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By Diogo Raimundo Rodrigues Santos & Aliny Cristina Ramos de Sousa

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# A Dialogue between Aquiles and Percy Jackson in Homero and Rick Riordan: Epic Heroism, Contemporary and Readings Reader Formation

Diogo Raimundo Rodrigues Santos<sup>α</sup> & Aliny Cristina Ramos de Sousa<sup>σ</sup>

**Abstract-** This paper intends from the dialogue with classic and postmodern literary readings, to present a proposal of poetic interpretation of the works *The Iliad* of Homer and *The thief of rays*, of Rick Riordan in addition to the Manichaeism Canon and Mass Literature. In this way, we intend to think the issue of literary criticism, from the characters Achilles and Percy Jackson, reflecting on the issues that the literary work can elicit in formation of readers.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**H**eroism is a question covered in literature and cultures for centuries of human history. From the classic heroes of canonical literature to the heroes of comics and media phenomena (eg, cinema, which really is the seventh art!), These paladins of justice have always been in vogue for the creative ideal of the human. In this sense, fantastic stories with heroes have always surprised readers of all ages. However, for most authors researching reader education and literary education, classical literature is in crisis, and is no longer so desired and read by children and young people, who mostly consume so-called bestsellers.

Our main aim in this work will be to provoke thinking from Homer's Greek epic *Iliad* and from the contemporary work *The Lightning Thief* (2008) by the American Rick Riordan the hero question in classical literature and of contemporaneity in the formation of readers, seeking to recover the interest in canonical literature and to establish dialogues between generations, cultures, literatures and readings.

The image of the hero seems to be something that is always present in most cultures. The hero is the one who overcomes all adversity. Even "the chill at the threat of death" (HEIDEGGER, 2010, p. 24). The

presence of the gods is something that is constantly shining on your journeys. Classical examples can be observed in Greek epics and Judeo-Christian narratives. This is how we see Moses and Ulysses, the two heroes most often in their challenges rely on the blessings and curses of Yahweh and the gods of Olympus. Hegel (2001), on the other hand shows heroes not as individuals supported by angelic messengers, but as a subject within a materialistic perspective:

It focuses on the historical situation. As an individual, with all his impulses and powers, he is nothing but the raw material of the Spirit of the World, which grasps him with an overwhelming historical passion. The abstract Spirit thus acquires the concrete power of fulfillment. [...] (HEGEL, 2001, p. 35)<sup>1</sup>.

The wake and worldview that we will follow here will be the classic one, where the hero is the one who dances with the gods and talks with mortals and immortals, he goes beyond human forces, is moved by courage and altruism, and this is how he can kill the jellyfish or defeat a giant. They are the ones facing death and life, not retreating even considering their human and mortal state.

However, although the heroes show strength and power, each has its own characteristics, which will be expressed through their adventures and also by virtue of the context (world / culture). Thus each story is a rich and different narrative and reading that contributes to the formation of critical, human and open readers.

So this is how we believe that the two heroic characters, Achilles and Percy Jackson, have much to poetically educate us. But what would a poetic educate be?

Educating is not a matter of school and curriculum. It is a matter of being, of humanizing being what you have received to be. The human of all men is inherent in all ages, peoples and their cultures. Since the outbreak of the human being in life, there is education because it concerns the outbreak of the world, being inseparable from the essence of the human being and the truth in the

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<sup>1</sup>Translated by the authors from: "Nele se concentra a situação histórica. Como indivíduo, com todos os seus ímpetos e poderes, ele não é nada senão a matéria-prima do Espírito do Mundo, que o agarra com uma paixão histórica avassaladora. O Espírito abstrato assim adquire o poder concreto de realização. [...]"

happening of reality. To educate, therefore, always concerns the poetic realization of the human being as it prevails in the truth of the sense of being. (CASTRO, 2014, p. 15)<sup>2</sup>.

