

**(Not) Looking Together in the Same
Direction:
A Comparative Study of Representations of
Latin America in a Selection of Franco-
Belgian and Latin American Comics**

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Confirmation of Originality

I certify that this thesis, submitted to The University of Sydney for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts is my original work and contains no material previously published by another person. It contains no material submitted for the award of a degree or diploma in any university. Contributions made to the thesis by others are explicitly acknowledged. The interviews carried out for this thesis were done with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the university.

Trilingual Acknowledgements

These acknowledgements are in all three languages because it is important to me that those to whom they are addressed are able to read them.

Let it be known: it is my parents' fault if I love comics so much! They were the ones who introduced me to comics before I even knew how to read and I have always been surrounded by *Tintin*, *Gaston Lagaffe* and *Rubrique-à-Brac* albums and many more crazy works. It is again my parents' fault if I am the student that I am: they have always given me their full support. Let them be thanked for it.

A very big thank you to the Pellegrins in Paris who not only welcome me with open arms and spoil me during each stay in France but also do not forget me when I am not there. A very special thank you to my cousin Gilles who often sent me material that I would not have been able to obtain otherwise and who has really accompanied me to pretty much every *bande dessinée* event and park every time I visited... and always in good spirit!

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Abstract

For almost a century, the creation of comics set partly or entirely in Latin America has been something of a tradition in France and Belgium, two countries where comic book production is abundant. Though for a very important nucleus of (mostly) Belgian comic authors the Americas have been of capital importance (one of them grew up in Argentina; three others travelled to North America, drawing from their experiences to create what is now considered some of their best and most significant work). Yet in their work and that of their Franco-Belgian successors, Latin America continues to be essentially represented by fictional countries. Given that there are no colonial links between Belgium and Latin America, this interest in Latin America is all the more striking when we consider some of the images used to represent Latin America in the Franco-Belgian tradition and the fact that Latin American comics do not reciprocate by depicting France or Belgium extensively, but rather focus on national issues.

This thesis fills several gaps by bringing to the fore culturally significant texts that have been largely disregarded and underlines the contribution of Francophone Europe to the creation of the “idea” of Latin America. I approach the depiction of ‘Latin America’ in these comics with a two-pronged tactic. First, using comics from centres of Latin American comic production (Mexico and Argentina) I compare and contrast various aspects of Latin America as represented in the Franco-Belgian and in the Latin American traditions: the state and masculinity, a perceived economic backwardness, a perceived geographic remoteness, colonisation and its aftermath and the imperatives of selling oneself to a foreign market. Second, I seek to address the reasons why there is no corresponding interest on the Latin American side and why

Franco-Belgian comics appear to favour fictional Latin American countries by considering what it is that Latin America means in Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics.

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Corpus List

The corpus spans almost a century of comics, starting with L'oreille cassée (1937) and ending with Sur la piste du marsupilami (2012). Though I may include references to and comments on more recent creations, they cannot be included for an in-depth analysis for reasons of time limitations. The full details of the items included in the corpus for this study are listed below.

Tintin

- Hergé, *L'oreille cassée* [The Broken Ear], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 6, Tournai: Casterman, 1937.
- Hergé, *Le secret de la Licorne* [The Secret of the Unicorn], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 11, Tournai: Casterman, 1946.
- Hergé, *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* [Red Rackham's Treasure], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 12, Tournai: Casterman, 1945.
- Hergé, *Les 7 boules de cristal* [The Seven Crystal Balls], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 13, Tournai: Casterman, 1948.
- Hergé, *Le temple du soleil* [Prisoners of the Sun], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 14, Tournai: Casterman, 1949.
- Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros* [Tintin and the Picaros], Les aventures de Tintin, Vol. 23, Tournai: Casterman, 1976.

Spirou et Fantasio

- Franquin, "L'héritage" [The Inheritance], in *L'héritage*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976.
- Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers* [Spirou and the Heirs], Les aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, Vol. 4, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1952.
- Franquin, *Le dictateur et le champignon* [The Dictator and the Mushroom], Spirou et Fantasio, Vol. 7, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1956.
- Tome & Janry, *L'horloger de la comète* [The Comet Watchmaker], Spirou et Fantasio, Vol. 36, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1986.
- Morvan & Munuera, *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir* [The Man who did not Want to Die], Spirou et Fantasio, Vol. 48, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2005.
- Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak" [Back to the Editorial Offices], Spirou et Fantasio, *Spirou*, 16 April, 2008, year 71, Issue 3653, 32-39.
- Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons* [Zorkon Alert], Les aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, Vol. 51, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010.

Marsupilami

- Franquin, Delporte & Will, "Capturer un marsupilami" [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002.
- Batem, Yann & Franquin, *Baby Prinz*, Marsupilami, Vol. 5, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2010.

Batem & Yann, *Fordlandia*, Marsupilami, Vol. 6, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2010.
 Batem, Yann & Franquin, *L'or de Boavista* [The Gold of Boavista], Marsupilami, Vol. 7, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005.
 Batem, Yann & Franquin, *Le temple de Boavista* [The Temple of Boavista], Marsupilami, Vol. 8, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2004.
 Batem, Kaminka & Marais, *Le défilé du jaguar* [The Jaguar Fashion Show], Marsupilami, Vol. 13, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005.
 Batem & Dugomier, *L'orchidée des Chahutas* [The Chahutas' Orchid], Marsupilami, Vol. 17, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2004.
 Batem, Colman & Dugomier, *Robinson Academy*, Marsupilami, Vol. 18, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005.

Lucky Luke

Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton* [Tortillas for the Daltons], Lucky Luke, Vol. 31, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1967.

Los Supermachos

Rius, "Los Supermachos 1" [The Supermales 1], *Los Supermachos remasterizados*, 17/02/2004, <http://toliro.webspaceforme.net/supermachos/> (21/12/2012).
 Rius, *Mis Supermachos* [My Supermales], Vol. 1, Mexico D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004.
 Rius, *Mis Supermachos* [My Supermales], Vol. 2, Mexico D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 2009.
 Rius, *Mis Supermachos* [My Supermales], Vol. 3, Mexico D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 2010.
 Rius, *Mis Supermachos* [My Supermales], Vol. 4, Mexico D.F.: Grijalbo, 2012.

Inodoro Pereyra

Fontanarrosa, *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra* [20 Years with Inodoro Pereyra], Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 21, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 1996.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 22, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 1997.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 23, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 24, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2000.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 25, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 26, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 27, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 28, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 29, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 30, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 31, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007.
 Fontanarrosa, *Inodoro Pereyra*, Vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008.

Operación Bolívar

Clement, Edgar, *Operación Bolívar*, México: Castor, 1999.

Proper Names, Place Names and Their Official English Translations

Proper names and place names are used in this thesis as they appear in the original works. The following list is provided for the benefit of those who are more familiar with the English translations.

Tintin

Capitaine Haddock: Captain Haddock
Milou: Snowy
Dupont et Dupond (or Dupondt in plural): Thomson and Thompson
Les Joyeux Turlurons (or the Turlurons): The Jolly Follies
Professeur Tryphon Tournesol: Professor Cuthbert Calculus
Moulinsart: Marlinspike (village) / Marlinspike Hall (Haddock's castle)
Chevalier François de Hadoque: Sir Francis Haddock
Rackham le Rouge: Red Rackham
R. W. Chicklet: R. W. Trickler
Nuevo Rico: Nuevo-Rico
Bibaros: Rumbabas
Trenxcoatl: Hotuatabotl
Badurayal: Coliflor
Babaoro'm: Babaorum
m'Hatouvou: M'Hatuvu
Bikoulou: Karamelo
Père Sébastien: Papa Sebastian
Kaloma: Avakuki
Le pont de l'Inca: the Bridge of the Inca
Le temple du soleil: the temple of the sun

Spirou et Fantasio¹

Zantafio: Pathetico
Seccotine: Snoopie

¹ Please note that only some of the albums are available in English: a dozen early albums are published by Euro Books, *Z comme Zorglub* is published by Fantasy Flight Publishing and three albums are published by Cinebook. The proper names vary according to the publishers: Fantasy Flight and Cinebook tend to keep them as they are in the French original whereas Euro Books have translated several proper names. Listed here are the translated versions that exist, regardless of the publishers.

Général Zantas: General Pacheco
Palombie: Palombia
Hermoso (the spy): Vindicto
Marsupilami: Beastie
Champignac/Champignac-en-Cambrousse: Culdesac
Comte (Pacôme) de Champignac: Count Culdesac
Champignacien: Culdesacian
Zorglonde: Zorgwave
La vallée des bannis: the valley of the exiles
Touboutt-Chan: Yurmaheesun-Shan
Zorglumobile: zorgmobile

Lucky Luke

Rantanplan: Rin Tin Can

Publications in This Thesis

Pellegrin, Annick, “*Inodoro Pereyra: The Gaucho as a National Icon*”, *Literature and Aesthetics*, 20, 1 (2010): 9-25, Available: <http://escholarship.library.usyd.edu.au/journals/index.php/LA/article/view/4787/5507> (06/10/2011).

Pellegrin, Annick, “De los feos vicios, o las vergüenzas de los Pereyra”, 1^{er} Congreso Internacional de Historietas: *Viñetas Serias*, Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires, 23-25 September, 2010, Available: <http://www.vinetas-sueltas.com.ar/congreso/pdf/HumorGrafico,GauchescayTradicion/pellegrin.pdf> (11/01/2011).

Introduction

Bandes dessinées (Franco-Belgian comics) are the books that sell the most in France and in Belgium and walking in Brussels is, to say the least, like walking in *bande dessinée* heaven.¹ The capital of Europe and of *bande dessinée*, has streets lined with “bookstore” after “bookstore” dedicated to selling not only regular editions of comics for the aficionado of humble means but also more expensive figurines and editions kept in display cabinets, as well as framed posters and paintings. In a less commercial register, the city also honours *bande dessinée* with over thirty murals depicting the most famous series and heroes of the ninth art.²

¹ Maïana Bidegain (dir.) *Sous les Bulles: L'Autre visage de la bande dessinée* [Underneath the Bubbles: The Flip Side of *Bande Dessinée*], 2013 [52min].

² The trilingual *La BD dans la ville* (in French, Flemish and English) is nothing less than a tourist guide to Brussels' murals, complete with pictures, addresses, measurements and introductions to the characters or series represented in each mural. See Thibaut Vandorselaer, *La BD dans la ville / De strip in de stad / The Comics in the City: Bruxelles - Brussel - Brussels*, Louvain-La-Neuve: Versant Sud, 2007.

Amongst the best-known authors of the Franco-Belgian golden age of comics are Hergé (author of *Tintin*) and Franquin (one of the many authors of *Spirou et Fantasio* as well as many other very successful series). In the world created by Hergé, Latin America is the area to which Tintin travels the most. As regards Tintin's historical rival Spirou, Latin America is one of the first places he visits in the classic series and it remains a regular destination for this other well-travelled hero, with a total of six visits so far.³ Though Hergé is, without the shadow of a doubt, the most famous *bande dessinée* author at a global level, he is not alone in the *bande dessinée* pantheon. While they may not enjoy as much fame as Hergé outside of Belgium and the French-speaking world, the Belgians Morris, Franquin and Jijé are iconic authors in their own right and, together with Frenchman Goscinny (scriptwriter of the well-known *Astérix*, amongst other things), they formed a small nucleus that had a particular relationship with the Americas. Jijé was a mentor to three authors—Morris, Franquin and Will (author of *Tif et Tondu*)—who lived with him and his family.⁴ In 1948, fearing the cold war might degenerate into a third world war, Jijé took his entire household—leaving only Will behind due to his youth—to the US.⁵ This trip, which also included visits to Mexico and Canada, is of great import to *bande dessinée* for several reasons.⁶ One of them is that it was during that time that Jijé and his protégés met Goscinny in New York. Goscinny himself, though French-born, had grown up in Argentina and he eventually followed Jijé's gang back to Europe, where he went on to create several

³ Hugues Dayez, *Le Duel Tintin - Spirou: Entretiens avec les auteurs de l'âge d'or de la BD Belge* [The Tintin-Spirou Duel: Interviews with the Authors of the Golden Age of Belgian BD], Bruxelles & Paris: Luc Pire & Les Éditions Contemporaines, 1997, p. 6.

⁴ Dayez, *Le duel Tintin - Spirou*, pp. 173, 202-203.

⁵ Numa Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe: Entretiens avec Numa Sadoul* [And Franquin Created Gaffe: Interviews with Numa Sadoul], Bruxelles: Distri BD/Schlirf Book, 1986, p. 43; Philippe Mellot, *L'Univers de Morris* [Morris's Universe], Paris, Barcelone, Bruxelles, Lausanne, Londres, Montréal, New York, Stuttgart: Dargaud, 1988, p. 5.

⁶ Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe*, p. 43; Mellot, *L'Univers de Morris*, p. 5; Jean-Pierre Fuéri, "Destination Disney!", Interview avec Yann, *Casemate*, Janvier, 2012, Issue 44, p. 55.

successful *bande dessinée* series.⁷ Another reason is that, upon their return to Europe, these men would change the face of Franco-Belgian comics.⁸ According to Jacques Gilard, it is precisely in the weekly publications *Spirou* and *Tintin* (homes of the two heroes who give these magazines their names) that *bande dessinée* Latin America was forged.⁹ Since the well-known works of Hergé, Franquin and their peers, there have certainly been countless *bandes dessinées* set in Latin America, be they entire series or only one volume. So important are Jijé, Franquin, Morris and Goscinny and their years in North America to Franco-Belgian *bande dessinée* that part of the trip has recently been recounted in *Gringos Locos*, the first instalment of a diptych by Yann and Schwartz.¹⁰ The accuracy of this *bande dessinée* may have been contested by the protagonists' heirs, but all parties agree that its subject matter is highly important to the world of *bande dessinée*.¹¹ As Schwartz puts it, with this work "[n]ous touchons à notre héritage commun, à notre inconscient collectif" ([w]e broach the subject of our [*bande dessinée* professionals'] common heritage, our collective unconscious).¹²

While it is clear that Latin America holds a very important and particular place in Franco-Belgian comics, given that *Spirou* and *Tintin* are both originally Belgian magazines, one must wonder *why* Latin America? And what is this Latin America that

⁷ Aymar du Chatenet & Caroline Guillot, *Goscinny: Faire rire, quel métier!* [Goscinny: Making People Laugh, What a Job!], Paris: Gallimard, 2009, pp. 22-29; Frédéric Bosser, "Gringos locos: Road movie à la française", Interview with Yann, *L'Immanquable*, November, 2011, Issue 11, p. 53; René Goscinny, *Del Panteón a Buenos Aires: crónicas ilustradas* [From the Pantheon to Buenos Aires: Illustrated Chronicles], trans. Laura Fóllica, Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2009, pp. 17-22.

⁸ Bosser, "Gringos Locos", p. 51.

⁹ Jacques Gilard, "Utopies hebdomadaires: L'Amérique latine des bandes dessinées" [Weekly Utopias: *Bande Dessinée* Latin America], *Caravelle: Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien*, 58, L'Image de l'Amérique latine en France depuis cinq cents ans (1992), pp. 117-118.

¹⁰ See from Yann & Schwartz, "Gringos locos (episode 1/6)" [Crazy Gringos], *Spirou*, 30 November, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3842, pp. 5-15 to Yann & Schwartz, "Gringos locos (episode 6/6)" [Crazy Gringos], *Spirou*, 4 January, 2012, 75th year, Issue 3847, pp. 12-15; Fuéri, "Destination Disney!", p. 55.

¹¹ Uncredited, "Lorg: 'Gringos locos, c'était du caviar et on nous a servi du poisson pané'" [Lorg: 'Gringos Locos was like Caviar and We Got Crumbed Fish'], Interview with Laurent Gillain, *Expressbd.fr*, 18/01/2012.

¹² Fuéri, "Destination Disney!", p. 59.

Franco-Belgian *bande dessinée* purports to portray? Do these images correspond to the way Latin Americans represent themselves in comics? To address these questions, in this thesis I compare *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio*, not only to each other but also to other related *bandes dessinées*, as well as Latin American comics, or *historietas*. The aim of the study is to compare how Latin America is represented in *bande dessinée* and in *historietas*. In order to do so, it considers the representations of particular aspects of Latin Americanness, such as sex/gender configurations and a perceived backwardness, economic or otherwise. However, this project goes beyond a comparison of the way *bandes dessinées* and *historietas* present *aspects* of Latin America and interrogates how these two blocs approach what the decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo calls “the Idea of Latin America” itself, how it is used and what purposes it may serve in these different works.

The series I consider are *Tintin*, *Spirou et Fantasio*, *Marsupilami*, *Lucky Luke*, *Los Supermachos*, *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Operación Bolívar*. *Los Supermachos* and *Operación Bolívar* (Mexico) and *Inodoro Pereyra* (Argentina) are the “Latin American” counterparts to the Franco-Belgian comics and they were chosen as much for their respective countries of origin as for the set of themes they have in common with the concerns of this thesis: Argentina and Mexico are centres of production for comics within Latin America and the comics engage with images of Latin America and national identity. Aside from *Operación Bolívar*, which is one of the more recent items in the corpus, these *historietas* have received considerable official and cultural recognition. For example, so important was Fontanarrosa—the author of *Inodoro Pereyra*—that a day of national mourning was declared in Argentina when he passed

away and his funeral was attended by thousands.¹³ However, authorities did not wait for Fontanarrosa's death to celebrate his work and a total of six Argentinean stamps featuring Inodoro Pereyra have been issued. As for Rius—author of *Los Supermachos*—the Mexican postal services approached him to create some stamps with his characters but the project never came to fruition.¹⁴ Not only are there television programs dedicated to comics, such as the recently-cancelled *Un monde de bulles* (A World of [Speech] Bubbles) and *Continuará...* (To be Continued...) but there have also been stage or screen adaptations of *Tintin*, *Inodoro Pereyra*, *Los Supermachos*, *Marsupilami*, *Lucky Luke* and *Spirou et Fantasio*.¹⁵ In addition, it is not possible to ignore the fact that 2013, dubbed “l’année groom” (the year of the bellboy), is a particularly important year for *Spirou* as the character, the magazine and the series of the same name are turning seventy-five. Improving on the seventieth

¹³ Uncredited, “Roberto Fontanarrosa 1944 - 2007: Duelo de la Cultura Nacional” [Roberto Fontanarrosa 1944 - 2007: National Culture in Mourning], (19/07/2007), <http://www.cultura.gov.ar/prensa/?info=noticia&id=264> (24/06/2010); Uncredited, “La Cultura Nacional de duelo y banderas a media asta por el Negro” [National Culture in Mourning and Flags at Half-Mast for el Negro], *rosario3.com*, 19/07/2007, <http://www.rosario3.com/noticias/noticias.aspx?idNot=15744>; Mauro Aguilar, “El adiós a un grande: Rosario, movilizada por el dolor y el afecto: El ‘Negro’ Fontanarrosa, despedido como un verdadero ídolo popular” [The Farewell to a Great Man: Rosario, Mobilised by Pain and Affection: El ‘Negro’ Fontanarrosa, Sent Off Like a Veritable Popular Idol], *Clarín.com*, 21/07/2007, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2007/07/21/sociedad/s-05601.htm>.

¹⁴ Rius, interview with the author, Mexico City/Tepoztlán over the telephone, 18 April 2011.

¹⁵ Ministerio de Educación, “Continuará...” [To Be Continued], http://www.encuentro.gov.ar/sitios/encuentro/Programas/detallePrograma?rec_id=50481 (20/02/2013); Jean-Philippe Lefèvre (dir.) *Spéciale Bruxelles: La Dernière* [Brussels Special: The Last Performance], *Un Monde de bulles*, 25/01/2013 [29min] Available: <http://www.publicsenat.fr/vod/un-monde-de-bulles/speciale-bruxelles-la-derniere/126179> (20/02/2013); Benoît Peeters, *Le Monde d’Hergé* [The World of Hergé], Tournai: Casterman, 1990, pp. 180-183; Ivana Costa, “Inodoro Pereyra esquina Corrientes” [Inodoro Pereyra Corner Corrientes], *Clarín*, 15/01/1998, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/1998/01/15/c-00901d.htm>; Uncredited, “Un ‘Inodoro Pereyra’ teatral” [A Theatrical ‘Inodoro Pereyra’], (06/05/2008), <http://www.culturasalta.gov.ar/content/view/363/> (30/10/2009); Uncredited, “Reposición de la pieza ‘Inodoro Pereyra, el renegau’” [Revival of the Play ‘Inodoro Pereyra, el renegau’], *El tribuno*, 26/06/2009, <http://www.tribuno.info/jujuy/diario/2009/06/26/espectaculos/reposicion-de-la-pieza-inodoropereyra-el-renegau>; Rius, *Rius para principiantes* [Rius for Beginners], México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2008, p. 158. The *Los Supermachos* film is Alfonso Arau (dir.) *Calzoncin Inspector*, 1973 [1h31min]. There are so many screen adaptations of the Franco-Belgian comics that it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list here. Suffice to say that the latest adaptations are James Huth (dir.) *Lucky Luke*, 2010 [1h43min], Alain Chabat & Jérôme Seydoux (dir.) *Sur la Piste du marsupilami* [On the Marsupilami’s Trail], 2012 [1h40min], Daniel Duda (dir.) *Spirou et Fantasio Intégrale* [*Spirou et Fantasio* Complete Set], 2006 [10h] and Steven Spielberg (dir.) *The Adventures of Tintin*, 2011 [1h42min].

anniversary celebrations that saw Brussels' Manneken Pis dressed in a red bellboy uniform, Dupuis is marking this new milestone with the Spirou Tour.¹⁶ While comic production is important in Mexico, despite the existence of a museum of caricature and of numerous outlets where one can purchase comics, Mexico City cannot compete with Brussels in terms of the visibility of comics in the city. Yet, in terms of numbers of comics read or produced, Mexico is, with Japan, at the top of the list. Buenos Aires, for its part, fares better in terms of visibility, with a number of statues, murals and more recently the creation of a route with traffic lights to the effigy of popular comic characters in the suburb of San Telmo.¹⁷

Perhaps the work that springs to mind most immediately in relation with comics and Latin America is Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's *Para leer al Pato Donald* (How to Read Donald Duck), a 1970s study of the imperialist function of *Donald Duck* in Chile.¹⁸ This thesis has some points in common with Dorfman and Mattelart's work: like *Para leer al Pato Donald*, this thesis is focused on comics and Latin America and has a marked interest in imperialism/coloniality. However, I do not

¹⁶ Uncredited, "Dernière Minute", En direct de la Rédak, *Spirou*, 16 April, 2008, 71st year, Issue 3653, p. 16. Designed as a year-long series of events, the Spirou Tour is set to travel to ten cities across Belgium, France and Switzerland, drawing a giant "S" (for Spirou) over Europe. The Spirou Tour will see Spirou celebrated, amongst other things, at the iconic Atomium, the very building that gave the *style atome* (the drawing style associated with *Spirou*) its name. See Spirou, "Spirou Tour", (2013), <http://www.spirou.com/75ans/spirou-tour.php> (11/02/2013).

¹⁷ María Luján Picabea, "El autor de 'Mafalda' recibió ayer el nombramiento como 'Ciudadano ilustre de Buenos Aires'" [Author of 'Mafalda' Named 'Illustrious Citizen of Buenos Aires' Yesterday], *Clarín*, 17/08/2005, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2005/08/17/sociedad/s-04001.htm>; Uncredited, "Una escultura para Mafalda" [A Sculpture for Mafalda], (08/09/2009), http://www.quino.com.ar/?op=module&path_module=modules/News/index.php&id_news=16&lang=es (14/09/2009); Buenos Aires Ciudad, "Paseo de la Historieta" [Comics Route], <http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/noticias/paseo-de-la-historieta> (01/02/2013) ; Uncredited, "Instalarán semáforos de Gaturro en San Telmo" [Gaturro Traffic Lights to be Installed in San Telmo], *La Nación*, 13/09/2012, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1508088-instalaran-semaforos-de-gaturro-en-san-telmo>; Uncredited, "Macri e Isidoro Cañones presentaron el Paseo de la Historieta" [Macri and Isidoro Cañones Presented the Comics Route], *La Nación*, 20/06/2012, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1492135-macri-e-isidoro-canones-presentaron-el-paseo-de-la-historieta>.

¹⁸ Ariel Dorfman & Armand Mattelart, *Para leer al pato Donald: Comunicación de masa y colonialismo* [How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic], México: Siglo XXI, 2007.

concern myself with the possibility that foreign comics may be trying to sell a way of life in Latin America: the interests of this thesis lie elsewhere. *Bandes dessinées*, and especially *Tintin*, have been approached from all manner of angles: from psychoanalysis, philosophy and historical contextualisation of albums, to book-length interviews of authors, dictionaries of characters and catalogues of magazine supplements.¹⁹ Specifically on the topic of Latin America in these series, there are isolated works such as Niall Binns' article on the representation of Latin America in *Tintin*, Hugo Frey's reading of colonial infections in *Le temple du soleil* and James Scorer's article considering Tintin's ability to blend into the crowd across all of his Latin American adventures.²⁰ Titling one of his subsections "Para leer a Tintín" (How to read Tintin), Binns reads *Tintin* as similar to Disney in that they both present Latin Americans as inferior.²¹ After an overview of the different ways in which this inferiority is made apparent, he also discusses how the scene of the eclipse in *Le temple du soleil* is parodied in the Guatemalan Augusto Monterroso's "El eclipse" (the eclipse).²² Frey's article is particularly interesting as he not only considers the way Peru is represented in the *Les 7 boules de cristal* / *Le temple du soleil* diptych, but also establishes links between Hergé's Peru and Belgian Congo: he posits that, what he terms the "anxieties of retro-colonisation" that can be observed in this

¹⁹ Serge Tisseron, *Tintin chez le psychanalyste: Essai sur la création graphique et la mise en scène de ses enjeux dans l'œuvre d'Hergé* [Tintin on the Couch: Essay on the Graphic Creation and the Staging of Stakes in Hergé's Œuvre], Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1985; Various, *Les Personnages de Tintin dans l'histoire* [Tintin Characters in History], Paris: Sophia (Historia) & Le Point, 2011; Cyrille Mozgovine, *De Abdallah à Zorrino: Dictionnaire des noms propres de Tintin* [From Abdallah to Zorrino: A Dictionary of the Proper Names in Tintin], Tournai: Casterman, 2003; Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe*; Numa Sadoul, *Tintin et moi: Entretiens avec Hergé* [Tintin and I: Interviews with Hergé], Paris: Flammarion, 2003; Philippe Mouvet, *Spirou: 70 Ans de suppléments!* [Spirou: 70 Years of Supplements!], Charleroi: L'Âge d'or, 2008.

²⁰ Niall Binns, "Tintín en Hispanoamérica" [Tintin in Spanish America], *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 568 (October 1997); Hugo Frey, "Contagious Colonial Diseases in Hergé's *The Adventures of Tintin*", *Modern and Contemporary France*, 12, 2 (2004); James Scorer, "Imitating Incas and Becoming Llama: Tintin in Latin America -- or the Latin American in Tintin?", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11, 2 (2008).

²¹ Binns, "Tintín en Hispanoamérica", p. 53.

²² Binns, "Tintín en Hispanoamérica", pp. 61-65.

diptych are in fact the work of a “displacement strategy”.²³ As he puts it: “[i]n the case of Hergé, the narrative type is the classic ‘colonial infection-invasion’ and the ‘imperial cure’ story line, but this is displaced from the Belgian Empire to that of Inca culture and Peru”.²⁴ The only work addressing Latin America as depicted in *bande dessinée* as a whole, however, is Jacques Gilard’s “Utopies hebdomadaires”. In this article, Gilard identifies several Latin American clichés common to a considerable number of *bandes dessinées*, arguing that *bande dessinée* Latin America was born in the pages of *Tintin* and *Spirou*.²⁵ Although he does not speak of displacement, like Frey, he suggests that there is a link between *bande dessinée* Latin America and Africa as the Franco-Belgian authors drew from the colonial experience in Africa when creating their Latin American countries.²⁶

As regards the Latin American comics under consideration, the number of works engaging critically with them is significantly smaller. More common are large encyclopaedic volumes cataloguing vast numbers of works or historiographic volumes.²⁷ Also of note is María Perez-Yglesias and Mario Zeledon-Cambronero’s book-length study of the contestatory *historietas* *Los Agachados*, *Pueblo* and *Mafalda*.²⁸ A more common approach for those works that do engage critically with Latin American comics seems to be through edited volumes combining contributions from several authors or monographs addressing a different work in each chapter. This

²³ Frey, “Contagious Colonial Diseases in Hergé’s *The Adventures of Tintin*”, pp. 178 & 181.

²⁴ Frey, “Contagious Colonial Diseases in Hergé’s *The Adventures of Tintin*”, p. 182.

²⁵ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, pp. 117-118.

²⁶ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, pp. 118-119.

²⁷ Judith Gociol & Diego Rosemberg, *La historieta argentina: una historia* [Argentinean Comics: a History], Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2000; Juan Manuel Aurrecochea & Armando Bartra, *Puros cuentos: Historia de la historieta en México, 1874-1934*, México D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1993.

²⁸ María Perez-Yglesias & Mario Zeledon-Cambronero, *La B.D. critique latino-américaine: Idéologie et intertextualité* [Latin American Contestatory Comics: Ideology and Intertextuality], Louvain-La-Neuve: Cabay-Jezierski, 198; Perez-Yglesias & Zeledon-Cambronero, *La B.D. critique latino-américaine*.

is the case of Juan Sasturain's *El domicilio de la aventura*, David William Foster's *From Mafalda to Los Supermachos*, Bruce Campbell's *¡Viva la historieta!* and the volume edited by Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, *Redrawing the Nation*.²⁹ Aside from these books, there are few articles on the works under consideration. Several works focus on Inodoro Pereyra's Argentineanness and his relation to modernity, *Operación Bolívar*'s commentary on NAFTA or its hybrid graphic style and *Los Supermachos*'s social and political satire are recurring topics of interest.³⁰

There is no work that broaches the question of the representation of Latin America in both *bandes dessinées* and *historietas*. This thesis is perhaps closest to Jacques Gilard's work in the sense that it concerns itself very specifically with the representation of Latin America in numerous *bandes dessinées*. It is also comparable to the monograph approach to Latin American comics, in that it is tied around a theme in Latin American comics. However, there is no one chapter dedicated to a sole work or body of work in this thesis. Rather, under a particular node or theme, I compare and contrast how certain series or particular stories represent Latin America, and *bandes dessinées* and *historietas* are compared to each other in almost every chapter

²⁹ Juan Sasturain, *El domicilio de la aventura*, Colección Signos y cultura, 1, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue, 1995; David William Foster, *From Mafalda to Los Supermachos: Latin American Graphic Humor as Popular Culture*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1989; Bruce Campbell, *¡Viva la historieta!: Mexican Comics, NAFTA, and the Politics of Globalization*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009; Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste & Juan Poblete, eds., *Redrawing the Nation: National Identity in Latino/a American Comics*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

³⁰ Ana Merino, "Inodoro Pereyra, a 'Gaucho' in the Pampa of Paper and Ink: Folkloric and Literary Intertextuality and its Reformulations in Argentinean Comics", *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 2, 1 (Spring 2000); María Alejandra Minelli, "La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan: el humorismo gráfico Fontanarrosa y Caloi" [The Pampas of Forking Paths: Fontanarrosa and Caloi's Graphic Humour], *El Corredor Mediterráneo*, 06/02/2008, <http://www.culturaenlinea.com.ar/corredor/CORREDOR145.pdf>; Foster, *From Mafalda to Los supermachos*; Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas: estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* [Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity], Estado y Sociedad, vol. 87, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, México: Paidós, 2007; Paula Speck, "Rius for Beginners: A Study in Comicbook [sic] Satire", *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, 1 (1982); P. A. W. Procter, "Mexico's Supermachos: Satire and Social Revolution in Comics by Rius", 1977; Nilanjana Bhattacharya, "Historia y política en México: Algunos aspectos de las historietas de Rius" [History and Politics in Mexico: Certain Aspects of Rius's *historietas*], *Revista latinoamericana de estudios sobre la historieta*, 9, 34 (June 2009).

of the thesis. My contention is that while they may appear to look together in the same direction, Latin American and Franco-Belgian comics do not speak of the same thing. While there may be aspects of Latin America that are represented in similar ways on both sides of the Atlantic, the two blocs of comics do not in fact look at the same thing either. The “Latin American” comics do not gaze upon the whole of Latin America but rather upon a very local setting to comment on the same local setting, while the Franco-Belgian comics gaze upon Latin America as a whole... but also gaze upon a different region altogether (Africa) and use Latin America to a range of ends.

Comics and Latin America: Some Conceptual Considerations

Comics, comix, graphic novels, sequential art? While there may be discussions about what term or spelling is more appropriate to refer to different types of comics, for my purposes the debates about the nomenclature of the works under consideration are largely irrelevant. After all, all the variants listed above are English terms and in reality are of little import when it comes to the classification of the works I am using in their countries of origin. While it is understandable that there may be a certain discomfort with the name “comics” because comics are not necessarily humorous works, the seemingly more technical and descriptive term “sequential art” is not without its problems either. As Bart Beaty states in the opening lines to his article on a screenprint by Emile Bravo:

The question of whether or not a single image can constitute a comic is possibly the most boring and least productive debate in contemporary comics studies. While few would argue that a single image can contain a strong narrative component, many theorists of the comics form have identified sequentiality as a necessary component of comics. This narrow definition of the form has led to needlessly reductive arguments about what comics are or can do, and, consequently, helped to minimise scholarly understandings of the way that images circulate and gain currency within the comics world.³¹

³¹ Bart Beaty, “A Clear Line to Marcinelle: The Importance of Line in Émile Bravo’s *Spirou à Bruxelles*”, *European Comic Art*, 4, 2 (2011), p. 199.

Given that in French, the term “comics” is normally used to refer to works originating in the US, as distinct from *mangas* (Japan), *fumetti* (Italy) and *bandes dessinées* (Franco-Belgian), and that in Latin America the local production is commonly referred to as *historietas* (Argentina and Mexico) or *monos* (Mexico), I often rely on the local terms rather than encumbering myself with English terms that are still being debated. The term *bande dessinée*, in particular, offers the advantage of being relatively unproblematic as it simply means “drawn strip” and says nothing regarding the content of these strips aside from the presence of drawings. When I do use the term “comics”, it is used as an umbrella term that can include *any* type of comic, with no implication regarding the country of origin, worth, narration style, graphic style or content of the work. Thus, “Franco-Belgian comics” and “Latin American comics”, in this thesis, mean the same as “(Franco-Belgian) *bande dessinée*” and “*historietas*” respectively and “comics” by itself often refers to both Franco-Belgian and Latin American works.

While almost each chapter of this thesis has its own set of theoretical frameworks, there are two that underpin the thesis as a whole. The first lens through which I read all the works under consideration in this thesis is semiology/mythology. Saussure conceptualises language as a system of signs. According to him, these signs have two components: a signifier (the form used to convey a concept) and a signified (the concept conveyed).³² The link between signifier and signified is arbitrary inasmuch as there is no natural reason why a particular signifier should be associated with a signified, which is not to say that speakers are at liberty to mix and match their signifiers and signified: the link between the two components may be arbitrary but it

³² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* [Course in General Linguistics], Paris: Payot, 1972, pp. 98-100.

is governed by a convention within a community of speakers.³³ Myth, in the Barthesian sense, is also a communication system and it operates as a function of the system put forward by Saussure. In Barthes' model, language continues to be seen as a system of signs in the Saussurian sense but myth reprocesses these already constituted signs to give them a new meaning.³⁴ In the plane of myth then, written and drawn signs alike are turned into signifiers that are associated with new signifieds, to create new significations.³⁵ Relying on both sign as explained by Saussure and myth as explained by Barthes, I read the images contained in the comics both as signifiers indicating a position, a movement, an interaction, a setup—much as one might read a description of a scene in a novel for instance—and as carriers of myth. As such, the movements of these signs across the page, their positions, their actions, are read on two levels.

The second major framework employed throughout the thesis is decolonial thought. Walter Mignolo of the group *modernidad/colonialidad* describes coloniality as “the untold and unrecognized historical counterpart of modernity”.³⁶ According to him, the Americas were neither “found” nor “discovered” but rather invented, as the mass of land now referred to as the Americas was not conceived of as a unit by its original inhabitants prior to its “discovery”, nor did it exist in the imaginary of the rest of the world.³⁷ As he puts it:

³³ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Robert Wilks, Singapore: Pansing, 1998, Act 2 Scene 2, lines 43-44; de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, pp. 100-101.

³⁴ Roland Barthes, “Le Mythe aujourd’hui” [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Jacqueline Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, pp. 225 & 227.

³⁵ Barthes, “Le Mythe aujourd’hui” [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, p. 228.

³⁶ Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. xi.

³⁷ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 2.

America came, literally, out of the blue sky that Amerigo Vespucci was looking at when he realized that the stars he was seeing from what is now southern Brazil were not the same stars he had seen in his familiar Mediterranean. [...] “America,” then, was never a continent waiting to be discovered. Rather it was an *invention* forged in the process of European colonial history and the consolidation and expansion of the Western world view and institutions.³⁸

The coloniality that Mignolo and the rest of the group *colonialidad/modernidad* speak of is not to be confused with colonialism. To paraphrase Mignolo, while colonialism pertains to particular times in history when certain powers exerted imperial domination over certain countries, coloniality refers to the internal logic of colonialism (regardless of the period or the countries involved), which seeks to control and dominate the world.³⁹ The group *colonialidad/modernidad* (coloniality/modernity) bears in its name one of the central concepts it propounds: that coloniality is the flipside of modernity. That is to say, if European modernity can be traced back to the European Renaissance or the European enlightenment, from the perspective of the former colonies of North, South and Central America and the Caribbean, modernity was made possible through the colonial exploitation of human and natural resources in America, or in plainer terms, the beginning of mercantilism and imperial expansion.⁴⁰ However, decolonial thought sees capitalism as a system that affects all aspects of daily life, rather than solely economic relations between centres and peripheries. Thus, Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel argue that the global division of labour, “vinculó en red una serie de jerarquías de poder: etno-racial, espiritual, epistémica, sexual y de género” (linked a series of power hierarchies in a network: ethno-racial, spiritual, epistemic, sexual and gender-based).⁴¹

³⁸ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 2.

³⁹ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, pp. xi, 5.

⁴¹ Santiago Castro-Gómez & Ramón Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Santiago Castro-Gómez & Ramón Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores,

In addition, and aside from pointing out the fact that the globalised capitalist world began with the colonisation of the Americas, decolonial thought is focused on the fact that the decolonisation process was an incomplete one. Indeed, the administrative independence obtained by some of the then Spanish colonies did not lead to the removal of any of the power relations in terms of race, gender, sex, economy or epistemology so that the now former colonies continue to be in a colonial power relationship with the centre, as well as within the borders and boundaries of nation-states and regions of the colonised world. For this reason, they argue that a decolonial process is necessary, in order to “complement” the decolonisation process, an argument echoed by postcolonial theorists.⁴² Decolonial thought, however, does not suggest an utter and complete rejection of all systems, but rather, a subversion of the established power relations. Indeed, they refer to a “complicidad subversiva” (subversive complicity) that works to resemanticise hegemonic knowledge through the incorporation of those “lesser” knowledges.⁴³

If these concepts cover the Americas, it is also worth paying heed to the denomination and very idea of a *Latin America*. According to Mignolo, whose famous book I mentioned earlier (*The Idea of Latin America*), if we go back to the origins of the term “Latin America”, we come to find that there have been important links between

Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 19.

⁴² Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 17.

⁴³ Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, pp. 20-21.

France and Latin America. Indeed, “Latin America” is a term that was coined by the French in the nineteenth century as a result of France’s own rivalry with the British and with the US (which were both expanding), in part over the control of the Panama canal.⁴⁴ *Latinité* was used as a term to unite the “Latin” countries that had interests in America (France, Spain, Portugal and Italy) and “[b]y the mid-1850s... [Michel] Chevalier had developed a vision of pan-Latin diplomacy that pitted the Latin nations of Europe (including Belgium, Spain and Portugal, and led of course by France) against the Germanic or Anglo-Saxon peoples of Northern Europe and the Slavic nations of Eastern Europe.”⁴⁵ The adoption of the term “Latin America” to distinguish between two perceived sections of America (one “Latin” and one “Anglo”), beyond the relatively obvious desire to entrench former colonies as Latin or not, was also a Eurocentric move in that it reproduced a division that existed in Europe and transposed it onto the “new world” version of Europe.⁴⁶ The term was then appropriated by the creole *élite* in the Americas, as a means of asserting independence from the colonisers—as the independence struggles were inspired by and began during the Napoleonic wars—and implied ideological affiliation with France, or as Mignolo puts it: “‘Latinidad’ came to refer to a Spanish and Portuguese government and an educated civil society in America that turned its face to France and its back to Spain and Portugal.”⁴⁷ However, as he also points out, by embracing this term, the creole *élite* paradoxically inscribed itself even more in the system of coloniality as the

⁴⁴ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 58.

⁴⁵ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, pp. 58 & 79; A. McGuiness, “Searching for ‘Latin America’: Race and Sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s”, in *Race and Nation in modern Latin America*, Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson and Alejandra Roseblatt (Eds.), Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, p. 99 in Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 80.

⁴⁶ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, pp. 64 & 74.

⁴⁷ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 59.

term “Latin” not only erased the presence of native and black people in “Latin” America but also defined these countries by their colonial past.⁴⁸

Various theories come and attach themselves to these two main frameworks in each chapter and they are briefly introduced in the following section.

Thesis Chapters

In most chapters I consider a given theme in relation to the representation of Latin America, comparing the way in which Latin American comics and Franco-Belgian comics approach this aspect. Though I do not use every album, short story or episode of each series in each chapter or indeed in the entire thesis, I still consider these series as a whole, never losing sight of the fact that the stories used, long or short, belong to a body of work with its own internal logic, chronology and mythology. Therefore, as I introduce stories that I have not used yet, I strive not only to summarise their plots, but also put them back in their context.

Following this introductory chapter, I begin this thesis with a chapter on the multi-layered meanings associated with comic characters. Titled “Ink on Paper”, the chapter does not yet broach the question of how Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics compare in their representation of Latin America. Focusing mainly on the image of Spirou and that of Inodoro Pereyra, I turn to semiology and mythology to explore the multiple layers of iconicity of these characters, starting with the significance of the line. As a character passed on from author to author, Spirou is something of shape-shifting entity. As for *Inodoro Pereyra*, it is practically the work of a single author and yet its main character changes considerably over the years. This chapter concerns

⁴⁸ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, pp. xv & 58.

itself with establishing what Spirou and Inodoro Pereyra stand for, as much in the most direct sense of the sign as in the more evocative meanings associated with these characters. While the series *Inodoro Pereyra* is used as a whole and considered in relation with the outside world, Spirou is considered mostly with a special interest in the work of Yoann and Vehlmann, to make sense of what it is that Spirou's bellboy hat signals and what its importance is in the series. At the end of the chapter, I also consider how the myth of these characters also extends to their authors, turning their lines into equally mythical entities, and effectively turning writing into icons in their own right.

Past this first step, in "Far Far Away" (the second chapter) and "Supermales and Hyperfemales" (the third chapter) I begin to engage with the points put forward by the group *modernidad/colonialidad* regarding Latin America's place in relation to Europe and modernity. In "Far Far Away", with the two diptychs *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* from the *Tintin* series; *L'horloger de la comète* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* from the *Spirou et Fantasio* series; and *Operación Bolívar*, I discuss the place of Latin America in terms of time and space. In order to do so, I turn to David Harvey's conceptualisation of uneven development and the "spatial fix" that capitalism requires in order to sustain itself as markets become saturated; and to Johannes Fabian's conceptualisation of the denial of coevalness that sees anthropological subjects consistently placed in a stage of evolution that is different from that of anthropologists. Both Fabian's and Harvey's works speak to the distancing of countries in a state of colonality in order to maintain modernity.

In “Supermales and Hyperfemales”, as the title suggests, I focus on the representation of Latin Americans from the perspective of gender, using *Los Supermachos*; *Inodoro Pereyra*; *Le nid des marsupilamis* from the *Spirou et Fantasio* series; and *Baby Prinz*, *L’orchidée des Chahutas* and *Red Monster* from the *Marsupilami* series. Relying on works by Raewyn Connell (on hegemonic masculinities and on the geography of masculinities) and Frantz Fanon’s work on sexual/gender relationships between black and white partners, I explore how the internal sexual/gender hierarchy functions between men in these stories, how they relate to the nation, and how these relationships then pan out on the global level. In addition to Connell and Fanon, I also rely on Jorge Salessi’s work on homosexuality and the nation in Argentina and on Octavio Paz’s well-known “The Sons of La Malinche” for the configuration of four Mexican figures as defined by the openness or closedness of their bodies. Aside from some minor alterations, the discussion on gender, sexuality, culinary preferences and nationhood in *Inodoro Pereyra* is taken and translated from “De los feos vicios, o las vergüenzas de los Pereyra”, a conference proceeding from a paper presented in Argentina in 2010.⁴⁹

Following these two chapters, I begin to approach the corpus from a different perspective, in order to understand *what* is the Latin America that these series present to us. The fourth chapter, titled “Latin America?”, concerns itself solely with Franco-Belgian comics. Letting the series *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio* speak for themselves, and reading them through the lens of semiology and mythology, I look at echoes between various albums and series included in the corpus to see to what extent *bande*

⁴⁹ Annick Pellegrin, “De los feos vicios, o las vergüenzas de los Pereyra” [Of Ugly Vices, or the Shames of the Pereyra], 1er Congreso Internacional de Historietas: *Viñetas Serias*, Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires, 2010, <http://www.vinetas-sueltas.com.ar/congreso/pdf/HumorGrafico.GauchescayTradicion/pellegrin.pdf> (11/01/2011).

dessinée Latin America (as represented by Palombia and San Theodoros) matches up with real-life Latin America or relies on a convention peculiar to *bande dessinée* itself. This will eventually lead me to consider echoes with representations of regions far removed from Latin America, with a particular interest in Africa. In agreement with Gilard and Hugo Frey, I believe that there are some very strong echoes between the way Latin America and Africa are represented in *bande dessinée*. This chapter therefore shows Palombia and San Theodoros as having several layers of meaning, from a stand-in for the whole of Latin America and something of a world unto itself to being a stand-in for Africa. In this chapter I therefore also turn to stories that I do not use elsewhere in the thesis: the short story “L’héritage”, *Tembo Tabou* and the diptych *La frousse aux troussees / La vallée des bannis* from the *Spirou et Fantasio* series; the one-*planche*⁵⁰ story “Houu ba!” from the *Marsupilami* series; *Tintin au Congo* from the *Tintin* series; and *Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes*, from the *Blondin et Cirage* series.

In the fifth chapter, I continue the reflection started in the previous chapter. Titled “De qui se moque-t-on?”, this chapter seeks to identify the different targets of the Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics to explain the difference in the way these two blocs present Latin America. To this end, I turn to satire and parody to analyse *Tortillas pour les Dalton* from the *Lucky Luke* series; “Capturer un marsupilami”, *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy* from the *Marsupilami* series; *Inodoro Pereyra*; and *Los Supermachos*. The chapter considers these works under three categories, showing how some comics use Latin America as a backdrop or vehicle to comment on matters external to Latin America without questioning the way Latin

⁵⁰ For an explanation of the difference between a *planche* and a page, please see p. 31.

