 2008, p.81)

Furthermore, the use of graphic novel works to promote literary literacy has been gaining considerable recognition among readers, as graphic novels are acknowledged for their high quality in narrative and artistic development (Baetens, 2008). This way, they encompass

a diverse audience, from young people to adults, as well as containing intense and profound themes that contribute to the holistic development of the reader.

Thus, the approach of intense and profound themes in graphic novel works encompasses a cultural impact on the reader, as the development of both textual and visual narratives triggers complex societal issues, prompting reflections in the reader. Therefore, the themes explored in graphic novels involve the human condition, ranging from grief to love, as well as social and political issues such as inequality, injustice, prejudice, and conflict. They also address sensitive topics like trauma, mental illness, and violence, encouraging the reader to question the society around them and contributing to their holistic development.

According to Schwarz (2002, p. 3), “An important benefit of graphic novels is that they present alternative views of culture, history, and human life in general in accessible ways, giving voice to minorities and those with diverse viewpoints.”

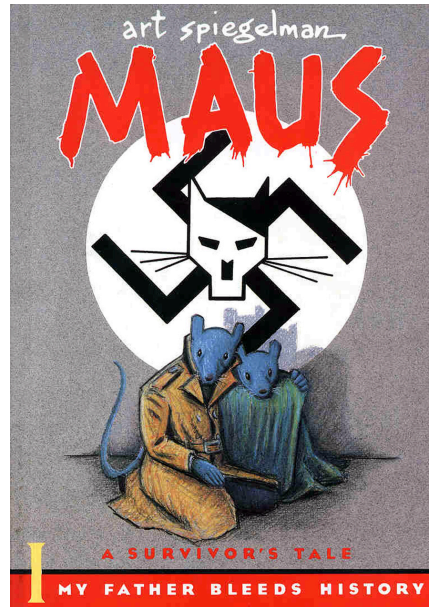
Therefore, the approach of graphic novels is a powerful tool for promoting literary literacy, offering countless benefits to readers. Their unique blend of visual and narrative elements creates an engaging reading experience, bridging the work and the reader. In addition to promoting literature and culture, graphic novels contribute to the holistic development of readers. They cultivate the skill of multimodal reading, which incorporates various modes of communication, such as images, beyond the written word, enriching interpretation and fostering critical literary analysis.

### **Maus – A Survivor 's Tale by Art Spiegelman.**

The literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" by Art Spiegelman is a testimony to the experiences of his Jewish parents during World War II. However, the work is presented in the form of a graphic novel, offering a graphic representation and a compelling approach for the reader. As a result, "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" became the first graphic novel to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, solidifying its place as a masterpiece of both literature and comics.

The first volume of "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" was published in 1986, followed by the second volume in 1991.

Figure 1 - Cover of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



Source: Spiegelman, Art. **Maus: A survivor's tale**. Pantheon Books. (1986).

The cartoonist Art Spiegelman, born after World War II, approaches the work with remarkable graphic symbolism that represents the different ethnic groups involved in the story. In this way, the author uses animals to symbolize these groups: Jews are represented by mice, Nazis by cats, Poles by pigs, and Americans by dogs. Through this approach, Art Spiegelman allows the reader to gain a universal perspective on the history, while also observing the dehumanization suffered by the Jews during the Holocaust.

Therefore, the literary work, marked by its graphic representation in the form of comics, offers readers unique perspectives on the Holocaust, exploring themes such as trauma, memory, and identity. It also provides a rich and dynamic reading experience that admirably combines art and narrative.

Thus, the specific objective of this project is to analyze how "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale" by Art Spiegelman, with its context of cultural and totalitarian resistance, can promote the holistic development of readers.