In this article we will present how the phenomenon of epic heroism happens, how it arises in antiquity, how it presents itself in contemporary times and how it contributes to the formation of readers. For this, we will analyze Homer's work *Iliad*, in dialogue with Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief*, for the construction of this writing we will list the characters Achilles and Percy Jackson, making an analysis of the essence of being hero in the person of the two protagonists – the first, an epic (or classic) hero; the second, a contemporary (or modern) hero – and how his different stories poetically show us possibilities for the formation of readers.

This time, from a conception of poetic reading, we will preliminarily discuss the concepts of: epic, classic and hero, then the crisis of classical literature, the dialogue between the classic and the contemporary, and, finally, the relevance of these questions to the literature and the formation of readers.

## II. PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS - EPIC, EPIC, CLASSIC AND HERO

To continue our journey it is important to talk about some concepts such as epic poetry, epic, classic. But after all, what would be epic? The term epic comes from the Latin *epicus*, refers to what belongs or is related to epic or heroic poetry. The epics feature the exploits (or deeds) of an archetypal hero who represents the collective values of a nation. The hero is one who, even in the face of imminent danger, is not intimidated but advances.

The Houaiss dictionary defines it as “epic poem, set of fabulous heroic actions” (2004, p. 292).

A classic is a work of art that never exhausts what it has to say, it crosses us, bringing with it the marks of the readings that preceded ours and behind it the traces they left in the culture or cultures they crossed (CALVINO, 2007,

P. 9-11). Just as a historian looks at history, classical literature dances in time / space and, while making us think about the past, inspires us to see paths to the future. Lajolo draws such a classic (2001),

[...] originally classic was a concept that encompassed only Latin and Greek works. Only later did it include works written in the various European languages throughout the

14th, 15th and 16th centuries. However, at the present time an author or text need not be contemporary with either Euripides' Greece [...] or Racine's France [...]. Just that they are recognized as excellent by critics. (LAJOLO, 2001, p.20)<sup>3</sup>.

The concept of hero for classic authors such as Plato and others is linked to the divine, “Heroes are demigods born of a god who fell in love with a mortal woman or a mortal who fell in love with a goddess” (ABBAGANANO, 1982, p. 498). Thus the great exploits of the heroes of the various mythologies and narratives could be explained by the presence of the gods. In Judeo-Christian histories, it was possible to see in the Old Testament Moses “the Hebrew messiah” in dialogue with the sacred performing miracles such as opening the Red Sea and others. The Jew believed that his people (Israel) were special and children of God. In the New Testament this manifests with the arrival of the Messiah Jesus Christ, the legitimate son of God. From it, the so-called Christians become heroes and martyrs, representing their master's ideals as love, hope, faith and others.

Hegel disagrees with the hero's relationship with the sacred because.

The source of the hero's strength is still hidden beneath the surface of reality, he has direct access to the reality of the Idea and she inspires him to his deeds, filling his whole being with a concentrated will and thus making him the subject of history, his creator, who brings to light what is still hidden in the womb of time. It is the heroic man who pushes history forward. (HEGEL, 2001, p. 35).

In this way, the hero, whether aided by the gods or just “by the Spirit of the world for his own ends” (HEGEL, 2001, p. 35), always comes up amidst an extraordinary adventure triumphing! Whether beating the Lion of Nemea, or returning from death, the hero's coat of arms always shines and perpetuates itself in the culture, history and art of humanity. In this way, we believe that the hero is the one who walks the paths of mystery, going beyond the ordinary and working the extraordinary, and thus emanates from him an “open place in the midst of the being, in whose opening everything is different from usual and natural” (HEIDEGGER, 2011, p. 22,45).

## III. CRISIS CLASSIC LITERATURE

In this poetic wake we realize that as time goes by, the readings and various works of classical literature that extol the figure of the classic epic hero are becoming increasingly forgotten by generations of

<sup>2</sup>“Educar não é uma questão de escola e currículo. É uma questão de ser, de humanizar-se sendo o que recebeu para ser. O humano de todos os homens é inerente a todas as épocas, povos e suas culturas. Desde a eclosão do ser humano na vida, há educar porque ele diz respeito à eclosão de mundo, sendo indissociável da essência do ser humano e da verdade no acontecer da realidade. Educar diz respeito sempre, portanto, à realização poética do ser humano enquanto vigora na verdade do sentido do ser”.