America itself is represented, others reflect on the representation of Latin America in comics and yet others reflect on the way Latin America is represented *outside* of comics. In this fifth chapter, the section on *Inodoro Pereyra* is taken from my article “*Inodoro Pereyra: The Gaucho as a National Icon*”.⁵¹ These last two chapters seek to show how the degree of precision (that is to say a more national specificity as opposed to a more generic Latin Americanness) in the representation of Latin America is linked as much with the targets of each individual work, as it is linked with what its purpose is and with the tradition from which it emerges.

The Series in the Corpus

Without the shadow of a doubt, the best-known comics series in the corpus is *Tintin*. The series has achieved even more notoriety, if possible, with Spielberg’s recent adaptation of *The Secret of the Unicorn* into an animation film.⁵² With twenty-three complete albums and the unfinished *Tintin et l’Alph-Art*, Tintin, “righter of international wrongs”, is the boy with a blond quiff and plus-fours who travels the globe with his faithful dog Milou, visiting real and fictional places, investigating and solving crime.⁵³ Since the creation of the series at the end of 1928, Tintin’s most immediate entourage has grown from only his canine friend Milou to a veritable family, with the creation of the rowdy Capitaine Haddock, and later the hard of hearing but multitalented Professeur Tournesol.⁵⁴ In this series, as stated earlier, Latin America is the region that Tintin travels to the most, with two visits to the fictional

⁵¹ Annick Pellegrin, “*Inodoro Pereyra: The Gaucho as a National Icon*”, *Literature and Aesthetics*, 20, 1 (2010).

⁵² Spielberg (dir.) *The Adventures of Tintin*.

⁵³ Matthew Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art: Bandes Dessinées and Franco-Belgian Identity*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005, p. 20.

⁵⁴ Philippe Goddin, *Hergé et Tintin reporters* [Hergé and Tintin Reporters], Bruxelles: Lombard, 1986, p. 29; Jean-Marie Apostolidès, “Hergé and the Myth of the Superchild”, *Yale French Studies*, 111 (2007), p. 51, 57; Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Tintin et le mythe du surenfant* [Tintin and the Myth of the Superchild], Bruxelles: Moulinsart, 2003, p. 87.

San Theodoros, one expedition to an unnamed Caribbean island and a cross-country hike through Peru.⁵⁵ Of particular importance in Tintin's universe is the unnamed Caribbean island because it is precisely thanks to this expedition that Tintin's invented family takes its final form. Situated in the middle of the series, not only does this expedition mark Tournesol's first appearance, but it also results in Moulinsart (the castle that once belonged to Haddock's ancestor) becoming home to Haddock and Tournesol, with whom Tintin later moves in.⁵⁶ Though *Tintin* continues to enjoy considerable fame, it is a closed series: Hergé having expressed the wish that his œuvre should not be continued after he passed away, there have been no new albums since 1976 (*Tintin et les Picaros*), aside from the unfinished *Tintin et l'Alph-Art*, published in 1986.⁵⁷

Initially created by Rob-Vel in 1938 as a young bellboy to work at the Moustic Hôtel, Spirou (Walloon for 'squirrel') has long left this profession and is now similar to Tintin in that he has become an adventurer who often travels around the globe.⁵⁸ Although Spirou also has a quiff, he is a redhead and is most commonly associated with his red bellboy uniform and his pet squirrel Spip. Spirou seldom embarks on adventures without his closest friend, the journalist Fantasio. He also counts amongst his close friends the reporter Seccotine and the scientist Count Pacôme de

⁵⁵ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée* [The Broken Ear], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 6, Tournai: Casterman, 1937; Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros* [Tintin and the Picaros], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 23, Tournai: Casterman, 1976; Hergé, *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* [Red Rackham's Treasure], Les aventures de Tintin, vol. 12, Tournai: Casterman, 1945; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil* [Prisoners of the Sun], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 14, Tournai: Casterman, 1949.

⁵⁶ Hergé, *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁷ Michael Farr, *Tintin: The Complete Companion*, London: John Murray, 2001, p. 199; Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*; Hergé, *Tintin et l'Alph-Art* [Tintin and Alph-Art], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 24, Tournai: Casterman, 1986.

⁵⁸ Uncredited, "Rob-Vel", <http://www.spirouetfantasio.com/auteurs/rob-vel/index.htm> (31/10/2009); Rob-Vel, "La Naissance de Spirou" [The Birth of Spirou], in *La Voix sans maître (et 5 autres aventures)*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2003, p. 3; Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe*, p. 98.

Champagnac. The count is best known for his research as a mycologist although, like Tournesol, he is versatile. Some of the similarities between *Spirou et Fantasio* and *Tintin* can be explained by the fact that the most important *Spirou et Fantasio* author (Franquin) had never read *Spirou et Fantasio* or *Spirou* (the magazine) before he took up the series, but grew up reading *Tintin*.⁵⁹ If there are some similarities in the *types* of characters found in *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio*, the two series are in stark contrast in terms of editorial policy: *Spirou et Fantasio* is, without any negative connotation intended, a veritable octopus that has been passed from one author or team of authors to another numerous times and that has several strands. The primary strand, known as the classic series (fifty-three albums to date), begins with a compilation of four *Spirou et Fantasio* short stories by Franquin and excludes several (prior or subsequent) short stories and aborted projects.⁶⁰ In this thesis, most of the *Spirou et Fantasio* stories come from the classic series. Also included are two short stories and one album from the parallel series, commonly known as *Spirou one-shot*.

Aside from being a multifaceted and multipronged series in itself, *Spirou et Fantasio* has also spawned a number of fully-fledged spin-offs, the most important of which, in relation to this project, is *Marsupilami*. The marsupilami is a fictional animal who first appears at the end of *Spirou et les héritiers*, one of the early albums in the classic *Spirou et Fantasio* series.⁶¹ First announced as strong and ferocious, this monotreme indeed reveals himself to be strong, but he is also a fun-loving, friendly and protective animal.⁶² Physically, the marsupilami has a simian appearance, a very long tail,

⁵⁹ Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe*, p. 39.

⁶⁰ Franquin, *4 Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio* [4 *Spirou et Fantasio* Adventures], *Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1950.

⁶¹ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers* [Spirou and the Heirs], *Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 4, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1952, 53/3.

⁶² Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, pp. 53-63.

leopard-like fur and a very visible navel, despite being an egg-laying mammal.⁶³ Created by Franquin, and known for his cry (houba!) the marsupilami stopped appearing in the classic series shortly after Franquin left the series.⁶⁴ *Marsupilami* counts a total of twenty-six albums to date, all drawn essentially by Batem, but scripted by some twelve men over the years. Away from Europe, Spirou and Fantasio, the marsupilami is most often shown interacting with his own family—a marsupilamie (that is to say, a female marsupilami) and three baby marsupilamis—visitors to the Palombian jungle and various indigenous groups (most often the Chahutas, to whom he is the god Marsupilcoatl). The series shows a strong environmental engagement, an interest that has been brought even more to the fore since the series has become formally associated with the World Wildlife Fund (henceforth WWF).⁶⁵

The last Franco-Belgian series of the corpus is *Lucky Luke*, created by Morris in 1946, prior to his travels to the Americas.⁶⁶ Though Morris was originally the sole author of the series, Goscinny became his scriptwriter some seven years after they met in New York.⁶⁷ This tandem created thirty-nine *Lucky Luke* stories between 1955 and 1977, a period that is considered to be the golden age of the series.⁶⁸ Influenced by the friendships they formed in the US (they knew the founders of *MAD* magazine),

⁶³ Batem, et al., *L'Encyclopédie du marsupilami de Franquin: La grande Énigme* [The Encyclopedia of Franquin's Marsupilami: The Great Enigma], Monaco: Marsu Productions, 1991, pp. 4-10.

⁶⁴ Franquin, et al., "Panade à Champignac" [Bread Soup in Champignac], in *Aventures humoristiques: 1961 - 1967*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 8, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2009; Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*; José-Louis Bocquet, "Passage de relais" [Handing *Spirou* Over], in *1969 - 1972*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010, p. 19; Bocquet, "Un collaborateur en or" [A Golden Collaborator], in *1969 - 1972*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁵ See Batem & Colman, *Viva Palombia!*, Marsupilami, vol. 20, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2007; Uncredited, "Sauve la planète..." [Save the Planet...], <http://www.savepalombia.com/> (28/07/2009).

⁶⁶ Mellot, *L'Univers de Morris*, p. 5; Henri Filippini, "Les quatre Vies de Lucky Luke" [Lucky Luke's Four Lives], *[dBD]*, November 2009, Issue 38, p. 32.

⁶⁷ Mellot, *L'Univers de Morris*, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Filippini, "Les quatre Vies de Lucky Luke", pp. 34-35.

Morris and Goscinny eventually turned the series into “une parodie à 100%” (a complete parody) of westerns.⁶⁹ *Lucky Luke* continues to enjoy significant success as new adventures are regularly added to the series beyond the death of Morris and it has also spawned a couple of spin-offs.⁷⁰ Lucky Luke, the phlegmatic hero famous for being able to shoot faster than his own shadow, is a “poor lonesome cowboy” living in the Wild West. Almost always dressed in a yellow shirt, blue jeans, red neckerchief and a white hat from under which a prominent black forelock sticks out, Lucky Luke rides from town to town, catching villains, liaising between feuding parties and protecting the innocent. His closest ally is his horse Jolly Jumper, who, aside from being a good mount, also has several unusual talents, the least of which is speech. Few other characters appear several times in *Lucky Luke*, with the notable exception of the intellectually challenged but nonetheless villainous Dalton brothers and the equally stupid dog Rantanplan. The latter, dubbed “le chien le plus stupide de l’ouest” (the stupidest dog in the west), is a deliberate reversal of the famous Rintintin, “un chien trop intelligent pour être crédible, trop parfait pour être amusant” (a dog too intelligent to be believable, too perfect to be amusing).⁷¹ Most of the minor characters are even more stereotyped: all the towns have cheating poker players, gold prospectors, (ever-napping) Mexicans and many more stock figures.⁷² Within this set of flat characters, however, are numerous caricatures of famous people, that Morris included in his work to avoid constantly repeating the same stereotypical physiques.⁷³

As the series is set in the time of the conquest of the west, plots are often centred on

⁶⁹ Dayez, *Le duel Tintin - Spirou*, p. 203; du Chatenet & Guillot, *Goscinny*, p. 31.

⁷⁰ The latest *Lucky Luke* album was published in October 2012 (Pennac, et al., *Cavalier seul* [Going it Alone], Les Aventures de Lucky Luke d’après Morris, vol. 5, Givrins: Lucky Comics, 2012). The spin-offs include a series dedicated to Rantanplan (latest album Fauche, et al., *Carré d’os* [Four Bones], Rantanplan, vol. 20, Givrins: Lucky Comics, 2011) and the short-lived *Kid Lucky* (Achdé, *L’Apprenti cow-boy* [The Cowboy’s Apprentice], Les Aventures de Kid Lucky d’après Morris, vol. 1, Givrins: Lucky Comics, 2011).

⁷¹ Uncredited, “Rantanplan: Portrait”, <http://www.lucky-luke.com/fr/les-personnages.php> (01/11/2009).

⁷² Dayez, *Le duel Tintin - Spirou*, p. 203.

⁷³ Dayez, *Le duel Tintin - Spirou*, p. 204.

such concerns as the building of the rail network and legendary figures of the Wild West—such as Billy the Kid and Calamity Jane—are given a prominent place. Despite the fact that the series is based in the US Wild West, the lanky Lucky Luke occasionally ventures into Canada or Mexico. Although there are always Mexicans to be found in the series, I choose to only use *Tortillas pour les Dalton*—the only *Lucky Luke* album set in Mexico—in this thesis.

Though we now turn to Latin American creations, we stay in the parodic genre and in cattle culture as we consider *Inodoro Pereyra*. Created in 1972 by the Argentine Roberto Fontanarrosa, this series recounts the adventures of Inodoro Pereyra (literally, “Toilet Pereyra”), a *gaucho* (the Argentinean, Brazilian and Uruguayan equivalent of the cowboy) and his talking dog Mendieta.⁷⁴ Although the series evolved as much in terms of structure as in terms of graphic style over a period of thirty-five years there are some constants: Fontanarrosa’s witty humour and puns, Inodoro Pereyra’s (self-conscious) embodiment of *gaucho* Argentineanness, the protagonist’s strikingly big hair, his very particular and creative use of language, his complex relationship with the “Indians” and his strong judgements and opinions on all manner of matters... judgements that often not only directly contradict equally strong opinions he may have emitted before, but also often reveal that he has misunderstood his interlocutor.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Hernan Fontanet, “Infamación del gaucho del XIX, estadio inferior del exilio del XX” [The Defamation of the Nineteenth-Century Gaucho, The Inferior State of Twentieth-Century Exile], *Espéculo: Revista de estudios literarios*, Año XIV, 41 (March-June, 2009); Stephen Paullada, *Rawhide and Song: A Comparative Study of the Cattle Cultures of the Argentinian Pampa and North American Great Plains*, New York: Vantage Press, 1963.

⁷⁵ Juan Sasturain (dir.) *Fontanarrosa e Inodoro Pereyra* [Fontanarrosa and Inodoro Pereyra], Continuará...: Historietas argentinas, 2010 [27min36sec] Available: http://www.encuentro.gov.ar/sitios/encuentro/Programas/detallePrograma?rec_id=50481 (18/02/2013); Juan Sasturain, “Inodoro Pereyra, una gauchada de Fontanarrosa” [Inodoro Pereyra, a *Gaucho* Gesture by Fontanarrosa], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, pp. 7-10.

Finally, on the Mexican side, there are *Los Supermachos* and *Operación Bolívar*. Named as much in reference to older Mexican comics such as *Los Supersabios* (The Superwise) and *Los Superlocos* (The Supercrazies) as in reference to superhero comics from the US, Rius's very first comic series, *Los Supermachos* (The Supermales), was first published in 1965.⁷⁶ The series follows the lives of the inhabitants of the village of San Garabato de las Tunas (Saint Doodle of the Prickly Pear). Headed by a handful of rich men, the inhabitants of San Garabato (henceforth *Garabatenses*), claiming to be supermales, endure poverty and abuse on the part of the powerful in the name of a stoic dignity that is, according to them, the ultimate expression of patriotism. Never leaving the village, each episode relies on a premise—ranging from the organisation of a procession around the church and visits from outsiders to allegorical dreams and the telling of (distorted) biblical stories—that enables the author to comment on the political situation in Mexico. Eventually, the publisher, uncomfortable with the content of *Los Supermachos* and under pressure from the Mexican government, employed other artists to draw the series and censored some of Rius's work without advising him. By 1968 Rius had created some 100 fortnightly episodes of *Los Supermachos* and left his publisher, as well as the series *Los Supermachos*.⁷⁷ With the publication of *Mis Supermachos* (a compilation of twelve *Los Supermachos* episodes by Rius) in 2004, some of Rius's *Los Supermachos* stories became available to the general public in their uncut version for the first time.⁷⁸ A fifth and final volume of *Mis Supermachos* is expected in 2013.⁷⁹ In this thesis I draw primarily from the published *Mis Supermachos* volumes, as much for the

⁷⁶ Rius, *Rius para principiantes*, p. 151; Rius, "Mis Supermachos" [My Supermachos], in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁷ Rius, "Mis Supermachos" [My Supermachos], in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 7-8 & 10; Rius, Personal Communication (email), 18 May 2011.

⁷⁸ Rius, *Mis Supermachos* [My Supermachos], vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004.

⁷⁹ Rius, Personal Communication (email), 24 January 2012.

convenience of availability as for the interest in accessing the uncensored versions of the work.

Although the Latin American authors whose works are under consideration here do not form such a close nucleus as that of Jijé and his protégés, there are nonetheless links between all three authors. Thus, Rius's autobiography includes references to Fontanarrosa's admiration for his work and Edgar Clement, author of *Operación Bolívar*, claims both Rius and Fontanarrosa as major influences on his own work.⁸⁰ Funded by a scholarship offered to young creators, *Operación Bolívar* was originally published in episodes in the magazine *Gallito Comics* and later published in two volumes by Editorial Planeta.⁸¹ In what appears to be present-day Mexico City, judicial police officer Román and *angelero* Leonel uncover a plot to control Mexico and the rest of the Americas emanating from the US. *Angeleros* are descendants of the indigenous population of Mexico and are able to see and touch angels.⁸² As an *angelero*, Leonel uses this gift to earn a living, killing angels and selling off their body parts. Each of these body parts can be put to good use and the body parts that sell the most are the bones of angels that, when ground to a dust, become a potent drug: angel dust.⁸³ The eponymous operation of this book will see the massacre of a crowd of angels in Tlatelolco, under the supervision of Archangel Michael; a group comprised of a CIA agent, the US army, and Mexican police; and army officers, as

⁸⁰ Rius, *Rius para principiantes*, pp. 258 & 283-284; Edgar Clement, interview with the author, Mexico City, 18 April 2011.

⁸¹ Edgar Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, México: Castor, 1999, inside of the back cover; Carmen V. Vidaurre Arenas, "Una historieta mexicana" [A Mexican Comic], *Sincronía*, (Verano 2000).

⁸² Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

⁸³ Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

the first step towards a fictional planned free-trade agreement for the production and distribution of angel dust across the Americas.⁸⁴

Clement's work comes from a background that is in sharp contrast with that of the other comics in this corpus: while *Tintin* and *Lucky Luke*, for instance, are mainstream bestsellers, *Operación Bolívar* comes from the world of alternative comics.⁸⁵ Visually, it is also quite distinct from the other comics. Where the other works resort to simplified lines on a white background or a colourful but still simplified background, Clement opts for a more realistic drawing style, to which he adds collages from famous paintings or other iconic images, over a very dark grey to black background. Now that the series have been introduced in more detail and that the considerable clout they carry has been made evident, I would like to take some time to define some particular terms and referencing conventions I use in this project.

Authors, the Terms Used to Refer to Them, and Their Names

While certain works are created entirely by one person (for instance, *Operación Bolívar*) others, such as the later *Lucky Luke* stories, are created by a team. The generic term "author" is particularly useful where a work is the fruit of only one person's labour but it is also used to cover both scriptwriters and artists. The former, as the word suggests, are in charge of writing the script: they provide the story, the setting, the characters' lines and attitudes either in purely written form or in sketched frames. The artists, for their part, bring scripts to life by illustrating them.

⁸⁴ Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

⁸⁵ Bruce Campbell, "Signs of Empire in Mexican Graphic Narrative: A Research Agenda", in *Spanish and Empire*, N. Echávez-Solano & K. C. Dworkin y Méndez (eds.), vol. 34: Hispanic Issues, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007, p. 175; Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, "On Angels, Drugs, and Trade: Edgar Clément's *Operación Bolívar*", *International Journal of Comic Art*, 8, 2 (Fall 2006), p. 163.

In order to gain more insight into how the comics were created, as much in terms of the processes involved as the reasons behind certain choices of words or images, I have interviewed all the living authors who agreed to meet me and answer my questions for approximately two hours. However, the content of the interviews itself is not what is under scrutiny here: they only serve to shed a light on the corpus and references to these interviews are used sparingly. I normally refer to authors by their pen names as they appear on their work in respect of their right to privacy. On the rare occasions when I do use their full names, it is always with their prior consent.

Avoiding Confusion

The word “Spirou” can be particularly ambiguous because it refers to so many linked but distinct entities. In order to avoid confusion, in the body of the text I strive to always refer to the classic series as *Spirou et Fantasio*, while the magazine is referred to as *Spirou* and the parallel series is referred to as *Spirou one-shot*. In the footnotes, the title of the classic series alternates between “Spirou et Fantasio”, “Une Aventure de Spirou et Fantasio” and “Les aventures de Spirou et Fantasio” (without the inverted commas) while that of the parallel series alternates between “Le Spirou de...” and “Une aventure de Spirou et Fantasio par...” (also without the inverted commas). These are not random variations: they reflect the changes in the titles of both series. Where further clarification is necessary, I specify which “Spirou” is being discussed.

Albums

Most of the primary material used in this thesis was originally made available to the public in a periodical such as a newspaper or a magazine dedicated to the (pre)publication of several comics. The term *album*, in the Franco-Belgian tradition,

is used to refer to a volume, usually hardbound and approximately the size of an A4 sheet, containing all the pages of a particular story or a number of shorter stories from the same series.

Translations

The works included in the corpus are studied directly in the original language in which they were published. All proper names and place names—with the exception of Palombie, which I normally refer to as Palombia—are used as they appear in the original work. If they exist, translations for proper names are listed in the front matter.⁸⁶ Translations or glosses are provided for all quotations that cannot be understood by an English speaker. These translations are usually placed within the body of the text, immediately after the quotation and between round brackets. As for titles, if they cannot be understood by an English speaker, translations are provided between square brackets immediately after the title the first time the reference appears in the footnotes. For both quotations and titles, preference is given to official translations and my own translation is only supplied if there is no official translation or the official translation does not address an aspect that is relevant to my argument. Unless specified, translations of quotations are my own.

Name Variations

Some names appear with alternative spellings in the works included in this study. This is the case of Welwell/Wellwell (in “L’héritage”) and Pwa-kassé/Pwakassé (in *Les soucoupes volantes*).⁸⁷ In addition, it appears that the name of the original Palombian indigenous people (Chahutas) included an *s* in its singular form in the

⁸⁶ See pp. xiii - iv.

⁸⁷ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976; Jijé, “Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes” [Blondin and Cirage Discover the Flying Saucers], in *1954 - 1955*, Tout Jijé, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992.

early days. It has since lost its *s* in the singular while it takes an *s* in plural. For the sake of consistency, the names of the former two characters will be spelled Welwell and Pwakassé while “Chahuta” will be used in the singular form and “Chahutas” will always denote the plural form, unless the variations occur in a direct quotation.

Planche and Page

Though both *planche* and *page* translate as “page” in English, there is an important distinction in French. The *planche* corresponds to the original sheet of paper on which the work was drawn and is usually, though not always, numbered manually by the artist near the last frame. The *planche* number distinguishes itself from the page number in that the machine-generated pagination may vary from one edition to the next while the *planche* number is invariable. For example, *planche* 29 of the *Spirou et Fantasio* story *Alerte aux Zorkons* can be found

- on page 12bis of the magazine *Spirou* (issue 3768)⁸⁸
- on page 31 of the standard album⁸⁹
- on page 35 of the luxury edition⁹⁰

The reason why the *planche* numbers do not change while there are differences between the page numbers is that *planche* numbers pertain to the position of the drawing pages in relation to the work as a unit (in this case, the story *Alerte aux Zorkons*) while the page numbers refer to the position of these same drawing pages within the publication that contains them (that is to say, a magazine, an album or a bound volume containing additional material).

⁸⁸ Yoann & Vehlmann, “Alerte aux Zorkons (episode 3/7)” [Zorkon Alert], *Spirou et Fantasio*, *Spirou*, 30 June, 2010, 73rd year, Issue 3768, p. 12bis.

⁸⁹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons* [Zorkon Alert], *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 51, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010, p. 31.

⁹⁰ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons* [Zorkon Alert], *Spirou et Fantasio*, Saive: Khani, 2010, p. 35.

Referencing System for *Bandes Dessinées* and *Historietas*

In this thesis, I usually follow *European Comic Art* guidelines for referencing comics.

A typical reference for an album will look like the following:

Hergé, *Les bijoux de La Castafiore*, 34/2.
(the numbers refer to page 34, frame 2)

The referencing system varies slightly in that when I refer to an entire page or a set of pages, “p.” and “pp.” precede the page numbers. In addition, where there is no page number available, but there is a *planche* number that can be used, the *planche* number is preceded by “pl.” Finally, as *Operación Bolívar* resists frame, *planche* or page number assignation, references for this work are inevitably followed by the mention “no pagination”. Every effort, however, is made to describe the scenes being discussed in enough detail that they can be found relatively easily if required.

Throughout this thesis I concern myself with reading comics through the two main lenses of decolonial thought and semiology/mythology, which I combine with a number of other theories to understand *bande dessinée* and *historieta* Latin America. What is the position of Latin America on the global scene? What is the Latin America we are presented with? Given the absence of a colonial history between Belgium and Latin America, why the interest in Latin America? How are *bandes dessinées* and *historietas* different in their representations of Latin America and why? This project embarks on a journey to uncover the multiple visions and meanings of Latin America in the Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics.

Maestro non è scritto! / Come? Vedo che è scritto, cosa leggi? / Non leggo. Non sono lettere dell'alfabeto e non è greco, lo riconoscerei. Sembrano vermi, serpentelli, caccole di mosche... / Ah, è arabo.¹
(Master, it is not written! / What do you mean? I can see it is written. What do you read? / I am not reading. These are not letters of the alphabet, and it is not Greek. I would recognize it. They look like worms, snakes, fly dung.... / Ah, it's Arabic.)²
(The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco)

Ink on Paper

The epigraph to this chapter is taken from Umberto Eco's first novel, *The Name of the Rose*. In this passage set in a forbidden section of an abbey library, the friar William of Baskerville asks the novice Adso to read some books to him as he has lost his glasses. Unfamiliar with Arabic, Adso declares the book he has picked up is not written.³ Unless we are able to interpret the printed material contained in comic books, we are like Adso: drawing and writing alike are nothing more than ink on paper until we bring them to life by decoding them. In this chapter, I do not yet engage critically with the representations of Latin America found in the corpus. Rather, I explore some theories to explain the lens through which I read all the images as well as the words in the corpus throughout the thesis. To this end, I use examples primarily from *Spirou et Fantasio* and *Inodoro Pereyra*, with the occasional reference to other series. I start by establishing some of the links between writing and drawing

¹ Umberto Eco, *Il Nome della rosa* [The Name of the Rose], Milano: Tascabili Bompiani, 2009, pp. 176-177.

² Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver, London: Pan Books, 1984, p. 173. The difference in the number of ellipses is in the official translation.

³ Eco, *Il Nome della rosa*, pp. 176-177.

and then focus on the graphic side, establishing the several layers of meaning attached to comic book characters. At the end of the chapter, I return to the written side to discuss how it too conveys meaning on as many levels as the images. In order to do this, I turn to cartooning as explained by Scott McCloud, to Ferdinand de Saussure's formulation of the sign and to Roland Barthes' reformulation of Ferdinand de Saussure's work on the sign to explain myth. I also take some time to discuss the meaning of the term *line* with respect to comics and to explain its importance in the worlds of *Spirou* and of *Inodoro Pereyra*. Once I have introduced these concepts, I apply them to some of the comics I focus on in this thesis, with a particular interest in Inodoro Pereyra, Spirou's bellboy hat and Franquin's line as examples.

A Rose by Any Other Name: Sign, Myth and Cartooning

Saussure conceptualises language as a system of signs. According to him, these signs have two components: a signifier (the form used to convey a concept) and a signified (the concept conveyed).⁴ To renew the classic examples offered by Saussure, for he or she who speaks Latin the term 'rosa' will evoke the concept of a rose. The two syllables 'ro-sa' constitute what Saussure refers to as the signifier while the concept of 'rose' is the signified. It is the combination of the signifier "rosa" and of the signified "rose" that makes a sign and it is thanks to this combination that we are able to communicate through language.⁵ The link between signifier and signified is arbitrary inasmuch as there is no natural reason why the particular signifier "rosa" should be associated with the signified "rose" (as Shakespeare's Juliet puts it, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"), which is not to say that speakers are at liberty to use any signifier: the link between the two components may be arbitrary but

⁴ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, pp. 98-100.

⁵ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, p. 99.

it is governed by a convention within a community of speakers.⁶ While the quote from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* serves to illustrate Saussure's point, it is important to bear in mind that what the latter terms the signifier is not so much a name as an "image acoustique" (acoustic image) and that the signified is not an object.⁷ Rather, Saussure explains that the acoustic image is the sound of the word associated with the signifier as it is imprinted in our memories—hence the fact that we are able to recite words in our heads without speaking. Similarly, the signified is a concept rather than a material object and since both signifier and signified pertain to the mind, so does the sign, which is comprised of the signifier and the signified.⁸ Thus, according to Saussure, words, as used in speech, are the oral realisation of the signifier.⁹ Signifiers, however, can also be realised as script or as images.¹⁰

Myth, in the Barthesian sense, is also a communication system and it operates as a function of the system put forward by Saussure. In Barthes' model, language continues to be seen as a system of signs in the Saussurian sense but myth reprocesses these already constituted signs to give them a new meaning.¹¹ In the plane of myth then, written and drawn signs alike are turned into signifiers that are associated with new signifieds, to create new significations.¹² For example, the quote from *Romeo and Juliet* used earlier, beyond simply stating that a name does not carry the essence of what it designates, is an often quoted line from the very iconic balcony scene. And this line captures all that will lead to the tragic end of these famous ill-fated lovers

⁶ Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2 Scene 2, lines 43-44; de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, pp. 100-101.

⁷ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, p. 98.

⁸ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, pp. 98-99.

⁹ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, p. 98.

¹⁰ de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, p. 103.

¹¹ Barthes, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, pp. 124, 225 & 227.

¹² Barthes, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, p. 228.

(being in love with someone who bears the wrong family name). In addition, it immediately evokes the whole of Shakespeare's play, much like the play itself evokes the entire works of a playwright so famous he is simply referred to as "the bard".

Barthes describes myth as a robbery as myth takes away the original meaning of language to endow it with new meanings. Hence, the quote from *Romeo and Juliet* comes to mean less the fact that "rose" is but a name and to mean more Shakespeare's complete works or even Victorian plays for instance.¹³ This robbery, however, is not complete since myth does not obliterate the sign, but only deforms it.¹⁴ If the sign is diminished by myth, according to Barthes, myth prefers to appropriate signs that are already weak and available to take on new meanings, such as caricatures, pastiches and symbols.¹⁵

In his book *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud shows how comic characters can be 'read', much in the same way as text can be, thanks to cartooning. While they do so to varying degrees, McCloud suggests that practically all comic artists resort to cartooning, which he describes "as a form of amplification through simplification".¹⁶ Put in clearer terms, cartooning is a method of drawing in which illustration is reduced to a few lines depicting the most salient traits of the object represented. This type of drawing may be far removed from photographic realism but, conversely, it enables more readers to identify with the characters than a photograph would, as the

¹³ Barthes, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, p. 235.

¹⁴ Barthes, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, pp. 230-231.

¹⁵ Barthes, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, p. 233.

¹⁶ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, New York: HarperPerennial, 1994, 30/4 & 42/1-2.

drawings become more generic and less representative of one single person.¹⁷ To McCloud, cartooning and writing can be placed together on a spectrum of abstraction: where words retain no resemblance whatsoever to the concept they refer back to, cartoons, though not photographic copies, still retain a certain resemblance to the concept depicted.¹⁸

While comic characters drawn on the page can therefore be understood as icons that carry the story (each frame indicating how characters interact with each other and what happens to them at a given time), through the process of cartooning they lose a certain depth as only some characteristics are accentuated while others are removed. This loss of depth, which enables readers to identify with characters, also enables myth to graft itself onto the characters, as their apparent void becomes filled with a new meaning, in the same way that Barthes suggests myth appropriates weaker signs such as caricatures.¹⁹ Thus, many comic characters have a double iconicity, being cartoons that we ‘read’ and follow as they move across the page as well as having the weight of myth rest on their shoulders.

The Line

Referred to as *trazo* in Spanish or *trait* in French, the word ‘line’ in English can seem a rather obscure term. Before turning to the meaning of the images found in comics as signs and as myths, I wish to take some time to discuss the question of the line, which refers to the drawing style. In the Franco-Belgian tradition, there are two important, though not entirely different, drawing styles that emerged in the late 1940s and 1950s

¹⁷ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 31/4.

¹⁸ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁹ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 36/6-7 & 37/5; Barthes, “Le Mythe aujourd’hui” [Myth Today], in *Mythologies*, Guittard (ed.), Paris: Seuil, 2010, p. 233.

and that are associated with particular schools of drawing.²⁰ These two styles are, perhaps unsurprisingly, linked with the two great rival figures of *bande dessinée*: *Tintin* and *Spirou*. The *École de Bruxelles* is known for the *ligne claire* (clear line) and is associated with *Tintin*.²¹ In terms of graphic execution, Hergé explained that the *ligne claire* approach consisted in drawing the same character over and over until he obtained the line that best captured this character's movement before tracing the final drawing in *one clear line*.²² However, Hergé also specified that to him, the concept of the clear line goes beyond being purely a drawing technique: he also applied this concept to his narrative method in order to tell his stories in a clear and simple manner.²³

As for the *École de Charleroi* (or *École de Marcinelle*) it is known for the *style atome*, the drawing style associated with *Spirou*.²⁴ This drawing style came about when, moving away from a more rounded line, Franquin's drawing evolved into a graphic style in which "shapes became more angular, more geometric, and they were drawn with bolder, straighter lines".²⁵ Named after the iconic Atomium, the landmark built for the Brussels World Fair (1958), the *style atome* embraces technological progress.²⁶ As Screech puts it, "[s]tyle atome' glorified the mass consumerism and the technological optimism of a Europe emerging from post-war austerity".²⁷

²⁰ Ann Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip*, Bristol & Chicago: Intellect, 2007, p. 19.

²¹ Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, p. 19.

²² Michel Jakar (dir.) *Le Secret de la ligne claire* [The Secret of the Clear Line], 1995 [16 min].

²³ Peeters, *Le Monde d'Hergé*, p. 204.

²⁴ Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, p. 19; Beaty, "A Clear Line to Marcinelle", p. 201.

²⁵ Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, p. 57.

²⁶ Uncredited, *2013: L'Année groom* [2013: The Bellboy Year], Pressbook, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2012, p. 68; Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, p. 57.

²⁷ Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, p. 57.

Although the rivalry and differences between *Tintin* and *Spirou* were “most furiously expressed in the line of the artists’ drawings”, the two Franco-Belgian schools still have a number of features in common.²⁸ As Screech points out, in both these universes the world is a “safe, clean, prosperous [place] where goodness always triumphs”.²⁹ Moreover, if the clear line and the *style atome* are different lines, both resort to cartooning and it is striking that Tintin and Spirou in reality have practically the same general facial characteristics: a quiff, a round face, two eyes, a nose and a mouth. As Bart Beaty points out, the sequence of Emile Bravo’s award winning *one-shot* *Le journal d’un ingénu* where Spirou dresses like Tintin makes manifest the extent to which these characters resemble each other. As Beaty puts it: “it [...] serves to reinforce the important similarities between the signature characters in Belgium’s best-known comics magazines, so alike that they can be interchanged with a simple shift in wardrobe.”³⁰

Though the term *line* refers to an artist’s drawing style, such as whether he uses the clear line or the *style atome*, it also has a narrower, more personal meaning. If drawing is a form of writing, an artist’s line can be compared to his handwriting and though (s)he may, for instance, use the *style atome*, there is still a quality to an artist’s line that is particular to him or her and that allows us to recognise his or her work even when it is not signed. For example, while the timeline Dupuis uses to illustrate the past seventy-five years of the classic *Spirou et Fantasio* may not reflect the evolution of each artist’s style through the years, one only needs to glance at this

²⁸ Beaty, “A Clear Line to Marcinelle”, p. 201.

²⁹ Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, p. 57.

³⁰ Émile Bravo, *Le Journal d’un ingénu* [The Diary of an Innocent], *Le Spirou de...*, vol. 4, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 29/4-11; Beaty, “A Clear Line to Marcinelle”, p. 205.

timeline to see that in this series artists can use their own line, at least to a point.³¹ The itinerary of the current artist behind the classic *Spirou et Fantasio*, Yoann, in the *Spirou et Fantasio* universe and in collaboration with the scriptwriter Vehlmann provides a tailor-made example of the importance of line, sign and myth in the series.

Although Yoann and Vehlmann's first classic album was published in 2010, their first incursion in the *Spirou et Fantasio* universe dates back to 2006, when they inaugurated the *one-shot* series with *Les géants pétrifiés*.³² For the present discussion, this album is not relevant so much for its story line, as it is important with respect to its graphic aspect and therefore I will not summarise its plot here. In the parallel series, authors are expected to present their personal vision of Spirou—the character and the series—and Yoann opted for a line that is quite harsh and angular in this album. Although Dupuis—the publisher and copyright holder of Spirou—accepted Yoann's harsh line for the *one-shot* series, it was not considered appropriate for the classic series. Thus, when Yoann and Vehlmann were entrusted with the classic series four years later, Dupuis requested that Yoann use a line that is closer to Franquin's in order to maintain a graphic *continuity*, although there is no strict graphic *unity* in the series.³³

The line Yoann uses in the classic series may be strikingly different from the one he uses in the parallel series, yet it is possible to recognise his handiwork in both

³¹ Uncredited, "Journaliste et aventurier" [Journalist and Adventurer], *Dupuis*, (© Dupuis 2013), <http://www.spirou.com/album/spirou-et-fantasio.php> (03/02/2013).

³² Yoann & Vehlmann, *Les Géants pétrifiés* [The Stone Giants], Une Aventure de Spirou et Fantasio par..., vol. 1 Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2006.

³³ Frédéric Vidal, "Peindre Spirou, c'est le toucher" [Painting Spirou is Touching Him], Interview with Yoann, *Casemate*, August-September, 2010, Issue 29H (Hors série été), p. 94; Damien Perez, "Spirou: Il renaît le divin enfant" [Spirou: The Divine Child is Reborn], Interviews with Yoann, Vehlmann, Munuera, Morvan, Tome and Bravo and plates commented by Yoann, *Casemate*, February, 2009, Issue HS n°1, p. 38.

branches of the series and I would suggest that Yoann is in fact slowly integrating his harsh line in his more recent work. Despite the fact that Dupuis explicitly requested a more classic line for the classic series, there is still some leeway for artists in the *Spirou et Fantasio* series compared to a series like *Marsupilami*, for instance. While the artists' work in *Spirou et Fantasio* can still have its own personality, in *Marsupilami*, Batem is the only one who can draw the marsupilami and he is required, by contract, to continue drawing this animal the way that Franquin drew him in the seventies.³⁴ As a result, there is a stronger graphic unity in *Marsupilami* than in *Spirou et Fantasio*.

Spirou the (Broken) Sign

According to the very first episode of the series, the character Spirou was created specifically to work as a bellboy at the Moustic Hôtel. This first episode, “La naissance de Spirou”, was published on the first page of the first issue of *Spirou*, known as *Le journal de Spirou* at the time.³⁵ As such, the birth recounted in this first episode is in reality a triple one: it is the birth of Spirou the character, the magazine and the series. Today, the term “Spirou” continues to be the signifier of all three of these distinct but interlinked entities, as well as a few more: it is also the name of the character referred to as Petit Spirou (Little Spirou, from the eponymous spin-off series) and the name of a basketball team.³⁶ In addition, a “Spirou” is a Spirou album, regardless of whether it is from the classic or the parallel series, as is attested by the fact that the current title of the parallel series is simply “Le Spirou de...” (The Spirou

³⁴ Jean-Pierre Fuéri & Frédéric Vidal, “Chabat réalise son rêve” [Chabat Directs his Dream], Plates commented by Batem and Colman, *Casemate*, April, 2012, Issue 47, p. 58.

³⁵ Rob-Vel, “La Naissance de Spirou” [The Birth of Spirou], in *La Voix sans maître (et 5 autres aventures)*, *Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2003, p. 3.

³⁶ Vehlmann, interview with the author, Paris, 11 July 2011.

of...). As he is the face of Dupuis and of the magazine Spirou, Spirou's bellboy hat is also visible on the logo of both.³⁷

However, Spirou is a broken sign: if at the time of his creation there was a logical explanation for Spirou's attire (he was created specifically to work as a bellboy), by the start of the classic series (that is to say during the time the stories were being created by Franquin) Spirou had long stopped being a bellboy to become a journalist and an adventurer. Hence, the original equation

$$\text{Spirou}^{38} = \text{bellboy} = \text{uniform} = \text{magazine} = \text{Dupuis}$$

no longer applied by the time the classic series began. Rather, the links between each of the elements of the above equation looked something like this:

$$\text{Spirou} = \text{uniform} = \text{magazine} = \text{Dupuis}$$

However, the presence of the uniform made little sense without Spirou's occupation as a bellboy and, though he retained a red outfit with black stripes, Spirou gradually lost his uniform. This is a change that in fact started at the end of the Franquin period (specifically in the nineteenth classic album *Panade à Champignac*). As regards the Morvan/Munuera period, though it is represented by a bellboy in full uniform in the timeline, in reality Spirou only briefly dons the uniform to avoid being recognised in a hotel—an irony that Spip is prompt to comment on.³⁹ While it is true that in the parallel series there have been a number of *one-shots* where Spirou wears his full uniform, each of these albums—though recent—can in fact be inserted at a much earlier time within the diegetic timeline of the classic series, before the time when

³⁷ Vehlmann, interview.

³⁸ The word is used to refer to the character here.

³⁹ Franquin, et al., "Panade à Champignac" [Bread Soup in Champignac], in *Aventures humoristiques: 1961 - 1967, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 8, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2009; Morvan & Munuera, "Spirou et Fantasio à Tokyo (episode 5/12)" [Spirou and Fantasio in Tokyo], *Spirou*, 26 July, 2006, 69th year, Issue 3563, 54/9 – 55/1.

Spirou began losing his uniform.⁴⁰ Thus, by the time Yoann and Vehlmann were entrusted with the classic series, Spirou had completely lost his uniform, only retaining the colour red. At the same time, the bellboy hat continued to be part of the logos of *Spirou* and Dupuis as well as the basketball team known as Spirou. As for Petit Spirou and his family, they never stopped wearing the red uniform. The sign Spirou was therefore broken even further, and could be expressed in these terms:

Spirou = magazine = Dupuis

and

Bellboy hat = magazine = Dupuis

but

Spirou ≠ uniform/bellboy hat

Spirou the Myth

As a broken sign, Spirou becomes more open to appropriation by myth. It therefore comes as no surprise that it took several decades for Spirou to rid himself entirely of his uniform (the white spats with golden buttons and the bellboy hat can still be found in the Tome/Janry period, for instance): while the sign was weakening, it was through myth that the presence of the uniform continued to be justified. The return of Spirou's complete uniform in the classic series, after it was eventually reduced to nothing more than a red unitard that made Spirou look like a "spermatozoïde humain" (human

⁴⁰ The *one-shot* *Le tombeau des Champignac* is set immediately after the classic *QRN sur Bretzelburg* (vol. 18); the *one-shots* *Le journal d'un ingénu* and *Le groom vert-de-gris* are set around WW2; and the *one-shot* *Panique en Atlantique*, featuring a character named Sprtschk [sic], must be placed before the classic *Le voyageur du mésozoïque* (vol. 13), in which Sprtschk dies. See: Tarrin & Yann, *Le Tombeau des Champignac* [The Champignac Family Vault], *Une Aventure de Spirou et Fantasio* par... vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2007; Tarrin in Jean-Philippe Lefèvre (dir.) *Les Éditions Dupuis* [Dupuis Publishers], *Un Monde de bulles*, 16/11/2007 [28min] Available: <http://www.publicsenat.fr/cms/video-a-la-demande/vod.html?idE=56202> (13/01/2011); Bravo, *Le Journal d'un ingénu*; Yann & Schwartz, *Le Groom vert-de-gris* [The German Soldier Bellboy], *Le Spirou de...*, vol. 5, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2009; Fabrice Parme & Lewis Trondheim, *Panique en Atlantique* [Panick in the Atlantic], *Le Spirou de...*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010; Franquin, "Le Voyageur du mésozoïque" [The Traveller from the Mesozoic], in *Spirou et Fantasio*, L'Intégrale, vol. 5, Ixelles: Niffle, 2002, no pagination.

sperm), coincides with the beginning of the Yoann/Vehlmann period.⁴¹ However, the reasons for this comeback are not to be found in Yoann and Vehlmann's first classic album, but rather in a short story created in the chronological centre between this team's *one-shot* and their first classic album. The short story, titled "Back to the Rédak", was prepublished in the issue marking the seventieth anniversary of Spirou (character, series and magazine alike) and is as yet unpublished in an album.⁴² In addition to explaining the reasons for the return of the full bellboy uniform, this short story serves to exemplify how iconicity, cartooning and myth come together in the world of Spirou. I argue that, past this turning point, Yoann and Vehlmann's work in *Spirou et Fantasio*, whilst touching upon different themes and telling different stories each time, is also an ongoing reflection on the relationship between Spirou-sign and Spirou-myth.

Briefly, in the eight-*planche* story "Back to the Rédak", Spirou agrees to accompany Fantasio to the editorial offices of *Spirou* in order to pick up a document. While Fantasio still works for the magazine, Spirou, we are told, has not been to the editorial offices for a considerable amount of time. It is not long before Fantasio gets caught up in office work related to the preparation of the special issue of the magazine to mark Spirou's seventieth anniversary and delegates some tasks to Spirou. On his way to recover some past issues of the magazine for Fantasio, Spirou bumps into the marketing director, who explains to him that he is required by contract to wear his uniform when he is in the editorial offices. Spirou then proceeds to the archives section and experiences a short adventure in the underground section of the building

⁴¹ Morvan, et al., *Aux Sources du Z* [The Origins of the Z], Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 50, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 31/10.

⁴² Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak" [Back to the Editorial Offices], Spirou et Fantasio, *Spirou*, 16 April, 2008, 71st year, Issue 3653.

before finally resurfacing with the past issues Fantasio had requested. While most of the editorial staff celebrates the return of Spirou, the marketing director is not moved and it is revealed he had already started looking for a replacement for Spirou.⁴³

Aside from the obvious reference to the *Back to the Future* franchise, both in the phrasing and stylisation of the title, this short story is nothing short of an exploration of the *Spirou* universe in terms of the iconic and mythical value of the character.⁴⁴ As stated earlier, Spirou is a broken sign insofar as there no longer is a logical link between Spirou, his uniform and the magazine. While some of Yoann and Vehlmann's predecessors have tried to deal with this inconsistency by gradually removing the bellboy costume or by using it as a camouflage in the world of hospitality, Yoann and Vehlmann take a different approach: they explain Spirou's uniform by the mere fact that he is the face of the magazine and its publisher.⁴⁵ As the marketing employee of Dupuis summarises it for Spirou: "Spirou=Dupuis et Dupuis=Spirou (...) En résumé n'oubliez pas votre costume ! Dans ce bâtiment, Spirou=costume... vous n'avez pas le choix... c'est contractuel" (Spirou= Dupuis and Dupuis=Spirou (...) In short don't forget your costume! In this building, Spirou=costume... you have no choice... it's in the contract).⁴⁶ Before stating this obligation in such plain terms, the marketing director tries to explain to Spirou the importance of the bellboy uniform and what he is as a myth. Thus, he explains that "courage, générosité, costume rouge, écureuil" (courage, generosity, red costume,

⁴³ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", *passim*.

⁴⁴ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", p. 33.

⁴⁵ See Tome & Janry, "Zorglub à Cuba" [Zorglub in Cuba], *Spirou et Fantasio, Spirou*, 9 November, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3839, 11/6-9; Morvan & Munuera, "Spirou et Fantasio à Tokyo (5/12)", 54/9 – 55/1.