## LITERACY PRACTICE

The practice of literary literacy is crucial for both individual and social development, as it enables readers to engage actively with literary works. This interaction helps them develop the ability to interpret various literary elements, such as plot, characters, style, and symbolism, while also playing a significant role in shaping their overall intellectual and emotional growth. According to Cosson (2014, p. 23), the so-called "Reading Circle occupies a privileged position due to the benefits it offers both for the learning of reading and for the comprehensive development of the student as a citizen."<sup>9</sup> The literary practice of the 'reading circle,' developed by Rildo Cosson, involves a shared reading experience where participants discuss and collectively interpret the work they have read. In this way, shared reading becomes a group activity that fosters solidarity, communication, and collaborative learning among readers.

Shared reading offers several benefits to readers who participate in a group, including the development of empathy and mutual respect. It promotes the holistic growth of the reader while facilitating the sharing of the literary experience. The "reading circle" encourages group participation, where readers collectively engage with texts, develop strategies for exploration, and critically analyze each element. As a result, it is a practice that fosters literary literacy, empowering readers to understand and interact with texts in a critical and meaningful way.

According to Cosson (2014, p. 29), the so-called "A reading circle is the gathering of a group of people to discuss a text, to share the reading in a more or less systematic way."<sup>10</sup>

However, the literary practice of the 'reading circle,' developed by Rildo Cosson, serves as a privileged pedagogical approach that stimulates language and communication development, strengthens social bonds, encourages reading, and contributes to the holistic formation of the reader.

The aim of this article is to promote literary literacy through the graphic novel "Maus – A Survivor's Tale", using the reading circle method developed by Rildo Cosson. The choice of this graphic novel is rooted in its exploration of the complex theme of the Holocaust. The work portrays the genocide of Jews during World War II, shedding light on the horrors and traumas experienced in concentration camps. It delves into the memories and psychological scars that shape family dynamics and the lives of Holocaust survivors. Additionally, the novel uses animal symbolism to represent different groups (Jews as rats, Nazis as cats, Poles as pigs), raising important questions about identity and prejudice.

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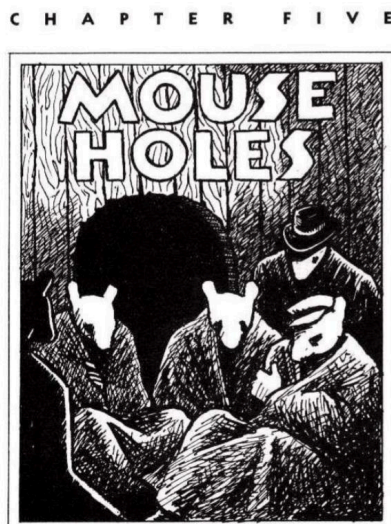
<sup>9</sup> O círculo de leitura ocupa uma posição privilegiada pelos benefícios que oferece tanto ao aprendizado da leitura quanto ao desenvolvimento integral do aluno como cidadão.

<sup>10</sup> Um círculo de leitura é a reunião de um grupo de pessoas para discutir um texto, para compartilhar a leitura de forma mais ou menos sistemática.

The chapter selected for development and exploration in Rildo Cosson's literary literacy practice is the fifth chapter, titled "Mouse Holes". This chapter addresses deep themes such as the memories, traumas, and fears of Vladek and Anja, as well as Artie's own emotional struggles. It presents a tense and gripping narrative of Vladek and Anja hiding from the Nazis in a secret refuge known as the "Mouse Holes". The chapter also depicts the betrayal of a neighbor who reveals their hiding place, forcing Vladek and Anja to flee to another location. At the same time, it emphasizes the mutual support between Vladek and Anja during these difficult moments, ultimately shedding light on the characters' identities.

The fifth chapter, titled "Mouse Holes," not only contributes to the tense and gripping narrative between Vladek and Anja, but also unveils a storyline that highlights the complex relationship between Art and Vladek. It reveals Art's emotional turmoil and the lasting traumas that continue to haunt him. The chapter also portrays the difficulties in family communication and introduces the revelation that Artie had written a comic book called *Prisoner of the Infernal Planet*, a story about his mother. Vladek discovers this after all these years, creating a tension between the present and the past.