<sup>3</sup>[...] originalmente clássico era um conceito que abrangia apenas obras latinas e gregas. Só posteriormente passou a incluir também obras escritas nas várias línguas europeias ao longo dos séculos XIV, XV e XVI. No entanto, na atualidade um autor ou texto não precisam ser contemporâneos nem da Grécia de Eurípides [...], nem da França de Racine [...]. Basta que sejam reconhecidos como excelentes pela crítica.

readers of post modernity. For Cynthia Costa, the reading children make the following classification of what they read: "there are the nice books and the boring books" (COSTA, 2012, p.1)<sup>4</sup>, that is, the books that are required readings, required by the teachers (which are usually classics of literature), and those they read spontaneously and for pleasure. For Sodré (1985), specialized literary criticism divides Literature into "two literatures, cultured literature and mass literature. from the latter, we can use the expression bestseller [...]" (SODRÉ, 1985, p. 6 - 7)<sup>5</sup>.

So, for those who work with reader education, it is interesting to note that nowadays there is a growing lack of interest among children and young people for the classics of literature and, on the other hand, there is an exponential interest in bestsellers. Sartre believes that there is a relationship of complementarity and dependence between the author of a literary work and its reader. Because in writing, the writer needs the reader to willingly acknowledge the importance of his work by reading it. According to the author, it is necessary to appeal to the freedom of the reader to collaborate in the production of his work (SARTRE, 2004, p.39). But does it mean training readers? First of all it is up to us to question what is the act of reading? For Castro (2015):

Reading, in a poetic sense, is always questioning oneself, but whose reading path exposes us and demands meaningful decisions about our living. At this point, the difference between the experience and the reading experience appears, as reading not only tells us something, but puts us in question. And that is understanding each other. (CASTRO, 2015, p. 111)<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, we realize that the reading that forms human readers is the one that causes questioning and questioning, and this time it is with sadness that we see great classical works, which contain many rich questions for human formation, being forgotten and left on the shelves of the few old libraries in Brazil. It is with regret that we heard in his last course at the Collège de France (1979-1980) Roland Barthes that great literature was languishing in practice and teaching. (MOISÉS, 2011, p. 251).

In this scenario, it becomes relevant to think of alternatives to create spaces, whether physical or poetic, where the different types of literature that exist today can be remembered, rescued and appreciated, as works of art that are, at the same time, presenting

proposals. with conciliatory elements to create an atmosphere of diversity and richness in reader education, where the classic is not regarded as outdated by the juvenile audience, and the bestsellers are not underestimated by literary criticism.

#### IV. ACHILLES AND PERCY JACKSON - TWO HEROES, TWO TIMES AND GENERATIONS

In this topic we will briefly expose a biography of the authors of *Iliad* and *The Lightning Thief* and discuss the trajectory of Achilles and Percy Jackson. The different narratives are important to understand the relevance that each of the works contains as peculiar and rich readings with questions for the formation of the subject-reader.

It is scarce what is known precisely about the life and even the actual existence of Homer, the Greek poet-thinker. But it can be said that its significance to the Greek people is considerable, as it symbolizes a foundation for the cultural legacy of Western civilization, author of two of the greatest classics of universal literature of all time: *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For Santana (2004, p. 1, 2):

Some claim that he would have belonged to the eighth century BC, a time that corresponds to the revival of writing in Greece, but in fact it is difficult to specify when he would have actually lived, or even where. Ancient legends describe him as an aedo - singers who told the heroic stories of a people, always accompanied by a musical instrument common among the ancient Greeks, the forminx, poor and blind, wandering here and there, bestowing their hosts with the narration of their verses. He would have been in the habit of roaming the courts and public spaces of the cities of this time, describing the heroic acts of the Greeks, ancestors of the Greeks. His works left to posterity accounts of the wars waged by brave warriors for the conquest of Ilium, narrated in the *Iliad*, and the events later, as the fate of Odysseus and his comrades on their return home, told in the *Odyssey*, in the epic style celebrated by this poet.<sup>7</sup>

In *Iliad*, who stands out is Achilles. He is the greatest warrior of the Trojan War. His fury is the fundamental theme of the Homeric narrative, which is caused by his being taken Briseida, the slave he loved.