⁴⁶ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", 33/7 & 33/10.

squirrel) are all part of Spirou's "branding concept".⁴⁷ This marketing director is particularly keen on exploiting the bellboy brand and not only does he wear a bellboy hat himself but his office is also filled with a plethora of Spirou merchandise, all featuring either Spirou in his bellboy uniform or at the very least his iconic bellboy hat.⁴⁸

This branding concept that the marketing director insists upon so much is in fact Spirou's myth: 'spirou', the Walloon word for 'squirrel', has come to mean the character Spirou, Dupuis, the magazine *Spirou*, the Belgian basketball team Spirou, "courage, generosity, red costume, squirrel"... but the squirrel no longer is Spirou. It is his pet Spip who now springs to mind as the squirrel. Thus in the Spirou universe, the signifier "spirou" has been entirely robbed of its signified. The original signified has been replaced first by a redheaded character (sign) as well as certain character traits and values (generosity and courage) and a dress code (myth). As for the original meaning of 'squirrel', it has also been taken over by myth as it is not entirely lost, but has been shifted onto Spip.

Interestingly, while the marketing director associates certain positive values with Spirou (courage and generosity), we see little of either as the plot unfolds. Instead, it is Spirou's grumpier side that is emphasised as he first becomes impatient and attempts to leave the marketing director's office when he does not understand what the latter is trying to say.⁴⁹ Later, when it finally becomes clear that he must wear the uniform, Spirou is shown stomping angrily on his way to look for the past issues that

⁴⁷ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", 33/6.

⁴⁸ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", 33/3, 33/4, 33/7 & 33/10.

⁴⁹ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", 33/7.

Fantasio had requested.⁵⁰ The humour here resides in the fact that Spirou the sign is confronted to his own myth, is able to reflect on this state of affairs and rebels against it. Indeed, though he may not have a say regarding his attire, Spirou does not accept it willingly and he displays a stronger character than the somewhat wishy-washy person the marketing director described. This confrontation of the sign with his myth runs throughout this short story, as Spirou has to prove his authenticity to the various characters he encounters. For instance, held at gunpoint by a crazy man, Spirou has to prove that he is not Tintin or face death, and we also find out that there are several applicants who have applied for the role of Spirou under a program named “Spirou académie”.⁵¹

Spirou the Sign and the Myth

“Tintin a sa houpette [sic], Mickey a ses oreilles rondes, Spirou, lui, a son calot de groom” (Tintin has his quiff, Mickey [Mouse] has his round ears, Spirou, for his part, has his bellboy hat) according to Sergio Honorez.⁵² The parallel he establishes between Spirou’s hat and Mickey Mouse’s ears is particularly interesting in light of the example provided by McCloud to illustrate how we, as readers, fill the void of cartoons’ faces by projecting ourselves in their emptiness: McCloud shows a child’s head fitting exactly in Mickey Mouse’s, with only the cartoon character’s iconic ears showing.⁵³ The parallel established by Honorez is confirmed by Yoann’s and Vehlmann’s words on Spirou’s iconicity and the importance of his bellboy uniform. According to Vehlmann,

⁵⁰ Yoann & Vehlmann, “Back to the Rédak”, 33/11.

⁵¹ Yoann & Vehlmann, “Back to the Rédak”, pp. 37 & 39/6. The name “Spirou Académie” is a reference to *Star Academy*, a reality talent show. It is discussed in more detail in the chapter “De qui se moque-t-on?”.

⁵² Sergio Honorez, “Retour sur une aventure éditoriale au long cours” [Looking Back on a Long-Running Editorial Adventure], *La Revue des livres pour enfants*, 260, Spécial Spirou (2011), p. 86.

⁵³ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 36/6.

Spirou, clairement, c'est rien. C'est un calot vide et après chaque repreneur y a mis un peu de lui. C'est un peu comme une défroque, en fait, que je peux enfiler le temps de quelques épisodes et puis l'animer comme un personnage du répertoire en fait, comme Polichinelle.⁵⁴

(Spirou, clearly, is nothing. It's an empty bellboy's hat and every author who took up the series put a little bit of himself in it. It's a bit like a costume into which I can slip for the duration of a few episodes and then in fact bring him to life like a classic character, like Punchinello.)

When we consider the importance of the bellboy's uniform, and in particular Spirou's hat, as the logo that unites the Spirou universe (*Spirou* and Dupuis, but also *Le Petit Spirou*), Yoann and Vehlmann's decision to make Spirou wear his uniform again in the classic series—for the first time in more than a decade—can be read as an attempt to repair the sign and reconcile sign and myth. Indeed, Vehlmann explains that the decision to make Spirou wear his full outfit again is linked with the fact that *Spirou et Fantasio* is republished in *Spirou*, that his hat is part of the logo of *Spirou* and of Dupuis and is a present that is distributed to children during festivals.⁵⁵ Therefore, if the sign is broken, the bellboy hat continues to be present as a logo and marketing tool. Making Spirou wear this uniform *because* it is part of the logos of Dupuis and *Spirou* makes the equation whole again: it no longer matters that Spirou is not a bellboy.

Beyond the turning point of “Back to the Rédak”, I argue that Yoann and Vehlmann's work is an ongoing reflection on Spirou the sign *and* the myth. *La face cachée du Z* is the second instalment of Yoann and Vehlmann's opening diptych in the classic series, following from *Alerte aux Zorkons*, an album that will be discussed in the next chapter. After a *planche*-long prelude creating a link between the two instalments of

⁵⁴ Pierrick Allain & Laurence Le Saux (dir.) *Spirou, flamme olympique* [Spirou, Olympic Flame] (Interview with Yoann & Vehlmann), *Spirou, groom toujours*, Episode 1, April 2009 [4min24sec] Available: <http://www.telerama.fr/livre/spirou-flamme-olympique.41374.php> (11/10/2011).

⁵⁵ Vehlmann, interview.

this diptych, *La face cachée du Z* opens on Spirou and Fantasio waking up in the room they usually occupy in Champignac only to find out that they are on the moon. The megalomaniac scientist Zorglub has gone into a business partnership in order to fund his scientific research on the moon. These endeavours are financed thanks to an exclusive holiday resort set up near Zorglub's research station. Wishing to surprise Spirou, Fantasio and Pacôme de Champignac, Zorglub has put the three men to sleep and transported them to a replica of their room, but on the moon. It is not long before Spirou runs into trouble: irradiated by the harmful sunrays of a solar eruption, Spirou and Spip mutate. The Spirou-garou (werespirou i.e. Spirou-werewolf) spreads panic on the moon as he becomes more and more violent. Meanwhile, Zorglub, hurt by Pacôme's criticism of the station on the moon, sabotages the tourist resort in order to convince all the guests to leave. After almost being killed several times and attacking a number of people, Spirou jumps on board the zorglumobile (Zorglub's air shuttle) and on his way back to earth, he gradually reverts to his usual self. In the last half-*planche*, we see Zorglub's associate for the first time and he declares that he would like to purchase Spirou.⁵⁶

The following album, *Dans les griffes de la vipère*, is the latest addition to the classic series. It opens on a conversation between Spirou and a young admirer about Spirou's adventures on the moon. A visibly embarrassed Spirou explains that the authors took some licence when writing about the adventure and that he does not remember what happened very clearly. Soon after this conversation, Fantasio summons Spirou to join him in court, in his bellboy outfit, as they are in trouble. The next *planches* show Spirou, Fantasio and Seccotine in court, as the magazine is being sued for damages:

⁵⁶ Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z* [The Dark Side of the Z], Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 52, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011.

the violence depicted in the previous adventure has led a boy to jump out of a window and he would have hurt himself badly had he not been on the ground floor. The lawyer has also found several more plaintiffs to join in these legal proceedings and the judges condemn *Spirou* to paying 1 000 000€ in compensation. Unable to pay that amount, Fantasio signs a contract with the V.I.P.E.R. corporation in order to keep the magazine afloat and Spirou, as the namesake of the magazine, is also asked to append his signature. While Fantasio enjoys the possibilities that open up with this inflow of capital, Spirou soon finds himself in a gilded cage. The boss of V.I.P.E.R. corp is none other than Zorclub's former business partner and, having seen Spirou in action while he was on the moon, this man has provoked the court case specifically with the aim of buying Spirou—the magazine but more so the character—“avec tous [ses] accessoires” (with all his accessories). Spirou soon tires of the gilded museum he has been placed in: the apartment he is given by his new employer is filled with memorabilia from his previous adventures and other merchandise to his effigy. As he manages to escape, Spirou effectively initiates a cat-and-mouse chase across the globe. He is freed from this abusive agreement at the end, when both copies of the contract are destroyed.⁵⁷

In both these albums, Yoann and Vehlmann continue to reinforce the myth of the bellboy uniform. First, Spirou is forced to wear his uniform, against his will in “Back to the Rédak”. In *La face cachée du Z*, immediately after announcing that he brought Spirou and his friends to the moon as a surprise, Zorclub proudly shows Spirou a

⁵⁷ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Dans les Griffes de la vipère* [In the Viper's Claws], Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, Silver ed., vol. 53, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2013. In the lead-up to the prepublication of this adventure, the story of this boy and his mother's complaints about the magazine were included in the form of two letters of complaints in the section dedicated to letters the editor. See Uncredited, “Pas tous à la fois!” [Not all at once!], En direct de la Rédak, *Spirou*, 3 octobre, 2012, 75th year, Issue 3886, p. 21; Uncredited, “Pas tous à la fois!” [Not all at once!], En direct de la Rédak, *Spirou*, 31 October, 2012, 75th year, Issue 3890, p. 21.

wardrobe full of bellboy uniforms that he provided and Spirou has no choice but to wear the only clothes that have been made available to him.⁵⁸ In *Dans les griffes de la vipère*, Spirou first dons his costume in response to a request from Fantasio, who was hoping to move the judges. Later on, Spirou is instructed to wear his costume as he goes to meet his new employer.⁵⁹ From album to album, then, Spirou finds himself wearing his red uniform, and the presence of this red outfit serves to repair the sign as once again

Spirou = uniform = magazine = Dupuis

By choosing to make Spirou wear his uniform *because* he is the face of Dupuis, Yoann and Vehlmann address the issue of the justification of the outfit, making it seem like the obvious choice again despite the fact that Spirou no longer is a bellboy. That is to say, if Spirou used to be a real bellboy, he is now employed to represent *Spirou* and Dupuis. The costume is still justified by his occupation and Spirou's relationship with Dupuis is made much stronger: the reason why Dupuis has a bellboy hat on its logo is Spirou and the reason why Spirou wears the bellboy hat is because it is on the logo of Dupuis.

The Yoann/Vehlmann classic period, so far, is therefore marked by a reinforcing of the myth and reuniting all that belongs in the Spirou universe under the bellboy hat. For instance, in *La face cachée du Z*, Spirou challenges a professional basketball player to a match, taunting him with “[p]ar chez moi on appelle les bons basketteurs des ‘Spirou’. Et j’dois reconnaître que je me débrouille” (where I’m from good basketball players are called ‘Spirou’. And I must say I’m quite good).⁶⁰ While the

⁵⁸ Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*, 6/3-4.

⁵⁹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Dans les Griffes de la vipère*, pp. 3-5 & 11/8.

⁶⁰ Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*, 22/5.

match, spanning approximately three *planches*, does not in itself advance the plot, it is a nod towards the basketball team known as Spirou basket, who have Spirou as their mascot.⁶¹

If Yoann and Vehlmann's work in the classic series strengthens the myth of Spirou, making the link between the costume, the character, the magazine and the publisher a natural one, the sign is not at all weakened. Rather, Yoann and Vehlmann's awareness of the fact that Spirou is an empty hat and their wish to fill it, to give Spirou more character, is very apparent. As Yoann explains

[i]l y a autant de manières de [...] traiter [Spirou] que d'auteurs. Franquin en avait fait une coque vide dans laquelle pouvait se projeter le lecteur. Fabien [Vehlmann] et moi souhaitons lui donner un certain relief psychologique avec un profil précis, des failles, des faiblesses

([t]here are as many ways of treating [Spirou] as there are authors. Franquin made him into an empty shell onto which the reader could project her/himself. Fabien [Vehlmann] and I wish to give him a certain psychological depth with a specific profile, flaws, weaknesses).⁶²

In other words, while they recreate the links between the sign and the myth, Yoann and Vehlmann also wish is to strengthen Spirou as a sign.

Throughout Yoann and Vehlmann's work since "Back to the Rédak" we can observe how the empty bellboy hat is being filled. In "Back to the Rédak", Spirou the sign is stronger because Spirou has been given a stronger character, and this strong-willed character wants to detach himself from his myth. While Spirou does have to wear his costume because of a contract he has signed, he no longer wishes to be reduced to "courage, générosité, costume rouge, écureuil" and he asserts his character by rejecting the myth (I use "character" here in both senses of the word: comic-book

⁶¹ Vehlmann, interview.

⁶² Perez, "Spirou: Il renaît le divin enfant", p. 38.

character and strength of character). Spirou's angry face and the way he stomps out of the marketing director's office enables us to understand his utter rejection of the myth that is imposed on him.⁶³ In *Alerte aux Zorkons*, we see a similar comment from Spirou: on his way back from a festival, he declares to Fantasio "moi, j'ai hâte de me changer : je n'en peux plus de ce costume promotionnel" (as for me, I can't wait to get out of these clothes: I can't stand this promotional outfit anymore).⁶⁴ However, it is in *La face cachée du Z* and *Dans les griffes de la vipère* that Yoann and Vehlmann engage the most with this tension between the myth and the sign.

I argue that *La face cachée du Z* in fact reveals *two* characters rather than one. If Spirou is a broken sign, Zorclub is a very whole sign. From his very first appearance in the series, Zorclub literally leaves his mark where he goes. As the title of the album in which he enters the series says: *Z comme Zorclub* (Z is for Zorclub).⁶⁵ Everything Zorclub invents starts with "zor" (zorglonde, zorglumobile) and anything remotely related to him is branded with a big 'Z'. Thus, for anyone who knows *Spirou et Fantasio*, the title *La face cachée du Z* is very easy to understand: it will reveal Zorclub's darker side, a side of Zorclub that Franquin had entirely annihilated in his last album (*Panade à Champignac*).⁶⁶ While it is true that Zorclub becomes a megalomaniac villain again in *La face cachée du Z*, there is more to this album. For some time Yoann and Vehlmann toyed with the idea of using a semi-English title, although keeping the French meaning of "groom": "The Dark Side of the Groom" (i.e. in English, "The Dark Side of the Bellboy") as a reference to Pink Floyd's album

⁶³ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Back to the Rédak", 33/11.

⁶⁴ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 6/2.

⁶⁵ Franquin, et al., "Z comme Zorclub" [Z is for Zorclub], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: Z comme Zorclub + L'Ombre du Z*, Double Album, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011.

⁶⁶ Franquin, et al., "Panade à Champignac" [Bread Soup in Champignac], in *Aventures humoristiques: 1961 - 1967, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 8, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2009.

The Dark Side of the Moon. In fact one of the characters suggests that Spirou's story could be made into a film titled "Dark Side of the Groom" in the album itself.⁶⁷ Although this title was not kept in the end, it is certainly true that we see a much darker side to Spirou than ever before in the series, as he turns into a Spirou-garou and literally reveals his wild side. The duality of this album can also be seen in the choice of covers for the album. Indeed, the regular album was released with two different covers and the common edition portrays the Z, that is to say, Zorglub, on a red background while the limited edition portrays a mutating Spirou, hiding his face in his hands.⁶⁸ The limited edition cover is particularly striking in relation to the title and one almost wants to flip the 'Z' to make it into an 'S', as Spirou truly embodies the title: "La face cachée du Z" literally translates as "the hidden face of the Z".

Again, in *Dans les griffes de la vipère*, Spirou's character is developed and given more depth. While Spirou no longer is a werewolf and shows his kind heart as he donates vast amounts of his first pay from the V.I.P.E.R. corp to non-governmental organisations, he also refuses to live according to his myth.⁶⁹ In this album, more than ever, it is clear that Spirou = magazine since buying *Spirou* effectively means buying Spirou. But like in "Back to the Rédak", Spirou rebels against this configuration and no sooner is he sent to his life-size dollhouse, complete with all his "accessories", than Spirou declares his intention to escape from the gilded cage he has been put in.⁷⁰ So strong is the link between *Spirou*, Spirou and the bellboy uniform that once he has escaped from the villa where he was being kept captive, Spirou must avoid his

⁶⁷ Vehlmann, interview; Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*, 36/5.

⁶⁸ Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*, front cover.

⁶⁹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Dans les Griffes de la vipère*, pp. 10-11.

⁷⁰ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Dans les Griffes de la vipère*, pp. 15-17.

costume at all costs to save himself. Symbolically then, for Spirou to exist as a fuller sign, with more character, he must avoid his costume.

The effectiveness of Yoann and Vehlmann's approach lies in the fact that they have found a way of keeping the myth while strengthening the sign. They have succeeded in reconnecting all the different branches of the *Spirou* universe under the bellboy hat by making Spirou wear his uniform again, and with a valid reason. In addition, as characters such as the boss of the V.I.P.E.R. corp and the marketing director of *Spirou* try to force Spirou to wear his costume because it is part of his myth, Yoann and Vehlmann effectively reinforce Spirou's myth at the same time. However, the strengthening of the myth here does not entail a further weakening of the sign. Quite the opposite, Spirou fights tooth and nail to be a stronger sign. He constantly resists being mythified and objectified by those who would reduce him to an empty bellboy hat: he is grumpy, he is rebellious and he can be very aggressive. The aim, however, is not to reconcile the myth and the sign, because it is thanks to their antagonistic relationship in Yoann and Vehlmann's work that they are able to coexist as stronger elements of Spirou. Thus, it is thanks to the costume that they are able to turn Spirou into a wild animal in *La face cachée du Z*: if on the cover of the limited edition Spirou still retains part of his red quiff, at the peak of his metamorphosis all that is left of the Spirou we know is his costume. In other words, the apparently restricting costume (myth) in fact allows Yoann and Vehlmann to develop the character (sign).

Inodoro Pereyra: An Additional Layer of Meaning

If Dupuis literally pulled Spirou's myth out of a (bellboy) hat, and since "Back to the Rédak", Spirou the sign is shown to be reflecting on his own nature as sign and as myth, what is particular about Inodoro Pereyra's mythical value in comparison with

that of Spirou is that Inodoro's own myth draws on a pre-existing myth. Indeed, don Inodoro is a *gaucho*, and *gauchos* hold an important place in the Argentinean imaginary. These Argentinean equivalents of cowboys have been celebrated in literature and two of the best known and most typical *gaucho œuvres* are the poem *Martín Fierro* by José Hernández (1872) and *Don Segundo Sombra* by Ricardo Güiraldes (1926).⁷¹ Geographically speaking, rather than the entire mass of land that is Argentina, *gauchos* are typically associated with the Pampas and the Buenos Aires region, as well as Uruguay and Brazil, an area that corresponds roughly to the *rioplatense* region.⁷²

Before turning to Inodoro Pereyra and the myth, I would like to take some time to consider Inodoro Pereyra, the line and the sign. In the case of *Inodoro Pereyra*, there is a considerable change in Fontanarrosa's line from the first publication to the last. However, this does not mean that the line is of no import in this series. From the very beginning, *Inodoro Pereyra* was created as a parody of the famous *gaucho* poem *Martín Fierro*. In addition to the clear references to Martín Fierro's story from the first, the comics scholar Juan Sasturain points out that the parody in *Inodoro Pereyra* goes even further, describing it as “una parodia fiel tanto de argumento como de imagen” (a faithful parody as much in terms of plot as in terms of graphic style).⁷³ As Sasturain explains, though Fontanarrosa's drawing style may have changed dramatically from the first to the last episode, in the early stages of *Inodoro Pereyra*, Fontanarrosa's line copied that of Juan Carlos Castagnino, the illustrator of a very

⁷¹ Fontanet, “Infamación del gaucho del XIX, estadio inferior del exilio del XX”, no pagination.

⁷² Jeffrey Tobin, “Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina” [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, María Cristina Pons & Claudia Soria (eds.), trans. Mariana Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 211-212.

successful sixties edition of *Martín Fierro* that was so popular that every household had a copy.⁷⁴

The question of the line becomes important again in relation to the last volume of *Inodoro Pereyra*, when Fontanarrosa had to stop drawing due to illness.⁷⁵ Within the pages of the thirty-second and last volume, one can already detect Fontanarrosa's difficulty to control his hand. In the very last episode drawn by Fontanarrosa, though the line has become extremely shaky, it is still legible and still remains instantly recognisable. In the case of that particular story, Fontanarrosa's line does not signify so much a reference to a model that is parodied or an affiliation to a school of drawing as it betrays how difficult it must have become for Fontanarrosa to draw and how ill he was.⁷⁶ When, following this episode, Fontanarrosa published a letter to his readers announcing that he had decided to pass on the graphic side of his work to someone else, the question of the line was taken into consideration. As he explained, he looked for an artist whose style was close to his own, though not identical, "porque el intento de lograr un clon limitaría muchísimo la creatividad del ilustrador" (because attempting to obtain a clone would limit the illustrator's creativity considerably).⁷⁷

If the line in itself has a certain degree of importance in the world of *Inodoro Pereyra*, as it signals an affiliation with the poem *Martín Fierro*, regarding Inodoro Pereyra the sign, David William Foster rightly points out that "there are no indicators of self-

⁷³ Sasturain (dir.) *Fontanarrosa e Inodoro Pereyra*.

⁷⁴ Sasturain (dir.) *Fontanarrosa e Inodoro Pereyra*.

⁷⁵ Fontanarrosa, "Carta a los lectores" [Letter to the Readers], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, p. 47.

⁷⁶ This is particularly visible in Fontanarrosa, "El pollo Ricardo" [Ricardo the Rooster], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, pp. 17-22 and Fontanarrosa, "Lo que mata es la ansiedad" [It's anxiety that kills], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, pp. 40-45.

⁷⁷ Fontanarrosa, "Carta a los lectores" [Letter to the Readers], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, p. 47.

reflection on his part”.⁷⁸ Yet, in a rare moment of self-awareness (on the sign plane) Inodoro Pereyra says of himself and of Mendieta “[d]e tinta somos” (we are made of ink) in a one-frame comic.⁷⁹ However, what *Inodoro Pereyra* brings to this discussion about the layers of meaning of comic characters, beyond the line and the sign is an added layer of myth. A few concepts that one needs to pay heed to in order to gauge the full measure of the mythical weight of the *gaucho* when Fontanarrosa began using this figure in his work are that of the dichotomy of “civilisation” and “barbarism”, as put forward by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in his book *Facundo* (1845), and that of the *ser nacional*.⁸⁰ For Sarmiento, civilisation was based on the European concept of progress and human control of nature, while barbarism was linked to nature, country life and its traditions.⁸¹ The work of Sarmiento—who, as well as being a writer, was a politician and a “nation-builder”—had a deep impact on the way Argentina was constructed and the discourse of “civilisation” and “barbarism” is still very much alive, as is an ongoing need to define the (Argentinean) *ser nacional*, the national being.⁸² Though the popularity of *gauchos* waxed and waned through centuries, they enjoyed the status of national icons during certain periods in history, such as following the independence war—in which the *gauchos* were involved, particularly

⁷⁸ Foster, *From Mafalda to Los supermachos*, p. 38.

⁷⁹ Fontanarrosa, *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra* [20 years with Inodoro Pereyra], Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 450.

⁸⁰ Luis Di Pietro, “Reflexiones sobre la cuestión nacional, 1900-1970” [Reflexions on the National Question, 1900-1970], *Revista de Filosofía Latinoamericana y Ciencias Sociales*, 18 (June, 1993), pp. 40-41.

⁸¹ Claudia Briones, “Construcciones de aboriginalidad en Argentina” [Constructions of Aboriginality in Argentina], *Société suisse des Américanistes / Schweizerische Amerikanisten-Gesellschaft*, 68 (2004), p. 78; Di Pietro, “Reflexiones sobre la cuestión nacional”, p. 41.

⁸² Mónica Quijada, “Ancestros, ciudadanos, piezas de museo: Francisco P. Moreno y la articulación del indígena en la construcción nacional argentina (siglo XIX)” [Ancestors, Citizens, Museum Pieces: Francisco P. Moreno and the Articulation of the Indigenous in the Argentinean Nation Building (Nineteenth Century)], *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 9, 2 (July-December, 1998). On the *ser nacional*, see José Carlos Chiaramonte, “¿En qué consiste hoy el ser nacional de los argentinos?” [What Does the Argentinean *ser nacional* Consist of Today?], *Clarín*, 08/09/1998, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/1998/09/08/i-01501d.htm>; Uncredited, “La argentinidad al palo” [Argentineanness to the Core], *Clarín*, 15/10/2007, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2007/10/15/espectaculos/c-00402.htm>; Di Pietro, “Reflexiones sobre la cuestión nacional”.

from 1810 to 1820—and in the 1930s. During the latter period, and in the face of the growing number of immigrants, *gauchos* regained their position as a national symbol, one that could not be claimed by social-climbing European newcomers and that—to paraphrase Rosalba Campra—represented the rural values that no longer existed.⁸³ According to Campra, this choice was due to the fact that, besides having fought in the wars that established the Argentinean state, the *gaucho* no longer existed and thus no longer posed a threat to “civilisation”.⁸⁴

So important is *gaucho* literature in Argentina that, according to Campra, it is the figure of the *gaucho* in literature that becomes a symbol of Argentineanness, rather than “real-life” *gauchos*.⁸⁵ Be that as it may, *lo gauchesco* is—together with tango—the most commercialised national icon in Argentina, according to David William Foster.⁸⁶ As regards *Inodoro Pereyra*, one of the particularities of Fontanarrosa is that unlike other artists who created *gaucho* comics, he had not been to the Pampas—the area associated with *gauchos*—and had no intention of visiting it when he started his series. As such, *Inodoro Pereyra* differs from other *gaucho* comics as Fontanarrosa worked with *clichés* rather than speaking from first hand experience.⁸⁷ From its inception, *Inodoro Pereyra* was built on a mythical figure.

⁸³ Fontanet, “Infamación del gaucho del XIX, estadio inferior del exilio del XX”; Rosalba Campra, *América latina: L'Identità e la maschera* [Latin America: The Identity and the Mask], Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1982, p. 35; Campra, *América Latina*, p. 38.

⁸⁴ Campra, *América Latina*, p. 38.

⁸⁵ Campra, *América Latina*, p. 35.

⁸⁶ David William Foster, “Gauchomanía y gauchofobia en *Las aventuras de Inodoro Pereyra* de Roberto Fontanarrosa” [Gauchomania and Gauchophobia in Roberto Fontanarrosa’s *The Adventures of Inodoro Pereyra*], *Literature and Popular Culture in the Hispanic World: A Symposium*, Montclair State College, USA, 13/03/1981, p. 109.

⁸⁷ Judith Gociol, “Cronología” [Chronology], in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 674; Gociol & Rosemberg, *La historieta argentina*, p. 299.

If on the one hand Inodoro seldom reflects on who he is as a sign, on the other hand he is acutely aware of his mythical iconicity and repeatedly draws the reader's attention to it. I do not yet wish to explore Don Inodoro's relationship with his mythical iconicity as it is considered in great detail elsewhere in this thesis (see "Supermales and Hyperfemales" and "De qui se moque-t-on?"). However, I wish to highlight the fact that beyond the line, the sign and the myth associated with this comic character through his own merit, so to speak, he also has an additional layer of meaning as he comes from a mythical figure of Argentinean culture. As Campra succinctly sums it up:

Con un segno grafico scarno e allusivo, Fontanarrosa propone questo antieroe senza storia, o meglio, la cui storia è stata definita da altri testi: il *Martín Fierro*, le parole delle canzoni pseudofolkloriche, tutta la mitologia letteraria che gli fa portare sulle spalle il peso dell'«essere nazionale».⁸⁸

(With a minimalist yet expressive graphic style, Fontanarrosa creates an antihero without a story, or better said, whose story has been defined by other texts: *Martín Fierro*, the lyrics of pseudofolkloric songs, the entire literary mythology which makes the weight of the "national being" rest on his shoulders.)

Mythical Authors

At the beginning of this chapter I explained that drawing is a form of writing inasmuch as both word and image can be deciphered, and as words can be placed further ahead on a spectrum of abstraction than images. Before closing this chapter to begin reading the signs contained in the corpus, I would like return to the written word.

While characters such as Spirou and Inodoro Pereyra can be read at the level of the line, of the sign and of the (multi-layered) myth, they are not the only ones who are

⁸⁸ Campra, *America Latina*, pp. 39-40.

engulfed by this multi-tiered iconicity. The authors (and especially the artists) of these works themselves have come to be reduced to a mere line that works as much as a signifier for the person behind the comic books, as a bearer of their mythical iconicity. In the introduction I pointed out how important Franquin is in the world of *Spirou et Fantasio*, as he is the one with whom the classic series truly begins, and how important he is to *bande dessinée* in general. *Spirou et Fantasio*, however, is not, strictly speaking, Franquin's creation in the sense that he inherited it from Jijé, who himself had inherited it from Rob-Vel. *Gaston Lagaffe*, on the other hand, is a character and a series that belonged entirely to Franquin. Born in the pages of *Spirou et Fantasio*, this character has his own series and a signature feature of this series is Franquin's signatures at the end of each half-*planche* or one-*planche* gag.⁸⁹ In Franquin's signatures, the line is maintained in the sense that we can always recognise his handwriting. However, each signature is unique in that Franquin adapted these signatures to the content of the gag, turning a simple combination of abstract letters into veritable works of art related to a particular gag. So famous and iconic are these signatures of an equally iconic author that a book compiling all of these signatures was released in 2005.⁹⁰ In addition, these creations that truly bring letters back into the realm of (decipherable) images have also been made into collectible sculptures, creating new signifiers of Franquin and of all the myth that is attached to this figure.⁹¹

Fontanarrosa's signature is equally iconic and it can be found on an *asador* (a barbecue restaurant) named after this well-loved Argentinean author. Serving barbecued meats, the restaurant is decorated with large framed paintings of

⁸⁹ Gaston Lagaffe first appears in Franquin, "Le Voyageur du mésozoïque" [The Traveller from the Mesozoic], in *Spirou et Fantasio, L'Intégrale*, vol. 5, Ixelles: Niffle, 2002.

⁹⁰ Franquin, *Les Signatures de Franquin*, Gaston Lagaffe, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005.

⁹¹ The figurines can be seen and purchased online: http://www.franquin-collector.com/figurines-pixi?album_serie=63.

Fontanarrosa's characters. Again, in the case of Fontanarrosa, it is not only his name that is iconic, but also his line, his handwriting and the way he signed his name. By lending his name to the restaurant, Fontanarrosa bestowed a part of his myth upon it. In the same line of thought, and in light of the iconicity of Jijé and his protégés, it is no accident that when Schwartz illustrated *Gringos Locos*, he drew the characters of Jijé, Franquin and Morris using each of these artists' respective lines.⁹² Such a choice illustrates how representative of each of these authors their lines are, and how much meaning they convey, from simply giving life to characters by defining the boundary between the blank page and the sign to conveying the myth of the character and of the author himself.

Barthes says that in the eyes of myth, all signs are equal, be they words or images. In the world of comics, while there certainly is a mix of words and images, both realms, in the end, are nothing more and nothing less than ink on paper if we cannot interpret them. And both words and images work together to convey meaning on multiple levels, from the simple communication of a signified concept at the level of the sign to all the myth that is already attached to certain figures such as the *gaucho* and as well as the myth that accumulates with time in characters such as Spirou and his uniform and even becomes attached to their authors. The words and images in comics may be ink on paper but this ink becomes so much more when we read it. The ink stains on the next few hundreds of pages are a reading of representations of Latin America in the words and images of *bandes dessinées* and *historietas*.

⁹² Damien Perez, "SCHWARTZ : « On n'imagine plus cette attirance pour l'Amérique ! »" [SCHWARTZ : "It's Hard to Imagine Such an Attraction Towards the US Nowadays!"], Interview with Yann & Schwartz, *Spirou*, 14 December, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3844, p. 4.

Far Far Away

The title of this chapter is taken from *Shrek* as a nod towards the series of parodic animated films.¹ While in *Shrek 2* the kingdom of Far Far Away is an obvious reference to the typical opening line of fairy tales, what I am particularly interested in, in the term “far far away” is the repetition of the word “far”. This suggests a spatial remoteness almost beyond our imagination, much like the one used in the *Star Wars* films, which open with “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...” However, “far” in this chapter also refers to a different kind of remoteness: a temporal one. Indeed, what I propose to explore in this chapter is the representation of “Latin America” as spatially and temporally remote, which is very much linked with imperialism.

¹ The kingdom of Far Far Away first appears in Andrew Adamson, et al. (dir.) *Shrek 2*, 2004 [1h28min].

² See for instance George Lucas (dir.) *A New Hope*, Star Wars Episode IV, 1977 [1h56min].

There are very different types of “far far away” within the corpus that I have selected. For instance, in *Los Supermachos* and *Inodoro Pereyra*, the fictional San Garabato de las Tunas (the fictional village where the supermachos live) and Inodoro Pereyra’s hut in the Pampas are referred to, but cannot be located on a map. Neither the Pampas nor San Garabato, however, are remote in terms of time, and neither the *Garabatenses*³ nor Inodoro Pereyra are shown as being left out of current affairs. The texts on which I propose to focus in this chapter are the diptychs, *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*, from the *Tintin* series, *L’horloger de la comète* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* from the *Spirou* series, and *Operación Bolívar*.⁴ The first three adventures were chosen as examples of the trope of Latin America’s spatial and temporal remoteness, and the latter two as examples of parody and satire. These texts all engage to some extent with scientific discourse, although they may not correspond to the typical science fiction story that might spring to mind, aside from *L’horloger de la comète* and *Alerte aux Zorkons*. While the texts do not necessarily “talk” to each other in an intertextual manner, they offer a variety of representations of the Latin American time/space and examples of how the trope of Latin America as a land far far away may be referred to without necessarily being accepted wholly by all parties, including in some Franco-Belgian productions. In particular, the very recent *Alerte aux Zorkons* works as a foil to the representations in *L’horloger de la comète*, while fitting perfectly into the category of catastrophic science fiction.

³ Inhabitants of San Garabato.

⁴ Hergé, *Le Secret de la Licorne* [The Secret of the Unicorn], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 11, Tournai: Casterman, 1974; Hergé, *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*; Hergé, *Les 7 Boules de cristal* [The Seven Crystal Balls], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 13, Tournai: Casterman, 1948; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*; Tome & Janry, *L’Horloger de la comète* [The Comet Watchmaker], Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 36, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1986; Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*; Clement, *Operación Bolívar*.

I use and blend several theories and concepts as I proceed to analyse the texts selected for this chapter. Ever present is decolonial thought, to which I add here, J. D. Overton's theory of exploration, David Harvey's "spatial fix", Johannes Fabian's formulation of the denial of coevalness, Néstor García Canclini's formulation of hybridisation, and Allamel-Raffin and Gangloff's approach to the figure and the role of the mad scientist in *bande dessinée*. As will become clear as I explain these concepts in more detail and begin to analyse the texts, discussing where and when Latin America is inevitably leads to questions regarding the position of Latin America in the global economy, which I will discuss later in the chapter. The rest of this chapter, after an explanation of the aforementioned theories is split into four sections: *Where is Latin America?*, *When is Latin America?*, *The Place of Latin America* and finally, *Subverting Far Far Away, Technology and Sheer Economic Exploitation*. The first section focuses on the spatial remoteness of Latin America as depicted in the two diptychs *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*. The second section focuses on the temporal remoteness of Latin America in *L'horloger de la comète* and the double albums *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*. The third section of the chapter focuses on the role given to Latin America in the albums analysed in the previous sections and the economic and developmental implications of these representations. In the fourth and last section I then continue to look at how *Operación Bolívar* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* work to offer alternatives to such representations.

Exploration, "Spatial Fix", the Denial of Coevalness and Hybridisation

Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other*, while focused particularly on the representation of the "other" in anthropological work, has much to offer to the research here, not only in terms of time, but also of space. Indeed, while Fabian's

book is known for its focus on the denial of coevalness—a term which will be fully explained shortly—he also makes clear the link between this denial of coevalness and the occupation of space.⁵

Fabian categorises the uses of time in three types that are not mutually exclusive: physical, mundane and typological time. The first type uses units of equal value to represent events in relation to each other in a chronological manner. Thus, while it may be recognised that this type of time is relative in that events are shown in relation to one another, it is not considered to be “culturally relative” but rather “objective” and neutral”.⁶ Mundane time, to Fabian, is more closely related to typological time. The former, whilst recognising physical time, approaches time as periods and stages rather than focusing on details of precise chronology.⁷ As for typological time, it refers to culturally specific stages as markers of time, with little to no reference to physical time. Fabian offers “preliterate vs literate” and “tribal vs feudal” as examples of terms that depend on typological time and argues that “[i]nstead of being a measure of movement it may appear as a quality of states; a quality, however, that is unequally distributed among human populations of this world.”⁸

When Fabian talks of the “denial of coevalness”, he refers to the fact that the objects of anthropological studies are “*peristent[ly] and systematic[ally]*” denied both contemporaneity (sharing the same typological time) and synchronicity (sharing the same physical time) with the anthropologists who study them.⁹ To Fabian this denial

⁵ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 31.

⁶ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 22.

⁷ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, pp. 22-23.

⁸ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 23.

⁹ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 31.

of coevalness is linked to the fact that it is considered “impossible for two bodies to occupy the same space at the same time” (to be understood as physical time, here).¹⁰ He suggests there are two solutions available to colonisers when they arrive in a place that is already occupied. The first one is to take over the space through genocide, denying the existence of other people or division of space (reserves or apartheid).¹¹ The other solution is to take over time: “[w]ith the help of various devices of sequencing and distancing one assigns to the conquered populations a *different Time*”.¹² Thus, denial of coevalness effectively makes space for colonisers in the present.¹³

While Fabian’s book focuses essentially on what he terms “chronopolitics”, Overton’s *Theory of Exploration* and Harvey’s “spatial fix” are two theories that focus on geopolitics and that complement each other. Overton’s article *A Theory of Exploration* is principally concerned with a case study of the Nelson colony in New Zealand and the exploration trends around the settlement in the period 1841-1865. However, it begins with an extensive discussion of what motivates one to explore that proves useful.¹⁴ The author distinguishes discovery from exploration, as discovery suggests a chance finding of something previously unknown whereas exploration is a conscious effort to look for something previously unknown, sometimes in places that are already known, and draws our attention to the importance of the work of the explorer for the work of the geographer and cartographer. Indeed, he says that “[i]t was the chronicling of exploration and discovery that gave geography much of its

¹⁰ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, pp. 29 & 31.

¹¹ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, pp. 29-30.

¹² Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 30.

¹³ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, pp. 29-30 & 144.

¹⁴ J. D. Overton, “A Theory of Exploration”, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 7, 1 (1981).

early *raison d'être*".¹⁵ It is true that, in Overton's terms, the Americas were more of a "discovery", even though they were in fact already inhabited when they were "discovered". However, this accidental find was the result of an attempt to find an alternative route to India and exploration of these lands began in earnest following their "discovery". Prior to analysing the trends in the Nelson colony, Overton begins by explaining his conceptual framework—that is, his theory of exploration—with a simple model, on which he later elaborates, but it will suffice to refer to the simple model here.

This simple model of the exploration cycle illustrates the consequences of a demand for exploration, as well as its possible consequences. Following the arrows, we can see that the demand for exploration will lead to choosing a destination and exploring it. After the exploration is completed, the explorer submits a report, which is evaluated. If the results are deemed unsatisfactory, another exploration process will begin in a new area. If, on the other hand, the results are deemed satisfactory, this will lead to the development of the area that has been explored. After the development process has begun, there is a possibility that the area reaches a stage of full development and thus creates a new demand for exploration, which will then set the exploration process in motion again.¹⁶ What draws my attention in this exploration cycle as depicted in Overton's simple model is the key element that incites one to explore, the "something" that is actively sought: resources. Indeed, while he lists among the possible motivations for a demand in exploration economics (which he later describes as "geographical limitations to economic growth), religion, science, and personality (such as curiosity), the economic reasons appear to occupy the largest

¹⁵ Overton, "A Theory of Exploration", pp. 53 & 56.

¹⁶ Overton, "A Theory of Exploration", pp. 57-58.

place in this model, and also coincide with capitalist expansionism, a point that I will return to shortly.¹⁷ As Overton is more concerned with the causes that lead to exploration, he does not elaborate on what “development” entails. He nonetheless describes it as “settlement, trade, mineral exploitations, missionary activity, etc.” and full development is equated with full utilisation of the resources, or in other terms, reaching the point where all resources have become depleted.¹⁸

This exploration-for-development/exploitation approach is—according to many, including David Harvey, the group modernidad/colonialidad (consisting of scholars such as Ramón Grosfoguel, Walter Mignolo and Enrique Dussel) and Immanuel Wallerstein—inherent to capitalism. Indeed, Harvey clearly states that “[a]ccumulation through dispossession is to be construed [...] as a necessary condition for capitalism’s survival”.¹⁹ However, in Harvey’s discussion of capitalism and uneven geographical development—understood as uneven distribution of wealth and of social costs—Overton’s economically-driven “exploration” and the ensuing “development” become a more negative “dispossession” and “pillage”.²⁰ Thus, his description of the same exploration cycle is much more sharply stated: “The perpetual search for natural resources of high quality that can be pillaged for surplus and surplus value production has therefore been a key aspect to the historical geography of capitalism.”²¹ This exploration-exploitation goes further, however, as capitalism

¹⁷ Overton, “A Theory of Exploration”, pp. 58 & 59.

¹⁸ Overton, “A Theory of Exploration”, p. 58.

¹⁹ David Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 91.

²⁰ Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, pp. 71, 91-92.

²¹ Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, pp. 91-92.

relies on more than just “pillage”: it relies on, creates and *is*, uneven development.²² It is interesting to note that this uneven development, however, works on two ends. Indeed, it is not merely a matter of exploring new possibilities of exploitation—or pillage—but also exploring possible outlets for the inevitable surplus (be it in terms of capital or labour) in order to avoid devaluation locally. This solution, termed “spatial fix” by Harvey, is only temporary as the outlets for these surpluses eventually produce their own surpluses and will seek a “spatial fix” too.²³ This cycle of spatial fixes fits in Overton’s exploration as he lists “restricted fields of trade or isolation from markets” amongst the economic reasons for a demand for exploration: a restricted market size implies a surplus in capital and labour with respect to the capacity of the current market.²⁴ The loop can be closed when we note the various ways of finding or obtaining an outlet for surpluses outlined by Harvey: “Territories may be prized open by military force, colonization or commercial pressure, or they may voluntarily open themselves up to take advantage of surplus capitals from elsewhere.”²⁵ Thus, if the voluntary opening up of the market is a possibility, colonisation is also a means of securing an outlet for surpluses, besides being the source of the resources that can be “pillaged”. In other words, capitalism requires exploration in order to sustain itself at both ends (finding resources for production as well as outlets for its surpluses) and thus requires an area to develop, that is to say, it

²² Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 93.

²³ Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 108.

²⁴ Overton, “A Theory of Exploration”, p. 58.

²⁵ Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 107.

requires uneven development.²⁶ Therefore, through a division of labour (which can be done on a national, regional, global or any other scale), capitalism not only relies on uneven development, but also creates it as it continues to explore new places to “develop”. As Harvey puts it:

‘Difference’ and ‘otherness’ are *produced* in space through the simple logic of uneven capital investment, a proliferating geographical division of labor, an increasing segmentation of reproductive activities and the rise of spatially ordered (often segregated) social distinctions (...).²⁷

The implication of the term “development”, of course, is that there is a desirable level of development that some peripheral places have not reached—a situation that is *required* for centres to continue “developing”. However, uneven development, while “produced in space”, relies also on a temporal othering. Indeed, to place some areas in a different stage of development is to deny them coevalness and this is a link that Fabian himself establishes between time and space when he argues that “*geopolitics* has its ideological foundations in *chronopolitics*.”²⁸ As Fabian explains, although scientific travel originally distinguished itself from colonial enterprises, it was in fact very much part of it.²⁹ In his own words:

Anthropology contributed above all to the intellectual justification of the colonial enterprise. It gave to politics and economics—both concerned with human Time—a firm belief in “natural,” i.e., evolutionary Time. It promoted a scheme in terms of which not only past cultures, but all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time—some upstream, others downstream. Civilization, evolution, development, acculturation, modernization (and their cousins, industrialization, urbanization) are all terms whose conceptual content derives, in ways that can be specified, from evolutionary Time.³⁰

²⁶ Harvey, “Notes Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development”, in *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London, New York: Verso, 2006, p. 115.

²⁷ David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Cambridge, Massachusetts & Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p. 295 (emphasis in original).

²⁸ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 144.

²⁹ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 8.

³⁰ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 17.

Two theories that serve to counter the spatio-temporal distancing between colonisers and colonials are decolonial thought and García Canclini's hybridity. While there are points of contact between the theory of exploration, Harvey's "spatial fix" and decolonial thought, the last of these goes further. In fact, although decolonial thought does not deny the dependency relationship between centres and peripheries, it sees capitalism as more than a global economic system.³¹ Rather, decolonial thought sees capitalism as a system that affects all aspects of daily life, and not simply economic relations between centres and peripheries. Thus, Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel argue that the global division of labour, "vinculó en red una serie de jerarquías de poder: etno-racial, espiritual, epistémica, sexual y de género" (linked a series of power hierarchies in a network: ethno-racial, spiritual, epistemic, sexual and gender-based).³²

One of the very valuable ideas that decolonial thought brings to this study is that the global capitalist world we live in began spatially and temporally in the sixteenth century, with the colonisation of the Americas.³³ Indeed, to paraphrase Aníbal Quijano, Europe was able to emerge as an entity through the exploitation of (un)free labour and local technology in the Americas and by becoming the place that

³¹ Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification", in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Mabel Moraña, et al. (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, p. 188.

³² Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, "Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico" [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 19.

³³ Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification", in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Moraña, et al. (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 181, 195.

controlled the sea routes to the Americas.³⁴ This colonisation process was the starting point of the global organisation of a racial, sexual, epistemic, economic hierarchy, or as Quijano puts it: “starting with America, a new space/time was constituted materially and subjectively: this is what the concept of modernity names”.³⁵ However, through evolutionist discourse, from the mid-seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century, Europe adopted “the Eurocentric pretension to be the exclusive producer and protagonist of modernity”, thus casting the Americas in the pre-modern and effectively denying their coevalness with Europe.³⁶ One of the examples offered by Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel regarding the Eurocentrism inherent to the centre-periphery relationship is of interest here, as it relates directly to science, time and space. They point out that since the eighteenth century European science has had a privileged position, as the “real” form of knowledge, capable of neutrality and thus a point zero, while “alternative” knowledges have been cast as “una etapa mítica, inferior, premoderna y precientífica del conocimiento humano”(a mythical, inferior, pre-modern, and pre-scientific stage of human knowledge), a perspective that indeed places indigenous peoples earlier in typological time.³⁷

³⁴ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification”, in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Moraña, et al. (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, p. 200.

³⁵ Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 19; Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification”, in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Moraña, et al. (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, p. 195.

³⁶ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification”, in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Moraña, et al. (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 192, 200-201.

³⁷ Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 20.

Besides the fact that the globalised capitalist world began with the colonisation of the Americas, decolonial thought is focused on the fact that the decolonisation process was an incomplete one. Indeed, the administrative independence obtained by some of the then Spanish colonies did not lead to the removal of any of the power relations in terms of race, gender, sex, economy or epistemology so that the now former colonies continue to be in a colonial power relationship with the centre. For this reason, they argue that a decolonial process is necessary, in order to “complement” the decolonisation process, an argument echoed by postcolonial theorists.³⁸ Decolonial thought, however, does not suggest an utter and complete rejection of all systems, but rather, a subversion of the established power relations. Indeed, they refer to a “complicidad subversiva” (subversive complicity), which works to resemanticise hegemonic knowledge through the incorporation of those “lesser” knowledges.³⁹

Beyond the subversive appropriation of colonial impositions proposed by decolonial thought, García Canclini’s *Culturas híbridas* offers a less dichotomous perspective on Latin America. While the title of García Canclini’s book refers to *hybrid* cultures, he is in fact interested in hybridisation and not hybridity, since, he argues, nothing exists in pure form and everything is the result of hybridisation. Rather than examine the hybrid origins of cultures, García Canclini is interested in further processes of hybridisation, a term he uses to refer to several types of mixes: anthropology’s

³⁸ Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, p. 17.