Figure 2 - Cover of the fifth chapter of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



Source: SPIEGELMAN, Art. **Maus – A Survivor 's Tale**. Pantheon Books. (1986).

The 'reading circle' practice by Rildo Cosson, created alongside Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, unfolds in three stages: modeling, practice, and evaluation.

The modeling stage is a key moment where the teacher or mentor leads students in exploring the selected work. This involves examining its details, characters, settings, and language, as well as interpreting and contextualizing its messages. The teacher will help students connect the work to their prior knowledge. During this phase, students will also be divided into groups of 3 to 5 members, and a collective semester schedule will be established. This schedule outlines the development of the practice stages, including both teacher-student (Tt-Ss) and student-student (Ss-Ss) interactions.

The practice stage is divided into three moments: the initial meeting, the mid-stage meetings, and the final meeting.

For the initial meeting, it's ideal to hold the session in a spacious environment, allowing groups to engage in open discussions. The teacher will then provide the work in a digital format (PDF) to each group. During this first meeting, the teacher will outline the instructions for starting the reading. Students are expected to begin by examining the book's cover, reflecting on it, and discussing any questions or thoughts within their groups throughout the reading and interpretation process. This approach encourages an understanding of the text's materiality and fosters an initial connection, motivating students to continue developing their reading.

This moment of identifying and reading the cover is crucial for understanding the work, as the author incorporates various symbols and representations that aid in interpreting the narrative. For instance, the use of animal imagery to distinguish groups (Jews as rats and Nazis as cats), the symbol of Nazism, the significance of colors, and the powerful phrase "My father bleeds history." At this stage, the teacher should actively monitor the groups' interpretations, address any questions, and guide students in formulating reflections and inquiries that will be shared during the final meeting.

The intermediate meetings focus on individual reading of the work, while group meetings center around building and sharing interpretations and prior knowledge, sparking discussions about the text. In each session, the teacher should explore a key aspect or theme related to the reading, such as the intense tension and fear experienced by Vladek and Anja, Vladek's memories, Art's personal traumas, the challenges in family communication, and the revelation that Artie created a comic book titled *Prisoner of the Infernal Planet*. During each session, the teacher should present the theme being discussed using a relevant page from the work.

Figure 3- Page 96 of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



Source: Spiegelman, Art. **Maus: A survivor's tale**. Pantheon Books. (1986).

The theme of Art's traumas begins on page 96, the first page of the fifth chapter, marking the starting point for this segment of the reading. The narrative opens with Art and his wife lying in bed when Art receives a call from his father. The conversation is tense—Vladek is somewhat rude and demands that Art come to fix the roof at his house. This moment brings Art's traumas to the surface, highlighting his aversion to household chores (he doesn't even own any tools for the task) and his complicated relationship with home life. Through this, we gain insight into why Art became an artist.

Figure 4 - Page 98 of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



SOURCE: Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A survivor 's tale*. Pantheon Books. (1986).

The theme of communication struggles within the family runs throughout the entire narrative, with its first clear instance appearing on page 98. In this scene, Art visits his father's house and finds Vladek organizing nails. Art attempts to engage with him, but Vladek remains distant, cold, and rigid, continually shutting Art out.

Figure 5 - Page 99 of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



SOURCE: SPIEGELMAN, Art. *Maus – A Survivor 's Tale*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1987.

The theme addressing the revelation that Art wrote a comic book called "*Prisoner of the Infernal Planet*" is explored starting on page 99 of the work, where Mala informs him that Vladek read the comic written by Art. This leads to the presentation of the comic in the following pages, which, however, depict a dark and traumatic scenario.

Figure 6 - Page 106 of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



SOURCE: Spiegelman, Art. **Maus: A survivor's tale.** Pantheon Books. (1986).

The theme of Vladek's memories of the Holocaust is introduced on page 106, where the narrative details the brutal persecution of families by the Nazis, painting a vivid picture of each harrowing moment.