<sup>7</sup> "Alguns afirmam que ele teria pertencido ao século VIII a.C., época que corresponde ao renascimento da escrita na Grécia, mas na verdade é difícil precisar quando ele teria realmente vivido, ou mesmo em que local. Antigas lendas o descrevem como um aedo - cantores que contavam as histórias heróicas de um povo, sempre acompanhados por um instrumento musical comum entre os gregos antigos, o forminx, pobre e cego, vagando aqui e ali, agradecendo seus anfitriões com a narração de seus versos. Ele teria o hábito de perambular pelas cortes e pelos espaços públicos das cidades desta época, descrevendo os atos heróicos dos aqueus, ancestrais dos gregos. Suas obras legaram à posteridade os relatos sobre as guerras empreendidas por bravos guerreiros para a conquista de Ilium, narradas na *Iliada*, e os acontecimentos posteriores, como o destino de Odisseu e de seus companheiros no retorno para casa, contados na *Odisséia*, no estilo épico, celebrizado por este poeta."

<sup>4</sup> "há os livros legais e os livros chatos".

<sup>5</sup> "Duas literaturas: a literatura culta e a literatura de massa. Como sinônimo desta última, podemos usar a expressão best-seller."

<sup>6</sup> "Ler, em sentido poético, é sempre questionar-se, mas cujo caminho de leitura nos expõe e exige decisões de sentido de nosso viver. Nesse momento, aparece a diferença entre a experiência e a experienciada leitura, pois esta não apenas nos informa algo, mas nos põe em questão. Isso é compreendermo-nos."



From this stalemate he refuses to fight, and the war begins to be at the mercy of the Trojans. However, when his beloved Patroclus is killed in battle, he returns to war, and ends by killing Hector, brother of Paris. It is Paris who, by abducting Helena, gives rise to the beginning of the great war between Greeks and Trojans. Achilles returns to the fighting and, after ending Hector's life, casts his wrath on Hector's body for seven days to avenge Patroclus. In the end, appeased his anger, restores the body to Hector's father, Priam. So we see Achilles walk for revenge and then placate it. The paladin takes a heroic journey and dies in honor, never hesitating from duty.

Rick Riordan was born in 1964 and is a North American writer of a series of books in which he deals with mythologies, especially Greek, but with a teenage touch. Hence, his works are successful among this audience. The most well-known work that generated numerous films and awards in the cinema was the book series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*. In this series, the author evokes beings from Greek mythology and mixes with adventures in contemporary times. Moving Mount Olympus, the holy abode of the gods of Greece, to the Empire States in the heart of New York.

Percy Jackson is a demigod, son of Poseidon - the god of the sea. He is a twelve year old who discovers his lineage, and is then challenged to be part of an adventure in which he will seek his discovery and affirmation of identity. He is the leader of a group of teenage demigods who are training to learn to master their powers and discover their destinies. After some confusion and misunderstanding, he is accused of stealing Zeus' lightning bolt, thus starting his adventure to find out who the real rogue is. Thus the publisher Intrínseca summarizes the work:

The Lightning Thief, is the first volume of the saga Percy Jackson and the Olympians. The lightning thief was among the first on the New York Times bestseller list. The author combines legends of Greek mythology with adventures in the 21st century. In them, the gods of Olympus remain alive and still fall in love with mortals, and from this union are born half gods, half humans, like the heroes of ancient Greece. Marked by fate, they are hardly past adolescence. Few can find out their identity<sup>8</sup>.