³⁹ Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, “Prólogo: giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico” [Prologue: Decolonial Turn, Critical Theory and Heterarchical Thinking], in *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (eds.), Encuentros, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad Central, Instituto de Estudios Sociales Contemporáneos and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Instituto Pensar, 2007, pp. 20-21.

mestizaje, musical fusion, religious syncretism as well as the “latinisation” of the U.S. and the “Americanisation” of Latin America. Not only do these hybrids continue to be created, but they continue to exist side by side with cultural practices predating colonisation, thus defying the logic of anthropological studies that will have designated times attributed to designated peoples and practices in a chronological order that denies the possibility of coevalness.⁴⁰

The Bande Dessinée Mad Scientist: From Scientific Travels to Detective-Science Fiction in Bande Dessinée

As has been established through the discussion of the denial of coevalness, the theory of exploration and Harvey’s spatial fix, there is a link between science, travel and colonisation. Indeed, it has been established that scientific travel and spatio-temporal classifications have served to create a rift between centres and peripheries. This is a point of view shared by John Rieder in his book on colonialism and science fiction. The author points out that, from the very start, scientific discourse, especially evolutionary theory, is very much linked with colonisation and this eventually leads to science fiction. He argues thus:

In the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, Europeans greatly expanded the extent and the kinds of contacts they had with the non-European world. Between the time of Cyrano and that of H. G. Wells, *those contacts enveloped the world in a Europe-centered system of commerce and political power*. Europeans mapped the non-European world, settled colonies in it, mined it and farmed it, bought and sold some of its inhabitants, and ruled over many others. *In the process of all this, they also developed a scientific discourse about culture and mankind*. Its [that of the European scientific discourse] understanding of human evolution and the relation between culture and technology played a strong part in the works of Wells and his contemporaries that later came to be called science fiction.⁴¹

⁴⁰ García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas*, pp. 14-39.

⁴¹ John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008, p. 2, my italics.

If Rieder's work is primarily focused on British and US science fiction, Serge Lehman's *Hypermondes perdus* offers a complement to Rieder's work since Lehman is concerned with the francophone production of science fiction novels. According to this *bande dessinée* scriptwriter and theorist, science fiction novels were being produced in France prior to the genre becoming associated with the US, although it is often perceived as having a US origin.⁴² Despite the fact that *bande dessinée* is not Lehman's main focus, his text does light the way for an understanding of *bande dessinée* science fiction and its heroes. Indeed, Lehman points out that well-known authors of francophone detective novels, such as Maurice Leblanc (*Arsène Lupin*) and Gaston Leroux (*Le mystère de la chambre jaune* (The Mystery of the Yellow Room); *Le fantôme de l'opéra* (The Phantom of the Opera)), also wrote science fiction novels and later clearly states that to him golden age science fiction indeed is "le nouveau visage du roman policier" (the new face of the detective novel).⁴³ Given the fact that the profession of Spirou, Fantasio and Tintin is officially that of journalists, and that Tintin has been compared to Rouletabille,⁴⁴ it is interesting to note that both *Spirou et Fantasio* and *Tintin* are referred to in Lehman's text as series which very much correspond to the genre of the science fiction novels that are studied in his edited book.⁴⁵ In fact, Lehman goes so far as to say that science fiction characters are "des

⁴² Serge Lehman, "Hypermondes perdus" [Lost Hyperworlds], in *Chasseurs de chimères: L'Âge d'or de la science-fiction française*, Serge Lehman (ed.), Paris: Omnibus, 2006, p. IV.

⁴³ Lehman, "Hypermondes perdus" [Lost Hyperworlds], in *Chasseurs de chimères: L'Âge d'or de la science-fiction française*, Lehman (ed.), Paris: Omnibus, 2006, pp. V & VII.

⁴⁴ Rouletabille is the hero of *Le mystère de la chambre jaune* (Gaston Leroux, *Le Mystère de la chambre jaune* [The Mystery of the Yellow Room], Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1960) and its many sequels.

⁴⁵ Lehman, "Hypermondes perdus" [Lost Hyperworlds], in *Chasseurs de chimères: L'Âge d'or de la science-fiction française*, Lehman (ed.), Paris: Omnibus, 2006, p. XXI; Apostolidès, *Tintin et le mythe du surenfant*, pp. 11-15.

aventuriers dont le type ne survit plus, aujourd’hui, que dans la bande dessinée” (adventurers whose type only survives, nowadays, in *bande dessinée*).⁴⁶

Given the type of detective-cum-science fiction stories we find in classic *bande dessinée*, it is perhaps not surprising that the mad scientist has a particularly important role to play. Indeed, in their article “Le savant dans la bande dessinée: un personnage contraint”, Catherine Allamel-Raffin and Jean-Luc Gangloff focus on the function of these mad scientists in *bande dessinée* narrative.⁴⁷ The authors of the article are particularly interested in the mad scientists of *Tintin* and *Spirou* and establish the stereotypes that characterise our mad scientists: old-fashioned clothes worn in a slovenly manner, absent-mindedness and an exceptional intelligence that can only qualify as genius.⁴⁸ In these *bandes dessinées*, inventions are entirely linked to their sole creator and should be immediately identifiable as beneficial or harmful, in the same way that the mad scientist can only be purely good or evil. Moreover, any evil creation can easily be identified as a single item, such as blueprints or the only machine of the type, so that the detective is able to completely destroy those inventions that are deemed harmful. This, in turn, means that science in the world of *bande dessinée* is entirely controllable.⁴⁹ Beyond the superficial characteristics of the *bande dessinée* scientist, which, according to Allamel-Raffin and Gangloff, allow the

⁴⁶ Lehman, “Hypermondes perdus” [Lost Hyperworlds], in *Chasseurs de chimères: L’Âge d’or de la science-fiction française*, Lehman (ed.), Paris: Omnibus, 2006, p. XXV.

⁴⁷ Catherine Allamel-Raffin & Jean-Luc Gangloff, “Le Savant dans la bande dessinée: Un Personnage contraint” [The Scientist in *Bande Dessinée*: A Constrained Character], *Communication et langages*, 154 (2007), pp. 123-124 & 133. It is important to note that this term is used here as an imperfect translation of the term “savant”, which, to Allamel-Raffin and Gangloff in fact excludes science. Indeed, to them, the “mad scientist” does not stand in for science insofar as he is seldom shown to be working in a laboratory or using reason to solve a problem, but is rather an absent-minded inventor whose machines appear almost magically. Instead of the scientist, it is the detective—Tintin or Spirou—who uses rational thought and clues to solve the problem or the mystery at hand (see Allamel-Raffin & Gangloff, “Le savant dans la bande dessinée”, p. 130).

⁴⁸ Allamel-Raffin & Gangloff, “Le savant dans la bande dessinée”, p. 126.

⁴⁹ Allamel-Raffin & Gangloff, “Le savant dans la bande dessinée”, pp. 131-133.

reader to identify the characters as a type, what is particularly important to note is that the function of the scientist in *bande dessinée* is to provide inventions—be they machines or solutions—that serve to push the action forward in the adventures. Examples of such inventions are Tournesol’s rocket which takes Tintin and his friends to the moon (the diptych *Objectif Lune* (Destination Moon) / *On a marché sur la lune* (Explorers on the Moon)) or his ultrasound device that can destroy materials from a distance and that leads to his own kidnapping and to Tintin and Haddock travelling across Europe to rescue him (*L’affaire Tournesol* (The Calculus Affair)).⁵⁰

In the *bandes dessinées* I focus on in this chapter, the role of the scientist as the one who pushes forward the action is very much present. Thus, in *Les 7 boules de cristal* / *Le temple du soleil*, no fewer than eight scientists provide the intrigue and later the reason for travelling to Peru. First, there are the seven scientists who were part of the Sanders-Hardmuth expedition and who are suffering from a mysterious disease. Then there is Tournesol, whose kidnapping leads Haddock and Tintin to travel to a little-known place in Peru. In *Le secret de la Licorne* / *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, Tournesol has a less prominent role but he nonetheless imposes himself on the other characters, together with his submarine, which will eventually help in the treasure hunt. In *L’horloger de la comète*, the usual mad scientists Zorclub and Pacôme de Champignac are pushed aside temporarily and it is Aurélien de Champignac who is at the source of the adventure. In *Alerte aux Zorkons*, Pacôme de Champignac and Zorclub regain their place as the two mad scientists and are at the source of the catastrophe in Champignac-en-Cambrousse as well as being those who find the solution to the problem of the zorkons.

⁵⁰ Allamel-Raffin & Gangloff, “Le savant dans la bande dessinée”, p. 127 & 129.

Where is Latin America?

As stated in the introduction, Latin America is a region that is often visited in Franco-Belgian *bande dessinée*. Yet, it appears that Latin America remains spatially remote and that the heroes need to undergo much hardship before they reach their destinations. This is as much the case in *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* as it is in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*. Interestingly, these two diptychs are at the chronological centre of the series and in many ways mark a turning point for *Tintin*. First, *Le temple du soleil* was pre-published in the newly founded *Tintin* (the magazine) and second, these adventures mark the beginning of a new lifestyle for Tintin as Tournesol joins the cast and the main characters come across handsome sums of money.⁵¹

Although the main characters themselves do not travel to Latin America in *Le secret de la Licorne*—it is not until *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, 12/10 that Tintin and the captain set sail for the treasure island—Haddock nonetheless offers some details about the island in the first half of this adventure. Channelling the spirit of his seventeenth-century ancestor Chevalier François de Hadoque (whom he resembles like a twin), he recounts and re-enacts Hadoque's battle at sea with the pirate Rackham le Rouge.⁵² There is, however, little depiction of the land itself, with the battle taking up most of the narration and re-enactment and all we see of the island is the shadowy outline of some coconut trees and a small part of its shore by night.⁵³ Captain Haddock also mentions that his ancestor lived on the island amongst the

⁵¹ Hergé, "Le Temple du soleil" [Prisoners of the Sun], *Les nouvelles aventures de Tintin et Milou*, *Tintin*, 26 September, 1946, Issue 1, pp. 6-7.

⁵² Hergé, *Le Secret de la Licorne*, 13/12 – 26/11.

⁵³ Hergé, *Le Secret de la Licorne*, 22/6, 26/3 & 26/7-8.

indigenous people for two years, but does not elaborate on these two years.⁵⁴ In *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, on the other hand, the island occupies a much more important place, as it is Tintin's and Haddock's aim to visit it and much time is spent preparing for the journey and travelling to this island. However, the island itself is only clearly visible on a few *planches*: the characters are only depicted as being on the island on twelve *planches* (that is to say roughly 9%) of an adventure that is drawn over 124 *planches*.⁵⁵

The next *Tintin* adventure, *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*, is structurally quite similar to *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*. Indeed, it too begins in Europe and it is not until the second album that Tintin and Haddock reach Latin America. In this adventure, Tournesol, as well as the seven scientists who took part in the Sanders-Hardmuth expedition in Peru, fulfils his function of pushing the action forward much more than in the previous adventure. Indeed, the adventure begins when member after member of the expedition falls prey to a strange disease. However, it is Tournesol's kidnapping that leads Tintin and Haddock to leave for Peru. Unlike in *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, the heroes do not have time to plan before they leave. Rather, immediately after they decide to leave for Peru and announce their departure, they are shown as being on their way and *Le temple du soleil* opens with Tintin and Haddock already in the country.⁵⁶ The speed and ease, or the difficulty, with which the heroes move affect the apparent duration of the journey, thus giving the impression of a smaller or greater distance travelled respectively.

⁵⁴ Hergé, *Le Secret de la Licorne*, 26/10.

⁵⁵ Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge* [Red Rackham's Treasure], *Les Aventures de Tintin*, vol. 12, Tournai: Casterman, 1973, 24/9 – 31/13, 51/2 – 54/6.

⁵⁶ Hergé, *Les 7 Boules de cristal*, 62/5; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 1/1.

Although *Le temple du soleil* stands out in the *Tintin* series as the only one taking place in an existing Latin American country rather than a fictional one, the Incan temple is in fact as difficult to locate as Haddock's island and a considerable amount of time is spent travelling towards both. Thus, it is not until page 25 of *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* that Tintin and Haddock set foot on the island, and not until page 47 of *Le temple du soleil* that they enter the temple. The delay in reaching these destinations is amplified in *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* through various techniques. In the first diptych they are shown to be travelling at sea for some ten pages and an unspecified number of days before Haddock is first shown attempting to locate the island on the map.⁵⁷ From that moment begins a lengthy discussion about the exact location of the island on the map. Over several frames, all the main characters are shown on deck, eagerly looking for the island with no success. This leads to every one of these characters putting Haddock's navigation skills and authority in doubt. First come the Dupondt, who attempt to review Haddock's calculations and fail.⁵⁸ Then the captain himself goes back to verify his calculations—with little success—and it is Tintin who offers the solution.⁵⁹ All the time spent discussing where the island might be adds to the sense of a land that is very remote from Europe. In addition, despite the fact that the characters find both the island and the shipwrecked *Licorne*, they do not find what they are looking for: Rackham le Rouge's treasure. They thus spend over a month at sea, hunting for a treasure that is not found in these latitudes. This extensive search for, on and around the island gives an amplified impression of the latter's

⁵⁷ I would suggest that it is around eight days since this is the duration of the return journey. See Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁸ Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, 22/3 – 23/1.

⁵⁹ Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, p. 23.

remoteness, although it is in fact closer to Europe than the captain originally believed it to be.⁶⁰

In the second double album, although the flight to Peru is elided—thus giving the impression that Haddock and Tintin move fast—the heroes slow down considerably upon their arrival in Peru. Although the young orange seller, Zorrino, eventually volunteers to take them to the place where Tournesol is held captive—the temple of the sun—the journey is far from being “de tout repos” (a nice, restful holiday).⁶¹ Indeed, if Tintin and the captain face a few dangers and travel a certain distance on their own prior to meeting Zorrino, when they leave Jauga with their young guide, they undertake a seemingly endless journey. The distance travelled is never specified, nor is the amount of time spent travelling to the temple. The textual time markers, nonetheless, suggest that the temple is extremely far from Callao since seven days of the journey are clearly identified, but the total number of days walked is left unclear as Hergé makes use of the time marker “les jours passent” (days go by) twice.⁶² Similarly, although the return journey is not recounted, we are told that “days and days have passed” between the time Tintin, Haddock and Tournesol left the temple and their arrival in an unnamed place that may be Jauga.⁶³ In addition, the words uttered by the characters themselves emphasise the length of the journey. Thus Zorrino tells Tintin and Haddock “Voyage très long!” (Journey very long!) when they leave, and reiterates this statement every time Tintin enquires: “Loin, señor, très

⁶⁰ Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, 23/10 - 24/8.

⁶¹ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 37/4. Translation from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, The Adventures of Tintin, London: Methuen Children's books, 1973, 37/4.

⁶² Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 30/7 and 38/3. Translation from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 30/7 and 38/3.

⁶³ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 62/3. Please note that the official translation is “several days later” (Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 62/3).

loin!... Encore longtemps marcher, très longtemps, beaucoup de jours!” (Far, señor, very far!... Still long journey to Temple of the Sun... Many days...) and “Non, señor, encore plus loin” (No, señor, temple still far away).⁶⁴ To add to the impression that the heroes travel a very long distance, they are shown hiking through a décor that changes no fewer than ten times: the different landscapes include an arid and mountainous area near le pont de l’Inca, a greener mountainous area, the condor’s nest in the sky, the snowy mountains, the rocky mountains, the forest, a river teeming with alligators, rapids, a waterfall, an underground passage and a crypt.⁶⁵ The captain, for his part, ensures we do not forget how far the temple is by complaining about the journey with statements such as “Des montagnes, toujours des montagnes” (Is there no end to this mountainous menagerie?) or “Mille sabords! Ça n’en finira donc jamais?... Je commence à en avoir assez, moi, de cette petite excursion!” (Blistering barnacles! Is there no end to it? I’ve had about enough of this little jaunt, I can tell you!).⁶⁶ The important point to remember here is that although Peru is not a fictional country and one can place it on a map, the location of the temple itself is kept mysterious so that we only know that it is very far from Callao.

When is Latin America?

In *L’horloger de la comète* Spirou and Fantasio are visited by a new character: Aurélien de Champignac, Pacôme de Champignac’s great nephew. Aurélien is the creator of a time machine and has travelled from twenty-first-century Europe into the diegetic Champignac. His aim is to travel to *present-day* Palombia in order to collect samples of extinct flora but due to a technical mistake, he and his fellow travellers—

⁶⁴ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 21/5, 30/6 & 34/11. English translations from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 21/5, 30/6 & 34/11.

⁶⁵ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, pp. 20-40.

⁶⁶ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 30/5 & 34/12. Translations from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 30/5 & 34/12.

Spirou, Fantasio and Spip—are catapulted into sixteenth-century Palombia. The time travellers are eventually rescued by two unnamed characters—time police officers—who come from a future even further than the time of Aurélien (refer to Figure 1 below for a timeline that does not reflect the plot, but rather the origin of each of these characters in relation to physical time in *L’horloger de la comète*).

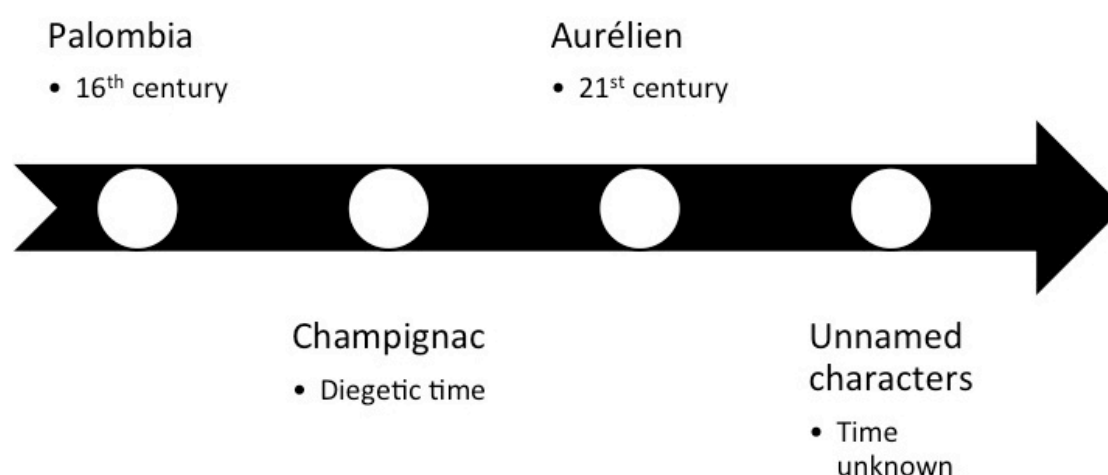


Figure 1. Timeline for *L’horloger de la comète*.

I argue that the multiple layers of time travel effectively deny Palombia coevalness with the diegetic Champignac-en-Cambrousse (the village where Pacôme lives) by presenting Palombia as a land that is triply backwards. Indeed, in the first instance, Aurélien explains to Spirou and Fantasio that several plants have become extinct in his time and that he intends to collect samples from present-day Palombia.⁶⁷ This is the first denial of coevalness as it suggests that there are some plants that can no longer be found in present-day Europe but continue to exist in present-day Palombia or in other words, that Palombia and Champignac do not share the same typological time. Yet, Aurélien could have collected several samples in present-day Champignac itself since—while not quite a jungle—Pacôme’s gardens boast abundant greenery

⁶⁷ Tome & Janry, *L’Horloger de la comète*, 14/5.

and have in fact served as a second home to the marsupilami in earlier albums, not to mention the fact that it only seems logical that Europe's extinct species should be found in Europe of an earlier time rather than in Palombia. The triple backwardness of Palombia is visible in the fact that in this album this country is not shown as being in the same physical time as Europe. There is only one version of Palombia: that of the sixteenth century. Champignac on the other hand has no past in this album. The threefold backwardness of Palombia is thus presented as opposed to Champignac. Europe is the land of the present (the heroes' time), the land of the future (Aurélien's time) and the land of an even further future that we do not see (represented by the two unnamed characters)—but see Figure 1. Indeed, the fact that these two unnamed characters follow Aurélien in order to protect him and his legacy in terms of time travel, as well as the fact that they refer to him as Mathusalem, suggests that he is very old for the unnamed characters and that his work will thus have a significant impact for at least several decades, if not centuries. Palombia, on the other hand, is not only represented as being part of the past, but is condemned to a key period: that of colonisation. To add to the impression of ancientness, the port of Palombia, where most of the colonial activity is taking place, is first shown to us in sepia tones, with only Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien, as well as those in direct contact with them, in full colour.⁶⁸ Aurélien's world, on the other hand, is shown as a colourful and dynamic one, with vehicles zooming around both on ground and in the air. While Aurélien's time may have little in terms of flora, science and mechanisation are not questioned but rather celebrated. Thus, although there may be a problem, it is believed that

⁶⁸ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 27/4.

science will be able to remedy the issue and Aurélien's closing words as he leaves Palombia indicate that he considers that he has finally gained recognition.⁶⁹

Both *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* also depict Latin America as a place that is temporally remote from the heroes' point of departure. However, it is the second one of these two adventures that offers more in this respect and I will therefore focus on it here. Unlike *L'horloger de la comète*, *Le temple du soleil* does not deny Latin America synchronicity with Europe: there is no time travel and it is clear that Hergé's Peru, or at least Callao, and Europe share the same physical time. However, *Les 7 boules de cristal* falls in the category of what John Rieder refers to as lost race narratives: one where the natives resist colonialism, but not the exceptional adventurers, who while claiming access to the resources, distance themselves from colonists and are treated as friends of these lost races. Thus, they are presented as exceptional visitors to an unknown land and the existence and location of this land are kept from the general public so that there is no colonisation and "development" as suggested by Overton's theory of exploration.⁷⁰ The recurring features of lost-race narratives are "the perilous journey to a nearly inaccessible destination" and what the hero(es) encounter(s) in this far-flung place: "a beautiful princess, a corrupt priesthood, an architecturally impressive pagan idol, and a treasure or a fabulously rich mine."⁷¹ The effect that lost race narratives have, in relation to coevalness, is to present the lost races as "anachronistic".

⁶⁹ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 43/5.

⁷⁰ Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 46.

⁷¹ Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, p. 22.

In relation to the anachronism of the lost races, Rieder observes that this sort of curiosity is limited to areas where the native inhabitants are considered to be primitive, and thus belonging to a different era. In short, this anachronistic representation casts the “primitive” people as anachronistic themselves. If the lost races do live in the same *physical* time as the adventurers, they are not from the same *typological* time.⁷² In *Le temple du soleil* Tintin is the first person to comment on the anachronism of the Inca when at the beginning of the journey he says to Zorrino: “L’Inca... L’Inca... Il y aurait donc encore un Inca?... **À notre époque?... C’est incroyable...**” (The Inca?... The Temple of the Sun?... **An Inca, in these days?... It’s unbelievable**).⁷³ As for the captain, he refers to Peru as a “pays de sauvages” (uncivilised country) and the first words he utters upon entering the temple are telling.⁷⁴ The captain greets the Incas with a series of insults:

Arrière poussières!... Au large espèces d’Incas de carnaval!... / Va-nu-pieds!... Bandes de zapotèques!... Moules à gaufres!... Anthropopithèques!... Lâchez-moi bande de sauvages!...⁷⁵

(Stand back, anachronisms!... Keep off, you imitation Incas, you! / Tramps!... Zapotecs!... Pockmarks!... Pithecanthropuses!... Bashi-bouzouks!... Let me go you savages!)⁷⁶

If the captain’s first words in the temple, in the French version, may appear to be just another one of his strings of colourful insults, there is more to them. First, the Captain suggests that these Incas are fake. Second, Albert Algoud, under the entry “Poussière” in his dictionary of Haddock’s insults suggests it may be a reference to the phrase “souviens-toi que tu es poussière et que tu redeviendras poussière” (dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return).⁷⁷ In other words, according to Haddock, the Incas do not

⁷² Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, pp. 52-53.

⁷³ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 22/6. Translation from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 22/6 (My emphasis).

⁷⁴ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 30/5. The official translation elides the reference to civilisation.

⁷⁵ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 47/3 & 47/5.

⁷⁶ Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 47/3 & 47/5.

⁷⁷ Albert Algoud, *Le Haddock illustré: L’Intégrale des jurons du capitaine* [The Illustrated Haddock: The Captain’s Complete Swearwords], Tournai: Casterman, 2004, p. 74; Genesis 3:19.

belong in his physical time and are like living dead. This is an idea that is captured very well in the English and Spanish translations, where “poussières” is translated as “anachronisms” and “momias” (mummies) respectively.⁷⁸

The Place of Latin America

What has been established so far is that the two *Tintin* diptychs and *L'horloger de la comète* present Latin America as a place that is both temporally and spatially remote from Europe. This subsection seeks to address the question of the place of Latin America in these adventures, or in other words, the implications of the chronopolitics and geopolitics present in these albums.

Overton's theory of exploration and David Harvey's “spatial fix” are particularly useful for teasing out what the implications of a far far away Latin America might be. It is important to recall here that the theory of exploration and Harvey's spatial fix both point to the need for a place to explore and “develop”, which paradoxically leads to the need for places that are not yet explored and “developed”. Indeed, does full development not set the exploration cycle in motion again? I suggest that it is precisely this need for uneven development that is expressed in *Le secret de la Licorne* / *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, *Les 7 boules de cristal* / *Le temple du soleil* and *L'horloger de la comète*. In these three adventures the need for uneven development has three interrelated manifestations: the colonial setting, the search for riches and the desire for preservation.

⁷⁸ Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*; Hergé, *El templo del sol* [Prisoners of the Sun], Las aventuras de Tintín, vol. 13, Barcelona: Juventud, 2006.

While the desire for preservation and the search for riches are not presented in the same way in all three adventures, the colonial setting is clear in all of them. The album that presents the most obvious colonial setting is *L'horloger de la comète*, as it denies Palombia of any present-day or future equivalent and only presents it in the sixteenth century, thus, not only marking Palombia as belonging solely to the past, but also literally condemning it to an eternal colonisation. Moreover, despite the fact that in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* Peru is depicted as belonging to the same physical time as Europe, we are nonetheless presented with a situation of coloniality. This may not be clearly visible in the first album of the diptych but once the heroes arrive in Peru they soon come to realise that the “Indians” have their own covert network, a group of people that is feared both by civilians and the police. Indeed, the stationmaster of Santa Clara agrees to murder Tintin and Haddock out of fear of possible repercussions should he refuse to obey the orders of the Inca.⁷⁹ Later Zorrino himself says that everyone in Jauga knows where Tournesol is but they refuse to speak out of fear of the Inca’s vengeance if they reveal secrets to white people.⁸⁰ As for the police, the reader witnesses—together with the captain and Tintin—the change in an officer’s attitude when Haddock says that Tournesol was kidnapped by “Indians”. Thus, the officer initially confirms he saw someone who fit Tournesol’s description then withdraws his statement by suggesting that Tournesol was moving of his own volition and denying that the man he saw resembled Tournesol in any way when Tintin and Haddock insist that Tournesol was abducted by “Indians”.⁸¹ The fact that the Inca holds such power in Peru could be construed as an indication of the absence of coloniality. Yet, the fact that the existence and practices of the temple

⁷⁹ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 13/2-3.

⁸⁰ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 22/5-6.

⁸¹ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 17/8-12.

must be kept secret shows that this is in fact a form of resistance to other powers. Indeed, Zorrino explains that the very existence of the Inca is kept secret from white people.⁸² It is in the temple of the sun itself that the Incas' resistance to colonial powers becomes explicit. Thus, the words used by the Inca and by Huascar, the great priest, refer to “ces infâmes étrangers que nous haïssons” (those vile foreigners whom we hate) and to Zorrino's treason for leading Tintin and the captain to the temple of the sun.⁸³ At the very end of the adventure, the Inca also shows Tintin and Haddock his people's treasure, explaining that it is the gold the *conquistadores* sought, and that has been successfully kept secret for so long.⁸⁴ Thus, the Inca, while affirming the resistance of his people, also confirms the existence of a power—that of the *conquistadores*—that they have been resisting. In other words, the very existence of the Inca's undercover resistance confirms the presence of an overt colonial power.

The adventure in which the colonial context is possibly the least obvious is that of *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*. This may be due to the fact that, while François de Hadoque certainly lived in colonial times, little of the island is shown during these times and as a result we do not “witness” the colonial activities. However, Haddock himself tells Tintin about the colonial setting as soon as he begins to recount the story of his ancestor in *Le secret de la Licorne*:

Nous sommes en 1698. LA LICORNE, un fier vaisseau de troisième rang de la flotte de Louis XIV a quitté l'île St. Dominique, dans les Antilles, et fait voile pour l'Europe avec, à bord, une cargaison de... enfin, il y avait surtout du rhum...⁸⁵

(It is the year 1676. The UNICORN, a valiant ship of King Charles II's fleet, has left Barbados in the West Indies, and set sail for home. She carries a cargo of... well, anyway, there's a good deal of rum aboard...)⁸⁶

⁸² Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 22/6.

⁸³ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 49/6 & 50/3. Translation from Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 50/3.

⁸⁴ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 62/1.

⁸⁵ Hergé, *Le Secret de la Licorne*, 14/12.

While the official translation has been adapted for a British readership (with changes in the year, country of origin of the fleet and the point of departure of *La Licorne*), this does not take away the idea of carrying cargo from the Caribbean to Europe. Although it seems quite likely that the captain is here changing the nature of the cargo in order to have an excuse to drink rum—an attempt that he makes throughout his narration, while Tintin tries to stop him from drinking—*La Licorne* still did carry cargo. The fact that a ship at the service of the French king was returning from the West Indies to Europe suggests that the French were indeed carrying out colonial activities of an extractive nature there. The French, however, are not the only ones in this enterprise. In fact, that part of the diptych is set in a time when “warring European nations were not only allowed but also positively encouraged to plunder enemy ships.”⁸⁶ Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that Rackham le Rouge’s treasure in reality comes from the ship of another colonial power in the area. As Serge Tisseron puts it: “à qui appartenait le trésor de Rackham le Rouge? « D’un vaisseau espagnol », a dit le pirate. Mais chacun sait d’où les Espagnols au XVII^e siècle tenaient leur or et leurs pierres précieuses” (who did Red Rackham’s treasure belong to? “From a Spanish ship” said the pirate. But everyone knows where the Spanish obtained their gold and precious stones in the seventeenth century).⁸⁸ If the extractive activities of the French and of the Spanish in *Le secret de la Licorne* have already served to show that François de Hadoque was involved in the colonial activities of the period, there is more to Rackham le Rouge’s treasure. Indeed, it is not only in François de Hadoque’s time that such extractive activities take place—Tintin and

⁸⁶ Hergé, *The Secret of the Unicorn*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, The Adventures of Tintin, vol. 11 Egmont, 1959, 14/12.

⁸⁷ Tom McCarthy, *Tintin and the Secret of Literature*, London: Granta Books, 2007, p. 127.

⁸⁸ Tisseron, *Tintin chez le psychanalyste*, pp. 58-59.

Haddock in fact go on a treasure hunt themselves in *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and it is in Latin America that they hope to find this treasure. Although they ultimately locate Rackham le Rouge's treasure inside the Moulinsart crypt, the treasure nonetheless retains its history as one that was taken from a Spanish colony and changed hands many times before becoming the captain's. Moreover, despite the ultimate location of the treasure, the treasure hunt has enabled the captain to gain access to the status of nobility.⁸⁹

Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge is not the only adventure to present Latin America as a land from which to extract riches. Indeed, this is also visible both in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* and in *L'horloger de la comète*. In the former adventure, as has already been said, there is a mention of the gold that the Incas have succeeded in hiding from *conquistadores* for centuries.⁹⁰ Two important points should be remembered in relation to the search for the Incas' gold here. The first one is that while the *conquistadores* were not able to find this treasure, the Inca offers Tintin, Haddock and Tournesol several bags of gold and other riches.⁹¹ Therefore, Tintin and his friends may not have stolen from the Incas, but they nonetheless return to Europe with gold and precious stones to add to the fortune already found in Moulinsart, which also originated in a Spanish colony. The captain's reaction when he sees the gifts the Inca offers them is very similar to his reaction when Tintin finds Rackham le Rouge's treasure—compare:

Non, mais regardez ça, tonnerre de Brest!... Des diamants!... Des perles!... Des émeraudes!... Des rubis!... Des... machins!... Quelles merveilles!...⁹²
(Thundering typhoons, look at this!... Diamonds!... Pearls!... Emeralds!... Rubies!... Er... all sorts!... They're magnificent!)⁹³

⁸⁹ Tisseron, *Tintin chez le psychanalyste*, p. 58.

⁹⁰ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 62/1.

⁹¹ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 61/6-10.

⁹² Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, 61/7.

and

Tonnerre de Brest!... C'est inouï... De l'or... Des diamants!... Des pierres précieuses...⁹⁴

(Thundering typhoons!... It's fantastic!... Gold!... Diamonds!... Precious stones!...)⁹⁵

It is not only the captain's exclamations that echo each other here, but also the fact that in these two consecutive diptychs the heroes acquire riches from a Latin American country under colonial powers. For this reason, although the heroes do not seek a treasure in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*, but rather Tournesol, these two diptychs confirm that the place of Latin America is that of one which facilitates Europeans' acquisition of wealth.

If the extractive activities of French and Spanish colonists are implied in *Le secret de la Licorne*, Tome and Janry give these activities a more prominent and explicit position in *L'horloger de la comète*. The very first encounter with Don Alvaro Moru—translator to the governor Don José de Concuaque—immediately reveals the concerns of the Portuguese crown with regards to its colony. Don Moru states that the Portuguese have been very successful in the new world and that they know the French intend to invade the continent in order to extract riches from this land—the very reason why the Portuguese crown wishes to maintain its power in Palombia. Moru himself does not hide his greed as he strokes a golden statue while speaking of the success of the Portuguese colony. In addition to the threat of a French invasion of Palombia, Moru readily accepts that the British are seeking to invade Palombia when Fantasio makes light of the accusations levelled against him and his friends,

⁹³ Hergé, *Red Rackham's Treasure*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, *The Adventures of Tintin*, vol. 12, London: Egmont, 1962, 61/7.

⁹⁴ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 61/8.

⁹⁵ Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 61/8.

introducing himself as James Bond.⁹⁶ Ironically, while Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien are surprised at such accusations, they later find out that the torturer working for the Portuguese crown is in fact a French subject and spy!⁹⁷

While the activities of Francis the First's spies are a source of surprise to the heroes, this does not prevent them from seeking to obtain resources in Palombia. Indeed, they may not be seeking to establish a French colony or to extract gold and precious stones from Palombia, but they nonetheless travel there for the specific purpose of making use of the natural resources. One should not forget that Aurélien travelled to the twentieth century with the aim of obtaining flora samples from Palombia, as he explained upon arriving in Champignac-en-Cambrousse. According to Aurélien, twenty-first century Europe has reached full development, that is to say, most of the resources there have been depleted due to deforestation. The samples Aurélien wants to collect will serve the double purpose of proving that the time machine works, for the “triumph of science”, and recovering extinct flora species in order to reverse desertification.⁹⁸ While this ecological program may seem like a moral one, one must wonder why it is not possible to recover these samples in Europe. The journey to the sixteenth century may be the result of a mistake, but Palombia was the desired destination. Yet, present-day Champignac-en-Cambrousse offers a considerable amount of greenery and has even served as a second home to the marsupilami—a native of the Palombian jungle—in the past. Thus, Aurélien unnecessarily seeks to use Palombia as a tree nursery to Europe (as well as to the rest of the world), and at the same time show his scientific superiority. As a result, geopolitics and

⁹⁶ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 30/2-4.

⁹⁷ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 39/8.

⁹⁸ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 14/4-7.

chronopolitics resort to the noble goal of preserving the ecosystem, as a Trojan horse to maintain uneven development. In reality, the success of Aurélien's use of Palombia as a tree nursery would serve to ensure that Aurélien's Europe can continue to sustain itself. The *Marsupilami* series gives the same place to Latin America, as it advocates the preservation of nature in Palombia. The series has in fact recently partnered with the World Wildlife Fund to further promote the protection of nature, through the campaign "Save Palombia".⁹⁹ The issue here is not that ecology as such is a problem, but that the preservation of nature is encouraged in the fictional Palombia whilst nothing is said of Europe's role in preserving nature "at home" in the stories themselves.

Neither *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* nor *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* address the question of preserving Latin America in terms of ecology. However, there certainly is a sense of the need for preservation in these two adventures. This is particularly visible in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*, where both Europeans and Peruvians give much importance to the preservation of Incan culture. Thus, while the Incas go to great lengths to keep their culture alive and protect their riches from the colonial powers, Europeans seek to preserve Inca culture in a very different manner. In fact, Europeans—be it Tintin or members of the Sanders-Hardmuth expedition—wish to preserve it as a museum piece, or as a still life. This is precisely what the members of the Sanders-Hardmuth ethnographic expedition did when they brought Rascar Capac's mummy to Europe. The last of the seven scientists to catch the mysterious disease, Hippolyte Bergamotte, kept Rascar Capac's mummy as an exhibit under glass in what appears to be his

⁹⁹ Uncredited, "Sauve la planète...".

reading room.¹⁰⁰ At the end of the diptych, Tintin himself defends these seven scientists, claiming that: “Ils n’ont eu d’autre ambition que de faire connaître au monde entier vos traditions séculaires et la richesse de votre civilisation...” (Their sole purpose was to make known to the world your ancient customs and the splendours of your civilisation).¹⁰¹ Tintin and Haddock in fact behave in a similar way in the previous adventure, when the captain exhibits all the items they found near and on the island during the treasure hunt together with other items linked with François de Hadoque, such as his portrait.¹⁰²

As a sidenote, it is worth mentioning that a relatively new series, titled *Les Brigades du temps* (originally titled *U.K.R.O.N.I.A.*), continues to reinforce the idea of a need for the colonisation, submission and confinement to the past of Latin American indigenous populations for European modernity to exist. The series follows the main characters Daggy and Montcalm, two of many temporal agents who must ensure history runs smoothly. Their first mission together is to intervene when Columbus is shot dead as soon as he sets foot in what *must* become Latin America.¹⁰³ Daggy and Montcalm are therefore sent to ensure that the Spanish conquest does occur.¹⁰⁴ Despite the abundant research carried out by the authors, it is quite unsettling to think about the premises on which this award-winning series is based: “si l’on n’arrive pas à faire conquérir l’Amérique par les Européens, notre civilisation va disparaître” (if we do not succeed in making the Europeans conquer America, our civilisation will

¹⁰⁰ Hergé, *Les 7 Boules de cristal*, 26-31.

¹⁰¹ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 60/4; Hergé, *Prisoners of the Sun*, 60/4.

¹⁰² Hergé, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, 62/1.

¹⁰³ Kris & Duhamel, “1492, à l’Ouest, rien de nouveau (episode 1/6)” [1492, Out West, Nothing New], Agence temporelle U.K.R.O.N.I.A., *Spirou*, 12 October, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3835, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Kris & Duhamel, “1492, à l’Ouest, rien de nouveau (episode 2/6)” [1492, Out West, Nothing New], Agence temporelle U.K.R.O.N.I.A., *Spirou*, 19 October, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3836, pp. 9-10.

disappear).¹⁰⁵ The only redeeming feature of this first diptych is in the closing scenes, when Montcalm, having read Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (a well-known report on the ill-treatment of "Indians" under Spanish rule and addressed to the Spanish king), begins to question the morality of the missions they accomplish.¹⁰⁶ Only time will tell if the authors will address this issue as the series progresses.

Subverting "Far Far Away", Technology and "Sheer Economic Exploitation"

Given the spatio-temporal distancing with Latin America in the adventures analysed so far in this chapter and the place given to Latin America in these stories, it is quite clear that "little more than technology and sheer economic exploitation seem to be left over for the purposes of 'explaining' Western superiority".¹⁰⁷ Edgar Clement and the team Yoann/Vehlmann, however, present alternative views to those of Hergé and the team Tome/Janry. Indeed, the former two offer a more pessimistic perspective on technology, with *Operación Bolívar* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* respectively. In this section I begin by summarising the plots of *Operación Bolívar* and of *Alerte aux Zorkons* before comparing how each of these two volumes represents time and space, science and technology and economic growth.

Alerte aux Zorkons, for its part, is set exclusively in Champignac-en-Cambrousse. The adventure starts when Zorglub appears on Pacôme's doorstep and—using his mind-controlling invention, the zorglonde, to keep the latter off—attempts to

¹⁰⁵ Hugues Dayez, "U.K.R.O.N.I.A. devient *Les Brigades du temps*" [U.K.R.O.N.I.A. becomes *The Time Squads*], Interview with Kris, *Spirou*, 9 January, 2013, 76th year, Issue 3900, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Kris & Duhamel, "La grande Armada (episode 6/6)" [The Spanish Armada], *Les Brigades du temps, Spirou*, 13 February, 2013, 76th year, Issue 3905, 20/5; Bartolomé de las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* [A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies], ed. Jean-Paul Duviols, Buenos Aires: Stockcero, 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 35.

“borrow” some of Pacôme’s potions. As Zorclub breaks some flasks by accident, some of the prolific mould that Pacôme had used to destroy Zorclub’s headquarters in *L’ombre du Z* mixes with formula X1 (which gives tremendous strength) and formula X2 (which makes one age by seventy years in an hour), leading to an ecological catastrophe in Champignac-en-Cambrousse.¹⁰⁸ The flora and fauna that are affected by this mixture experience an accelerated evolution. When Spirou and Fantasio find Pacôme in this jungle-like environment, the latter has spent sufficient time observing the changes in his surroundings to be able to explain that the unusual fauna and gigantic flora that have invaded Champignac-en-Cambrousse are undergoing an evolution that only takes a few hours.¹⁰⁹

Though it may seem that *Alerte aux Zorkons* does not have much to offer here as it does not include Latin America, at least in an explicit way, it is nonetheless useful for analysis as it focuses on the opposite of “far far away”: the here and now of Champignac-en-Cambrousse. Indeed, in the fifty-first *Spirou* album, the adventure is kept very much within the confines of the village and it is only on the last pages that it opens up to the outside world again, with a plug into the next adventure, *La face cachée du Z*, which is set on the moon.¹¹⁰ While there is neither literal spatial remoteness nor literal temporal remoteness in this adventure, Champignac-en-Cambrousse changes to the point that it is barely recognisable even to the characters.¹¹¹ In his depiction of the jungle that has developed so suddenly in

¹⁰⁸ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, pp. 1-5 & 51/5-7; Franquin, et al., “L’Ombre du Z” [The Shadow of the Z], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: Z comme Zorclub + L’Ombre du Z*, Double Album, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011, p. 135; Franquin, “Il y a un Sorcier à Champignac” [The Wizard of Culdesac], in *De Champignac au marsupilami: 1950 - 1952*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 2, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2006, 61/7-8 & 62/2.

¹⁰⁹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, p. 34.

¹¹⁰ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 56/7; Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*.

¹¹¹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 18/5.

Champagnac-en-Cambrousse, Yoann used Franquin's Palombian jungle as a source of graphic inspiration.¹¹² The fact that the Champagnac jungle is based—graphically—on the Palombian jungle allows Spirou and Fantasio to travel to Palombia—figuratively—without leaving Champagnac-en-Cambrousse so that Palombia is no longer spatially remote.¹¹³ In addition, the choice of the Palombian jungle as a graphic source for the Champagnacian jungle instantly creates a sense of coevalness between the two locations. In other words, they are immediately thrown into the same typological time although we do not see the Palombian jungle in this adventure. At the same time, the accelerated evolution in Champagnac-en-Cambrousse creates the impression that physical time is moving at such a high speed that the future is encroaching on the present. Thus, Champagnac-en-Cambrousse continues to be the land of the (accelerated) future, as in *L'horloger de la comète*. However, unlike *L'horloger de la comète*, *Alerte aux Zorkons* does not cast Palombia out of this future. Quite the opposite, this accelerated movement towards the future leads the two locations to resemble each other more.

Edgar Clement's approach to time and space is radically different from that of the Franco-Belgian comics. Indeed, if space—Mexico and the US—is fixed and presented as being the “here” of the plot, physical and typological time are less compartmentalised than in *L'horloger de la comète*, *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil* or *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*. In fact, there is no real separation, in *Operación Bolívar*, between pre-Columbian Mexico, the conquest and present-day Mexico (typological time), or between the Spanish civil war and the Tlatelolco massacre (physical time). Rather than being neatly concatenated,

¹¹² Vehlmann, Personal Communication (email), 10 February 2011.

¹¹³ Vehlmann, interview.

all these periods are superimposed, in the same geographic location. Speaking of this phenomenon, Bruce Campbell refers to the “‘multitemporal simultaneity’ of Clement’s graphic hybridizations”, clearly referring to García Canclini’s formulation of hybridisation in *Hybrid Cultures*.¹¹⁴ However, since the term is somewhat tautological given the double reference to time, I believe that “multitemporal geography” better reflects Clement’s approach to time and space. For instance, it is a real fact that Mexico City has been built over the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán and Clement uses this fact to create a multitemporal geography in his work. Clement’s multitemporal geography is an example of hybridisation, where the “new” and the “old” continue to co-exist and thus contradicts the logic that the new must replace the old, and indeed the very logic of “old” as opposed to “new”. This is in agreement with Rowe and Schelling’s description of Latin American modernity as “a modernity which does not necessarily entail the elimination of pre-modern traditions and memories but has arisen through them, transforming them in the process.”¹¹⁵ The logic of temporal superimposition is present throughout the story itself as well as in the page layout, where frames are not neatly separated, but rather blend into one another (Figure 2). In addition, while *Operación Bolívar* is a work of fiction, Clement makes use of real locations that already have multiple architectural, cultural and historical layers and thus contribute to the multitemporal geography of the work. I will use two examples to illustrate this point: Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco and Xanadú.

¹¹⁴ Bruce Campbell, “*Operación Bolívar*: The Work of Art in the Age of Globalization”, in *¡Viva la historieta!: Mexican Comics, NAFTA, and the Politics of Globalization*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009, pp. 168 & 184.

¹¹⁵ William Rowe & Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*, Critical Studies in Latin American Culture, eds. James Dunkerley, et al., London, New York: Verso, 1991, p. 3.



Figure 2. Superimposed frames in *Operación Bolívar*.¹¹⁶

Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco is infamous for the massacre that took place there in 1968. In short, giving in to pressures from the US regarding ongoing student protests in the lead up to the Olympic games, the Mexican government took action by

¹¹⁶ Source: Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

ordering the army to open fire on civilians who were protesting in Tlatelolco.¹¹⁷ This massacre, however, is only *one* of the many reasons why Tlatelolco is historically significant. Indeed, besides the monument to those who died in the 1968 massacre, Plaza de las Tres Culturas also has a plaque commemorating another very important event: the taking of Tlatelolco and Cuauhtémoc—its leader—by Hernán Cortés on 13 August 1521. In addition to these two significant events, both marked by plaques, the architecture of Plaza de las Tres Culturas itself presents several temporal layers. Indeed, much as depicted in *Operación Bolívar*, Plaza de las Tres Culturas has a church—Santiago de Tlatelolco—that was erected on top of an Aztec temple, using stones from the temple (Figure 3). Furthermore, the church and the temple are in close proximity to high-rise buildings. With the combination of these three layers from different typological times coexisting in Plaza de las Tres Culturas, Edgar Clement has an ideal real-life location for his multitemporal geography.