Figure 7 - Page 110 of the literary work "Maus – A Survivor 's Tale".



SOURCE: Spiegelman, Art. **Maus: A survivor's tale**. Pantheon Books. (1986).

The theme of tension and fear is powerfully depicted starting on page 110, where Vladek hides to protect himself from being captured by the Nazis, creating a secret refuge known as the "Mouse Holes." This section also reveals the betrayal of a neighbor who exposes the hideout, forcing Vladek and Anja to flee to another location. At the same time, it emphasizes the mutual support between Vladek and Anja during these harrowing moments, bringing Vladek's memories to the forefront.

The final meeting involves the completion of the reading by the groups, followed by expressing gratitude for the shared experience and presenting their interpretations to the entire class. This session allows groups to share their insights, reflections, and questions developed throughout the various stages of the practice. During this time, the teacher will engage in discussions with each group to facilitate deeper understanding.

The last stage is the evaluation, which includes a self-assessment where readers reflect on their experience and the knowledge gained during the reading process. The teacher will ask individual questions like: "How was your experience in the 'reading circle' practice?", "Did the work change your perspective on any societal issues?", and "What did you learn from this reading?" By answering these questions, readers will conduct a self-assessment of the work, enhancing their understanding and interpretation of the reading experience.

Furthermore, when the chapter from the work is developed and explored through the "reading circle" literary literacy practice, it targets an audience ranging from young adults to adults and can be examined both inside and outside educational institutions. Given the themes addressed in the chapter "Mouse Holes", such as memories, trauma, fear, betrayal, love, and the persecution of Jews by the Nazis, the practice encourages readers to collaboratively construct and discuss their interpretations of the text. As the reading progresses, a connection between the text, the readers, the author, and the context emerges, allowing each reader to form their own interpretation, engage in discussions, and raise issues for analysis. These reflections are then shared with the group, fostering a collective dynamic. According to Cosson (2014) :

First of all, because reading is entering into a conversation that involves at least four elements: the reader, the text, the author, and the context. We understand that this

conversation occurs between a reader and an author, mediated by the text, within a specific time and space. These four basic elements receive different emphases depending on the interests of those engaging with the reading and can be unfolded into many other elements, but they cannot be ignored in any definition of reading. (Cosson, 2014, p. 14)<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the "reading circle," as a valuable didactic strategy for literary literacy, offers immeasurable benefits to the participants. These include fostering social bonds, promoting mutual solidarity among readers, supporting their overall development through reading literary works, and encouraging discussions that enhance literary competence while respecting individual interpretations. By selecting a literary work with complex and profound themes, the "reading circle" amplifies these benefits, providing readers with a deeper learning experience and greater awareness of literary literacy.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this article, we explored the potential of literary literacy as a powerful tool for shaping readers, using Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* as a focal point. This work, with its graphic representation, layered narrative, and interplay between past and present, serves as an ideal companion for the 'reading circle' practice proposed by Rildo Cosson. The practice provided a unique space for building a community of readers, where the exchange of experiences and perspectives enriched the understanding of the text and fostered the comprehensive development of the reader. In conclusion, we assert that literary literacy, paired with the 'Reading Circle' methodology, is a potent approach for cultivating readers who can engage with the world critically and empathetically. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, with its narrative power and historical significance, has proven to be an invaluable resource for promoting reading and fostering a culture of peace and respect for diversity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my mother for providing me with this wonderful journey of knowledge, for giving me strength when I needed it most, and for standing by my side throughout this entire journey.

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<sup>11</sup> Em primeiro lugar, porque ler é entrar em uma conversa que envolve pelo menos quatro elementos: o leitor, o texto, o autor e o contexto. Compreendemos que essa conversa se dá entre um leitor e um autor mediado pelo texto em um tempo e espaço específico. Esses quatro elementos básicos recebem diferentes ênfases segundo os interesses de quem trata da leitura e podem ser desdobrados em outros tantos elementos, mas não podem ser ignorados em qualquer definição da leitura.

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