Both heroes represent not only two different stories, but two distinct eras and two generations. From this dialogue a rich network of questions can emerge; cultural, social, philosophical and ontological issues of the human. One of the main issues we can observe in the heroes Achilles and Percy Jackson is the issue of reading, which is closely linked to the practice of reader training. Both characters are living works that present a reading and interpretation of the human. Each is a possibility of forming readers, when we look at their

journeys and adventures, we see ourselves in our daily groves, with our problems, dilemmas and issues. While adult scholars praise Achilles, children extol Percy Jackson, the former are those who "know everything", while the others are those whose gift is the "unknown."

We can learn about reading from these two characters, as well as from the great literary critics and especially from children, because they are those who inhabit the poetic, and, as Rosa (1994) says, when a child is born, a new world is inaugurated. Thus Achilles and Percy Jackson show us how reading is something beautiful, poetic, alive, and beyond prisons, for "reading is rebellious and slutty" (CHARTIER, 1998, p. 7) and is not tied to order of books, as Chartier says (1998). In addition, reading is the communion of diversity:

All languages, like rites, say the different, but as languages always say the same, although they do not say the same things. Just because language always says the same thing is that one human being can speak different languages, translations can be made and there is the living tradition of memory. This is all reading. (CASTRO, 2015, p. 56)<sup>9</sup>.

## V. THE RELEVANCE OF EPIC AND CONTEMPORARY HEROES WITHIN LITERATURE AND FOR THE FORMATION OF READERS

Epic heroes come from classical literature, also called by some authors the "great literature." The canon versus mass literature issue is still much discussed today, but our purpose is not to deepen this chasm, but to approximate these realities.

The contemporary hero is the one who finds resonance with today's juvenile audience, children and young people identify with them because these heroes seem to suffer the same dilemmas as their readers, the school routine, the triad childhood-adolescence-youth issues. As Barreto states about the famous work among children and young people Harry Potter.

J. K. Rowling's book features a young man with the difficult mission of eliminating "You Know Who." We can identify that the "hero", the preteen Harry Potter, is a seemingly ordinary person. Because of its fragility, the reader quickly identifies with the protagonist. (BARRETO, 2012, p.1).<sup>10</sup>

Heroes, regardless of whether they are classical or modern, make us think of the humanity that

<sup>9</sup> Todas as línguas, como ritos, dizem o diferente, mas como linguagem dizem sempre o mesmo, embora não digam as mesmas coisas. Só porque a linguagem diz sempre mesmo é que um mesmo ser humano pode falar diferentes línguas, traduções podem ser feitas e haver a tradição viva da memória. Tudo isso é leitura. (CASTRO, 2015, p. 56).

<sup>10</sup> "O livro de J. K. Rowling traz um jovem com a difícil missão de eliminar "Você Sabe Quem". Podemos identificar que o "herói", o pré-adolescente Harry Potter, é uma pessoa aparentemente comum. Por causa de sua fragilidade, o leitor se identifica rapidamente com o protagonista".

<sup>8</sup> Available in <https://www.intrinseca.com.br/livro/409/>. Access in: 10/Jul.2018.

constitutes the human being, what he is ontologically, with its anxieties, fears and perplexities. Another contribution of this work is the reflection of how life happens, but then we have to question what life is?

We cannot delimit, define life. This implies giving it a limit, a finish, an exhaustion, that is, denying what life is: perpetual bestowal, eternal beginning of everything. All. For there is nothing outside of it that is no longer in it, or rather that it is no longer - even death, especially death, which gives it its meaning, principle, source, current, sea of living rivers. As an instant of generation, life must embrace the not yet lived, the not living, or the living and dead - consecrates death as a possibility of the possibility of becoming. (FAGUNDES, 2014, p. 253)<sup>11</sup>

In this way, to think the hero is to question the being and the possibilities of becoming. The hero is one who, in confrontation with death, makes an extraordinary consecration of life. All of these pieces of the puzzle called man, which are at its core, become a unit in the phenomenon of heroism.