¹¹⁷ NPR (dir.) *Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?*, All Things Considered, 01/12/2008 [22min48sec] Available: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687> (04/11/2009).



**Figure 3. The church and the temple of Tlatelolco
Photograph taken on 15/04/2011.**

The other example of multitemporal geography I will use here is Xanadú. In *Operación Bolívar*, explicit reference is made to the film *Citizen Kane* as the source of this location.¹¹⁸ Indeed, this is what the narrator—León—tells us about this place: “Llegamos al rancho del gringo. Es una finca inmensa que perteneció a un tal Charles Foster Kane. Está construida en lo que fue una reservación india. Antes se llamaba XANADÚ” (We arrive at the gringo’s ranch. It is an immense estate that belonged to a certain Charles Foster Kane. It is built in what was an Indian reservation. It was known as XANADÚ before). We also know that this ranch is located in el paraíso—the paradise—or in other words, the US.¹¹⁹ From the information provided, we therefore know that Xanadú, like Plaza de las Tres Culturas, has several layers. Given that in a

¹¹⁸ Orson Welles (dir.) *Citizen Kane*, 2001 [1h59min].

¹¹⁹ Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

past that is unspecified Xanadú was an Indian reservation, we may speculate about its past affiliation too. To me, Xanadú can be compared to Aztlán, the lost land of the Aztecs, that Chicanos claim is on the land Mexico lost to the USA.¹²⁰ Xanadú therefore presents a US present built on an Indian—possibly Aztec—past. In addition, Xanadu itself was already a place of colonial appropriation prior to *Operación Bolívar*. Indeed, it is also the (real-life) Chinese medieval city visited by Marco Polo that was subsequently romanticised in the poem “Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, before becoming the equally mythical seat of power and escapism in the equally emblematic *Citizen Kane*. The fact that, in *Operación Bolívar*, it was an Indian reservation in the past points to its history and the attempt to distribute spatial occupation between colonisers and colonised. At the same time, with the previous history of the place name Xanadu, Clement is able to draw from a history of exploration, colonialism, orientalism, romanticism and Hollywoodisation to bring even more layers to the his multitemporal geography. Both the fictional Xanadú and the very real Plaza de las Tres Culturas exemplify Clement’s approach to time and space in his own work: continuity in time in the same location, or a multitemporal geography.

In terms of approaches to science and technology, both *Alerte aux Zorkons* and *Operación Bolívar* view them with suspicion. The former—like *L’horloger de la comète*—though it is a science-fiction story and though it has ecological concerns, presents science and technology in a less celebratory light than the thirty-sixth *Spirou* album. As I stated earlier, the evolution of the fauna is so swift that it is almost as if the future is encroaching on the present. While in that respect it may be said that

¹²⁰ Daniel Cooper Alarcón, “The Aztec Palimpsest: Toward a New Understanding of Aztlan, Cultural Identity and History”, *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 19, 2 (Fall 1988-90), pp. 37, 51 & passim.

Champagnac-en-Cambrousse is still presented as the land of the future, this is not a particularly desirable future and this accelerated evolution is not to be equated with any kind of progress. In fact, the zorkons that give the album its title are one of the many types of monsters found in this album and—as their name suggests—they are brainless creatures that are unable to ensure their own safety.¹²¹ The zorkons’ lack of intelligence, however, does not reflect on Latin America since the zorkons do not exist anywhere else than in Champagnac-en-Cambrousse. The fact that the zorkons and the other monsters are the result of a clumsy accident in Pacôme’s laboratory, nonetheless, does little to promote science and although Pacôme creates a new formula—formula X5—to eliminate the zorkons, this new invention is not entirely effective. Thus, thanks to formula X5, *most* of the creatures are eliminated and Champagnac-en-Cambrousse is returned *almost* entirely to its original state.¹²² Yet, some zorkons are immune to the X5 formula, a fact that Pacôme keeps well hidden from Spirou and Fantasio, and one of the monsters even returns to haunt them at Christmas.¹²³ At the end of the adventure, Spirou expresses his doubts about the X5 formula: “Moi, les catastrophes technologiques qu’on prétend résoudre avec encore plus de technologie, ça commence à me laisser un brin dubitatif...” (As for me, technological catastrophes that we attempt to solve with even more technology, it’s starting to leave me a tad sceptical...).¹²⁴ These words—uttered by the hero immediately before the problem with the X5 formula is revealed to the readers—only add to the pessimistic vision of science in this adventure. Thus, the trope of controllable science in *bande dessinée*, as put forward by Allamel-Raffin and

¹²¹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 21/6, 31. Zorkons bear, in their name, the trademark of the other mad scientist of the series (Zorglub), like all of his other creations. The name zorkons is thus clear – they are a creation of Zorglub and are *cons*, that is to say stupid.

¹²² Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, p. 54.

¹²³ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 55/4; Yoann, “Conte de Noël” [Christmas Tale], Spirou et Fantasio, *Spirou*, 1 December, 2010, 73rd year, Issue 3790, pp. 40-41.

¹²⁴ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 55/1.

Gangloff, has no place in this album since it is an accident that serves as the onset of the adventure and not all the harm can be undone.¹²⁵ Spirou's attitude towards science and ecology is reiterated early on in *La face cachée du Z*, when he criticises Zorglub's plans for spatial colonisation. While Zorglub effectively argues that a spatial fix through colonisation of other planets in the solar system will soon be essential due to the overexploitation of resources on Earth, Spirou advocates investing in cleaning the planet rather than in seeking a new place to exploit: "et si avec cet argent, vous commencez plutôt par dépolluer la terre, "zozo"?" (How about using this money to clean up the Earth first, "Zozo"?).¹²⁶

In *Operación Bolívar* all technology and science have to offer is death. Indeed, there is no instance where machines serve any purpose other than that of killing. León, the narrator, tells of the US war industry that, following the cold war, has been put to the service of fighting the drug trade both within and without the US. Yet, these guns, helicopters (Sikorsky AH-1521 Conqueror), special lenses that can detect angels, and the soldiers onto whom angel hunter hands have been grafted all serve one purpose: to kill angels in order to obtain angel dust.¹²⁷ While not all those with supernatural powers are life-asserting characters—see archangel Michael, for instance—healing or fighting corruption is done through the use of supernatural powers rather than technology. This is the case of the double agent Zofiel, when he cauterises Juan Grande's wounds after his hands were savagely chopped off, or León, when he turns

¹²⁵ Allamel-Raffin & Gangloff, "Le savant dans la bande dessinée", pp. 131-133.

¹²⁶ Yoann & Vehlmann, *La Face cachée du Z*, 10/4-5. "Zozo" means "idiot" and is a disrespectful nickname Zorglub has been given by his new associate's employees.

¹²⁷ Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

into a giant winged leopard to fight Michael's troops and recover Juan Grande's hands.¹²⁸

One of the major foci of *Operación Bolívar*—and the reason for which Archangel Michael and his troops seek out angel dust—is trade. Indeed, in the conversation between León and the gringo, it transpires that they seek to establish the free and legal trade of drugs throughout the Americas, while making drugs from other countries illegal. The workings of this trade are, from the beginning, to the advantage of the US. Indeed, what John Smith (St Michael's ally) proposes is to make the Mexican angel hunters kill as many angels as possible in as little time as possible. He has no wish to engage in the killings himself, although he too is an angel hunter, and makes no attempt to ensure that the angels are not completely depleted within a few years. He also reveals that his interest in León, and in all angel hunters is limited to their hands, which can be grafted onto highly trained soldiers at his service. This is the reason why Juan Grande's hands were cut off (Juan Grande is an *angelero*), and why John Smith eventually orders his men to cut off León's hands. This gory practice, however, reveals even more about the place of Mexicans in this free trade scheme. Indeed, the caption on the page where el protector cuts off Juan Grande's hands says: "I NEED THEIR HANDS THEIR HANDS". In light of the conversation between León and the gringo, this caption appears to be a reference to the *bracero*¹²⁹ program, where Mexicans were wanted in the US to work the fields. Thus, in a play on words on the expression *mano de obra* ('labour', c.f. the term 'hand' used for a labourer in English), the Mexican angel hunters, much like the angels themselves, are represented as having become fodder for the gringo's economic plan. In addition, as mentioned

¹²⁸ Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

¹²⁹ *Bracero* has the same root as *brazo* – arm.

before, Clement suggests that there is a US war industry, one that could not be abandoned following the cold war, although it is expensive, because it would imply the end of US imperialism. In his conversation with León, the gringo reveals that the free trade he wishes to establish would also allow him to get rid of excess supplies of weapons. In other words, he intends to gain entrance into other American countries by offering them this surplus of weapons: he is seeking a spatial fix by establishing this trade agreement with other American countries.¹³⁰ From such arguments on the part of the gringo, one might well doubt that the other countries might really benefit from the trade agreement, as it appears the gringo only seeks to reinforce uneven development through a more or less coercive lifting of economic barriers and a geopolitical distribution of tasks.

Although *Alerte aux Zorkons* does not appear to engage with economic development per se throughout the album, a short sentence, placed at the end of the adventure, sheds a bright light on the approach to economic development in this album. When we reach the concluding part of the story, Spip says: “Je suis bien d’accord, c’est la décroissance qui sauvera la planète” (I completely agree, it’s degrowth that will save the planet).¹³¹ While Spirou’s squirrel says this in relation to Pacôme’s X5 (the “degrowth formula”) the choice of the word “décroissance”—degrowth—points to an economic concept of great import. Instead of advocating an ever-increasing production, which is the spirit of capitalism and uneven development, this short sentence advocates slowing down.¹³² The position of this statement, near the end of the adventure, makes it part of the moral of the story. The fact that the pun in this

¹³⁰ See pp. 65–74 for the discussion on the term “spatial fix”.

¹³¹ Yoann & Vehlmann, *Alerte aux Zorkons*, 54/4.

¹³² Vehlmann, interview.

frame is articulated on the word *décroissance*—with the narrator referring to the X5 formula and Spip referring to an economic concept—suggests that the entire story may be seen as a running metaphor for the results of an unrestrained profit-oriented economic approach. Moreover, Spip’s concern for the planet rather than solely Champignac-en-Cambrousse points to an interest in the wellbeing of more than just Europe.

Thus if *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*, *L’horloger de la comète* and *Le secret de la Licorne / Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* all cast Latin America in a remote time and space, and give it the role of the provider of riches for Europe, this is not the case of all Franco-Belgian comics. The place given to Latin America is that of a land to be explored and developed, but only to a point in Hergé’s and Tome/Janry’s work. *Operación Bolívar* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* counter such propositions through a different use of time. The former denies clear boundaries between past and present and depicts technology as a source of death. While it also depicts Latin America as the source of riches (including the supply of workforce and of raw materials), the hero of the story rejects this geopolitical arrangement, highlighting the inequality of such a US-Latin America division of labour. As for the latter, it focuses on the here and now of Champignac-en-Cambrousse. By doing so, *Alerte aux Zorkons* offers a more just geopolitical message. This album not only presents ecology as being the responsibility of Europe too, but it also warns against the implications of an unbridled economic development for the planet as a whole. Given that *Operación Bolívar* and *Alerte aux Zorkons* are relatively recent in comparison with *L’horloger de la comète* and Hergé’s work, this may mean that the perception of science, technology and geopolitics is changing over time. Indeed, through their respective creations, both the

Mexican Edgar Clement and the Frenchmen Yoann/Vehlmann express their doubts about the kind of approach to production and geopolitics found in *L'horloger de la comète*, *Les 7 boules de cristal* / *Le temple du soleil* and *Le secret de la Licorne* / *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*.

Supermales and Hyperfemales

The comic series that inspires the title of this chapter is *Los Supermachos*, a title that translates, literally, as *The Supermales*. However, this chapter is not dedicated exclusively to Rius's comic series. Rather, it concerns itself with Latin American sexuality and gender, and representations thereof. In particular, it seeks to explore how masculinity and femininity are represented in the Franco-Belgian and in the Latin American comics. While none of the series has a female protagonist, representations of—and a strong concern with—Latin American masculinity abound on both sides of the Atlantic. Although women placed in a position of power are rare in my corpus, since 2004 the Chahuta tribe (*Marsupilami*) have had a beautiful female chief, Tèpamalroulé. In order to compare how Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics represent Latin American male and female sexuality and gender, in addition to *Los Supermachos*, I will use in this chapter *Inodoro Pereyra*, the *Spirou et Fantasio* album *Le nid des marsupilamis* and the *Marsupilami* albums *Baby Prinz*, *L'orchidée*

des Chahutas, *Viva Palombia!* and *Red Monster*. Unfortunately, though it offers interesting additions to the representation of masculinity, I will not be able to analyse *Tintin et les Picaros* in depth in this chapter. I will, nonetheless, refer to it briefly as I discuss the *Marsupilami* albums.

The chosen volumes all show men and masculinity as strongly associated with the nation or in a position of power, which begs the following questions: what is the place given to a clear heterosexual masculinity in Latin America? What is the link between nationhood and masculinity? Why is homosexuality perceived as a threat? How do Latin American males compare with European males? What is the place of femininity in this construction? The tools that will help me explore the representations of male and female sexuality and answer these questions are Octavio Paz's concepts of open and closed bodies, Chant and Craske's exploration of the dynamics of male heterosexuality and homosexuality in Latin America, Raewyn Connell's approach to hegemonic masculinities and Frantz Fanon's analysis of sexual relationships between black and white. In addition to these, Salessi's analysis of the construction of the Argentinean nation through masculinity and Sergio de la Mora's analysis of the link between masculinity and Mexican nationhood will be invaluable tools to draw out the implications of the way Latin American masculinity and femininity are represented in the chosen volumes.

In order to streamline the analysis, I will only focus on a number of characters: the main characters in *Los Supermachos* who identify as supermales (Chón Prieto, Gedeón Prieto, Don Lucas, Calzónzin) and their mayor Don Perpetuo del Rosal; Inodoro and Serafín Pereyra in *Inodoro Pereyra*; Baby Prinz (from the eponymous

album); Tèpamalroulé, Émile Pistil and Tapalèrbèth from *L'orchidée des Chahutas*; the marsupilami (*Le nid des marsupilamis*, *L'orchidée des Chahutas* and *Baby Prinz*); and the couple Miss-Terry/mapinguari (*Viva Palombia!* and *Red Monster*).

I will begin by exploring the link between nationhood and masculinity in Mexico and Argentina and providing a definition of the Latin American concepts of male homosexuality and heterosexuality. I will then go on to look at the concept of hegemonic masculinities and geographies of hegemony before incorporating Frantz Fanon's work on sexual relationships between black and white partners. Once I have laid down the theoretical framework for this chapter, I will discuss masculinity and its interaction with femininity in two main blocs: Latin American perspectives and Franco-Belgian perspectives. This choice may appear obvious since the stated purpose of the chapter is to compare these perspectives, but it is also based on the fact that there is a considerable rift between them so that it is not possible to show a spectrum in the same way as in the previous chapter.

Masculinity and Nationhood

Before going any further in this discussion about Latin American masculinity and *machos*, it is crucial to specify that the term *macho*, in English, has a negative connotation that is not necessarily present in Spanish. Originally, in Spanish, the term *macho* simply means "male" and what is meant by the term *macho* in English is in reality termed *machista* in Spanish, although *macho* in Spanish may also refer to a gender style: the *macho macho* is a man's man. It is also important to note that when I use the term "supermachismo" here, I do not refer to someone who demonstrates an extreme *machista* behaviour, but rather to the essence of being a *supermacho*, as seen in the series *Los Supermachos*.

The base model I use to understand the *Garabatense* masculinity is the system proposed by Octavio Paz in his well-known *The Sons of la Malinche*.¹ This text discusses Mexicanness, comparing and contrasting four Mexican figures: *el chingón*, *la chingada*, the son and the virgin. The *chingón*, literally, is the figure of “the one who screws over” and it harks back to Hernán Cortés, the Spaniard who was at the head of the conquest of Mexico. *La chingada*, for her part, is the one who was screwed over. She harks back to La Malinche—also known as Malintzin or Doña Marina—Hernán Cortés’s interpreter and mistress. Paz suggests that though she was not raped, she let herself be used by Cortés and was soon forgotten once she was no longer needed and therefore represents a body open to the Spanish invader and is a passive figure. The virgin, best represented by the virgin of Guadalupe, is the figure of the virtuous woman. Though the virgin is also a passive figure, it is *la chingada* who represents absolute passivity. Finally, Paz compares the son (embodied by Cuauhtémoc) to Jesus. Cuauhtémoc, often referred to as “the young grandfather”, was the last Aztec emperor and what he has in common with Jesus is his youth and his tragic death to save his people. After being made prisoner by the *conquistadores*, Cuauhtémoc had his feet burnt as a form of torture before being murdered. As he remained stoic throughout this torture, Paz proposes that his body can be said to have remained closed to the Spanish invader.²

The two opposed figures that I am particularly interested in here are those of the son—the closed body—and that of *la chingada*—the open body. La Malinche, as well

¹ Octavio Paz, “The Sons of La Malinche”, in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Gilbert M. Joseph & Timothy J. Henderson (eds.), Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002.

² Paz, “The Sons of La Malinche”, in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Joseph & Henderson (eds.), Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 21-25.

as being a victim, is known as *the* national traitor in Mexico, to the point that the term *malinchista* is used to refer to traitors to the nation. Regardless of the fact that as an interpreter and traitor La Malinche has had, of necessity, an active role in her relationship with Cortés, she remains the figure of passivity in the name attributed to her. Indeed she has been reduced to her victimised sexuality in the passive form *la chingada*: the one who was screwed (literally) and screwed over (figuratively).³ Mexico, on the other hand, remains closed like Cuauhtémoc, negating all origins, according to Paz.⁴ Although the characterisation of male and female figures is strikingly schematic in Paz's work, it is a model that is explicitly engaged with in *Los Supermachos* and is therefore very relevant to the discussion here. Inspired by the ideas discussed by the supermachos, I propose to use the term *cuauhtémiquista* in contraposition with the term *malinchista* to refer to those who follow Cuauhtémoc's example and remain closed to the invader.

It is perhaps unsurprising that it is a woman who should bear the brunt of the fall of Mexico, given the patriarchal construction of the Mexican state. In *Cinemachismo*, Sergio de la Mora focuses on images of national masculinity and *machismo* in Mexican cinema, presenting the latter as a tool that was used to build both the Mexican nation and *machismo*. Indeed, in his book, de la Mora describes *machismo* as "an ideology of heterosexual male supremacy that in Mexico gets wedded to the institutionalized post-revolutionary State apparatus, of which cinema is a crucial component."⁵ By virtue of its audiovisual nature, Mexican cinema presents

³ Paz, "The Sons of La Malinche", in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Joseph & Henderson (eds.), Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 25.

⁴ Paz, "The Sons of La Malinche", in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Joseph & Henderson (eds.), Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 25-27.

⁵ Sergio de la Mora, "Macho Nation?", in *Cinemachismo: Masculinities and Sexuality in Mexican Film*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006, p. 7.

masculinity as a spectacle. It therefore comes as no surprise that one needs to go through a ritual to attain masculinity. For Mara Viveros Vigoya, as for de la Mora, there is also a link between the Mexican *macho* and the figure of the *charro* (the Mexican cowboy). To Viveros Vigoya, the *charro* is a rebellious character, but is also “**estoic[o]**, **val[iente]**, **generos[o]** y **capa[z]** de seducción” ([**stoic**], [**brave**], gener[ous] and capa[ble] of seduction).⁶ This cinematic figure of the Mexican macho, which celebrates the figure of the *charro*, also refers back to Cuauhtémoc who himself is characterised by the idea of a model stoicism. This is certainly visible in the official statement that accompanies the bust erected in honour of Cuauhtémoc in the Zócalo, México D.F.’s main square (Figure 4). Identifying Cuauhtémoc as a role model for all Mexicans, the plaque reads:

⁶ Mara Viveros Vigoya, “El machismo latinoamericano: un persistente malentendido” [Latin American Machismo: A Persistent Misunderstanding], in *De mujeres, hombres y otras ficciones: género y sexualidad en América Latina*, Mara Viveros, et al. (eds.), Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia - Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Centro de Estudios Sociales CES con Editores del grupo TM, 2006, p. 115 (my emphasis); de la Mora, “Macho Nation?”, in *Cinemachismo: Masculinities and Sexuality in Mexican Film*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006, pp. 2 & 6.



**Figure 4. Cuauhtémoc's bust in the Zócalo, México D.F.
Photograph taken 25/04/2011.**

Fue el último Tlatoani Mexica y su nombre significa “aguila [sic] que cae”. Se distinguió [sic] como dirigente de la resistencia y líder militar. **El coraje, el estoicismo, y la dignidad del último emperador azteca es [sic] un ejemplo de heroísmo para todos los mexicanos.**

(He was the last Tlatoani Mexica and his name means “falling eagle”. He distinguished himself as leader of the resistance and as military leader. **The courage, the stoicism and the dignity of the last Aztec emperor is [sic] an example of heroism for all Mexicans.**)⁷

In Argentina too, heterosexual masculinity has occupied an important place in the construction of a patriarchal nation. Thus, not only was citizenship organised and controlled through the regulation of sex and gender to the point where homosexuality was considered a threat for the patriarchal system, but in addition, it was considered to be a *source* of illness—in the form of syphilis at the end of the fourteenth century—and a phenomenon that did not belong in Argentina. In other words,

⁷ My emphasis. Note that the text refers to Mexicans in masculine but that for grammatical reasons it could also include women.

homosexual identity did not fit in “the nation”. Following the same conception of the nation as a patriarchal organisation, in the early twentieth century, sons of immigrants were sent to the army in order to give them a virile education and develop their patriotism.⁸ Moreover, it was perceived that though sexual inversion—understood as “reversed sexual dispositions in a contrary outer body”—remained supposedly outside of the nation, its presence on Argentinean land represented a real danger of “power reversal”, so that they could lead to the destruction of the patriarchal system. One can assume that this was therefore construed as presenting a danger of displacement of the nationals by the foreigners.⁹

While homosexuality, or sexual inversion, was construed as not belonging in the Argentinean nation, there is also an embodiment of national masculinity. Much like the figure of the *charro* in the Mexican imaginary, the figure of the *gaucho* holds a very important place in the Argentinean imaginary as a representative of this national masculinity. Jeffrey Tobin explains the link between the Argentinean *macho*, beef and the *asado* (barbecue) in the following way: beef occupies a very important place in Argentina, as much in the diet as in the industry. As Tobin puts it himself, “[h]istóricamente, el asado está relacionado con la industria de la carne y más específicamente con los gauchos” ([h]istorically, the *asado* is related to the meat industry and more specifically with the *gauchos*).¹⁰ Although the *gaucho* may be

⁸ Jorge Salessi, *Médicos maleantes y maricas: higiene, criminología y homosexualidad en la construcción de la nación Argentina (Buenos Aires: 1871-1914)* [Villainous Doctors and Sissies: Hygiene, Criminology and Homosexuality in the Construction of the Argentinean Nation (Buenos Aires: 1871-1914)], Estudios Culturales, Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2000, pp. 180, 182, 185-186, 351-354.

⁹ Vek Lewis, *Crossing Sex and Gender in Latin America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 228; Salessi, *Médicos maleantes y maricas*, p. 189.

¹⁰ Tobin, “Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina” [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, p. 211.

originally from a certain region, Tobin draws a parallel between Spain's *corridos* and Argentina's *gauchos*, suggesting that they are both "un símbolo nacional efectivo en cual la región (y una clase social) domina a las demás" (an effective national symbol where one region (and class) dominates the rest).¹¹

To Tobin, as the *asador* (he who "mans" the grill) watches the barbecue, he repeats a ritual that harks back to *gaucho* models, as well as other models of the "macho porteño" and this ritual is in fact a *machista* one.¹² To support this claim he points out that it is considered that a real *asado* is one that is prepared by a man and that it is even thought that women do not know how to enjoy a barbecue.¹³ Furthermore, in addition to the fact that women are practically excluded from the process of preparing *asados*, Tobin also underlines the fact that though not the only Argentinean dish, the *asado* is the only one that is typically prepared by men and yet, it is the one that has the status of national dish while other well-known dishes such as the *empanada* have a more regional status. For this reason, according to him, "el lugar privilegiado del asado, en la construcción culinaria de nación argentina, concuerda con la observación de George Mosse al respecto del nacionalismo europeo moderno, que ha tenido 'una afinidad especial por la sociedad masculina'" (the privileged position of the *asado*, in

¹¹ Original English language text by Carrie B. Douglass, "Toro muerto, vaca es": An Interpretation of the Spanish Bullfight ["A Dead Bull is a Cow": An Interpretation of the Spanish Bullfight], *American Ethnologist* Vol. 11, 2 (May, 1984), pp. 255 quoted in Spanish in Tobin, "Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina" [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, p. 212.

¹² Tobin, "Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina" [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 215, 221. A *porteño* is an inhabitant of Buenos Aires. The *macho porteño* is therefore to be understood as the "Buenos Aires male".

¹³ Tobin, "Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina" [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 213-214.

the culinary construction of the Argentinean nation, corresponds to George Mosse's observation regarding the modern European nationalism, which has had 'a special affinity with the masculine society').¹⁴ Thus, from his point of view, the ritual of the *asado* is a patriarchal ritual that reasserts "la ley del padre": the father's law. It is worth remembering here that the very term *patria* (fatherland) has the same etymological root as *padre* (father). Thus, it is to be understood that the nation is organised like a big family, following the same patriarchal pattern. Thus, "[e]l asador porteño entra en la sociedad burguesa al afirmar su primacía *por sobre las mujeres y por sobre otros hombres menores*" (the *asador porteño* gains access to bourgeois society by asserting his supremacy *over women and lesser men*).¹⁵

Latin American Male Heterosexuality and Homosexuality, Hegemonic Masculinities and Black/White Relationships

As we continue on this exploration of constructions of greater and lesser masculinities and nationhood, it is vital to point out that the concept of male homosexuality, in a Latin American context, does not simply entail choosing a partner of the same sex. In fact, according to Salessi, a man does not qualify as homosexual merely based on the fact that he has intercourse with other men. Rather, the one who penetrates has an active role and is considered to be heterosexual while the one who is penetrated is considered homosexual and has a more passive role.¹⁶ Sylvia Chant and Nikki Craske

¹⁴ Tobin, "Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina" [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 212-213.

¹⁵ Tobin, "Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina" [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 223-224 (my emphasis).

¹⁶ Salessi, *Médicos maleantes y maricas*, pp. 61, 67.

explain this distinction by the fact that manhood is expressed through the act of phallic penetration, regardless of whether it is a vaginal or anal penetration.¹⁷

The distinction offered by Salessi is useful in understanding the way masculinity is played out in the Latin American comics I will analyse in this chapter and it is very much linked with the idea expressed by Tobin, namely that “the *asador porteño* gains access to bourgeois society by asserting his supremacy over women and lesser men”, and to the ideas expressed by Connell in her theorisation of hegemonic masculinities.¹⁸ The latter enables a conceptualisation of *cuauhtémiquistas* and *malinchistas*, *asadores* and lesser men and women, and even the way Latin American masculinity is presented in the Franco-Belgian perspective. This concept of hegemonic masculinities accounts for the fact that, as Connell puts it, “[i]n the overall structure of gender relations, men are on top, but many men are not on top in terms of sexuality and gender, let alone class and race”.¹⁹ According to this model then, some men are higher up in the hierarchy of manliness in comparison with others. In addition to the idea that there are “lesser men”, the term “hegemonic” also presupposes that there is a general acceptance of this hierarchy and that it is therefore not maintained purely through domination. For this reason, Connell terms the “lesser” masculinities “complicit masculinities”. The category of complicit masculinities includes protest masculinities (a class-based distinction), subordinated masculinities (a gender-based distinction) and marginalised masculinities (a distinction based on

¹⁷ Sylvia Chant & Nikki Craske, “Gender and Sexuality”, in *Gender in Latin America*, Sylvia Chant & Nikki Craske (eds.), New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003, pp. 142, 148.

¹⁸ Tobin, “Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina” [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 223-224.

¹⁹ R. W. Connell, “Men, Gender and the State”, in *Among Men: Moulding Masculinities*, Søren Ervø & Thomas Johansson (eds.), vol. 1, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003, p. 20.

ethnicity).²⁰ It is important to note that these three blocs of complicit masculinities can in reality intermesh and a person can in reality belong to more than one of these categories. In addition, we should not lose sight of the fact that this relationship between hegemonic masculinity and complicit masculinities is to be understood as an internal hegemony: it is a hierarchy among men only. There is, however, also an external hegemony, which relates to women and even the men who may be “lacking” in some way (that is to say, who belong to complicit masculinities) not only accept this structure that places them in an inferior position with respect to “greater men”, but also use it for external hegemony in relation to women.²¹

Another aspect that Connell, together with Messerschmidt, suggests should be considered when looking at hegemonic masculinity is the geography of masculinities.²² They suggest that “regional and local constructions of hegemonic masculinity are shaped by the articulation of these gender systems with global processes”.²³ In order to analyse how different masculinities are negotiated according to the context of interaction, they consider three levels of hegemony within masculinity—local, regional and global—which they define in the following manner:

1. Local: constructed in the arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities, as typically found in ethnographic and life-history research;
2. Regional: constructed at the level of the culture or the nation-state, as typically found in discursive, political, and demographic research; and

²⁰ Connell, “Men, Gender and the State”, in *Among Men: Moulding Masculinities*, Ervø & Johansson (eds.), vol. 1, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003, p. 20; R. W. Connell & James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept”, *Gender and Society*, 19, 6 (December 2005), p. 847.

²¹ Connell & Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, pp. 844-845.

²² Connell & Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, pp. 849-851.

²³ Connell & Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p. 849.

3. Global: constructed in transnational arenas such as world politics and transnational business and media, as studied in the emerging research on masculinities and globalization.²⁴

These three categories will be used for the analysis both of the masculinity represented in *Los Supermachos* and that represented in Franco-Belgian comics as Latin American men are measured up against men from the US and Europe. Of particular interest, of course, is the fact that Rius's supermales constantly compare themselves to Superman, as well as the Chahutas' chief Tèpamalroulé's choice for a husband.

In relation to Tèpamalroulé's preference, Frantz Fanon's discussion of unions between black women and white men, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, is particularly relevant. He opens the chapter that concerns itself with unions between black women and white men by referring to *Je suis Martiniquaise*, a novel by Mayotte Capécia.²⁵ Fanon uses this novel—which he condemns throughout his analysis—as a source of examples of the inequality involved in a relationship between a black woman and a white man. For instance, he quotes and comments on Capécia's novel in the following way, to draw his conclusions on the dynamics of black female-white male relationships in the French Antilles:

“All I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin, and that I loved him.” It is not difficult to see that a rearrangement of these elements in their proper hierarchy would produce something of this order: “I loved him because he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin”.²⁶

Beyond his criticism of Capécia's novel, however, Fanon recognises that a sense of needing to “whiten the race, save the race” is omnipresent in the French Antilles and that Capécia's perspective is not an isolated case. Thus, he says that he has observed

²⁴ Connell & Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p. 849.

²⁵ Mayotte Capécia, *Je suis martiniquaise* [I am a Martinican Woman], Paris: Corrêa, 1948.

²⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, London: Pluto Press, 1967, pp. 42-43.

that “[i]t is essential to avoid falling back in the pit of niggerhood, and every woman in the Antilles, whether in a casual flirtation or in a serious affair, is determined to select the least black of the men.”²⁷ Distinguishing between two kinds of black women—the negress and the mulatto—Fanon suggests that when it comes to men, they both seek a white partner. In the first case, because it is her only concern to turn white and in the second case, because in addition to wanting to turn white, she is also concerned with the risk of “slipping back”.²⁸ In other words, Fanon draws our attention to the fact that a white partner is considered preferable for a woman of colour, because such a union will push her and the whole “race” up the social ladder. Fanon’s description of the dynamics of black/white and male/female relationships tie in neatly with hegemonic masculinity as in the white psyche black men are generally considered to have a stronger—terrifying, even—masculinity so that at the local, regional and global levels they remain less desirable sexual partners because of the advantages attached to having a sexual partner with a lighter skin colour.²⁹

Latin American Perspectives

In *Los Supermachos* we find that the main characters have a few obsessions: they repeatedly compare themselves to Superman, they repeatedly refer to the importance of the (1968) Olympics and they continuously remind each other that they need to show their *supermachismo* by stoically enduring all manner of ill-treatments on the part of government officials. Inodoro Pereyra, for his part, has different concerns: one of his obsessions is his nephew Serafín, who has brought shame to the Pereyra name by becoming a vegetarian. In this section I will begin by exploring the barely veiled associations between masculinity and meat consumption in *Inodoro Pereyra* and the

²⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 47.

²⁸ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 54-55.

²⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 141-209.

implications Serafín's culinary preferences have for the *gaucho*. I will then continue by unpacking the constructions of (superior) masculinity in *Los Supermachos* and how the supermachos relate to other men at a local level (in San Garabato) as well as at a global level in terms of their relationship with Superman and the importance given to the Olympics.

Though he seldom appears in *Inodoro Pereyra*, Serafín Pereyra—don Inodoro's nephew—is presented from his very first appearance as a source of shame for Inodoro and for the Pereyra in general. In fact, his entry into this series is preceded by the ominous announcement that “algo espantoso ha ocurrido en su familia” (a dreadful thing has occurred in your [Inodoro's] family). In order to maintain suspense, Fontanarrosa does not reveal what this dreadful thing is immediately. Instead, he shows us the horror that Inodoro's face registers when the news is whispered into his ear and how he is immediately moved to action. It is only after some delay that we find out what the dreadful news is: Serafín has become a vegetarian.³⁰ From then onwards, every time don Inodoro sees Serafín, or at the mere mention of his name, don Inodoro reminds us that Serafín has “un feo vicio” (an ugly vice)—vegetarianism—and that this lifestyle has made him “la vergüenza de los Pereyra”: the shame of the Pereyra.³¹

Serafín is not the only one in the Pereyra family who has “an ugly vice”. There is also don Inodoro's cousin, Gentilicio, whom don Inodoro calls a “travestí” (a cross-

³⁰ Fontanarrosa, “El rumiante primigenio” [The Original Ruminant] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 13), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 447.

³¹ Fontanarrosa, “Un feo vicio” [An Ugly Vice] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 20), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 645.

dresser) because he is a werewolf.³² Though the terms “homosexual” and “travesti” stopped being interchangeable from a “scientific” viewpoint around the mid-twentieth century, they continued being interchangeable in popular use and, in the same way that Gentilicio’s “ugly vice” (of being a werewolf) is a metaphor for his being a “travesti”, in Serafín’s case, it seems that the “ugly vice” (of being a vegetarian) is used as a metaphor for homosexuality.³³ The two most explicit examples of this association between vegetarianism and homosexuality is to be found in the words, uttered by don Inodoro: “[s]i hasta se habla de permitir el casamiento entre vegetarianos!” (they even talk of allowing vegetarian marriage!) and “No como lenteja. No desfilo en ninguna Jornada de Orgullo Vegetariano” (I don’t eat lentils. I don’t march in any Vegetarian Pride Parade).³⁴ In addition, Serafín is often nicknamed “el raro” (the queer one) and don Inodoro’s words regarding vegetarianism are pregnant with meaning. He calls it “¡(...) ese feo vicio que no me atrevo ni a mencionar!” (this ugly vice I dare not even mention!).³⁵ This description of vegetarianism refers directly to the *pecado nefando* (the nefarious sin), a euphemism used to signify the act of sodomy, given that the dictionary of Real Academia Española defines *nefando* as: “Indigno, torpe, *de que no se puede hablar sin repugnancia u horror*” (beneath one’s dignity, clumsy, *of which one cannot speak without revulsion or horror*).³⁶ From the sin of which one cannot speak to the vice that cannot be mentioned, there is only a small step. Why does Fontanarrosa use

³² Fontanarrosa, “Un feo vicio” [An Ugly Vice] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 13), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 436.

³³ Lewis, *Crossing Sex and Gender in Latin America*, pp. 227-229.

³⁴ Fontanarrosa, “Un feo vicio” [An Ugly Vice] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 20), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 645; Fontanarrosa & Oscar Salas, “Loros a la carga” [Parrots Charging], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 32, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 66/3.

³⁵ Fontanarrosa, “Una empanada salteña” [A *Salteña Empanada*], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 29, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 100.

³⁶ “Nefando”, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, XXII ed., Real Academia Española, 2001, <http://www.rae.es/rae.html> (26/07/2010), my emphasis.

vegetarianism as a metaphor for homosexuality and why is it generally don Inodoro's relatives who have "ugly vices"?

I have already mentioned the degree of recognition that *Inodoro Pereyra* and Fontanarrosa have attained in Argentina in the introduction. In a later chapter ("De qui se moque-t-on?") I will discuss the extent of Inodoro Pereyra's elevation to become an Argentinean national icon. For now, suffice to say that, as shown in the first chapter, in the case of *Inodoro Pereyra*, the hero has at least a double symbolic value, as a comic character whom we can identify as he moves across the page, but also as a *gaucho* who carries the weight of an Argentinean national icon on his shoulders. This mythical value is recognised as much within the series as without, and it is with great self-importance that Inodoro himself declares "[d]entro de 200 años, las enciclopedías [sic] solo [sic] dirán: 'Pereyra, Inodoro. m. Gaucho emblemático'" (within 200 years, encyclopaedias will only say: "Pereyra, Inodoro. m. Iconic *gaucho*").³⁷ In Fontanarrosa's work, the same degree of importance is given to cattle. For instance, a police officer accepts a cow's testimony in favour of Inodoro Pereyra based on the fact that "el ganado bovino nos da su cuero, su leche, su carne... y su sinceridá [sic]" (cattle give us their leather, their milk, their meat... and their sincerity) and therefore concludes that Inodoro Pereyra must be innocent.³⁸ Inodoro Pereyra's attitude towards cattle is practically the same as the police officer's and the cows themselves demand to be more present in the nativity set because they consider

³⁷ Fontanarrosa, "El mate del estribo" [The *Mate* of the Stirrup], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 21, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 1996, p. 24.

³⁸ Fontanarrosa, "¡No toquen a Pereyra!" [Don't touch Pereyra!] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 578.

that Argentina is “un país de vacas” (a country of cows).³⁹ Furthermore, given the association between the figure of the *gaucho* and argentineanness and Inodoro Pereyra’s double iconic value, it is unsurprising that there is an *asador* (a barbecue restaurant) named after Fontanarrosa.⁴⁰ Though the *asador* has framed images of more than just the characters from *Inodoro Pereyra*, it is fair to say that the restaurant’s creation is due to the success of *Inodoro Pereyra*, where Fontanarrosa celebrates Argentineanness more than in his other series, and don Inodoro certainly occupies an important place in the decoration of the restaurant.

As regards the association between the consumption of red meat and masculinity, it is an association that is by no means limited to the Argentinean context. For instance, one can refer to the Burger King advertisement for the Texas double Whopper “I am man”, which was also released in Spain at the end of 2006 as “soy un hombre”.⁴¹ In this advertisement the protagonist claims his right to a Texas double whopper based on his being a man and there are several demonstrations of physical strength, such as the ability of a single man to pull a truck as several men chant “I am man”.⁴² The message can be summarised by a few of the lyrics from the jingle:

I am man, hear me roar [...] I’m way too hungry to settle for chick food. [...] Yes, I’m a guy, I’ll admit I’ve been fed quiche, wave tofu bye-bye [...] I will eat this meat [...] I am hungry, I am incorrigible, I am man!⁴³

³⁹ Fontanarrosa, “País de vacas” [Land of Cows] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 13), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 437; Fontanarrosa, “El espíritu de la empanada” [The Spirit of the *Empanada*], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 28, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 118.

⁴⁰ Daniel Samper Pizano, “El Negro Fontanarrosa, ¿primer santo argentino?” [*El Negro Fontanarrosa, First Argentinean Saint?*], *El Tiempo*, 06/07/2007, <http://www.casamerica.es/casa-de-america-virtual/arte-y-exposiciones/articulos-y-noticias/el-negro-fontanarrosa-primer-santo-argentino>.

⁴¹ The videos can be seen on YouTube: Uncredited (dir.) *I Am Man-Burger King Commercial* [1min01sec] Available: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZWCdW_WaqU (25/06/2012); Uncredited (dir.) *Burger King - Come como un hombre* [Eat Like a Man], 2006 [1min01sec] Available: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6MCKSQASXE> (19/08/2010).

⁴² Uncredited (dir.) *I Am Man-Burger King Commercial*.

⁴³ Uncredited (dir.) *I Am Man-Burger King Commercial*.

And the slogan concludes “eat like a man, man!”⁴⁴ Another example is in the form of a product named Super Macho, a “formula de alta potencia con glándula de toro” (high potency formula with bovine glandular concentrate), quite possibly a euphemism for a dietary supplement that is supposed to enhance sexual potency in men.⁴⁵ The last example is the fundraising campaign conducted in Australia to fight against prostate cancer in 2010. It involved organising barbecues and in the advertising video not once was a woman shown “manning” the grill. Not only is it solely the man’s responsibility to “man” the grill in this video, but the women also sit and watch as a man serves the meal.⁴⁶ These three different examples show that the link between red meat, barbecue, masculinity and physical strength is one that is not limited to Argentina.

Inodoro Pereyra has been declared, in the comic itself, “lo más parecido (...) al ser nacional” (the one who resembles the national being the most) and has even been referred to as a “world heritage” figure.⁴⁷ Therefore, being a typical *gaucho* and an Argentinean icon, Inodoro can only value beef as an expression of *lo gauchesco*, Argentineanness, manliness and nationhood. For this reason, don Inodoro can only be offended by Serafín’s culinary preferences, as they are contrary to this entire essentialised and regimented symbolic system. In fact, for don Inodoro, the only food item that counts as meat, or non-vegetable, is beef and when he finds out about Serafín’s “desviación oral” (oral deviation), he does not worry about other types of

⁴⁴ Uncredited (dir.) *I Am Man-Burger King Commercial*.

⁴⁵ DLC Laboratories Inc., “DLC Laboratories: Vita Kahuama and Super Macho”, <http://www.dlclabs.com/English/VK%20SM.htm> (13/07/2012).

⁴⁶ Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, “Everyday Hero: The Difference is You! Host a Barbecue for Prostate Cancer”, <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/event/BBQ4prostate> (19/08/2010).

⁴⁷ Fontanarrosa, “El ser nacional” [The National Being] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, 313/1; Fontanarrosa, “Patrimonio de la humanidad” [World Heritage] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 559.

meat. Rather, he goes straight to the point when he asks his nephew: “¿Qué tenés contra las vacas, gurí?” (What do you have against cows, boy?).⁴⁸

Now that the problems that Serafín’s vegetarianism pose for don Inodoro are clear, I would like to focus more on the lack of masculinity associated with vegetarianism and the role of kinship as a representative of the nation in this series. We have already seen the extent to which red meat is associated with physical strength but it is also interesting to note here that the term “vegetal” (vegetable) is used, amongst other things, to refer to people who have few to no motor skills. Thus, one might suppose that the exclusive consumption of vegetables would have the opposite effect to that of meat consumption. That is to say, instead of being a source of energy, vegetables are perceived as a source of weakness and in fact, this strong dichotomy between meat-strength and vegetable-weakness (and even vegetable-death) is very much present in the series. Hence, when Inodoro obtains a short-lived repentance from Serafín, the latter justifies his choices by saying that they were made in “un momento de debilidad [sic]” (a moment of weakness), to which Inodoro responds with “¿Y cómo no va a estar débil si come esas porquerías!” (How could you not be weak when you eat this junk!).⁴⁹ In fact, Inodoro sees vegetables and fish—that is to say, all that is not beef—as a veritable health hazard, ranging from poison to hard drug. For instance, when Serafín sends him vegetable empanadas, don Inodoro—together with Mendieta—treats it as an attack or speaks of the risks of becoming addicted to soya and

⁴⁸ Fontanarrosa, “Un feo vicio” [An Ugly Vice] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 20), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 645; Fontanarrosa, “El rumiante primigenio” [The Original Ruminant] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 13), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 447.

⁴⁹ Fontanarrosa, “El rumiante primigenio” [The Original Ruminant] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 13), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 447.

marihuana.⁵⁰ Vegetarianism, then, in the eyes of Inodoro Pereyra not only presents a risk for the vegetarian but could also infect those around him or her and even the entire nation. This idea is strongly expressed in don Inodoro's words: "¡Se empieza por la lechuga y se termina en la marihuana! Recuerde: 'La droga es el opio de los pueblos'" (It all starts with lettuce and you end up with marihuana! Remember: "Drugs are the opium of the people").⁵¹ In addition, this black and white vision of the vegetarian body as weak and the carnivorous body as strong clearly harks back to the association of homosexuality with passivity. A vegetarian can be interpreted, then, as someone who has no physical strength and is more passive, i.e., a homosexual.

Turning to the question of the family, it is no accident that in the same episode in which he reacts to vegetables as if they might be poison, Inodoro leaves with the words "ay Patria mía" (oh my Fatherland) after seeing the suspected culprit, Serafín.⁵² In essentialised and symbolic terms, a male family member (and a citizen of the fatherland) who rejects meat also denies the fatherland, for several reasons. First, he does not support the local industry; secondly he renounces his role of *macho*; and third, in doing so he denies the patriarchal organisation of the family and of the nation itself. At first, seeing Serafín from a distance, clearly jumping quite high, Inodoro and Mendieta believe Serafín is dancing malambo (a vigorous traditional Argentinean dance) and think that he may have finally decided to embrace Argentineanness (since vegetarianism-cum-homosexuality is not the Argentinean way). To don Inodoro's

⁵⁰ Fontanarrosa, "Una empanada salteña" [A *Salteña Empanada*], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 29, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 101; Fontanarrosa, "El espíritu de la empanada" [The Spirit of the *Empanada*], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 28, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 117; Fontanarrosa, "Una admiradora de la cocina criolla" [An Admirer of the National Cuisine], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 23, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, p. 89.

⁵¹ Fontanarrosa, "El espíritu de la empanada" [The Spirit of the *Empanada*], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 28, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 117.

⁵² Fontanarrosa, "Una admiradora de la cocina criolla" [An Admirer of the National Cuisine], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 23, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 91/5.

great disappointment, as he approaches he finds out that Serafín is in fact playing hopscotch.⁵³ If dancing malambo might have redeemed Serafín, hopscotch—though a possible allusion to the Argentine Julio Cortázar’s well-known novel *Rayuela* (Hopscotch)—is a child’s game and a source of despair for Inodoro as his nephew yet again turns his back against a strong expression of Argentineanness. It is, no doubt, because of the patriarchal order as well that Inodoro himself was ill-treated by his father when he did not eat the *asado*. Here is how don Inodoro recounts it: “¡Mi Tata me enseñó a valorar la carne roja! Si no comía el asáu... [sic] ¡roja me dejaba la carne del traste a los guascazos!” (My father taught me to value red meat! If I didn’t eat the *asado* he whipped me on the backside until my flesh was red!).⁵⁴ Besides the pun on “red meat” to refer to beef as well as the state of don Inodoro’s backside after a beating, what catches my attention in these two sentences is the fact that due to his smaller appetite, don Inodoro found himself in a position that was inferior to his father’s. And in order to teach Inodoro to value red meat, his father imposed his authority brutally enough to leave red marks on Inodoro’s skin. It is also interesting to note that *guasca* can mean either “whip” or “penis”. Given Fontanarrosa’s love of multilayered puns, it is quite possible that Inodoro is referring to more than just a whipping when he talks of *guascazos*. Whether Fontanarrosa deliberately included a pun or not, it is clear that in the case of Inodoro’s father, it was not simply a matter of symbolically asserting his hegemonic masculinity over Inodoro by “manning” the grill, but more so a matter of asserting his authority in a very brutal and physical manner.⁵⁵

⁵³ Fontanarrosa, “Una admiradora de la cocina criolla” [An Admirer of the National Cuisine], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 23, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, p. 91.

⁵⁴ Fontanarrosa, “Un feo vicio” [An Ugly Vice] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 20), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 645.

⁵⁵ Tobin, “Todo mito gauchesco que camina va a parar al asador porteño: el asado y la identidad nacional argentina” [All Gaucho Myths that Walk End up in the *porteño* Barbecue: The Barbecue and

Given that the question of consuming meat or not has very serious implications in a symbolic sense—as we have seen, vegetables are presented as a poison or a drug that can affect the entire population—it is quite clear why don Inodoro reacts so strongly to the mere mention of vegetables or Serafín's name and why he repeatedly tries to convert him back to meat consumption. Indeed, Serafín's way of life goes against everything that Inodoro represents—an iconic, meat-eating, *macho gaucha*—and he will not have his name tainted with vegetarianism. Yet, it is very hard not to laugh at don Inodoro's entrenched vegetarianophobia and homophobia.

Like Inodoro Pereyra, the men who identify themselves as supermachos are the main characters of the series to which they belong and they place a great degree of importance on asserting their strong masculinity. While don Inodoro rejects Serafín's vegetarianism, he does not pay much attention to those who are not family members and is seldom interested in what happens outside of Argentina. In other words, don Inodoro's masculinity is concerned more with the regional and local masculinity than with a global masculinity. The supermachos, on the other hand, are greatly concerned not only with their own immediate circles (how they relate to the other *Garabatenses* and fellow Mexican citizens) but also with the rest of the world, in particular, with the US. In fact, in the early issues of *Los Supermachos* the characters insist a great deal on the fact of being supermales, repeatedly refer to Superman and remind us of the importance of the 1968 Olympics for Mexico.

Argentinean National Identity], in *Delirios de grandeza: los mitos argentinos: memoria, identidad, cultura*, Pons & Soria (eds.), trans. Pascuzzi, Primera ed., Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2005, pp. 223-224.

However, the *supermachos*, from the point of view of their physique, have nothing in common with Superman. For instance, as early as in the second issue of the series, Chón, Calzónzin and don Lucas bring up Superman and compare themselves to him. These supermachos have been incarcerated and don Lucas seeks a way to escape. Chón suggests that this would only be possible if don Lucas were Superman, to which don Lucas responds “¿Y por qué no? ¿A poco nomás en las historietas gringas hay hombres juertes [sic]?” (And why not? Do you think US comics are the only ones with strong men?).⁵⁶ Already the tone of the series is set: the supermachos compare themselves with US comic characters, with a very special interest in Superman. In the example from the second episode of *Los Supermachos*, don Lucas claims to be as strong as the strong men of US comics. Given that Superman is the strong man of US comics par excellence, and he is the one who is constantly referred to in *Los Supermachos*, it is worthwhile taking some time to compare Don Lucas and Superman in this particular situation. Though don Lucas claims to have a lot of physical strength, he has no visible muscles, while Superman is known to have bulky muscles. Moreover, though don Lucas is in a very active position, flexing his non-existent muscles, in this particular frame, this is an unusual position for him and he soon adopts a more passive position, first kneeling and sitting down to recover (after hitting his head against the prison walls), then leaning against the wall.⁵⁷ And yet, it would appear that to Chón, even standing up is too active a position. Indeed, in the frame where don Lucas is leaning against the wall, he is the only one who is standing and Chón reproaches him for not being a good *supermacho* because he refuses to

⁵⁶ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 32/3-6.

⁵⁷ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 32/6 & 33.

sleep without having dinner first.⁵⁸ To understand this seemingly odd reproach, it is necessary to know what is the essence of a *supermacho*, or what I term *supermachismo*.

If we think about the meaning of the word “supermacho”, we would suppose that the supermachos are not just more masculine than men by virtue of their “maleness”, as opposed to “manhood”, but that they are also even *more* masculine than Superman as they are supermales. Thus, in the hierarchy of masculinity, supermales would be at the top (hegemonic masculinity), followed by superman, males, and then men. In other words, when it comes to the term *supermachos*, it would appear that we are dealing with super-superlatives, or even hyperlatives. However, as we have already seen, the figure of the *supermacho* and that of Superman are polar opposites and *supermachismo* does not concern itself with physical strength. As Chón puts it: “Ese Supermán es solo [sic] pura envoltura; no piensa...” (That Superman is purely wrapping; he doesn’t think...).⁵⁹ Rather than physical strength, the characteristic trait of *supermachismo* that the supermachos emphasise the most is the stoic endurance of hardships. The character who best explains the sometimes curious attitude adopted by the *Garabatenses* is Calzónzin, in a conversation with an outsider:

¿No se acuerda usted [sic] del señor Cuauhtémoc...? / ¡Ese era un macho a todo dar!
/ ¡Ese jué [sic] nuestro mero héroe...! / ¡Y pa’ honrarlo nosotros nos portamos
como supermachos! ¡No tenemos qué comer, pero nos aguantámos [sic]! / ...Nos
amuelan los caciques, la policía, los riquillos... ¡pero nos aguantamos!

(Don’t you remember Mr Cuauhtémoc...? / Now that was a real male! / He was
our very hero...! / And to honour him we behave like supermales! We don’t have

⁵⁸ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 33/8.

⁵⁹ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato” (*Los Supermachos* 13), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 52/7.

food, but we endure it! / ...We are pestered by the despots, by the police, by the rich... but we endure it!)

⁶⁰

Calzónzin's explanation is the key to beginning to understand *supermacho* thought.

His very clear reference to Cuauhtémoc, known as the young grandfather gives us a clear indication of the *Garabatense* concepts of masculinity: it is defined by the ability to endure all hardships.

Out of the three types of complicit masculinities described by Connell, the one that I find most interesting and relevant for discussing the case of the supermachos is protest masculinity. Connell defines this masculinity as:

a pattern of masculinity constructed in local working class settings, sometimes among ethnically marginalized men, which embodies the claim to power typical of regional hegemonic masculinities in western countries, but which lacks the economic resources and institutional authority that underpins the regional and global patterns.⁶¹

In this definition, the possibility of intermeshing between different types of complicit masculinities mentioned earlier in the chapter is already occurring since it includes elements of both class and race. It is also a description that aptly fits the *supermachos*. These men all belong to the lower, mostly unemployed class and they are all, from a very early episode, victims of ethnic marginalisation, for the benefit of a tourist.⁶² While these supermachos have no economic or political power they latch on to the fact of being male and honouring a national hero as a consolation.

Another recurring theme in *Los Supermachos* is the need to organise the Olympics. This is perhaps not surprising since *Los Supermachos* was first published in 1965 and the Olympics took place in 1968. However, beyond the temporal coincidence of the

⁶⁰ Rius, "Los Supermachos de San Garabato" (*Los Supermachos* 11), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 2, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2009, 49/3-7.

⁶¹ Connell & Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity", pp. 847-848.

⁶² Rius, "Los Supermachos" (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, *passim*.

organisation of the Olympic games and the creation of *Los Supermachos*, there is another very important dimension to this ongoing concern: it addresses the PRI model of masculinity. The PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) was the party in power at the time. We know that the Olympics are an international event during which countries project an image to the rest of the world. According to Claire and Keith Brewster, the 1968 Olympics were seen as a way for Mexico “to prove itself on the international arena”.⁶³ While acutely aware of the fact that Mexico was showing and proving herself to the world with the Olympics, the PRI also faced serious issues in the form of protesting students at that time. The author and journalist Elena Poniatowska sums up very well the sense of spectacle—good and bad—in the lead-up to the 1968 Olympics:

In 1968, the government’s terror continued to rise till it reached a boiling point. *The eyes of the world, it was said, were upon us. What kind of spectacle were we creating?* Three billion pesos had been invested in the Olympics; the problems in the countryside, the frightening public debt, the labour problem, the housing problem, all had been put to one side so that *Mexico could be transformed into a showcase*.⁶⁴

In the end the Olympics can be summed up, quite simply, as a competition between countries, based on the physical strength displayed by each of the athletes. We can thus establish a parallel between the rite of passage to masculinity and the challenge the Olympics represented for Mexico, since nation is synonymous with *machismo*, as we saw earlier. In fact, the very sense of symbolically reaching an adult stage is discussed in the twenty-third episode of *Los Supermachos*, an episode dedicated to a race organised exclusively for the *men* of San Garabato in the lead up to the

⁶³ Claire Brewster & Keith Brewster, “Mexico City 1968: Sombreros and Skyscrapers”, in *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*, Alan Tomlinson & Christopher Young (eds.) State University of New York Press, 2006, p. 107.

⁶⁴ Elena Poniatowska, “The Student Movement of 1968”, in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Gilbert M. Joseph & Timothy J. Henderson (eds.), Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 563-564 (my emphasis).

Olympics.⁶⁵ In a conversation between Chón, his brother Gedeón and another *Garabatense* called Olegario, we find comments on the race, which are very interesting in relation to the topic of national autonomy. There, Chón and Olegario take some time to understand the name of the race, *Gran Carrera de la independencia* (great independence race). Instead of interpreting this name as meaning “great national race”, they perceive it as a promise of an independence that is still to come. In other words, to Chón and Olegario, Mexico is not yet independent, despite the fact that it has been officially independent since 1810, and the race will come after the independence. The specifics of this independence are also made quite clear: for Olegario, running for independence equates to “correr a los gringos” (chasing the US citizens).⁶⁶

However, while the Olympics were officially presented as a way for Mexico to prove itself to the world, according to Rius, it was simply a case of bread and circuses.⁶⁷ It is worth paying some attention to what is said about sports and the Olympics in the conversations between the *Garabatenses* in episode 23, as the opinions expressed clearly suggest that Rius did not consider the Olympic preoccupations of the political leaders as very useful to the people. On the very cover of issue 23, Calzónzin declares: “lo importante no es comer, sino organizar las olimpiadas” (the important thing is not to eat, but to organise the Olympics).⁶⁸ This comment suggests two ideas that both correspond to Poniatowska’s report of the situation in 1968 Mexico. First, it

⁶⁵ Though there is no date on the cover of issue 23, it was definitely published prior to the Olympics as issue 22 was published in 1966 and issue 66 was published in March 1967.

⁶⁶ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato de las Tunas, etc.” (*Los Supermachos* 23), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 123/6.

⁶⁷ Brewster & Brewster, “Mexico City 1968: Sombreros and Skyscrapers”, in *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*, Tomlinson & Young (eds.) State University of New York Press, 2006, p. 107.

⁶⁸ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato de las Tunas, etc.” (*Los Supermachos* 23), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, p. 117.

suggests that San Garabato is hungry, and secondly, it suggests that the priority is not well-being, but projecting a good image to the world. In addition, besides hunger in itself, Calzónzin's words appear to be a reference to the phrase "bread and circuses". Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, it seems that to Rius the Olympics were a kind of circus in order to distract the Mexican people, and thus better control them, an idea that is expressed more strongly in issue 44, when the Spanish barman Don Fiacro suggests that Don Perpetuo (the mayor) uses bread and circuses in order to appease the people. When Don Perpetuo thinks of using a sports event as a contemporary and Mexican version of the circus, Don Fiacro encourages him: "¡Claro: las olimpiadas y los campeonatos de fut sirven pa que la gente no piense..!" (Of course!: The Olympics and football championships are there to stop people from thinking!).⁶⁹ If we return once more to episode 23 of *Los Supermachos*—the one with the race—we can now see how the preoccupation with food stands out in it. While Chón is quite taken with the idea of what the Olympics will do for Mexico, the pharmacist Don Lucas is less optimistic and insists on expressing his concern with the lack of food. Within the space of three frames, Don Lucas refers to food twice and when Chón suggests that the Olympics will bring prestige, Don Lucas asks "¿... y desde cuándo el prestigio se come?" (... and since when is prestige edible?).⁷⁰ Thus, we can say that what is most important for Don Lucas is not the circus (Chón's prestige), but the bread.

Given the importance of the 1968 Olympics for Mexico in official discourse, it becomes clear why Rius faced some trouble with censorship.⁷¹ Not only did he make

⁶⁹ Rius, "Los Supermachos de San Garabato" (*Los Supermachos* 44), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 2, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2009, pp. 199-200.

⁷⁰ Rius, "Los Supermachos de San Garabato de las Tunas, etc." (*Los Supermachos* 23), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 128/3-5.

⁷¹ Rius, "Mis Supermachos" [My Supermachos], in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 7 & 3.

fun of the Olympics, but he also made his characters say that Mexico was a dependency of the US. He thus placed the US in the position of the *chingón*, the foreign figure to which the *malinchistas* sell out, all this in the context of strong discontent as demonstrated by the student protests. However, the Olympics were only one way in which Rius criticised the government in his series. Another and much more important tool he used to criticise the government was *supermachismo* itself. If we go back to the recurring comparison to Superman, it is important to remember that, though Superman recently officially rejected his affiliation with the US in order to enable the whole world to identify with him, he remains nonetheless an important US national icon.⁷² And the insistence of the *supermachos* in repeatedly comparing themselves with Superman can be read as a wish to have the status of Mexican national icons, a wish to be the Mexican equivalent of Superman. Even don Inodoro, who seldom concerns himself with what may be happening outside of his Pampas or of Argentina, makes a passing reference to Superman when the authorities try to make him more “realistic” by turning him into Supereyra. Inodoro comments on the situation ironically by suggesting a contract with a scriptwriter who specialises in realistic stories, though his superhero clothes are clearly anything but realistic.⁷³ However, if don Inodoro’s comment can be seen as a jibe at the official concerns with presenting the national being under a positive light, in *Los Supermachos* there is more to these recurring references to Superman. In the latter series there is an insistence on

⁷² Matt Moore, “Supermán renuncia a ciudadanía estadounidense” [Superman Renounces US Citizenship], *Yahoo! Noticias en español*, 29/04/2011, <http://es-us.noticias.yahoo.com/superman%20renuncia-ciudadan%20estadounidense-053614361.html>; Dareh Gregorian, “Superman Renounces US Citizenship”, *New York Post*, 28/04/2011, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/national/superman_renounces_us_citizenship_n5ZdXkQIWE7y5EoU6xTZQI; Tony Pierce, “Superman Renounces U.S. Citizenship in Latest Issue of *Action Comics*”, *Los Angeles Times*, 28/04/2011, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2011/04/superman-citizenship-renounced-in-new-comic.html>.

⁷³ Fontanarrosa, “El gaucho, ese símbolo” [The *Gaucho*, that Symbol] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 316.

the fact that they are *better* than Superman: they are also openly rejecting US domination in Mexico.

As Mexicans, the supermachos propose a different model of masculinity by trying to emulate Cuauhtémoc. However, despite the characters' declared intention of behaving like Cuauhtémoc, there is a great irony in Rius's comic. There is in reality a great difference between the young grandfather's behaviour and that of the *supermachos*. Cuauhtémoc is known for remaining stoic while he was being tortured but he was not a passive man who accepted anything. As the plaque that accompanies the bust raised in his honour in the Zócalo states: "He distinguished himself as leader of the resistance and as military leader" (see Figure 4). So, in Cuauhtémoc's case, his stoicism was a way of not allowing Cortés to get the better of him and of showing great mental resilience when he was in a position where he could not defend himself physically. On the other hand, the supermachos adhere completely to the system they jeer at. Indeed, does not adopting a protest masculinity place the supermachos somewhere within the system of hegemonic masculinity? Is the masculinity they claim not a complicit masculinity? After all, the figure of the stoic *macho* was one that was promoted by the PRI itself. Further to the point, we can see that though the supermachos nominally reject the influence of the US in Mexico and claim to be as strong as Superman, in their daily life in San Garabato, more than enduring heroically, they have reached a point of passivity where they accept anything and everything in the name of *supermachismo*. Any slightly rebellious behaviour is branded as antipatriotic in San Garabato. For instance, Don Fito is a *Garabatense* peasant who, in the thirteenth episode of the series, complains about the lack of land despite the agrarian reforms that began with the Mexican revolution. In response to

his grievances, Don Lucas reminds him that his duty as a *Garabatense*—and hence as a *supermacho*—is to be patriotic and that “¡hay que aguantarse de todas todas!” (we must put up with absolutely everything!).⁷⁴

With this conversation between Don Fito and Don Lucas, Rius not only shows the peasants’ complaints and another face of what he calls not the (Mexican) revolution, but “la robolución” (a robbery of a revolution), but he also shows what a patriotic and virtuous *supermacho* behaviour entails. However, we might wonder if our self-proclaimed *cuauhtémiquistas* have not in fact become inadvertent *malinchistas*. Though they certainly do not willingly sell out to foreigners to betray Mexico, the absolute passivity the supermachos display is alarmingly reminiscent of the open body and the passivity associated with it. The conversation between Don Lucas and Don Fito can therefore easily be read as a denunciation of the situation in Mexico, a critique of the lack of reaction on the part of the people and an incitement to rebellion. What is more, in becoming extremely passive and turning into open bodies, the men who aspire to an extreme form of masculinity have, paradoxically, adopted an attitude associated with the figure of a woman (la Malinche).

What Rius did with his *supermachos*, then, is to take hegemonic masculinity and turn it on its head, placing the supermachos on top. This reversal, however, is not to be taken literally. It is an irony on the part of Rius to say that in reality it is still hegemonic masculinity that prevails. For the *Supermachos*, it is still true that they “are pestered by despots, by the police, by the rich... but [they] endure it”.⁷⁵ The very

⁷⁴ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato” (*Los Supermachos* 13), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 50-52.

⁷⁵ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato” (*Los Supermachos* 11), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 2, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2009, 49/7.

title of the series is thus to be read as ironic, a fact that is reflected in the change of title, after Rius broke his contract with his publisher. Though the “new” series he created initially retained the original characters from *Los Supermachos* and remained essentially the same in the first two episodes, it was renamed *Los agachados* (the stooped ones), which, according to Rius is a less ironic way of describing the same situation, a reference to the attitude of Mexicans who were “agachados ante el poder” (stooped, or crouching down, in the face of power).⁷⁶

While Rius ironises on the power exerted by the US in Mexico, his characters continue to be in awe of the northern neighbour. Thus, although *Garabatenses* express pride in being supermachos in order to make fun of the *machista* ideology of the PRI, they willingly compare themselves to Superman and sometimes they even express the desire to be like him. In particular, it is interesting to note that the hero of the series, Calzónzin—as well as his cousin—sometimes takes himself for Superman. Both characters are ridiculed: Calzónzin is told he looks like Tarzan and his cousin literally falls flat on his face every time he attempts to fly.⁷⁷ Calzónzin displays a similar attitude in an exchange with Chón. To the latter’s question about why he would like to speak English, Calzónzin responds with a rhetorical question: “¿Pos en qué país cree que vivimos?” (Well what country do you think we live in?).⁷⁸ The *supermachos*’ obsession with Superman and Calzónzin’s comment about language both point to the paradoxical importance of the US, in a comic which sought to

⁷⁶ H.G., “Prologuín” [Little Prologue], in *Los agachados de Rius: selección de la gran historieta de los años setentas*, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 5 & 6; Rius, interview. It is important to note that *Los Agachados* later became a series in its own right, rather than remaining an undercover *Los Supermachos* (Rius, *Rius para principiantes*, p. 161).

⁷⁷ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato de las Tunas, etc.” (*Los Supermachos* 23), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 136/4; Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato, Cuc.” (*Los Supermachos* 29), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, pp. 198-201.

⁷⁸ Rius, “Los Supermachos de San Garabato” (*Los Supermachos* 40 1/2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 2, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2009, cover (p. 145).

encourage readers to value the local. Despite this paradox, by using irony, Rius still put in doubt the value of the model of masculinity promoted by the PRI, as well as the tendency to accept the government's bad actions in the context of these Olympic preparations. Similarly, though Fontanarrosa's Inodoro Pereyra stands for the very "essence" of Argentineanness, Fontanarrosa used his series to comment ironically on the very idea that there might be a *ser nacional*, an embodiment of an entire nation. Therefore, while he exposed the patriarchal ideology of his country and made his hero an indubitably heterosexual, *macho*, homophobic *gaucho*, Serafín's presence in Inodoro's family destabilises this model and Inodoro's own excessive attitude renders him laughable.

Franco-Belgian Perspectives

While Rius and Fontanarrosa mock the patriarchal model in their respective works, neither of them denies the fact that this model exists. Inodoro Pereyra's manhood is not to be questioned, nor is that of the *supermachos*, though their idealised type of masculinity may fall under the category of complicit masculinities. The Franco-Belgian perspectives, as can be observed in *Baby Prinz* and *L'orchidée des Chahutas*, are at polar opposites with the Latin American perspectives explored so far in the sense that the ideal of a strong heterosexual male as representative of a country is not a model that is often realised in the Franco-Belgian albums I will now focus on.

Baby Prinz is an early album in the *Marsupilami* series and is one of the albums that were scripted by the ubiquitous Yann, an author who is also behind a number of scripts for *Spirou* (both the classic series and some *one-shots*), *Lucky Luke* and more

recently, the much talked about *Gringos Locos*.⁷⁹ The storyline of *Baby Prinz* is two-pronged, following on the one hand a slice of Baby Prinz's life, and on the other that of a very old marsupilami who is pining away in Chiquito's zoo. The character on which I wish to focus here is Baby Prinz. In an obvious allusion towards Haiti's own Papa Doc and Baby Doc, Baby Prinz is Papa Prinz's son and successor as Palombia's head of state and he has been occupying this position for the last thirteen years.⁸⁰ However, in Palombia, assassination attempts on the president are a traditional feature of the day of the anniversary of Papa Prinz's successful coup and rise to power. As a result, Baby Prinz's first appearance in the album, on the anniversary of Papa Prinz's coup is also his last one as head of state. A mere two pages after we see Baby Prinz for the first time, a revolution breaks out and the dictator has to flee in order to save his life.⁸¹ Yet, though it may be a tradition to make an attempt on the life of the president on that particular day, the military, who were preparing a coup, are caught by surprise when the Palombian people revolt and decide to depose the president. The reason for his deposition? His lack of masculinity.⁸²

Many clues suggest that Baby Prinz is not the most virile of men before this is stated explicitly in the album. First of all, and true to his name, *Baby Prinz* is presented as someone who thinks and behaves like a child, though he clearly has the body of a grown man. Before we even see Baby Prinz, his security employees refer to him as "[le] petit" (the little one) and complain about the marsupilami outfits they have to wear as uniforms because of Baby Prinz's immoderate love of soft toys.⁸³ A few frames are also more than sufficient to conclude that Baby Prinz's room is a nursery,

⁷⁹ Yann & Schwartz, *Gringos locos*, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2012.

⁸⁰ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, Marsupilami, vol. 5, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2010, 11, 14/4.

⁸¹ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, pp. 11 & 15.

⁸² Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, pp. 15-16.

⁸³ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 12/3.

littered with toys of all sorts as well many reiterations of the mother's womb: Baby Prinz likes to hide in objects such as a giant egg and a fake marsupilami nest.⁸⁴ Secondly, in a medium that relies so much on iconicity, Baby Prinz's choice of clothes suggests that he may be a homosexual: he wears a frilly baby pink outfit and admits to owning a satin bullet-proof vest—a rather soft fabric for a garment that ought to be very tough if it is to be effective.⁸⁵ Moreover, Baby Prinz bears a strong resemblance to the singer Prince known for his falsetto and various ruffled stage costumes. Furthermore, in terms of hegemonic masculinity, after we have been presented with a childish, weak and frightened Baby Prinz, the terms he uses to describe his own father—all suggesting great physical and even animal strength—only make Baby Prinz appear even lower on the scale of masculinity: Papa Prinz was a volcano, a stallion, a torrent, the Niagara, a condor while Baby Prinz is prompt to feel faint, such as when a condor leaves some droppings on him.⁸⁶ Baby Prinz is a physically and emotionally weak man.

“Quelle honte pour la Palombie ! Et en direct devant les caméras étrangères” (What a disgrace to Palombia! And live in front of foreign cameras too) exclaims a man in the crowd while a woman demands “un vrai macho !” (a real *macho*) and proclaims “dehors la chochette” (out with the sissy).⁸⁷ These words, uttered as the revolt explodes, are the first explicit suggestion that Baby Prinz might be a homosexual. They also suggest that *Marsupilami* has similar concerns and interests to the ones found in *Los Supermachos* and *Inodoro Pereyra* when it comes to the nation and masculinity. Like the Latin American comics, *Marsupilami* here presents the Latin

⁸⁴ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, pp. 13 & 16.

⁸⁵ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, passim & 13/2.

⁸⁶ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 13/5 – 15/2.

⁸⁷ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 15/5.

American people as giving much importance to a patriarchal system where the nation should be represented by a very masculine and heterosexual man: a real *macho*. Much like in the Mexican context, the Palombian men, or at least the country's leader, must (continually) prove himself as he faces coups—and the possibility of death—every year. Palombia also has in common with the Mexico of the lead-up to the Olympics a strong awareness of the image projected to the rest of the world. For the man in the crowd, having a “sissy” for a leader is a source of shame in itself, but having this lack of masculinity broadcast to the world makes matters considerably worse. The sense of shame expressed by this anonymous character is also, of course, reminiscent of the shame Inodoro Pereyra feels when faced with Serafín's vegetarianism and the weakness that he associates with this choice.

An important function of the television broadcast is that it brings an international dimension to the masculinity, or lack thereof, of the Palombian leader: as a representative of the nation, when he compares negatively with other men in other countries on the scale of masculinity, he brings the entire nation down. In other words, Baby Prinz and Palombians do not belong in the category of hegemonic masculinity on a global level. In the *Marsupilami* series, Baby Prinz is certainly not the only leader whose strong heterosexual masculinity is either questionable or entirely absent. Though I do not have the space to look at Général Pochero's case in detail here, it is worth noting that in the penultimate *Marsupilami* album (*Sur la piste du marsupilami*, based on the film adaptation of *Marsupilami* also titled *Sur la piste du marsupilami*) the head of state (Pochero) initially appears to embody a strong masculinity but later proves, not only to be a weepy and weak man in the face of

adversity, but also to be a very talented singer and cross-dresser.⁸⁸ It is not long before Pochero is overthrown by the botanist Hermoso (literally, “handsome”). This old man, having found a flower that enables him to become “jeune et beau” (young and handsome, his motto) again, makes a great display of his young and powerful masculinity, surrounding himself with curvy women in skimpy clothes.⁸⁹ Interestingly, however, Pochero’s talent for cross-dressing and singing enables him to regain favour with his men, who appear to ask for his reinstatement.⁹⁰ It would seem, then, that they choose a man whose recent performance is a total failure in terms of giving a spectacle of masculinity over Hermoso’s strong heterosexual image, a rather unexpected turn of events. Could it be that deep down Palombians *like* their leaders to be effeminate and that they protest too much in their demands for a *macho macho*? The fact that ultimately Hermoso does not fulfil this ideal either (he is really an old man and eventually becomes a baby) does not contradict this possibility.⁹¹

Another Latin American head of state whose position at the top of the gender hegemony is uncertain is Général Alcazar. The republic of San Theodoros, like Palombia, is constantly experiencing coups. The difference between San Theodoros and Palombia, however, resides in the fact that there are only two men (Tapioca and Alcazar) who struggle for power in the former while the latter has seen countless dictators over the years. Though he is more concerned with playing chess than with running his country in *L’oreille cassée*, Alcazar is certainly not someone who displays childish behaviour of the same calibre as that of Baby Prinz.⁹² By the time he becomes

⁸⁸ Batem, et al., *Sur la Piste du marsupilami* [On the Marsupilami’s Trail], Marsupilami, vol. 25, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2012, 45/6-10 & pp. 47-48.

⁸⁹ Batem, et al., *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, pp. 25-26, 32-33 & 44/9-10.

⁹⁰ Batem, et al., *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, 50/7.

⁹¹ Batem, et al., *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, p. 58.

⁹² Hergé, *L’Oreille cassée*, p. 23.

a rebel in the San Theodoros jungle, his group has adopted a name that refers to a sign of masculinity: they are the *bigotudos*, the moustachioed ones.⁹³ Certainly, this is reminiscent of Fidel Castro's *barbudos*, the bearded ones, but more importantly here, one would assume that, as head of the *bigotudos*, Général Alcazar exerts hegemonic masculinity at a regional level and when he eventually becomes head of state again, one might say that Alcazar attains hegemony at a local level. Yet, while he may have reached internal hegemony, Alcazar does not have external hegemony. As the saying goes, Alcazar is not the one who wears the pants in his marriage. We find out in *Tintin et les Picaros* that the general is now married to Peggy, an intimidating woman who not only has full control of his domestic life but also interferes in his political negotiations.⁹⁴ Alcazar may not *choose* to wear frilly pink clothes like Baby Prinz, but he certainly is *forced* to wear a frilly pink apron as he does all the housework—hardly a traditional masculine task. As Farr puts it, “Alcazar while succeeding in overpowering one dictator, Tapioca, succumbs to another, his wife”.⁹⁵

In the case of *L'orchidée des Chahutas*, the masculinity of the leader is literally non-existent by the end of the album. The first album-length *Marsupilami* story scripted by Dugomier tells the story of Tèpamalroulé (literally, “you’re pretty sexy”), the beautiful and curvy daughter of the Chahuta chief Tapalèrbèth (literally, “you don’t look silly”), as she tries to escape a forced marriage and wishes to join “civilisation”. Tapalèrbèth, from his very first appearance, is a chief who does not have the respect of his people. As he comes out of his hut covered in colourful feathers—presumably to impress his people—the Chahutas laugh openly at him and we soon find out that

⁹³ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*.

⁹⁴ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, 20/5 & 13; Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, pp. 41 & 43.

⁹⁵ Farr, *Tintin*, p. 192.

the orchid in exchange for which he promises to give his daughter's hand in marriage is supposed to bring him tremendous power.⁹⁶ Tèpamalroulé has no desire to marry one of the Chahutas. She eventually falls in love with and marries Émile Pistil, the botanist who finds the chahutium (the pseudo-scientific name of the orchid commonly known as the Chahutas' orchid) so actively sought by all the Chahuta men. As he discovers that the flower that was supposed to bring him power gives him hives, Tapalèrbèth renounces his title and nominates his daughter as the new Chahuta chief. Thus, three different scriptwriters of *Marsupilami*—Yann, Dugomier and Colman/Chabat—chose to present the leaders in Palombia as not entirely fulfilling the ideal of a strong male leader. Instead we have the choice between an effeminate and childish man (Baby Prinz); an ambitious but powerless man (Tapalèrbèth); an old man/infant (Hermoso); a weepy cross-dresser (Pochero); and a very desirable woman (Tèpamalroulé) who is only characterised by her physique. Notably, Baby Prinz, Général Pochero and Tapalèrbèth are presented as leaders who are either ridiculous or scorned by the people they are supposed to lead.

While it is certainly admirable that Dugomier chose to place a woman in a position of power and Tèpamalroulé—whose temper and looks make her considerably more loveable than Hergé's Peggy Alcazar—is readily accepted as the new chief, we must question her choice of husband and the circumstances of her accession to power.⁹⁷ Tèpamalroulé, from the very start, is opposed to her father's decision to marry her off to a Chahuta. Her objections arise not so much from the fact that it is an arranged marriage, but the fact that she does not wish to marry a Chahuta. She considers her

⁹⁶ Batem & Dugomier, *L'Orchidée des Chahutas* [The Chahutas' Orchid], Marsupilami, vol. 17, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2004, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁷ Batem & Dugomier, *L'Orchidée des Chahutas*, 46/7.

fellow villagers to be savage and seeks a “modern” companion.⁹⁸ The words Tèpamalroulé uses could easily have been taken out of the examples listed by Fanon in relation to the mulatto woman’s perception of black men:

“I do not like the Negro because he is savage. Not savage in a cannibal way, but lacking refinement.” An abstract point of view. And when one points out to her that in this respect some black people may be her superiors, she falls back on their “ugliness”.⁹⁹

This corresponds precisely to what Tèpamalroulé says of Chahuta men:

Mon rêve est de me marier avec un homme séduisant... moderne ! / Un homme comme sur les images qu’on trouve dans l’oiseau de fer ! / Aaahh ! La mode des blancs ! Trèbô ! / Il n’est pas question que j’épouse un sauvage ! Je dois trouver cette orchidée et la détruire !...¹⁰⁰

(My dream is to marry a man who is attractive... modern! / A man like in the pictures we can find in the iron bird [an aeroplane]! / Aaahh! The white man’s fashion! Very nice! / There is no way I’m marrying a savage! I must find this orchid and destroy it!...)

In Tèpamalroulé’s mind, then, it is quite clear: the Chahutas are savages, white men are modern and attractive and she dreams of the latter. Though she initially shows no interest in Émile Pistil, a botanist who seeks the chahutium for the purpose of study, Tèpamalroulé reacts in a very different manner the next time she sees him. Indeed, true to his word, having finished his study of the chahutium, Pistil goes to find Tèpamalroulé with the flower. He intends to give the chahutium to Tapalèrbèth with the request that Tèpamalroulé be allowed to marry whom she chooses. However, Pistil has donned a suit that corresponds to the one worn by the “civilised” and “modern” men that Tèpamalroulé admires.¹⁰¹ At this sight, Tèpamalroulé instantly falls in love with him and throws herself at him. It is not long before the botanist presents Tapalèrbèth with the chahutium and requests Tèpamalroulé’s hand in marriage.¹⁰² Again, Fanon’s words spring to mind when we witness how Tèpamalroulé falls in love: though Émile Pistil is not blond and blue-eyed, the words

⁹⁸ Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas*, 11/3, 21/7 – 22/4.

⁹⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁰ Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas*, 22/1-4.

¹⁰¹ Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas*, 45/3-6.

¹⁰² Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas* 45/6-8.

“I loved him because he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a light skin” describe Tèpamalroulé’s logic quite accurately.¹⁰³ If we turn again to the model proposed by Paz, Tèpamalroulé corresponds to a very willing *chingada*. She is entirely open to a relationship with any man provided that he is white, “fashionable” and “modern”, but closed to any Chahuta, regardless of his worth as a person. Émile Pistil is more eligible than any Chahuta by the mere fact of his whiteness and, judging from the difference between the first and the second encounter, by virtue of his clothes. However, Tèpamalroulé’s conception of what constitutes a modern and fashionable western dress sense is somewhat warped since her point of reference is a catalogue from the late nineteen twenties. This “time warp” of course links back to the points put forward in the chapter “Far Far Away”: Palombia is so backwards that the late nineteen twenties are considered modern and fashionable in 2004! More importantly an old-fashioned white man with a less-than-great physique is considered a better partner than any Chahuta. The fact that Émile Pistil’s “fashionable” clothes come from Fordlandia, the abandoned site where Ford once had a factory, only points further to the idea of uneven development and the advantages that Tèpamalroulé associates with marrying a “civilised” man.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, we should pay attention to the way in which Tèpamalroulé becomes the new Chahuta chief. Practically at the same time as it is announced that she is to marry Émile Pistil, Tapalèrbèth has an allergic reaction to the chahutium. Faced with yet another failure to gain the respect of his people, the chief abdicates in favour of Tèpamalroulé.¹⁰⁵ Because of the quick succession of events, it is not possible to

¹⁰³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁰⁴ Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas*, 45/7. See also Batem & Yann, *Fordlandia*, Marsupilami, vol. 6, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Batem & Dugomier, *L’Orchidée des Chahutas*, pp. 45-46.

dissociate one from the other and it appears that it is both through the validation of her authority by her father (though he was never truly respected) and the fact that she is soon to be the wife of a white man that Tèpamalroulé is able to gain the support of the Chahutas as their new chief. It would thus seem that the idea—expressed by Fanon—that marrying a white man is a means for a coloured woman to climb the social ladder indeed applies in the Chahutas’ village. Tèpamalroulé is, after all, the very first woman to be named Chahuta chief and it seems that this recognition is gained by association with a man, not by her own right. On a global level, then, not only is Émile Pistil’s masculinity higher up in the hierarchy with respect to the Chahuta men, but his union with Tèpamalroulé coincides with a change from a barely respected male chief to an acclaimed female chief: Palombia yet again fails to deliver a *macho* leader.

If there is so much importance placed on being *macho* in the Argentinean and Mexican reality as well as in the fictional countries we have discussed in this chapter, we ought to ask ourselves “Where are the *machos* in Palombia?” The characters who truly embody an unequivocal hegemonic masculinity in Palombia are in fact animals, such as the marsupilami himself and the mapinguari.¹⁰⁶ From the time of his creation, Franquin tells us that the marsupilami is the uncontested prince of the Palombian jungle and from his very first appearance the marsupilami is shown bullying the jaguar, an animal known for being ferocious.¹⁰⁷ In the famous *Le nid des marsupilamis*, the marsupilami is shown again repeatedly fighting against (and

¹⁰⁶ The mapinguari appears in Batem & Colman, *Viva Palombia!* and in Batem & Colman, *Red Monster*, Marsupilami, vol. 21, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 53/11.

hurting) the jaguar and bullying the parrots.¹⁰⁸ As the marsupilami asserts his superiority over these animals, it is worth noting the symbolism of the jaguar's ever shortening tail and the fact that the parrots lose their tail feathers to the marsupilami, only to have them jammed back into their rear end, then pulled out yet again some time later.¹⁰⁹ Like Inodoro's father, the marsupilami (the animal with the longest tail) shows his own superior masculinity by focusing on the backside and tails of those who surround him. Moreover, though he first tries a gentle approach in his courtship of the marsupilamie, when he is turned down, the marsupilami flies into a rage. As the marsupilami expresses his anger and physical strength by destroying everything that is within reach, he succeeds in seducing the marsupilamie, much to his own surprise.¹¹⁰ It would seem that to the marsupilamie, what constitutes a good match is a partner who has tremendous physical strength and makes a show of male aggression.

In the following *Marsupilami* albums—in the *Marsupilami* series—the marsupilami retains his bully attitude towards the parrots and the jaguar, as well as other animals and he also knows how to impose his will on the Chahutas when their search for the chahutium disturbs his sleep.¹¹¹ However, if the marsupilami feels entitled to assert his authority in the jungle by repeatedly ill-treating the other animals' tails, he does not take kindly to attacks on his own masculinity, even if they are accidental. Thus, in *Baby Prinz*, in the heat of the revolt, some revolutionaries mistake the marsupilami for one of Baby Prinz's security guards, who, as I have specified previously, wear

¹⁰⁸ Franquin, "Le Nid des marsupilamis" [The Marsupilami Nest], in *Le Nid des marsupilamis*, Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 12, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1960 (henceforth Franquin, "Le nid des marsupilamis" (classic), pp. 12, 18-20, 23-24, 35 & 39.

¹⁰⁹ Franquin, "Le nid des marsupilamis" [The Marsupilami Nest], in Spirou et Fantasio, L'intégrale, vol. 5, Ixelles: Niffle, 2002 (henceforth Franquin, "Le nid des marsupilamis" (Niffle)), no pagination.

¹¹⁰ Franquin, "Le Nid des marsupilamis" [The Marsupilami Nest], in *Le Nid des marsupilamis*, Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 12, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1960 (classic), pp. 20-23.

¹¹¹ Batem & Dugomier, *L'Orchidée des Chahutas*, 15/5 – 16/3.

marsupilami costumes. As one of the revolutionaries seeks to pull down the zipper of what he believes to be a marsupilami costume, he pulls on the animal's penis. The marsupilami's fury and the blows everyone receives in return soon make it clear that it is not a costume but the real marsupilami: the parrots may regularly lose their feathers but no-one is to attack the marsupilami's masculinity.¹¹²

As for the mapinguari, he is also initially ill-treated by the marsupilami, despite the fact that he saved one of the baby marsupilamis.¹¹³ The mapinguari, a gigantic red animal with yellow teeth, is greatly feared by the Chahutas, though he is a gentle creature in reality. At the end of *Viva Palombia!* he finds love in a most unexpected manner: he meets Miss Terry (a lady whose charms do not work with humans) while she is holding a magical flower that brings love. When the mapinguari touches the flower, Miss Terry, in a Shrek-like moment, turns into a mapinguari too and both fall in love.¹¹⁴ Though there are no real *macho* leaders in *Marsupilami*, the mapinguari and the marsupilami bring a maleness of the, literally, animal type. The fact that Miss Terry turned into a mapinguari presents the latter as a human with a monstrous nature. Evidently, giving in to this creature and envisaging a relationship with it makes one a monster too. The nature of the relationship between Miss Terry and her red monster is unequivocal: it is a sexual relationship that eventually produces a baby mapinguari.¹¹⁵ In short, the Palombian *machos* are animals, and even monsters, that will turn their partners into monsters too. Interestingly, the Palombian wilderness appears to have such an overpowering masculine essence to it that even Baby Prinz, though initially

¹¹² Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 24/4 – 25/5.

¹¹³ Batem & Colman, *Viva Palombia!*, p. 32.

¹¹⁴ Batem & Colman, *Viva Palombia!*, passim and p. 45.

¹¹⁵ Batem & Colman, *Red Monster*, 28/10-11.

horrified to find that he starts sweating in the jungle, eventually grows accustomed to his new scent and becomes less prone to fainting.¹¹⁶

Though I have drawn attention to the fact that there are points in common between the Latin American perspectives and the Franco-Belgian perspectives in the sense that they have similar interests when it comes to the nation, manliness and the gaze of the rest of the world, there is a great difference in the representations they offer. As stated earlier, neither Rius nor Fontanarrosa doubt the existence of a patriarchal organisation of the state, though they ridicule it in their respective series. Rius also places his characters in relation with the outside world and, by reversing the order of higher and lower masculinities, gives them the chance to pronounce themselves of a superior masculinity compared to the US. *Marsupilami*, like *Tintin*, is very different in that respect. Though it too presents masculinity and patriarchy as a model of great importance to its fictional Latin Americans, there is no real questioning of this system. Rather, it consistently presents the (human) characters who are in a position of power as either somewhat lacking in masculinity (complicit masculinities) or as entirely devoid of masculinity (in the case of Tèpamalroulé). Unlike *Los Supermachos* and *Inodoro Pereyra*, what the *Marsupilami* and *Tintin* albums considered here ridicule is not the patriarchal model but the leaders who fail to fulfil the requirements of this model. When we do find a strong *macho* identity, it is only present in an animalistic and monstrous way, but not among the human leaders, be they indigenous (Chahuta) or *mestizo* (Général Alcazar, Général Pochero, Baby Prinz or even Hermoso).

¹¹⁶ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 34/7-8 & 38/2.

What is more, because of the European origin of these albums, it is impossible not to consider the masculinity of the Latin American characters presented therein from a global perspective. If the patriarchal model is not questioned and it is the men themselves who are presented as weak, childish, weepy and so on, then it is to be understood that they are “lesser” men at the global level. This is certainly what Émile Pistil’s character clearly proves in *L’orchidée des Chahutas*, when he is favoured over any Chahuta based purely on the fact of his whiteness. When the males do fulfil the ideal of a clear male identity and are openly sexually active, they are presented as monsters. This perspective, reminiscent of Fanon’s words on the perception of the black man’s sexuality, proposes those who fit the bill of *macho* as having an excessive and terrifying sexuality. One might even say they have gone beyond the supermacho and stepped into a zone we could label *hypermacho*. Though hypermales and the hyperfemale Tèpamalroulé are opposing figures by virtue of their respective masculinity and femininity, they can also be collapsed together. Indeed, by virtue of either their defective masculinity (infant and old Hermoso, Pochero, Baby Prinz) or their hypersexuality (young and handsome Hermoso, the marsupilami, the mapinguari) Latin American men are, in a way, feminised, in that they are reduced to their sexual being and can never attain hegemonic masculinity.

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that Tèpamalroulé’s idea of a modern man links back to the chapter “Far Far Away”. If we consider once more the definition of the global level of masculine hegemony, we can see that it pertains to world politics, business and media.¹¹⁷ This can then perhaps indeed link back to “Far Far Away”: when it comes to the global arena, Latin American men, in the Franco-Belgian

¹¹⁷ Connell & Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity”, p. 849.

perspective, do not hold the position of hegemony. Their “lesser” masculinities correspond to a lower position in terms of political, commercial and media power: they are at a lower or earlier stage of “development”, a difference that is necessary for “greater” men—such as Émile Pistil—to remain at the top. Certainly, by presenting Latin American men as either “lesser” men or as over-the-top animals, the Franco-Belgian comics considered do not appear to give their Latin American men a chance to be anywhere between these two extremes.

Latin America?

In the chapter “Far Far Away” I put forward the idea that the spatial and temporal remoteness of Latin America in Franco-Belgian comics presented Latin America as a backward region in a constant process of colonisation. Given the focus of this project, it should come as no surprise that most of the items in the corpus have been chosen precisely because they are set either entirely or partially in Latin America. However, remembering that there also exists a great number of series that are set entirely in Latin America—or at the very least include an episode set there—beyond the *bandes dessinées* included in this corpus, one might wonder “why Latin America?”. After all, France may have held colonies in the Americas but the area bounded by Mexico in the north and Argentina in the south is not particularly known for enclosing former French colonies, though the Caribbean may evoke a stronger French presence. On the other hand, Tintin only pays one very unfortunate visit to the Congo in the notorious

Tintin au Congo.¹ As for Spirou, although he visits Africa a number of times, his last visit to that continent—disregarding the aborted *Cœurs d’acier* (1982) and *Aux sources du Z* (2008), in which Spirou relives some of his past adventures—was in Senegal in 1973.² What is more, this visit to Senegal was Spirou’s first trip to a real African country and was in fact created on order, with the title already imposed to Fournier (the then author of the series).³ The recurrence of Latin American countries also raises questions as Hergé and Franquin, who created the first fictional Latin American countries found in *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio*, were both from Belgium—a kingdom that has no colonial history in the Americas. Given the apparent interest in Latin America, it is all the more striking that the corpus is filled with fictional countries: San Theodoros, Palombia, Guaracha, Nuevo Rico, Santa Banana and an unnamed island in the Caribbean (*Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*). This approach is in stark contrast with that of the Latin American side of the corpus where the concern with foreign countries is quite limited and mostly restricted to neighbouring countries, with little to no reference made to France or Belgium. In addition, though Inodoro’s hut and the village of San Garabato cannot be accurately located on a map, the stories are clearly set in real countries. In *bande dessinée* it is often the case that it is not merely a village or an area that is difficult to locate on a map, but an entire country. Indeed, not only are the directions to these countries deliberately jumbled but the fictional countries also bear resemblance to two or more real countries at a time, sometimes spanning vast areas. In such a landscape, *Le*

¹ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo* [Tintin in the Congo], Les Aventures de Tintin, vol. 2, Tournai: Casterman, 1946.

² Chaland & Yann Le Penetier, *Cœurs d’acier* [Hearts of Steel], Spirou & Fantasio, Bruxelles: Champaka, 2008; Morvan, et al., *Aux Sources du Z*; Fournier, *Le Gri-gri du Niokolo-Koba* [The Niokolo-Koba Grigri], Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 25, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1974; Philippe Peter, “Spirou à l’épreuve du temps” [Spirou and the Test of Time], *dbd*, Février, 2013, Issue 70, p. 50.