Most of the works our children and young people are reading are bestsellers. And despite the pessimistic view of literary critics of these works, there are authors who believe that these readings have their value. For Walnut, for example:

Reading best-selling books is often viewed with bias by intellectuals and the academic canon at large. However, disregarding the amount of importance such books will have in the reading life of individuals who consume this type of literature would be a wrong attitude, since it would imply the disregard of what they read. (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p.1).<sup>12</sup>

That is, it cannot be denied that the exercise of reading for pleasure is put into practice through such works, which often cannot be achieved with the reading of the classics. Nogueira also emphasizes that reading needs first of all to be enjoyable in order to enable discoveries and contribute to the construction of knowledge (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p.2).

One of the reasons why children are often enchanted by bestsellers is that they identify with the protagonist character of the work. What happens in Exupery's work, *The Little Prince*, one of the few classic works still read by the teen generation, where the

protagonist is a child. And so most of these works call and appeal to children and young people because they are either about their everyday subjects (although Percy Jackson is studying at a demigod school, it is still a school!), or themes that the children of the world have. enchant, as in the case of Stephenie Meyer's novel *Twilight*, or the magic in *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. According to Aquino (2013), it is almost impossible for children and youth readers not to identify with current best sellers:

Identification with today's bestsellers is instantaneous because their target audience is mainly the young reader. The characters in these books are mostly still in school, falling in love for the first time, trying to figure out who they are and what they like. Which young man would not identify with this? They enjoy reading about the same joys and difficulties they see in their daily lives, as they are in a self-affirming phase. (AQUINO, 2013, p.3).<sup>13</sup>

Thus, no matter how much the juvenile audience is not reading Homer, or what the school would like it to read, it cannot be denied that at least young people are reading. For Silva, "reading is a determining factor for the student's social life, as it is directly related to the ability to read to learn, as well as being decisive as to school success or failure" (SILVA, 2012, p.3). For Abreu, "the school teaches how to read and like literature" (ABREU, 2006, p.19), ie, this should be the appropriate locus to discuss with the reading subjects about these diversities and specificities of children's literature. After tracing the kind of literature that our schoolchildren are reading, some issues arise: how to work with bestsellers at school, while compulsory school reading is another? And should the classics be abandoned because of this new emerging paradigm? Should the school now embrace bestsellers as problematic classroom readings?

Firstly, we need to shed some bias against best sellers. For Nogueira, it is necessary to demystify the belief that these readings alienate and do not contribute to the formation of a reader by creating passive and uncritical individuals (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p.4). For Oliveira, when reading any literary work the reader experiences new sensations that probably would not have the courage or imagination to experience them without the protection of the fiction contained in it (OLIVEIRA, 2012, p.30). Therefore, there is a need to value the reading that children and young people elect. Second, there is a way to use bestsellers as a bridge to classical readings. Cintia Barreto, talking about *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*, says that these two books bring a

<sup>11</sup> "Não podemos delimitar, definir a vida. Isso implica dar-lhe um limite, um acabamento, um esgotamento, ou seja, negar o que *vida* é: perpétua doação, eternoprincipiariadetudo. *Tudo*. Pois não há nada foradelaque já não se jana, o melhor, que já não se seja - mesmo a morte, principalmente a morte, que lhe dá e lhe é o sentido, o princípio, a fonte, a corrente, o mar dos rios-viventes. Como instante de geração, vida tem de abranger o ainda não vivido, o não vivente, ou o que já não mais se vive e - morto - consagra a morte como *possibilidade da possibilidade de devir*".

<sup>12</sup> "A leitura de livros Best-sellers é normalmente vista de forma preconceituosa pelos intelectuais e cânone acadêmico de maneira geral. Entretanto, desconsiderar a dose de importância que tais livros venham a ter na vida leitora dos indivíduos consumidores desse tipo de literatura seria uma atitude errônea, já que implicaria na desconsideração de que eles leem."