³ Uncredited, “L’invitation au voyage” [The Invitation to Travel], in *1972-1075*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 10, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010, p. 10.

temple du soleil and *Tortillas pour les Dalton*—set in Peru and Mexico respectively—appear as exceptions rather than the norm. Why is there such an abundance of Latin American countries on the Franco-Belgian side of the corpus? Why are these countries primarily fictional? What is this Latin America that so many *bande dessinée* albums purport to be set in? Why is there no corresponding interest in France, Belgium or Europe on the Latin American side?

In “Ink on Paper” I explored how the characters Spirou and Inodoro, have acquired meanings as signs and myths well beyond the original meanings of “squirrel” and “toilet” respectively. In relation to Spirou, in particular, I discussed the mythical importance of his costume although it no longer signifies Spirou’s profession as a bellboy. I also pointed out how the uniform, while signifying “Spirou” allows the different authors to bring the character to life, adapting him to suit their interpretations and needs. When it comes to the question of the strong presence of Latin America in *bande dessinée* and its nature, I believe it is comparable to comic characters. First, much like cartooning strips comic characters of their less prominent traits while emphasising their more striking ones, the concept of cartooning is applied to the whole of Latin America to produce these various Latin American countries. Each of these fictional countries is therefore a stand-in for Latin America as a whole rather than only one country. Second, and again as with comic characters, as myth settles in *bande dessinée* Latin America has its own set of characteristics, that may not necessarily be up-to-date with real-life Latin America, but are part of what Latin America inevitably evokes in *bande dessinée*. This myth is not one that was created within one particular album or series, but rather one that was constructed conjointly in early albums of a number of series. Third, *bande dessinée* Latin America may well

have become a place of adventure that, from the Belgian perspective, has no colonial stigma attached to it. Indeed, it is particularly striking that *bande dessinée* Latin America often bears more than a passing resemblance to a number of real and fictional areas located very far from Latin America, especially *bande dessinée* Africa, and *bande dessinée* Latin America appears to have become a means for these series to distance themselves from any colonial activities carried out by Europeans. Following the list of the albums that will be used here, the rest of this chapter is therefore organised in three sections: “The Patchwork”, a relatively short section focusing on early *bande dessinée* Latin American countries as a malleable device, used as a token for Latin America as a whole; “The Shell”, a longer section focusing on how series borrow from each other and their Latin American countries may all look more or less the same on the surface and yet they may be used differently between series or even from one album to the next, within one series; and finally “Exotropia”, focusing on how *bande dessinée*, while gazing upon Latin America, in fact speaks more of Africa than of Latin America.

In his article “Utopies hebdomadaires”, Jacques Gilard traces the creation of *bande dessinée* Latin America back to the comic magazines *Tintin*, *Spirou* and *Pilote*, between 1945 and 1975.⁴ Gilard argues that these stories often relied on the African colonial experience to narrate stories set in Latin America—though he does not explore this argument further—and that since these creations, *bande dessinée* Latin America is internally self-referential, reproducing the imagery found therein rather

⁴ The magazine *Pilote* was published between 1959 and 1989. It was created by Goscinny, Uderzo and Charlier, under the care of François Clauteaux. It was the magazine of *Astérix* and many more successful *bandes dessinées*. See Patrick Gaumer, *Les Années Pilote* [The Pilote Years], Paris: Dargaud, 1996.

than referring to a real Latin America.⁵ It is thus fitting to use the former two classics to unpack what *bande dessinée* fictional Latin American countries stand for. As it is not possible to review *every* fictional Latin American country in the space of this chapter, I will initially use only two fictional countries—San Theodoros (*L’oreille cassée* and *Tintin et les Picaros*) and Palombia (spanning several *Spirou et Fantasio* albums, as well as practically the entire *Marsupilami* series)—though I may occasionally refer to the other fictional countries. The reasons for these choices lie in the fact that San Theodoros and Palombia are the very first Latin American countries visited by Tintin and Spirou respectively. In addition, the fact that these countries are visited in more than one album makes it possible to consider how the fictional countries change over time and, in the case of Palombia, under the care of different authors. In the last section I will draw from a number of stories that I do not use elsewhere in this thesis, with an interest in echoes with other *bande dessinée* countries, be they African or Asian. The stories concerned are: “Houu ba!”, *Tembo Tabou* and “L’héritage”, all by Franquin for the *Spirou et Fantasio*/*Marsupilami* series; the diptych *La frousse aux trousses* / *La vallée des bannis* by Tome and Janry for the *Spirou et Fantasio* series; *Les soucoupes volantes*, by Jijé for the *Blondin et Cirage* series; and *Tintin au Congo*, from the *Tintin* series.

The Patchwork

The fictional country of San Theodoros first appears in an early *Tintin* album—*L’oreille cassée*—and it is almost forty years before Tintin visits it again, in *Tintin et les Picaros*.⁶ In *L’oreille cassée*, Tintin’s search for an Arumbaya wooden statue that was stolen from a museum leads him to the republic of San Theodoros, homeland of

⁵ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, p. 18.

⁶ Hergé, *L’Oreille cassée*; Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*.

the indigenous Arumbayas. Once there, Tintin is set up, faces imprisonment and is sentenced to death, though it is not long before he is named colonel aide-de-camp to Général Alcazar as a reward for drunkenly cheering Alcazar while facing a firing squad. This coincides with Alcazar's ascension to power as he has succeeded in overthrowing the previous head of state (Tapioca). While in power, Alcazar agrees to a deal proposed by R. W. Chicklet of the General American Oil company (henceforth, GAO): he will go to war against a neighbouring country (Nuevo Rico, literally, *nouveau riche*) in order to gain full control of the Gran Chapo desert. If this war effort is successful the GAO will be able to drill for oil in the Gran Chapo desert and Alcazar will draw both personal and state financial benefits from this deal. Chicklet has previously tried—and failed—to strike the same deal with Tintin while Alcazar was away from his duties. As he reaches an agreement with Alcazar, the GAO representative suggests the head of state should not trust Tintin and it is not long before the latter is arrested. After escaping from prison thanks to the help of Pablo—a man who had in fact been hired to kill him—Tintin resumes his search for the stolen statue. He travels to the jungle and meets the Arumbayas, Ridgewell (an Englishman who is believed to be dead but has chosen to live among the Arumbayas) and the indigenous group Bibaros, who are enemies of the Arumbayas. Tintin leaves San Theodoros without recovering the wooden statue and it is not until he has travelled some more across the globe that he is able to find the statue and return it to the museum.⁷

When Tintin returns to San Theodoros in *Tintin et les Picaros*, it is for entirely different reasons. The opera singer, and long-time friend of Tintin, Bianca Castafiore

⁷ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, passim.

has been arrested by San Theodorian authorities while she was touring South America. Together with La Castafiore, her chambermaid Irma, her pianist Igor Wagner and the Dupondt brothers (who have been hired to guard the famous jewels she kept misplacing during her stay in Moulinsart in the previous album) are also arrested.⁸ La Castafiore is under suspicion of plotting an attempt on Tapioca's life and Tintin, Haddock and Professor Tournesol are accused of being the brains of this plot. Sensing that this scandal is a ploy to attract him and his friends to San Theodoros, Tintin chooses to stay in Haddock's castle, Moulinsart. Captain Haddock and Tournesol, for their part, decide to go to San Theodoros in order to clear their names and obtain the liberation of their friends and Tintin eventually joins them. Upon his arrival Tintin quickly demonstrates to the captain that they are not only being kept in a gilded cage—as the captain had already realised—but that they are also under covert audiovisual surveillance. A few days later, the same Pablo who had helped Tintin escape from prison in *L'oreille cassée* reveals that it is one of Tintin's old foes, Colonel Sponsz who is currently at the head of the San Theodorian state police. In a previous album, Sponsz, the then chief of police in Szohôd (Borduria), had kidnapped professor Tournesol in order to obtain the blueprints of an ultrasound weapon capable of destroying glass from a distance. Now he holds a grudge against Tintin and his friends, as Tintin and Haddock were able to rescue Tournesol thanks to La Castafiore's help.⁹ Pablo explains that Sponsz (better known under the name of Esponja in San Theodoros) set up the Castafiore arrest in order to exact revenge against Tintin. He also informs Tintin and his friends that Alcazar and his men—the Picaros—will carry out an armed attack to enable Tintin and his friends to safely

⁸ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 2/10-14, 4/6-11, pp. 5-6; Hergé, *Les Bijoux de La Castafiore* [The Castafiore Emerald], *Les Aventures de Tintin*, vol. 21, Tournai: Casterman, 1963, *passim*.

⁹ See Hergé, *L'Affaire Tournesol* [The Calculus Affair], *Les Aventures de Tintin*, vol. 18, Tournai: Casterman, 1956).

escape from Sponz during their visit at the Paztec pyramid of Trenxcoatl.¹⁰ Though this operation is successful, it is later revealed that Pablo is a traitor: Tintin, Haddock and Tournesol were supposed to be shot by the army as they attempted to escape with Alcazar and the Picaros. Tintin eventually helps Alcazar and the Picaros overthrow Tapioca and as Alcazar once again regains his position at the head of San Theodoros, Bianca Castafiore and her entourage are freed and they all return home.¹¹

Palombia first appears at the end of *Spirou et les héritiers*, an early *Spirou et Fantasio* album by Franquin.¹² In this album, Fantasio and his cousin Zantafio must compete in a three-step challenge to win the inheritance left by their—as yet unnamed—uncle Tanzafio.¹³ The third round of this challenge requires the cousins to “observer et décrire les mœurs du marsupilami, puis capturer un marsupilami vivant et l’offrir à un zoo” (observe the customs of the marsupilami, then capture a marsupilami live and give it to a zoo).¹⁴ It is therefore because of this challenge that Spirou and Fantasio first visit Palombia, the country of the marsupilami. We first catch a glimpse of the capital of Palombia, Chiquito, before Spirou and Fantasio undertake a trip to the Palombian primary forest to seek out a marsupilami. They succeed in finding, observing, taming and capturing a marsupilami and after being saved from a Chahuta

¹⁰ “Paztèque” (a pun on “pastèque” (watermelon) and “Aztèque” (Aztec)) in the original. The official translation only refers to it as an ancient pyramid. Despite its “Aztec” appearance, the word “Trenxcoatl”, like its English translation Hotuatabotl, is in reality an English word (“trenchcoat” and “hot water bottle”).

¹¹ Hergé, *L’Oreille cassée*, passim.

¹² Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*.

¹³ Tanzafio’s name is first mentioned when Fantasio and Zantafio find out that he is still alive in Morvan & Munuera, *L’Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir* [The Man who did not Want to Die], *Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 48, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2005, 8/10.

¹⁴ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 49/4. Translation from Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, The Adventures of Spirou and Fantasio, vol. 4, Mumbai: Euro Books, 2007, 49/4.

attack by Zantafio, they return home to give the marsupilami to a zoo and claim the inheritance while Zantafio chooses to stay in Palombia.¹⁵

In *Le dictateur et le champignon*, Spirou and Fantasio return to Palombia for the first time, with the intention of returning the marsupilami to the wild. Their trip to and in Palombia is punctuated by arguments with other characters because of the playful but uncontrollable marsupilami and his tail. As Spirou and Fantasio are being marched out of a restaurant by the military, their paths cross that of the current head of state: Général Zantas. Summoned to the general's palace, they find out that Zantas is none other than Fantasio's shady cousin—Zantafio. The latter intends to invade Guaracha, a neighbouring country, for personal material gain. Though initially very vocal in their refusal to join the Palombian army, Spirou and Fantasio eventually accept Zantafio's offer in order to dismantle the operation from the inside. At the end of the story, the defeated Zantafio disappears into the wild yet again and Spirou and Fantasio release the marsupilami in the jungle but the last frame reveals that the marsupilami has chosen to stay with Spirou and Fantasio.¹⁶

I propose to consider these *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio* albums as the initial stories where Latin American countries as patchworks that are stand-ins for the whole of Latin America are set. If we try to pinpoint a single model that Hergé used for San Theodoros, we quickly find ourselves with elements from many different countries. Based on the various geographical indications contained in the *Tintin* universe, we only have very few certainties: we can be certain that San Theodoros is not Peru as *Le*

¹⁵ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, passim.

¹⁶ Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon* [The Dictator and the Mushroom], *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 7, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1956, passim.

temple du soleil is clearly stated to be set in Peru. Similarly, since it is explicitly stated that La Castafiore is touring South America and that she has already been to Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela prior to visiting San Theodoros, we can conclude that San Theodoros is none of these countries, but could quite possibly be a neighbouring country.¹⁷ The information provided on the label beneath the Arumbaya statue in the museum (*L'oreille cassée*) confirms that San Theodoros is found in South America:

N° 3542

FÉTICHE ARUMBAYA

La tribu des ARUMBAYAS habite le long du fleuve BADURAYAL, sur le territoire de la RÉPUBLIQUE de SAN THEODOROS (AMÉRIQUE du SUD)¹⁸

(No. 3542

ARUMBAYA FETISH

The Arumbaya tribe live along the banks of the River Coliflor in the Republic of San Theodoros, South America)¹⁹

In addition, though there is little of the local (colonial) language used in *L'oreille cassée* and *Tintin et les Picaros*, it is used sufficiently to enable us to determine that San Theodoros is a Spanish-speaking country and therefore cannot be based on Brazil, Suriname, Guyana or French Guiana. Taking these limitations into consideration, we are left with the following possibilities: Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. However, though it may be relatively easy to reach this short list, in reality, beyond the certainties of what it is not (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela), it is quite impossible to identify what real country it represents. In terms of architecture, though the *Paztec* pyramid Trenxcoatl is obviously based—by name—on the *Aztec* pyramids in Mexico, it is an accurate copy of El Castillo, the

¹⁷ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 1/3.

¹⁸ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, 1/5.

¹⁹ Hergé, *The Broken Ear*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, *The Adventures of Tintin*, vol. 6, London: Egmont, 2012, 1/5. Please note that the changes in names, punctuation and capitalisation are in the original translation.

Mayan pyramid of Kukulcán, also known as El Castillo, in Chichén Itzá (Mexico).²⁰

Yet, according to Farr, Hergé used Belo Horizonte (Brazil) as a major source of inspiration for Las Dopicos (renamed Tapiocapolis), the San Theodorian capital city.²¹

When we turn to the population, again according to Farr, the Arumbayas are based on the Brazilian native Hariks, while their huts are based on Venezuelan huts.²² However, the clothes worn by some of the civilians—*sarapes* and *sombreros*—in the capital city of Las Dopicos (*L'oreille cassée*) are typical Mexican garments.²³

In terms of political figures, Tapioca and Alcazar hark back to different Latin American figures. In my article “Politics as a Carnival in Hergé’s *Tintin et les Picaros*” I explored in detail all the historico-political references found in Hergé’s last complete album.²⁴ I do not have the space for an in-depth discussion of the intricacies of these references here but I will attempt to briefly draw out the countries that San Theodoros could be modelled on, based on the references used by Hergé. Alcazar and his men, without the trace of a doubt, hark back to Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Hervé do Alto describes Alcazar as “[u]n general rebelde con aires de Fidel Castro” ([a] rebel general with Fidel Castro airs) and as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Picaros were originally named the Bigotudos, a clear reference to Fidel Castro’s Barbudos.²⁵ Hergé himself confirmed that Castro and Che Guevara, as well as the

²⁰ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 25/6. This obvious source is confirmed by Farr, who inserted a caption under a picture of El Castillo, stating: “Mayan pyramid in Mexico, from Hergé’s files.” (Farr, *Tintin*, p. 191.)

²¹ Farr, *Tintin*, p. 197.

²² Farr, *Tintin*, pp. 191 & 195.

²³ Hergé, *L’Oreille cassée*, 19/5-8 & 24/12 – 25/7.

²⁴ Annick Pellegrin, “Politics as a Carnival in Hergé’s *Tintin et les Picaros*”, *European Comic Art*, 3, 2 (2010), pp. 168-188.

²⁵ Hervé do Alto, “Del entusiasmo al desconcierto: la mirada de la izquierda europea sobre América Latina y el temor al populismo” [From Enthusiastic to Disconcerted: The Gaze of the European Left on Latin America and the Fear of Populism], *Nueva Sociedad*, 214 (marzo-abril de 2008), p. 65; Sadoul, *Tintin et moi*; Philippe Goddin, *Hergé et les Bigotudos: Le Roman d’une aventure* [Hergé and the Bigotudos: The Story of an Adventure], Tournai: Casterman, 1990, p. 263.

Tupamaros, were sources of inspiration for *Tintin et les Picaros*.²⁶ While Che and Castro evoke Argentina and Cuba, the Tupamaros evoke Uruguay: the latter became “one of the best organized (popular) guerilla movement in Latin America” in the 1970s and they sought “deep structural change”, aiming to establish socialism in Uruguay, then in the whole of Latin America.²⁷ Yet another possible source of inspiration is the case of the Chilean Salvador Allende, who was elected in 1970 and overthrown in 1973.²⁸ The prominent role played by the media throughout this album—as much in the setting up of the plot as in the way the coup against Tapioca is conducted—is reminiscent not only of the considerable media coverage of the coup against Allende but also of the very instrumentality of the media in the coup against the former Chilean president. Indeed, many of the exchanges between Tapioca and the inhabitants of Moulinsart are first done through newspapers and television and Tapioca’s deposition is announced on the radio.²⁹ In a comparable situation, the insurrection against Allende and the reasons for it, as well as Allende’s good-byes to the people, were broadcast on the radio. As for the press, it was also used before the election of Allende in “una campaña de terror” (a terror campaign) against the left and under Pinochet it was used to control information. Allende’s government also made use of the media as they bought shares in the only private paper company in an attempt to control private newspapers.³⁰

²⁶ Interview with Hergé published in *Le Ligueur*, 30 January 1970, quoted in Goddin, *Hergé et les Bigotudos*, p. 199.

²⁷ Alain Labrousse, *The Tupamaros: Urban Guerillas in Uruguay*, Middlesex & Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1973, pp. 35, 99, 100, 105, 107; A. C. Porzecanski, *Uruguay’s Tupamaros: The Urban Guerilla*, New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1973, pp. 4 & 8.

²⁸ Michael J. Kryzanek, *U.S.-Latin American Relations*, New York, Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 1990, pp. 55-56; Isabel Allende, *Mi país inventado* [My Invented Country: A Nostalgic Journey Through Chile], Barcelona: DeBolsillo, 2005, p. 172; Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 175.

²⁹ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, pp. 4-11 & 56-59.

³⁰ Paul E. Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977, pp. 157, 242 & 243; Salvador Allende, “Ultimas palabras” [Last

When we turn to foreign interventions in San Theodoros, we can add a plethora of possible models to the list. For instance the International Banana Company, which supports Alcazar and the Picaros, is a clear reference to the United Fruit Company (henceforth UFCO) and the Standard Fruit Company, both known for meddling in the political affairs of the so-called ‘Banana Republics’.³¹ Without reviewing the cases of each country concerned, suffice to say that the UFCO reportedly “sought, through close ties with successive dictators, to control nearly a dozen nations scattered about the Isthmus [of Panama] and the Caribbean.”³² Some of these “Banana Republics” include Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Cuba, Panama, El Salvador, and Costa Rica.³³ In addition, in *L’oreille cassée*, the war between San Theodoros and Nuevo Rico, over the desert of Gran Chapo can be read as a reference to the Gran Chaco war that opposed Bolivia and Paraguay or a petrol war between Panama and Costa Rica, backed by Standard Oil and British Controlled Oilfields.³⁴ This ample, yet not exhaustive, list of examples is more than sufficient to indicate that San Theodoros is not based solely on one country. Though it is clearly stated to be located in Spanish-speaking *South America*, it is based on a number of countries—that are not necessarily all Spanish-speaking—found in South, Central and North

Words], in *Chile: el otro 11 de septiembre*, Pilar Aguilera & Ricardo Fredes (eds.), Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2003, pp. 5-9; Allende, *Mi país inventado*, pp. 173 & 183.

³¹ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 1/7. Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, p. 45 also points to a possible intertextual reference to the American Banana Company in *Cien años de soledad* (A Hundred Years of Solitude): the company “brutalised” a Colombian town in Marquez’s novel.

³² Stephen Schlezinger & Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, London: Sinclair Browne, 1982, p. 65.

³³ Uncredited, “US Banana Firm must pay \$25m Fine”, *BBC NEWS*, 17/09/2007, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6999418.stm>; Schlezinger & Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, pp. 9, 11, 12, 66-70, 76, 77; Paul J. Dosal, *Doing Business with the Dictators: A Political History of United Fruit in Guatemala 1899-1944*, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1993, p. 9; Uncredited, “Nicaragua: bananeras en la mira” [Nicaragua: Banana Plantations in Sight], *BBC Mundo*, 23/11/2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_2505000/2505467.stm.

³⁴ Sonia Pérez García, “Tintin grand voyageur du siècle” [Tintin Great Traveller of the Century], *Isla Abierta: Estudios franceses en memoria de Alejandro Cioranescu*, [X coloquio de la asociación de profesores de filología francesa de la universidad Española, La Laguna, 2001], 3 (2004), p. 1051

America, as well as the Caribbean. This malleable fictional country enables Hergé to touch upon different incidents from contemporary Latin American history and politics while telling his story in a décor that feels familiar to readers.

Franquin's fictional country, Palombia, is also a patchwork of various Latin American countries. First and foremost is the name Palombia, an inside joke for francophone readers who also speak Spanish: "dove" translates as "colombe" (or, less commonly, "palombe") in French and "paloma" in Spanish. As Franquin puts it: "Palombie, ça vient de l'association colombe-palombe, c'est aussi bête que ça" (Palombia, it comes from the association between colombe and palombe, it's that simple).³⁵ Thus, the name Palombia is drawn directly from Colombia, though the real country was named after Columbus rather than after doves. Second, despite appearances, it is never entirely clear where this country is located. For instance, when Spirou and Fantasio first travel to Palombia, it happens so fast that the protagonists (and the readers) are transported to it before its name is ever mentioned: upon finding out where the marsupilami lives, in the last frame of page 49 Spirou exclaims "Fantasio, fais tes valises!" (Fantasio! Pack your bags!).³⁶ On the following page we are presented with a panoramic view and a statement that: "De toutes les républiques d'Amérique latine, la Palombie est la plus minuscule. Sa capitale, Chiquito, est à deux pas de la forêt vierge... le voyageur y accède par la route..." (Palombia... the tiniest of all Latin American republics, Palombia. Its capital, Chiquito, adjoins a dense, largely unexplored rain forest [sic]).³⁷ Beyond this summary formal introduction, Franquin says very little about Palombia and most of the information we gather as readers is

³⁵ Sadoul, *Et Franquin créa la Gaffe*, p. 106.

³⁶ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 49/8. Translation: Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 49/8.

³⁷ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 50/1. Translation: Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 50/1.

from first-hand experience, so to speak, as Spirou and Fantasio become acquainted with the capital and the jungle. The location of the country is never stated—aside from “South America”—and it is not until the last page of *Spirou et les héritiers*, when Spirou and Fantasio take the lawyer Mordicus (uncle Tanzafio’s executor) to the zoo to see the marsupilami that we are given a more specific indication of its location. The plaque on the marsupilami’s cage reads:

Marsupilami
(Marsupilamus Fantasio)
Habite la forêt amazonienne au sud-est de la Palombie.
Premier spécimen jamais capturé—
Expédition Fantasio Spirou – 1951 –
Don de M. Fantasio³⁸

(MARSUPILAMI)
(Marsupilamius [sic] Fantasio)
Lives in the Amazonia forest south east of Palombia. First specimen ever captured
—Expedition Fantasio-Spirou — 1951 — Gifted by Mr. Fantasio³⁹

This plaque gives us a clearer regional indication of the location of Palombia: it is found in the Amazon jungle, that is to say, somewhere near Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

A mere two weeks after the end of the publication of *Spirou et les héritiers* in *Spirou*, the magazine published a couple of *planches* announcing the start of the next *Spirou et Fantasio* adventure—*Les voleurs du marsupilami*—the following week.⁴⁰ These two *planches* serve as a transition between the two stories. We find out that Fantasio’s gift to the zoo has caused quite a stir: Spirou and Fantasio have received requests for

³⁸ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 64/1 (my italics).

³⁹ Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 64/1 (my italics, all other formatting changes in original translation).

⁴⁰ Franquin, *Les Voleurs du marsupilami* [The Marsupilami Robbers], *Une Aventure de Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 5, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1954.

journal articles, journalists seek them out and they give keynote addresses.⁴¹ In these *planches*, Franquin also offers us a map, on which Fantasio indicates Palombia's specific location.⁴² Though this map confirms that Palombia is found somewhere between Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela, it is in reality quite deceptive. Despite the fact that Fantasio is indicating a very specific spot, as Franquin did not include any political borders on his map, the information provided is not as precise as it may at first appear and leaves it to the readers to imagine how far this imaginary country reaches into Colombia, Peru, Brazil or Venezuela.⁴³

Despite the fact that Franquin's Palombia is clearly stated and *shown* to be located in South America, it bears a very strong resemblance with Mexico, more so than San Theodoros, which, as we have seen, is an amalgam of many countries from the beginning. For example, in Franquin's work, Spanish is more present than in Hergé's and there are several cultural indicators that Palombia is based very specifically on Mexico. Thus, from the very first Palombian frame, we can see a couple of locals in typical Mexican garb: one in a poncho and one in a *sarape*, and both in sombreros.⁴⁴ If we miss the abundance of sombreros in the background, it is impossible to miss the barely-veiled reference when it comes to the Palombian volcano known as El Sombrero. Not only is it named after and shaped like a giant sombrero, but Spirou and Fantasio also draw our attention to it as they stop and announce its name upon seeing

⁴¹ Franquin, "Les aventures de Spirou" [The adventures of Spirou] (*Spirou*, 27 March, 1952, Issue 728, 1-2), in *De Champagnac au Marsupilami: 1950 - 1952*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 2, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1952, pp. 141-142.

⁴² Franquin, "Les Aventures de Spirou" [The adventures of Spirou] (*Spirou*, 27 March, 1952, Issue 728, 1-2), in *De Champagnac au marsupilami: 1950 - 1952*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 2, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2006, p. 142.

⁴³ Noticeably, the film adaptation briefly shows a map of South America with Palombia in a similar location, but includes political borders. See Chabat & Seydoux (dir.) *Sur la Piste du marsupilami*.

⁴⁴ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 50/1.

it for the first time.⁴⁵ In the short time Spirou and Fantasio spend in the capital city during their first stay, we can see many more of these ponchos, *sarapes* and sombreros, as well as revolutionaries who run around Chiquito shooting and wearing their cartridges in bandoleers à la Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.⁴⁶ *Le dictateur et le champignon*—despite the omnipresence of the military—and *L’ombre du Z* both give us the opportunity to see some more Palombians in civilian dress and to catch another glimpse of the city streets. Besides the many *sarapes* and sombreros, as well as some men dressed in *mariachi* outfits, the foods and drinks advertised in Chiquito are all typically Mexican: tortillas, tamales, tequila and *pulque* (a sticky white drink that, like tequila, is made from the maguey plant; it is served in a *pulquería*).⁴⁷ Therefore, if Franquin officially placed his fictional country in the Amazon jungle and gave it a name that is very similar to Colombia, it clearly draws from a North American country that he knew: Mexico.

Thus, Palombia and San Theodoros, from the beginning, are signifiers, or tokens, for Latin America as a whole and were not designed by their creators to represent a single country but rather an entire region: therein lies the *raison d’être* of the fictional country as opposed to the real country, which we so rarely find in *bande dessinée*, at least when it comes to Latin America. Through cartooning, these authors have retained some salient traits of certain countries or areas, while certain aspects have been left out. The next incarnation, the “shell”, which I explore in the following section, is forged as myth takes over the malleable signifier that is Palombia.

⁴⁵ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 53/1.

⁴⁶ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁷ Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, 23/5, 48/1; Franquin, et al., “L’Ombre du Z” [The Shadow of the Z], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: Z comme Zorglub + L’Ombre du Z*, Double Album, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011 115/7, 116/9-120/1, 121/9-11, 122/1, 122/6-7, 124/6, 125/8 & 127/6.

The Shell

As *Tintin* is a closed series, it is not possible to explore the reincarnations of San Theodoros under the care of other authors. As for Palombia, besides spawning an entire series dedicated to the marsupilami, Spirou and Fantasio's Palombian adventures as created by Franquin in *Spirou et Fantasio* have served as a basis for Tome and Janry's *L'horloger de la comète* (set in Palombia) and Morvan and Munuera's *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir* (set in Guaracha). With such numerous iterations of Franquin's fictional countries, it is not possible to consider each album. In this section, I therefore focus on *some* reappropriations of Franquin's original Latin American creations, drawing from the albums *L'or de Boavista / Le temple de Boavista*, *Baby Prinz*, *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir* and *Sur la piste du marsupilami*. In addition, I consider how, though *Tintin* is now a closed series, even under Hergé and Franquin, there was a convergence in the way these artists represented Latin America so that the images that one can find in more recent works in fact draw from both *Tintin* and older *Spirou et Fantasio* albums.

L'or de Boavista and *Le temple de Boavista*, constitute the only formal diptych in the *Marsupilami* series so far, with both volumes bearing the title *Le temple de Boavista* on their spines. The first instalment tells the story of the chubby Donald Maxwell-Trump, the son of a rich man, who is kidnapped by *garimpeiros* (illegal gold prospectors) after skipping school. The children are expected to use lead to extract gold from the river but before Donald—promptly nicknamed Gordito (fatso)—is able to do much the floating platform on which he is standing is hit by a tree trunk. Gordito freezes with fear and is only saved thanks to Solorio, another boy who has been working for the *garimpeiros*. Believed to have drowned, the boys come back at

night to steal a bag of gold nuggets before running away. As the boss realises that some gold is missing he concludes that the boys have not died and attempts to track them down. The boys bump into Noé (Noah), a former circus clown who rescues them as they are trapped on a mass of soil travelling down a rapid.⁴⁸ Once the boys have explained the situation to him, the clown decides to get involved and to free the other boys. The first instalment of the diptych closes with Noé and all the boys from the *garimpeiro* camp hiding on a boat behind a big bush while the armed *garimpeiros* are looking for them.⁴⁹

The second instalment opens with all the boys still travelling through the jungle with Noé, though they are not on the run anymore and the *garimpeiros* do not appear again in this instalment. Solorio and Gordito soon meet the grim Harold Stonelove, the king of the photocopier, who is incapable of laughing. Stonelove is in the jungle because he received an anonymous letter from someone promising to make him laugh in exchange for a considerable amount of money. The person who sent the letter is revealed to be Chester Carlson, the man from whom Stonelove stole the blueprints of the photocopier that brought him fame and fortune. Carlson had hoped to make Stonelove die of laughter: drinking from the glowing waters of the Zygomaztec temple usually causes irrepressible laughter but it has no effect on Stonelove. The two

⁴⁸ Noé first appears in the *Marsupilami* series in *Mars le noir*, though his very first appearance can be traced back to the short story *Bravo les Brothers* in the *Spirou et Fantasio* series. Noé's name suits him well: he is extremely talented when it comes to taming animals and now appears to live on a boat with a number of animals. His love of animals and the environment is only matched by his dislike of people in general, though it is revealed in *Fordlandia* that he was once married to the bombshell and virago Rosannah Roquette. See Batem, et al., *Mars le noir* [Mars the Black], Marsupilami, vol. 3, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2007; Franquin, "Bravo les Brothers" [Well Done the Brothers], in *Aventures humoristiques: 1961 - 1967*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 8, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2009 and Batem & Yann, *Fordlandia*.

⁴⁹ Batem, et al., *L'Or de Boavista* [The Gold of Boavista], Marsupilami, vol. 7, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, passim.

men eventually make peace and agree to start a business selling this water. As they leave the jungle by helicopter, they agree to take Gordito back to Chiquito.⁵⁰

Sur la piste du marsupilami is a recent addition to the *Marsupilami* series. It is rather particular in that it is an adaptation of the motion picture also titled *Sur la piste du marsupilami*. The motion picture is itself an adaptation of the comic series, as well as a number of *Spirou et Fantasio* albums, though these two characters themselves do not appear alongside the marsupilami for copyright reasons.⁵¹ While the album adaptation follows the plot of the film quite closely, I focus mainly on the album, only referring to the film occasionally, where there are differences worth mentioning. The album is longer than the others in the series, with sixty-two pages rather than the usual forty-four to forty-eight, and has a more complex plot, involving Dan Géraldo and Pablito Camaroñ; the marsupilami; the Payas (an indigenous group); professeur Hermoso and Général Pochero; and the television channel TV 2 in Europe. Dan Géraldo—a reporter famous for shooting his first documentary with a V8 camera in the Palombian jungle while there was a guerrilla uprising in Chiquito—is going through a slump. V8, his television show, is not economically viable and the directors of TV 2 have decided to send him back to Chiquito to shoot another documentary that will determine whether he will be sacked or not. He only has a few days to get to the site, shoot the documentary and present it live from TV Palombia. TV 2 has arranged for him to leave on the same day and has provided a guide: Pablito, a veterinarian who earns a living by scamming tourists.

⁵⁰ Batem, et al., *Le Temple de Boavista* [The Temple of Boavista], Marsupilami, vol. 8, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2004, passim.

⁵¹ Chabat & Seydoux (dir.) *Sur la Piste du marsupilami*; Alain Chabat (dir.) *Tournage (mini documentary on the Bonus DVD of Sur la Piste du marsupilami)* [Shooting], Making Hop, 2012 [5min26sec].

As soon as Dan Géraldo sets foot in Palombia he faces all manner of adversity: first imprisoned by Général Pochero for damaging a unique record, then kidnapped by the Payas before being arrested and imprisoned again, this time by Général Hermoso. While Dan is struggling to shoot his documentary, Général Pochero—the Palombian head of state at the beginning of the story—is facing troubles of his own. The almost retired botanist Hermoso (whose name means ‘handsome’ in Spanish), having discovered an orchid (the orchidus hermosoid) that keeps one youthful, regains a young appearance and deposes Pochero. As the marsupilami has a predilection for this orchid and an ability to detect it by scent, Hermoso—obsessed with youth and beauty—captures the marsupilami and his eggs in the hopes of training marsupilamis to look for more orchids. The story comes to a climax in the studios of Palombia TV, where Dan and Pablito rush to do the live documentary after stealing the marsupilami eggs from Hermoso. Following a series of technical problems that bring the director of TV 2 very close to revealing that Dan Géraldo’s first documentary was a fake, an angry marsupilami emerges on set to claim back his eggs. This unexpected irruption saves the day: Dan’s popularity is on the rise and his former lies are not revealed, Pablito is able to prove to his children that he is not a liar (the marsupilami really exists) and it appears Pochero will be head of state again. Indeed, as mentioned in “Supermales and Hyperfemales”, with Pochero having impressed his men with his drag performance and Hermoso having reverted to adolescence, then infancy, it appears that nothing stands in Pochero’s way anymore.⁵²

In *L’homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, Morvan and Munuera rely considerably on Franquin’s work—in particular *Spirou et les héritiers* and *Le dictateur et le*

⁵² Batem, et al., *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, passim.

champignon—to build their own story. In this album, Fantasio’s hitherto unnamed uncle appears for the first time in *Spirou et Fantasio*, after having been declared officially dead for a little more than fifty years. Spirou, Fantasio, Tanzafio, Zantafio and Zantafio’s two men travel to the republic of Guaracha—the country that Zantafio sought to invade in *Le dictateur et le champignon*—to seek the fount of youth. Spirou and Fantasio hope to reach it in time for Tanzafio to regain his youth once more while Zantafio and his men hope to sell this water for a profit. Once in Guaracha, the travellers soon meet Katxina and Selvo, two characters who grew up together and are in love, but are torn apart by political and racial differences. Katxina is of indigenous descent and Selvo, though clearly not white, is said to be a descendant of *conquistadores*. They have both set up guerrilla groups to claim land back either for the indigenous population or for poor peasants. This polarised situation is worsened by the fact that Zantafio and his men join Selvo’s group while Katxina’s group welcomes Spirou and friends. Katxina, Selvo and Tanzafio are mortally wounded on their way to the lake but the former two are saved when they are immersed in the waters. It is too late for Tanzafio, however: Katxina and Selvo’s blood has polluted the water and the lake has lost its properties for many years to come. Not knowing this, Zantafio escapes with as much water as he can carry, hoping to sell it for a profit, while Spirou and Fantasio return home.⁵³

In the *Marsupilami* series, the use of the patchwork to touch upon different matters is well exemplified by Yann’s work, for instance. While the series may have been written by a dozen scriptwriters over the years, Batem, the artist, has been present in the graphic creation of every single album since the inception of this spin-off. And the

⁵³ Morvan & Munuera, *L’Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, passim.

artist is required by contract to maintain the same line in his work, always faithful to the way Franquin drew the marsupilami in the seventies so that there is a strong graphic unity across all the albums created so far.⁵⁴ Yet, Yann's Palombia to name just one, is a patchwork that changes from album to album, sometimes drawing sources from Mexico but maintaining Palombia in the Amazon (like Franquin once did) and sometimes drawing from other sources. In the diptych *L'or de Boavista / Le temple de Boavista*, for instance, we find out that, like San Theodoros, Yann's Palombia has at least one pyramid—of Zygomaztec origin.⁵⁵ Like Hergé's Paztec pyramid, in terms of sounds, the *Zygomaztec* pyramid appears to be a reference to the *Aztec* pyramids of Mexico, yet visually, it seems to be a mixture of the great Maya pyramid of Calakmul, Mexico and of the Mayan temple in Tikal, Guatemala. While the Mexican source may be in keeping with Franquin's original creation, and the Guatemalan one a little less so, the location of this temple adds another layer to Palombia, while also aligning with the information provided about Palombia until then. The action is set, presumably, within Palombia as there is no suggestion that the characters ever cross any national borders. Yet, it takes place in a very particular area of Palombia: a place called Boavista, where *garimpeiros* are operating. This illegal gold prospecting is being carried out using the free labour of children kidnapped in the streets of Chiquito.⁵⁶

While the pyramid would appear to be of Mayan origin, the *garimpeiros* and the place name Boavista are sourced directly from Brazilian history. Given the time of creation of these albums (the end of the second instalment is dated 12 August 1993) it is likely

⁵⁴ Fuéri & Vidal, "Chabat réalise son rêve", p. 58.

⁵⁵ "Zygomaztèque" in the original. Batem, et al., *Le Temple de Boavista*, 7/7.

⁵⁶ Batem, et al., *L'Or de Boavista*; Batem, et al., *Le Temple de Boavista*.

that Yann drew inspiration from the activities of *garimpeiros* in the Yanomami territory in the state of Roraima (Brazil), the capital of which is none other than Boa Vista. These prospecting activities in Yanomami land began around the end of the 1980s, after the Yanomami territory was split into two national forests and one national park, with nineteen indigenous territories dispersed within these national forests and national park.⁵⁷ By 1990 three gold-digging reservations were officially created directly out of the national forests that were on Yanomami territory.⁵⁸ A mere month before the completion of the *Le temple de Boavista*, the tension between Yanomami and *garimpeiros* came to a peak, when the latter killed—then mutilated and dismembered—twelve Yanomami.⁵⁹ This killing, known as the Haximu massacre, was in retaliation for the killing of one *garimpeiro* and the wounding of another one on 26 July 1993.⁶⁰ The latter Yanomami action was itself a retribution for the killing of four Yanomami on 15 June 1993.⁶¹

While *L'or de Boavista* clearly draws from real events in Brazilian history, when we consider the case of *Baby Prinz*, also scripted by Yann, it would appear that the sources are quite far from Mexico or the Amazon jungle. Indeed, though this album, which predates *L'or de Boavista / Le temple de Boavista*, first shows Chiquito as a city where people dress as exceedingly “Mexican”—ponchos, *sarapes* and sombreros

⁵⁷ Bruce Albert, “Terras indígenas, política ambiental e geopolítica militar no desenvolvimento da Amazônia: a propósito do caso Yanomami” [Indigenous Lands, Environmental Policy and Military Geopolitics in the Development of the Amazon: About the Yanomami Case], in *Amazônia: a fronteira agrícola 20 anos depois*, Léna Philippe & De Oliveira A.E. (eds.), Belém: Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, 1991, pp. 42 & 46.

⁵⁸ Albert, “Terras indígenas, política ambiental e geopolítica militar no desenvolvimento da Amazônia: a propósito do caso Yanomami” [Indigenous Lands, Environmental Policy and Military Geopolitics in the Development of the Amazon: About the Yanomami Case], in *Amazônia: a fronteira agrícola 20 anos depois*, Philippe & A.E. (eds.), Belém: Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, 1991, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Bruce Albert, “Indiens Yanomami et chercheurs d’or au Brésil. Le Massacre de Haximu” [Yanomami Indians and Gold-Diggers in Brazil. The Haximu Massacre], *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, 80 (1994), pp. 251, 254-256.

⁶⁰ Albert, “Indiens Yanomami et chercheurs d’or au Brésil”, pp. 252-253.

⁶¹ Albert, “Indiens Yanomami et chercheurs d’or au Brésil”, pp. 251-252.

abound—it also brings in elements from the Caribbean, with its references to Haiti. The names Papa Prinz and Baby Prinz, aside from being references to the singer Prince, are also references to Dr François Duvalier (better known as Papa Doc) and his son Jean Claude Duvalier (better known as Baby Doc), the men who ruled Haiti in 1957-1971 and 1971-1986 respectively.⁶² The parallels between Papa Prinz and Papa Doc are striking as the latter’s regime was a very brutal and bloody one, “an atrocity-ridden tyranny” and Papa Prinz, according to Baby Prinz’s speech, was also a very powerful man, comparable to a volcano.⁶³ Like Baby Prinz, Baby Doc inherited state control after his father’s death and, being very young at the time, he became a puppet president standing in for the Duvalier interests. Although he eventually began taking interest in politics and created *jeanclaudisme*, Baby Doc’s regime was also brutal.⁶⁴ While Baby Prinz never becomes a brutal ruler, his youth and political incompetence are certainly emphasised in the album that bears his name.

As for Tome and Janry, they send Spirou and Fantasio back to Palombia in *L’horloger de la comète* (in the *Spirou et Fantasio* series) and much like Yann in *L’ordre de Boavista / Le temple de Boavista*, they brought their own interpretation to Palombia, which becomes a former Portuguese colony.⁶⁵ As Roraima is one of the northernmost states of Brazil—sharing a border with Venezuela and Guyana—Yann’s decision to draw from the *garimpeiros’* activities in Roraima is geographically consistent with the official location of Palombia. Tome and Janry’s choice, while

⁶² R. Anthony Lewis, “Language, Culture and Power: Haiti under the Duvaliers”, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50, 4 (Dec 2004), pp. 41 & 47; Carlos D. Conde, “Baby Doc’s Second Act”, *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, 21, 11 (7 March 2011), p. 5.

⁶³ Bernard Diederich, *The Murderers Among Us: History of Repression and Rebellion in Haiti Under Dr. François Duvalier, 1962-1971*, Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2011, p. vii ; Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 14/5.

⁶⁴ Lewis, “Language, Culture and Power”, pp. 41 & 47.

⁶⁵ Tome & Janry, *L’Horloger de la comète*.

surprising since Palombia is Spanish-speaking, is equally consistent with the location given in Franquin's albums: as Tome points out, the Amazon jungle is, for the most part, in Brazil.⁶⁶ While the use of Brazilian sources for *L'horloger de la comète* and *L'or de Boavista / Le temple de Boavista* may correspond to the general official location of Palombia, these sources are far removed from the Mexico Franquin originally used. With Tome's, Janry's and Yann's contributions, not to mention that of the many other scriptwriters who have continued the *Marsupilami* series, Palombia acquires new layers every time and it is thanks to the patchwork created by Franquin that they are able to use Palombia as a malleable entity that contains, within its borders, the whole of Latin America.

Besides Palombia, there are other Latin American locales in the *Marsupilami* and *Spirou et Fantasio* series. For instance, the marsupilami also visits Santa Banana and Caracas in the company of Rémi and Collin (the two main human characters used during the Fauche and Adam period). Santa Banana is an imaginary island shaped like a banana and only appears in the story "Houba Banana ®", while Caracas, a real city, is the main location used by the scriptwriters Fauche and Adam.⁶⁷ Santa Banana—by virtue of its name, shape and the banana exploitation that is being carried out there—is, like Hergé's International Banana Company, a reference to the "Banana republics" mentioned earlier in this chapter. Caracas, for its part, though a real city, is rather hard to distinguish from Chiquito: besides the fact that the marsupilamis build a makeshift nest in their friends' greenhouse, there does not appear to be any great difference between the way Batem draws Caracas and the way he draws Chiquito. Tequila cola

⁶⁶ Tome, interview with the author, Brussels, 23 July 2011.

⁶⁷ Batem, et al., *Rififi en Palombie* [Trouble in Palombia], *Marsupilami*, vol. 10, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2003; Fauche, et al., "Houba Banana ®", in *Houba Banana ®*, *Marsupilami*, vol. 11, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, pp. 3-28.

is advertised in both cities and the locals still wear *sarapes* and *sombreros*.⁶⁸ The only difference appears to be the fact that Caracas does not have as many buildings with flashy signs as Chiquito, though it certainly displays an architecture that is very similar to what one might find in *Spirou et les héritiers*, *Baby Prinz* and *Le dictateur et le champignon*.⁶⁹ With such minor differences, it requires real effort to remember that the marsupilami family is temporarily away from Palombia and to locate information regarding their whereabouts.⁷⁰

In the case of *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, Morvan and Munuera chose to keep it quite close and similar to Franquin's original Palombia. Thus, as Tanzafio recounts his life story in sepia frames, during the boat trip to Guaracha, the authors refer us back to information given by Franquin to then extrapolate. For instance, Tanzafio's story includes an almost exact replica of the scene of the reading of the will in Mordicus' office, with the latter repeating verbatim the words Franquin had placed in his mouth.⁷¹ During Tanzafio's recollection, Palombia is briefly shown in one unique frame.⁷² Tanzafio tells us that when he visited the country, the revolution had already started. Though in his narration Tanzafio confirms what is stated in Franquin's work, namely that Palombia is in South America, the image used for Palombia harks back, yet again, to Mexico. The frame shows revolutionaries clearly

⁶⁸ Fauche, et al., "Houba Banana ®", in Houba Banana ®, Marsupilami, vol. 11, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, 11/2 & 13/4-6.

⁶⁹ Batem, et al., *Rififi en Palombie*, 5/2; Fauche, et al., "Houba Banana ®", in Houba Banana ®, Marsupilami, vol. 11, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, 3/1 & 13/5.

⁷⁰ There is a poster listing the rules and regulations regarding the use of a public pool which has as a header "Piscinas de Caracas" (Caracas swimming pools) in Fauche, et al., "Houba Banana ®", in Houba Banana ®, Marsupilami, vol. 11, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, 4/8 and in the following short story Rémi mentions that the who's who of Caracas is invited to the birthday party of the ambassador's son (Hergé, *Les Bijoux de La Castafiore*, 30/1).

⁷¹ Compare Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 5/4-6 and Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 29/12.