<sup>13</sup> "A identificação com os Best-sellers infanto-juvenis de hoje é instantânea porque o público alvo deles é justamente o leitor jovem. As personagens destes livros em sua maioria ainda estão na escola, se apaixonando pela primeira vez, tentando descobrir quem são e do que gostam. Qual jovem não se identificaria com isso? Eles gostam de ler sobre as mesmas alegrias e dificuldades que enxergam em seu dia-a-dia, pois estão em uma fase de autoafirmação."

structure already successfully used by Monteiro Lobato in 1920: the mix between the real world and the magical world (BARRETO, 2012, p.1), that is, it is possible to make a connection between the books sold by the media and the classics of literature!

Barreto understands that it is still possible to associate *Harry* with *Capitães de Areia*, by Jorge Amado; *Twilight* with *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare, *Amor de Perdição*, by Camilo Castelo Branco, and *Iracema*, by José de Alencar (BARRETO, 2012, p.2). Apparently, the way forward is to begin to discover what's interesting about these readings that appeal to children and young people so that they can look for further reading, even though there is still a lot of prejudice about bestseller reading - including some Religious institutions even banned reading Harry, believing it to be an incentive to witchcraft (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p.4). One should not deny the reality of the socio-cultural context in which we live. And so, we must move from this reality to the reality we want, after all, as Nogueira says if it is the incentive to read the greatest magic in Harry Potter it can be considered a great achievement. (Ibid.). So if the reality is that our youth is reading, let's move from their reality to the reality we would like to build.

In this sense, we believe in the importance of the theme because of its contemporaneity. Reading about heroes, whether they are ancient or current, challenges us to think about the importance of classical and contemporary literature for the formation of readers. In this sense, the hero is a link between antiquity and post modernity, and we bet that generation after generation, culture after culture, civilization after civilization rekindles the flame of the hero as a poetic educator who sows seeds that germinate time after time. The hero is the quintessential poetic educator, because he teaches us and reminds us that we are free, and that freedom is the most precious gift of life:

Every man, regardless of cultural differences, knows in his heart that freedom is divine, greater than he is. So much so that in every age and place there will always be those who have the courage to sacrifice their lives for freedom, as is the exemplary case of the tragic heroes. They immolate themselves to become, to conquer what, paradoxical as it may seem, ontologically they already are: free (otherwise they would not be men). Not worth it worth dying for freedom? When slavery is not accepted, is death preferable to a shackled life? A slave life is an attack not only against itself, but against what is divine, sacred in it. Man is always given the possibility, whatever the circumstances in which he lives, of leaping into his present self: the free openness of freedom. (FERRAZ, 2014, p. 107).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Todo homem, independentemente das diferenças culturais, sabe, no seu íntimo, que a liberdade é divina, é maior do que ele. Tanto é assim que, em todas as épocas e lugares, sempre haverá os que têm a coragem de sacrificar a própria vida pela liberdade, como é o caso exemplar dos heróis trágicos. Eles se imolam para se tornarem, para

## VI. CONCLUSION

Promoting thinking in the act of reading the fantastic narratives of heroes is an exercise in interpretation and questioning that contributes to the formation of readers. This shows us a shining path in which the hero is the messenger who carries in his wings the good news of poetic education. There are many possibilities, so we dare not exhaust the issue. However, we would like that even with the simplicity of this writing, somehow collaborated to provoke and foster among the subjects involved in the process of training readers the curiosity and interest in the subject problematized here.

We would like to hope that with this modest text, even if in the end, we can cooperate with the formation of teachers, researchers, students and human beings as readers' trainers.

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conquistarem o que, por paradoxal que pareça, ontologicamente são livres (senão fossem, não seriam homens). Não vale a pena morrer pela liberdade? Quando não se aceita a escravidão, não será preferível a morte a uma vida aprisionada? Um avião que se descontrola não é mais um avião, mas um pedaço de metal e madeira que se desintegra no ar. O mesmo acontece com o homem: quando ele não é livre, não é mais um homem, mas um pedaço de carne e osso que se desintegra no inferno. Ao homem sempre é dada a possibilidade, quaisquer que sejam as circunstâncias em que vive, de poder saltar para dentro de onde já está: o livre aberto da liberdade".

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