⁷² Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 21/9.

inspired from Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, sporting large moustaches, *sarapes*, sombreros and more bandoleers.⁷³

Though this imagery is in line with the one Franquin originally offered when he created Palombia, Morvan and Munuera's Guaracha—never previously *shown*, though mentioned, in *Spirou et Fantasio*—does not distinguish itself considerably from Franquin's Palombia. First, as a country that eternally depends on Palombia for its location, Guaracha is as difficult to place on a map—if not more so. All the information Franquin provided is that it is a neighbouring country of Palombia.⁷⁴ As for Tanzafio's map, it is considerably more vague than the one used by Spirou and Fantasio: a few landmarks and arrows appear to show the direction in which one should travel. Yet, without any indication of cardinal points, coordinates or even where the sea ends and the land begins, it is impossible to use this map to effectively locate Guaracha.⁷⁵ The map only gives us the *illusion* of knowing where the source is, when in reality it tells us nothing. Secondly, while Morvan and Munuera offer a clear visual distinction between the time of the conquest and present-day Guaracha, and though the present-day indigenous Guarachians do not resemble the Chahutas—they do not wear loincloths or beaded jewellery—their attire is, once again, clearly drawn from Mexican sources. Katxina and her followers wear the iconic black balaclava and red scarf of the members of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation, henceforth EZLN), based in the state of Chiapas,

⁷³ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 28/14 and 29/1.

⁷⁴ Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, 57/6 & 41/12.

⁷⁵ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 15/8; Franquin, "Les Aventures de Spirou" [The adventures of Spirou] (*Spirou*, 27 March, 1952, Issue 728, 1-2), in *De Champignac au marsupilami: 1950 - 1952, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 2, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2006, p. 142.

Mexico (Figure 5).⁷⁶ In addition, the weapons used by the Guarachians at the time of the conquest as well as the ones owned by Tanzafio seem to include Aztec weapons and Guaracha also has pyramids.⁷⁷ Thus, though the indigenous Guarachians are certainly not replicas of the various indigenous groups we may find in Palombia or in San Theodoros, and though Selvo's gang do not wear *sarapes* and *sombreros*, the sources for Guaracha in *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir* are undeniably Mexican.



Figure 5. EZLN poster.
Photograph taken on 11/04/2011 in the Zócalo, México D.F.

Besides the cultural traits that are often drawn from Mexico, another recurring feature of these fictional countries is the figure of the dictator. I have already shown the many references Hergé made in *L'oreille cassée* and *Tintin et les Picaros* through politics. Here, I do not wish to repeat the exercise but to focus on the inner workings of San

⁷⁶ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 41/12; EZLN is a group that, claiming its roots in Pancho Villa's and Emiliano Zapata's revolutionary ideals, fights for a real change in Mexican society (See Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, p. 13).

⁷⁷ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 17/5, 42/3-4, 48/5.

Theodorian and Palombian politics rather than what this might correspond to in real life. In *Tintin*, although we only have two dictators—Tapioca and Alcazar—these two men are in constant struggle against each other. From the very first coup in *L’oreille cassée* to the last one in *Tintin et les Picaros*, readers can count no fewer than seven coups in San Theodoros over the years: three in *L’oreille cassée*, one in *Les 7 boules de cristal*, one in *Coke en Stock* and two in *Tintin et les Picaros*.⁷⁸ The highest concentration of these coups is in *L’oreille cassée*, where the three coups happen in a very short space of time on the same day and within only two pages. This initial accumulation of coups, followed by the systematic mention of a revolution and a coup or two every time Tintin encounters Alcazar, makes for a general impression of a country that is perpetually undergoing a revolution and yet never ceases to be under the control of a dictator. In *Palombia*, the same trope is visible practically from the minute Spirou and Fantasio step out of their cab, with building after building going up in a blast.⁷⁹ While Spirou and Fantasio are truly shocked by the rapid succession of explosions, their taxi driver and improvised guide pragmatically comments “décidément, c’est une révolution!” (really, this is a revolution!).⁸⁰ Although we do not see the head of state at this time, it is not long before we encounter a dictator in Palombia in the person of Zantafio, alias Général Zantas, who is as emphatic in his body language as Tapioca himself when it comes to political speeches.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Hergé, *L’Oreille cassée*, pp. 21-22; Hergé, *Les 7 Boules de cristal*, 13/11-12; Hergé, *Coke en stock* [The Red Sea Sharks], *Les Aventures de Tintin*, vol. 19, Tournai: Casterman, 1958, 60/1; Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 1/5 & pp. 56-58.

⁷⁹ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, pp. 50-51.

⁸⁰ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 50/7. The official translation does not include this statement, preferring to use “Whoops... make zat [sic] was brand new building of ze [sic] bank!” (Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 50/7).

⁸¹ Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, passim.

Though *L'horloger de la comète* does not engage with the trope of the dictator—the period of the conquest is, after all, too early for this type of political figure to appear—and Morvan and Munuera have updated the political landscape by referring to the EZLN, in the series *Marsupilami* the figure of the dictator has recently made a comeback. In *Baby Prinz* we not only met the dictator Baby Prinz himself but also found out that he was the successor of Papa Prinz (his father) and that he belonged to the same political lineage as Général Zantas (there is a picture of Zantafio in his room).⁸² Baby Prinz's successor—Achilló Zavatas—proves much worse than Baby Prinz, promising political retaliation against all opponents to his regime as soon as he gains power.⁸³ While national political figures had altogether disappeared from the series since *Baby Prinz*—the stories were mostly centred on life in the Chahuta village—with *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, the figure of the dictator is brought back to the fore. Interestingly, both Général Pochero and Général Hermoso sport uniforms that closely resemble that worn by Général Zantas—though Pochero opts for one that is mostly white—and the army's uniform is also the same as the one found in *Le dictateur et le champignon*.⁸⁴ The film adaptation itself, though an original story, can be seen as a mix of many previous *Marsupilami* and *Spirou et Fantasio* albums, drawing from them to set up the background, but also to reproduce scenes from existing albums. For instance, the scene of the hatching of the marsupilami eggs closely resembles the one seen in *Le nid des marsupilamis*, the hermosoïd orchid has similar (though stronger) properties to those of the chahutium in *L'orchidée des*

⁸² Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, 17/8.

⁸³ Batem, et al., *Baby Prinz*, p. 48. The name Achilló Zavatas ("Achilles Shoes" in a very approximate Spanish translation) might be a reference to *Achille Talon* (literally, "Achilles Heel"), a humour comic series created by Greg, one of the authors who collaborated with Franquin on *Spirou et Fantasio* and *Marsupilami* stories such as *Tembo Tabou* (Greg, et al., "Tembo tabou" [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959*, *Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008) and *Le bébé du bout du monde* (Batem, et al., *Le Bébé du bout du monde* [The Baby From the Ends of the Earth], *Marsupilami*, vol. 2, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2007).

⁸⁴ Batem, et al., *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, 10/7-9 & 44/10; Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, 33/6-7.

Chahutas and the interrupted live transmission is reminiscent of the marsupilami's irruption in the television studio in *Rififi en Palombie*. The film director, Alain Chabat, himself says that while they were shooting the film, the entire crew had copies of Franquin's albums and used them to ensure every detail was faithful to Franquin's work.⁸⁵

Thus, though the figure of the Latin American dictator has become rather obsolete in real life and though it had long been left behind in *Marsupilami*, it is brought back to the fore with these two adaptations. I would argue that despite the fact that the figure of the dictator is no longer up to date with the reality of Latin America today, Alain Chabat's decision to bring back the dictator in *Sur la piste du marsupilami* is indicative of the fact that *bande dessinée* Latin America, ultimately, is a world unto itself and though it may have been based on Latin America at the time Hergé and Franquin created their fictional countries, it is also much more than a faithful reproduction of reality. It is a copy of what has already been seen in *bande dessinée* Latin America that with its own internal codes, allows the different scriptwriters who lend it life to touch upon different matters while using a setting that readers are visually familiar with. We should therefore not be surprised that *Sur la piste du marsupilami*, the film, was shot in Mexico and shows many cultural artefacts that are typically Mexican, yet shows Pablito riding a llama—a South American animal—as though it were perfectly normal. Nor should we be surprised that said llama spits in Pablito's mouth—or that the latter returns the favour—replicating Captain Haddock's famous troubles with spitting llamas in *Le temple du soleil*—an album that closes with

⁸⁵ Franquin, "Le Nid des marsupilamis" [The Marsupilami Nest], in *Le Nid des marsupilamis*, Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio, vol. 12, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1960 (classic), 31/2 – 32/3; Batem & Dugomier, *L'Orchidée des Chahutas*; Batem, et al., *Rififi en Palombie*, p. 6 and Alain Chabat (dir.) *Décors* (mini documentary on the Bonus DVD of *Sur la Piste du marsupilami*) [Film sets], Making Hop, 2012 [4min44sec].

Captain Haddock exacting revenge by spitting water in a llama's face.⁸⁶ In the same vein, bringing back the figure of the dictator in *Sur la piste du marsupilami* reconfirms that we are indeed in Palombia: a shell that we can easily recognise externally and that can be used to refer to a number of Latin American countries at once.

The borrowings from one *bande dessinée* to the next, however, did not start *after* Franquin and Hergé. In fact, Hergé's and Franquin's Latin American countries—fictional or real—have more in common with each other than one might suspect. Not only do they both use sources that are originally Mexican for countries that are located in South America, but the same names keep coming back. For instance the capital city of Palombia is named Chiquito, which aside from being reminiscent of the brand Chiquita Banana, is the pseudonym used by Général Alcazar's music-hall assistant (Rupac Inca Huaco) in *Les 7 boules de cristal / Le temple du soleil*.⁸⁷ Moreover, the volcano named El Sombrero could be a reference to the desert of Gran Chapo (literally, “big hat”) mentioned in *L'oreille cassée*.⁸⁸ Even Palombia's official location is not far from the countries that La Castafiore toured prior to visiting San Theodoros in *Tintin et les Picaros*, which might suggest that San Theodoros itself is not far off.⁸⁹ While these aforementioned points in common between Franquin's and Hergé's work might be attributed to mere chance, it is striking that, like Général Alcazar in *L'oreille cassée*, in *Le dictateur et le champignon*, Général Zantas seeks to

⁸⁶ Pablito and the llama spit in each other's face in the film, but this is not included in the album. Chabat & Seydoux (dir.) *Sur la Piste du marsupilami*; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, 2/4-10, 21/6-12 and p. 62.

⁸⁷ Hergé, *Les 7 Boules de cristal*, 13/5 & 57/4-7.

⁸⁸ Yann, for his part, would later use the name Zorrino—the name of Tintin's guide in *Le temple du soleil*—for a tomb raider in *Le temple de Boavista*.

⁸⁹ We should note, however, that if *L'oreille cassée* precedes *Spirou et les héritiers*, the latter album itself precedes *Tintin et les Picaros* by more than two decades.

invade a neighbouring country simply for personal gain.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the San Theodorian army in *Tintin et les Picaros* wears a uniform that very closely resembles that worn by Général Zantas and his army, the very uniform that has recently been reintroduced in the *Marsupilami* series.⁹¹ It is certainly true that Franquin grew up reading *Tintin* rather than *Spirou et Fantasio* and that many similarities can thus be attributed to Franquin's own reading habits. However, if *L'oreille cassée* precedes *Spirou et les héritiers*, the latter itself precedes *Tintin et les Picaros* so that if Franquin might have taken the idea of the invasion of a foreign country from *L'oreille cassée*, the location of Palombia on the map cannot have been taken from *Tintin*. If there has been a borrowing in this case, then it must have been from *Spirou et Fantasio* and into *Tintin*. Rather than seeking to establish who is copying whom between Franquin and Hergé, it is more constructive to understand Palombia and San Theodoros as two countries that are located more or less in the same area, and that through mutual borrowings have constructed the myth of *bande dessinée* Latin America that we continue to see in more recent creations.

Exotropia

As stated earlier, in this last section I introduce some “African” material. These are not works that are African in *origin*, but rather works that are either *set*—entirely or partly—in Africa or are linked to Africa. The reason for the inclusion of these “African” albums in this chapter is the fact that while *bande dessinée* Latin America—though it has points in common with “real” Latin America—relies on *bande dessinée*'s own mythical imagery, it also shares numerous echoes with other locations. While there are echoes with other countries found within and without *bande*

⁹⁰ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, pp. 33-42; Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, pp. 29-59.

⁹¹ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 57/2 ; Franquin, *Le Dictateur et le champignon*, 33/6-7.

dessinée, I am particularly interested in the similarities with *bande dessinée* Africa, as they are more commonly recurring. In this last subsection, I therefore briefly outline the similarities that Palombia and Guaracha share with a few other places in the world, before focusing on the similarities between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa. The similarities that lie between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa are so strong that the former may very well be an Africa that does not speak its name because of the stigma attached to the Belgian colonial ventures in Congo. Hence the title of this subsection: while gazing upon Latin America, many of the “Latin American” *bandes dessinées* seem to *also* be gazing upon Africa.

As regards *bande dessinée* Latin America’s similarities with other countries, one of the most striking ones is certainly Franquin’s mythical animal, the marsupilami. While it is true that there are some marsupials in Latin America, it is Australia that is most commonly associated with this kind of animal. In fact, marsupilamis are even more peculiar than marsupials, as they are in reality egg-laying mammals and monotremes are even more closely linked with Australia than marsupials. Yet, marsupilamis are (almost) exclusive to Palombia. In another register, the various sources of youth, be they in the form of a magical flower (the orchidus hermosoid) or the fount of youth as seen in *L’homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, they could easily be seen as references to the longevity associated with the mythical land of Shangri-La. In this respect, it is worth noting numerous echoes in Tome and Janry’s *La vallée des bannis*.⁹² Spirou and Fantasio reach the valley that gives this album its name after

⁹² Tome & Janry, “La vallée des bannis” [The Valley of Exiles], in *Les aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: La frousse aux troussees + La vallée des bannis*, Double Album, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011.

falling off a cliff during an expedition in the fictional Touboutt-Chan (literally, “all the time”), a country that shares a border with Nepal, in the first instalment of a dyptich.⁹³ This doomed valley may be officially near Nepal, but the imagery used by Janry has Palombian echoes. Not only does the Touboutt-Chan jungle seem to prefigure the jungle that invades Champignac-en-Cambrousse in *Alerte aux Zorkons*—a jungle that was originally inspired by Franquin’s Palombian jungle—with a number of exuberant monsters, but Spirou himself begins to find that this jungle resembles the Palombian one.⁹⁴ Thus, when he hears the cry “houba” in this lost valley, Spirou begins to believe that the marsupilami may well have come to his rescue and begins to hope, only to find himself face to face with a couple of animals that resemble a cross between hippopotamuses, cows and possibly pigs.⁹⁵ While this sequence makes the reader laugh as we know exactly what “houba” signals and we know that the marsupilami can no longer appear in *Spirou et Fantasio*, it also states upfront that the authors are aware of the visible similarities between the Touboutt-Chan jungle and the Palombian one. In addition, Tome and Janry’s Touboutt-Chan is reminiscent of Franquin’s Palombia and Morvan and Munuera’s Guaracha in that, like those two countries, the map depicting its location is relatively useless to the reader. Although we can see political boundaries and Touboutt-Chan’s proximity to China, the map mostly depicts the former country’s complicated situation, caught between two powerful countries: Touboutt-Chan is literally a foot caught between a

⁹³ Tome & Janry, “La Frousse aux troussees” [Running Scared], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: La Frousse aux troussees + La Vallée des bannis*, Double Album, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011, pp. 16 & 48-52.

⁹⁴ Vehlmann, Personal Communication, 10 February 2011.

⁹⁵ Tome & Janry, “La vallée des bannis” [The Valley of Exiles], in *Les aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: La frousse aux troussees + La vallée des bannis*, Double Album, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011, 73/5-10.

hammer and an anvil.⁹⁶ Finally, in a similar fashion to how *Tintin* and *Spirou et Fantasio* borrowed from each other in their Latin American imaginings, here Tome and Janry deliberately put a reference to *Tintin*, suggesting that Spirou and Fantasio's guide, Gorpah, also served as guide to Tintin and Haddock in *Tintin au Tibet*.⁹⁷ As Gorpah explains to Spirou soon after we first see him: “**Gorpah** bon guide. Moi déjà guidé jadis jeune étranger avec petit chien blanc ! Moi pouvoir montrer beaucoup yétis !” (**Gorpah** good guide. Me guided young foreigner with little white dog before! Me can show many yetis!).⁹⁸ And if the allusion is not clear enough, Gorpah regularly uses Captain Haddock's common swearwords “Mille sabords” (blistering barnacles), which suggests that he acquired this vocabulary from Captain as he guided Tintin, Milou and Haddock.

While there are undeniably echoes of *bande dessinée* Latin America in Tome and Janry's Touboutt-Chan and while there are also elements drawn in from other parts of the world in *bande dessinée* Latin America, I now wish to turn to echoes with *bande dessinée* Africa. In order to do so, I will draw from a number of stories and the shortest of these is a one-page gag that appears to be titled “Houu ba!”.⁹⁹ Resorting to very few words apart from some narrative text in the first half of the page, this short gag featuring the marsupilami and Tarzan relies essentially on physical comedy. The marsupilami shows his superiority over the other “[seigneur] de la jungle” ([lord] of

⁹⁶ Tome & Janry, “La Frousse aux trousses” [Running Scared], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: La Frousse aux trousses + La Vallée des bannis*, Double Album, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011, 24/5-7.

⁹⁷ Hergé, *Tintin au Tibet* [Tintin in Tibet], *Les Aventures de Tintin*, vol. 20, Tournai: Casterman, 1960.

⁹⁸ Tome & Janry, “La Frousse aux trousses” [Running Scared], in *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio: La Frousse aux trousses + La Vallée des bannis*, Double Album, vol. 3, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2011, 23/2. Translation from Tome & Janry, *Running Scared*, trans. Jerome Saincantin, *Spirou & Fantasio*, vol. 3, Canterbury: Cinebook, 2012, 17/2. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁹ Franquin, “Houu ba!”, in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, *Marsupilami*, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, p. 19. It is not entirely clear whether the text and illustration at the top of the eight frames are intended as the title or simply as an illustration, as Franquin sometimes added illustrations outside the frames. As the page is otherwise untitled, I use “Houu ba!” as the title for this page.

the jungle”, Tarzan, by playing a trick on the latter.¹⁰⁰ As Tarzan mistakes the marsupilami’s tail for a vine and falls flat to the ground, the marsupilami uses his tail to literally bounce back and hops off laughing loudly.¹⁰¹

Tembo Tabou, “L’héritage” and *Les soucoupes volantes*, like “Houu ba!” are rather peculiar stories, each for different reasons. The first one, *Tembo Tabou*, a *Spirou et Fantasio* adventure scripted by Greg and drawn by Roba and Franquin, is located quite far down on the list of *Spirou et Fantasio* classic albums (at number 24), between two of Fournier’s albums. Had the chronological order been maintained, *Tembo Tabou* would have been placed at number 18, but this story, written for and pre-published in the newspaper *Le parisien libéré* in 1958, was only pre-published in *Spirou* in 1971 and published as an album in 1973, during the Fournier period.¹⁰² In this story, the marsupilami accompanies Spirou and Fantasio to a fictional African country named Kwakildila (literally, “what’s he sayin’?”). The somewhat cryptic title of the album refers to a number of taboo tembos (elephants) that have been painted bright red. These elephants belong to some men who use the red elephants to destroy huts and intimidate pygmies into paying them tribute in the form of gold nuggets. Spirou and Fantasio find out that the man they had hoped to meet—the writer Oliver Gurgling Thirstywell—has disappeared and that his camp has been destroyed. Spirou and Fantasio join forces with the pygmies to stop the exploitation and during their action against the gang, they also find Thirstywell, who was being held hostage. Once

¹⁰⁰ Franquin, “Houu ba!”, in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 19/1.

¹⁰¹ Franquin, “Houu ba!”, in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 19/5-8.

¹⁰² Patrick Pinchart & Thierry Martens, “Franquin: Les Années galère” [The Years of Struggle], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, pp. 9 & 12.

they have brought this organisation down, Spirou and Fantasio hand the greedy men to the police and Thirstywell decides to stay amongst the pygmies.¹⁰³

“L’héritage”, for its part, is an early *Spirou et Fantasio* story by Franquin (1946 – 1947). It predates the stories published in the classic series and is available in the first volume of the *Spirou et Fantasio hors série* collection.¹⁰⁴ In a drawing style that is still quite close to that of his predecessor and master Jijé, Franquin here tells the story of how Spirou goes to a remote village, then to Africa, to find and claim his inheritance from an uncle whose existence was until then unknown to Spirou. Spirou and Fantasio eventually locate the inheritance—several cases of very strong whisky—shortly before it explodes and goes up in smoke.¹⁰⁵ As for *Les soucoupes volantes*, finally, it is the last story in Jijé’s series *Blondin et Cirage*.¹⁰⁶ *Blondin et Cirage*, created in 1949, features two young boys, one white (Blondin, literally, “blondie”) and one black (Cirage, literally, “shoe polish”). In this series, Jijé deliberately reversed the paternalism found in *Tintin au Congo* by making Cirage the one who solves problems, though Blondin seems to be the one who knows it all.¹⁰⁷ While this series is not one that I focus on in this project, *Les soucoupes volantes* is of interest here not so much because it briefly features Spirou, the count of Champignac and the marsupilami drawn by Franquin, or because of Jijé’s reaction to *Tintin au Congo*, but because it features a *Marsupilamus Africanus*.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, finding the perfection of

¹⁰³ Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, passim.

¹⁰⁴ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976.

¹⁰⁵ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, passim.

¹⁰⁶ Thierry Martens, “1954 - 1955”, in *1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé*, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Thierry Martens, “1938 - 1940”, in *1938 - 1940, Tout Jijé*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2001, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Martens, “1954 - 1955”, in *1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé*, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, p. 4; Jijé, “Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes” [Blondin and Cirage Discover the Flying Saucers], in *1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé*, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, passim.

Franquin's marsupilami (originally the Marsupilamus Fantasi, later the Maruspilamus Franquini) annoying, Jijé created his own "imperfect" African marsupilami: a fat, lazy, tailless and greedy animal, whose cry—bahou—is the reverse of that of the original marsupilami (houba).¹⁰⁹

Approached by a vaguely Hispanic Romeo Camarones, who is seeking to buy the marsupilami, Cirage agrees to call Spirou and Fantasio, who decline the offer. Shortly afterwards, Blondin and Cirage receive a letter from their friend the Prince Pwakassé, (literally, 'split pea') of the kingdom of the Bikitililis in Africa, informing them that a scientist named Labarbousse has identified an authentic marsupilami.¹¹⁰ Camarones immediately asks Blondin and Cirage to go to Bikitilili to buy the marsupilami at any cost and pays for their tickets. As irritatingly deaf and difficult to communicate with as professeur Tournesol, Labarbousse introduces Blondin and Cirage to the African marsupilami and the two boys take him to Camarones. Blondin and Cirage later find themselves roped into accompanying Labarbousse and the marsupilami to Tibet. Held captive by men who have built flying saucers, Blondin and Cirage succeed in escaping during a test flight and send the saucer back to Tibet with the inconvenient African marsupilami still in it.¹¹¹

Finally, from the *Tintin* series, I will also use here the notorious *Tintin au Congo*. This early *Tintin* album—the first one to be redrawn entirely for the colour edition—has been the centre of considerable controversy. Though the album was not removed from

¹⁰⁹ Martens, "1954 - 1955", in 1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, p. 4; Jijé, "Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes" [Blondin and Cirage Discover the Flying Saucers], in 1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, passim.

¹¹⁰ Jijé, "Le Nègre blanc" [The White Negro], in 1951 - 1952, Tout Jijé, vol. 7, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1991, 73/2.

¹¹¹ Jijé, "Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes" [Blondin and Cirage Discover the Flying Saucers], in 1954 - 1955, Tout Jijé, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, passim.

the series, Hergé himself expressed his regrets regarding the content of this album while he was still alive, considering it was a “[péché] de jeunesse” (a youthful indiscretion).¹¹² The album was the last one to be translated into English in 2005, even after *Tintin au pays des soviets*, the latter being “an ‘adventure’ that, due to its rarity, had long become something of a myth in the world of strip cartoon” before its final publication in facsimile edition in 1981.¹¹³ The translation came with a red dust jacket announcing that this book completed the collection and that some readers might find it “offensive” and also included a longer foreword from the translators.¹¹⁴ Despite these precautions, the book sparked controversy in the UK in 2007 and in the midst of the call to ban this album, Borders moved it to the adult section, while the US publisher renounced publishing a translation.¹¹⁵ There have been, and will likely continue to be, many debates on whether to ban this book or not, such as the case of the Congolese Bienvenu Mbutu Mondondo who turned first to the Belgian courts, then to the French courts, to ban *Tintin au Congo* because of what he considers to be racist content in Hergé’s album.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Sadoul, *Tintin et moi*, p. 89-90.

¹¹³ Benoît Peeters, *Tintin and the World of Hergé: An Illustrated History*, Bulfinch Press, 1992, p. 27, cited in Philippe Met, “Of Men and Animals: Hergé’s *Tintin au Congo*, a Study in Primitivism”, *Romanic Review*, 87, 1 (Jan 1996), p. 131.

¹¹⁴ Hergé, *Tintin in the Congo*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, The Adventures of Tintin, vol. 2, London: Egmont, 2005.

¹¹⁵ Martin Beckford, “Ban ‘Racist’ Tintin Book, Says CRE”, *Telegraph News*, 19/04/2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1557233/Ban-%27racist%27-Tintin-book%2C-says-CRE.html>.

¹¹⁶ Didier Pasamonik, “Affaire « Tintin au Congo »: Frédéric Mitterrand appelle à « ne pas banaliser la censure »” [The ‘Tintin in the Congo’ Affair: Frédéric Mitterrand Asks ‘Not to Make Censorship Commonplace’], *Actua BD*, 24/12/2009; NA, “« Tintin au Congo » colonise aussi le débat en Suisse!” [‘Tintin in the Congo’ Also Colonises the Debate in Switzerland!], *Actua BD*, 12/09/2009; Anonymous, “«L’affaire Tintin au Congo» en passe de rebondir devant les tribunaux français” [‘The ‘Tintin in the Congo Affair’ About to Take a New Turn in French Courts], (01/09/2009), <http://www.actuabd.com/+L-affaire-Tintin-au-Congo-en-passe-de-rebondir-devant-les-tribunaux-francais+> (02/09/2009); Jean Leymarie (dir.) *Faut-il interdire “Tintin au Congo”?*, Débats: Matin, 12/05/2010 [11min15sec] Available: <http://www.france-info.com/chroniques-debats-matin-2010-05-12-faut-il-interdire-tintin-au-congo-441039-81-189.html> (27/05/2010); Anonymous, “«L’affaire Tintin au Congo» en passe de rebondir devant les tribunaux français”; Didier Pasamonik, “Affaire « Tintin au Congo »: La Plainte belge est recevable” [The ‘Tintin in the Congo’ Affair: The Belgian Complaint is Admissible], *Actua BD*, 27/12/2009.

The storyline of the album itself is quite simple: Tintin goes to the Congo as a reporter. He rents a car and employs a boy named Coco to accompany him during his travels. Tintin soon encounters an antagonist, a man named Tom, who, under the orders of Al Capone, tries to kill Tintin. Having heard of Tintin's planned trip to the Congo, Al Capone thought Tintin knew of his plans to control the diamond industry in Africa. Before Tintin finds out why Tom wants to eliminate him, he experiences many adventures. He meets the chief of the Babaoro'm tribe (literally, 'rum baba') and gains their trust, he outwits and impresses the m'Hatouvou (a rival tribe, literally, 'show-off') so much that they ask him to be their king, meets a pygmy tribe who have made Milou their king, briefly teaches a mathematics class, and shoots a variety of animals. Tintin also faces death a number of times, finding himself hanging from a branch over a river teeming with crocodiles or over a waterfall. He finally leaves Congo on a plane after narrowly escaping being trampled by a herd of buffaloes.¹¹⁷

I would argue that the more obvious echoes between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa are found in the *Spirou et Fantasio* universe. For instance, the plot of *Spirou et les héritiers* very closely resembles that of "L'héritage". Not only do both stories have the concept of inheritance in their very title but many of the main nodes of the storyline of "L'héritage" are taken up again in *Spirou et les héritiers*. Thus, like Fantasio in *Spirou et les héritiers*, Spirou finds out he has inherited from an uncle he does not know—if Fantasio last saw Tanzafio at his own christening when he is informed that he is an heir in *Spirou et les héritiers*, Spirou did even not know he had an uncle until he received a letter informing him that he was the sole heir of the

¹¹⁷ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo*.

now deceased uncle.¹¹⁸ Though Spirou is not officially required to complete any tasks in order to gain access to his inheritance, he does need to travel to claim his uncle's most prized possession.¹¹⁹ On his way to finding this treasure, however, he needs to compete with a number of men who would like to lay their hands on this inheritance, but rather than to a fictional Latin American country (Palombia), it is to a fictional *African* country (Mababi) that Spirou travels.¹²⁰ There, he is captured by "savages" and avoids being eaten by them thanks to his guide Mr Welwell (an old friend of his uncle's) and the latter's ability to speak the "savages'" language.¹²¹

Although Spirou's uncle originally left him many cases of a very strong whisky, and a house, in the end it can be said that both Spirou and Fantasio are left with an essentially immaterial inheritance (disregarding the mansion Tanzafio leaves Fantasio much later, in *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, and which we never see again in any case).¹²² This is very clear in the case of Fantasio as the last letter Tanzafio left with Mordicus, for the winner of the challenge, clearly states that Tanzafio has left no earthly possessions:

l'obsession de ne rien pouvoir léguer à ma famille a fort assombri mes dernières années. [...] Mais, un jour, me vint l'idée de ce concours , et vous avez amassé vous-mêmes votre héritage , vous et votre cousin...

*... je vous lègue donc vos aventures , vos succès et même vos échecs, en espérant que ces trois épreuves auront été une école d'initiative, de courage et de persévérance et que votre vieil oncle a aidé un tout petit peu à faire de vous deux des hommes !*¹²³

¹¹⁸ Franquin, "L'Héritage" [The Inheritance], in *L'Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, pp. 17-18; Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 4/4.

¹¹⁹ Franquin, "L'Héritage" [The Inheritance], in *L'Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 24/10-12.

¹²⁰ Franquin, "L'Héritage" [The Inheritance], in *L'Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, passim.

¹²¹ Franquin, "L'Héritage" [The Inheritance], in *L'Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, pp. 40-41.

¹²² Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 56/1.

¹²³ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 64/4-5, my italics.

(the obsession of not being able to bequeath anything to my family darkened that last years [sic] of my life. [...] By declaring this unusual competition, I have ensured that you have gathered your inheritance yourself and your cousin...

...so, I bequeath you the benefit of your adventures, your success and even your failures. I know that these tests were a source of learning, initiative, courage and perseverance and that your old uncle could help in his own little way by making men out of you two!)

¹²⁴

If Fantasio thinks Tanzafio left him “un magnifique héritage” (a magnificent inheritance), Spirou considers that his own uncle left him an “héritage ridicule” (ridiculous inheritance).¹²⁵ Though the two friends may react differently to their respective uncles’ legacies, Spirou’s inheritance must also be essentially the experience he gathered as he travelled to and across Mababi. After all, the house that his uncle left him in Chahutemont (a precursor to the Chahutas?) is in a pitiful state—and we never see it again in the series—and the whisky cases catch fire and explode soon after Spirou finds them. Though he is mocking Spirou, Fantasio’s comment is very accurate: “Spirou a hérité d’un feu d’artifice!” (Spirou has inherited a fireworks show!).¹²⁶ All these points in common would suggest that “L’héritage” was a prototype of sorts for *Spirou et les héritiers*, which is transplanted from imaginary Mababi to imaginary Palombia.

The stories “Houu ba!”, *Tembo Tabou* and *Les soucoupes volantes* seem to contribute to a further blurring between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa. In Jijé’s story, there is still some distinction as it is clearly stated that Blondin and Cirage, the two heroes of the series, go to Africa to pick up the (African) marsupilami, but like Franquin’s Mababi, it is never mentioned where the kingdom of

¹²⁴ Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 64/4-5, my italics.

¹²⁵ Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 64/9; Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 47/1.

¹²⁶ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 46/9.

the Bikitililis is located within Africa.¹²⁷ In fact, the name of the kingdom is not even mentioned in this story—all we are told is that Pwakassé is in Africa and the name of the kingdom can be found in an earlier story, when Blondin and Cirage meet Pwakassé for the first time.¹²⁸ From this point of view, “Africa” can be seen as parallel to “Latin America” in its generic continent-for-country location and the fact that they each have a species of marsupilami. When we come to *Tembo Tabou*, the album confirms that Latin America and Africa are similar. While there are no African marsupilamis in *Tembo Tabou*, the original marsupilami accompanies Spirou and Fantasio to Africa for the third time in this adventure.¹²⁹ Though this may not be his native Amazonian jungle, the marsupilami takes to this environment like a fish to water: while an invisible narrator introduces and describes the marsupilami for the readers, the marsupilami is shown using his tail to catch fish much like he used to catch piranhas in the Palombian rivers.¹³⁰ In fact, it would seem that for the marsupilami there is no significant difference between the Palombian and the jungles of Kwakildila. As the narrator states: “[d]ans une forêt tropicale, le marsupilami se sent chez lui. Parmi les senteurs des profondeurs végétales et leurs bruissements mystérieux, il retrouve intacts tous ses instincts sauvages” ([i]n a tropical forest, the marsupilami feels at home. Amongst the scents of the vegetal depths and their mysterious rustles, all his wild instincts come back to the surface).¹³¹ Thus, this

¹²⁷ Jijé, “Blondin et Cirage découvrent les soucoupes volantes” [Blondin and Cirage Discover the Flying Saucers], in 1954 - 1955, *Tout Jijé*, vol. 9, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1992, pp. 62-65.

¹²⁸ Jijé, “Le Nègre blanc” [The White Negro], in 1951 - 1952, *Tout Jijé*, vol. 7, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1991.

¹²⁹ Spirou, Fantasio and the marsupilami have previously visited Africa in Franquin, *La Corne de rhinocéros* [The Horn of the Rhinoceros], *Une Aventure de Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1956 and in Franquin, “Le Gorille a bonne mine” [The Gorilla Gold Adventure], in Spirou et Fantasio, *L’Intégrale*, vol. 5, Ixelles: Niffle, 2002.

¹³⁰ Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959*, Spirou et Fantasio: *Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 91/4-6.

¹³¹ Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959*, Spirou et Fantasio: *Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 92/4.

imaginary African country that cannot be located on a map, though not Palombia, appears to be comparable to Palombia for the marsupilami.

It is perhaps also significant that in *Tembo Tabou* two anonymous characters are briefly “shown” to be speaking in a language that closely resembles the Chahuta language in the *Marsupilami* series.¹³² Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify the speakers as they are hidden in a bush and all that is visible is their eyes and this type of language never comes back in *Tembo Tabou*. Yet, it is notable that Greg, the scriptwriter for *Tembo Tabou*, was the first scriptwriter to make use of this type of language for the Chahutas, while Franquin preferred to use either words that are simply unintelligible or standard spoken French with a standard French spelling.¹³³ This brief slip of the tongue of sorts could be a Freudian slip on the part of Greg and in any case is certainly aligned with the way he has chosen to show that, for the marsupilami, Kwakildila and Palombia are equivalent.

When we turn to the one-page gag “Houu ba!”, it appears that the difference between Latin America and Africa no longer exists as the two have been entirely collapsed into one jungle. This one-page story featuring Tarzan and the marsupilami opens with the statement “Il fallait qu’un jour ces deux prestigieux seigneurs de la jungle se rencontrassent...” (These two prestigious lords of the jungle had to meet one

¹³² That is to say, standard spoken French written in a more phonetic manner, with inserted silent *hs* and shifted word boundaries to make the text appear like a foreign language. See Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959*, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 93/8.

¹³³ See Batem, et al., *La Queue du marsupilami* [The Tail of the Marsupilami], Marsupilami, vol. 1, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 1987; Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 59/10 - 60/6; Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, passim.

day...).¹³⁴ Though it is true that both Tarzan and the marsupilami live in jungles, there is a geographical impossibility that is never questioned here: Tarzan lives in an African jungle, while Palombia is officially in South America. Certainly, both the marsupilami and Tarzan can travel but their coinciding in the same jungle is not explained beyond the fact that they had to cross paths one day. They appear to be going about their usual business—swinging from vine to vine for one and playing tricks for the other—in the marsupilami’s native jungle when they chance upon each other.¹³⁵ Thus, it is presented as only natural that the marsupilami and Tarzan appear together in “the jungle” though an ocean separates their respective jungles.

Besides the similarities in the plots of “L’héritage” and *Spirou et les héritiers*, the creation of an African marsupilami and the contraction—or even collapse—of the geographical distance between Africa and Latin America, there is also in *Spirou et Fantasio* a repetition in the features used for Africans and for Palombian indigenous groups. For instance, Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien de Champignac’s run-in with the Palombinos, in *L’horloger de la comète*, results in them being taken back to the Palombino village in a manner that is reminiscent of the way in which Spirou, Fantasio and Mr Welwell are taken to the village of the “savages” in “L’héritage”: while Spirou and Fantasio are made to walk this time, unconscious Aurélien is tied to a wooden stick and carried like a prey by two Palombinos.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Franquin, “Houu ba!”, in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 19/1.

¹³⁵ Franquin, “Houu ba!”, in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 19/1.

¹³⁶ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage*, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 40/13; Tome & Janry, *L’Horloger de la comète*, 23/6.

Although there are no imaginary animals to help compare Africa and Latin America in the world of *Tintin*, there are nonetheless numerous echoes between African scenes and Latin American scenes in this series too. For instance, Milou's mistaking a crocodile for a log in *Tintin au Congo* finds an echo in *Le temple du soleil*, when Captain Haddock and Tintin mistake alligators for tree trunks.¹³⁷ More significantly, the rivalry between the Bibaros and the Arumbayas (*L'oreille cassée*) is reminiscent of that of the m'Hatouvou and the Babaoro'm (*Tintin au Congo*).¹³⁸ In addition, two of these tribes have somewhat similar names in the sense that they refer to alcohol: while the Babaoro'm are a clear reference to *baba au rhum* (a cake filled with rum), Daniel Justens and Alain Préaux, in their study of the use of Marollien in Hergé's work, have suggested that Arumbaya either comes from "had je rhum bij u?" (did you have rum?) or from "(hed e g)a rhum ba ja?" (do you have rum [with you]?).¹³⁹ Coincidentally, the official English translation for 'Bibaros' is none other than 'Rumbabas'.

Another echo between Hergé's Africa and his Latin America is the figure of the priest or witchdoctor who seeks to carry out a ritual sacrifice on Tintin for various reasons. Whether he has acquired too much authority with the locals (*Tintin au Congo*), run into the Arumbayas' rivals by sheer luck (*L'oreille cassée*) or committed sacrilege by entering a temple without permission (*Le temple du soleil*), in Congo, like in San Theodoros and in Peru, Tintin is not merely arrested: he is to be *ritually executed*.¹⁴⁰ And in all three countries he outwits the locals, or is in the company of someone who helps him outwit the locals. Thus, in *Tintin au Congo*, the hero escapes thanks to his

¹³⁷ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo*, 12/4; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, p. 38.

¹³⁸ Gilard, "Utopies hebdomadaires", p. 123.

¹³⁹ Marollien is a language spoken in the Marolles, a part of Brussels. Daniel Justens & Alain Préaux, *Tintin, Ketje de Bruxelles* [Tintin, Brussels Kid], Tournai: Casterman, 2009, p. 61.

¹⁴⁰ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo*, 24/3; Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, pp. 50-51; Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, passim.

boy Coco who comes to free him. Once free, Tintin proceeds to film Muganga (the witchdoctor) and Tom to then reveal to the Babaoro'm that their witchdoctor does not believe in their gods and is simply keeping them under his power.¹⁴¹ *L'oreille cassée* does not repeat this scene exactly, but offers an echo: after Tintin and Ridgewell are captured by the Bibaros, Milou is caught by Bikoulou, an Arumbaya who seeks an animal for a sacrifice. As the Arumbaya suggests that the kerchief tied around Milou's tail belongs to Ridgewell and that the latter may be in danger, the Arumbaya witchdoctor chooses to burn the kerchief so that no one will seek Ridgewell and that he may regain power over the Arumbaya. While the Arumbaya witchdoctor's attitude towards Ridgewell is reminiscent of that of Muganga towards Tintin, Tintin and Ridgewell themselves are facing sacrifice at the same time as Milou, at the hands of the Bibaros. Unlike the Incas of *Le temple du soleil*, Muganga or the Arumbaya witchdoctor, the Bibaros did not pick Tintin and Ridgewell to die for any particular reason other than the fact that they chanced upon them. However, in a scene that almost seems to announce the climax of *Le temple du soleil*, Ridgewell uses his talents as a ventriloquist to project his voice onto a totem and—passing himself off for the spirits of the forest—obtains his own liberation as well as Tintin's.¹⁴² In *Le temple du soleil*, it is Tintin who pretends to be able to address the gods and obtain favours from them.¹⁴³ Thus, while *Le temple du soleil* is explicitly stated to be set in Peru, it still appears to follow a certain continuity from *Tintin au Congo* and through *L'oreille cassée* in the way Tintin escapes this religious dimension of the sacred, sacrilege and sacrifice. In fact, it is striking that in both *Tintin au Congo* and *L'oreille cassée* there is a wooden statue—a fetish—that is given a growing importance. In

¹⁴¹ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo*, pp. 25-27. One might add that the motif of the indigenous leader keeping his fellow tribesmen in ignorance to better rule over them is repeated in Batem, et al., *Le Bébé du bout du monde*.

¹⁴² Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, p. 51.

¹⁴³ Hergé, *Le Temple du soleil*, pp. 58-59.

Tintin au Congo, as mentioned earlier, Muganga uses the fetish as an excuse to falsely accuse Tintin of sacrilege and to rid himself of the boy who is undermining his power. While the fetish only occupies a small place in *Tintin au Congo*, it becomes significantly more important in *L'oreille cassée* since it is the item that Tintin chases after throughout the album, and which gives the album its title (the fetish has a broken ear).¹⁴⁴ In this light, Rascar Capac's mummy could be read as another, much bigger, fetish that has been taken out of Peru and to Europe. Again, the European men will be punished for taking this sacred item.

Apart from the figure of the fetish, another recurring figure is that of the white man living amongst the indigenous. Though in most *Tintin* albums set outside Europe there are white men with whom Tintin has a conflictive relationship (such as Gibbons in *Le lotus bleu*), the indigenous/white relationship that Hergé depicts in Congo and in San Theodoros is of a different kind. Though the Incas of *Le temple du soleil* live principally as recluses from the rest of Peru while instilling fear and respect in the locals, in Congo and in San Theodoros, there are certain men who entertain a different relationship with the indigenous: they have chosen to live amongst them and at peace with them. This is the case of Ridgewell (*L'oreille cassée* and *Tintin et les Picaros*) and the missionary priest who rescues Tintin in *Tintin au Congo*. Though these men have left their own society to live with indigenous people of Africa or Latin America for different reasons, and though they are not in conflict with the people with whom they live, they nonetheless are figures of authority where they live. For instance, the priest, being a missionary, is one of many present in the Congo to impart knowledge—be it religious, mathematical or imperial—as well as provide health care.

¹⁴⁴ Hergé, *Tintin au Congo*, 24/6 – p. 27.

The first version of *Tintin au Congo*, for instance, is notorious for depicting Tintin standing in for Father Sébastien—who has been taken ill—and teaching Congolese boys about their fatherland Belgium.¹⁴⁵ While Ridgewell presents a less controversial figure—he is certainly not trying to awaken a sense of colonial belonging in the Arumbayas—he nonetheless is a figure of authority amongst them. As has already been stated, the Arumbaya witchdoctor resents him for holding sway with the other Arumbayas.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, Ridgewell has attempted to teach the Arumbayas to play golf, a gentlemanly sport that he asserts—in *L'oreille cassée*—they will never master.¹⁴⁷ When Tintin and Ridgewell meet again in *Tintin et les Picaros*, Tintin's first words are: “Heureux de vous retrouver Ridgewell!... Et vos Arumbayas? Ont-ils enfin appris à jouer convenablement au golf?” (Nice to be back [sic], Doctor Ridgewell!... How are the [sic] Arumbayas?... Learnt to play golf yet?).¹⁴⁸ Both Tintin's words and Ridgewell's words are telling in the original. Though Kaloma is still the Arumbaya chief, Tintin does not ask Ridgewell about “*the* Arumbayas”—as stated in the official translation—but rather about “*his* Arumbayas”, as though he was either their chief or owned them.¹⁴⁹ Ridgewell's response denotes exasperation with the Arumbayas' persistent inability to play golf so that, though he may have chosen to live away from “civilisation”, Ridgewell is still clinging to his European values, although it is hard to imagine how this sport can be practised properly in the thick of the jungle.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Peeters, *Le Monde d'Hergé*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, 48/11-14 & 51/5.

¹⁴⁷ Hergé, *L'Oreille cassée*, 52/11.

¹⁴⁸ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 32/3. Translation from Hergé, *Tintin and the Picaros*, trans. Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner, The Adventures of Tintin, vol. 23, London: Methuen, 1976, 32/3.

¹⁴⁹ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 32/3 & 33/5.

¹⁵⁰ Hergé, *Tintin et les Picaros*, 32/4.

The figure of the white man living among the indigenous is one that also repeats itself in *Spirou et Fantasio*, be it in Africa or in Palombia. The first white man Spirou and Fantasio meet once in Mababi is Mr Welwell—whose amusing name is reminiscent of Ridgewell’s. This man has no domestic but the gorilla Apollon, whom he has trained to set the table and serve guests, carry luggage, start cars, listen to the radio, drink and even play the piano.¹⁵¹ Like “Ridgewell’s” Arumbayas, and despite the impressive way in which Apollon performs all these tasks, Welwell still complains about the gorilla’s *one* false note on the piano.¹⁵² Though Welwell’s attitude is amusing in that he is extremely demanding of Apollon, it is strangely reminiscent of Ridgewell’s attachment to trivial indicators of ‘civilisation’.

Still in the same series, we can find a third white man living among the indigenous: Oliver Gurgling Thirstywell. The latter’s name is not only funny in itself, but also very similar to that of Ridgewell and Welwell. Thirstywell’s case is slightly different as he does not have any interest in teaching the pygmies how to do anything. Rather, he lives for his profession. Much in the same way as he did not appear to be overly concerned for his own safety during a shooting and only wished for Spirou and Fantasio to do something so that he could have more material to write about, his decision to stay with the pygmies is due to the fact that he finds “[l]ittle pygmies **très** interesting!” and wants to write an article on them.¹⁵³ While Thirstywell’s attitude is sometimes absurd, in this adventure, the one with the paternalistic attitude is in fact Spirou. After bending down to pat a “savage” boy on the head in “L’héritage”, here

¹⁵¹ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 34/6 - 35/12.

¹⁵² Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 34/15.

¹⁵³ Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 118/8 & 120/5.

he bends down, a finger pointing out, to instruct the pygmies not to tell anyone about their gold: “l’administrateur viendra vous dire comment vous en servir pour vivre plus confortablement...” (the administrator will come to tell you how to use it to live more comfortably).¹⁵⁴ Though Spirou certainly means well by warning pygmies against those who might want to exploit them and he shows no intention of taking the pygmies’ gold himself, there is something unsettling in Spirou’s body language when we know that, though they may be small, these pygmies are in fact adults.

Apart from Mr Welwell and Mr. Thirstywell, in *Spirou et Fantasio*, there are two white men who have gone to live away from the city and with the indigenous people they have befriended: Spirou and Fantasio’s respective uncles. Thus we find out that Spirou’s uncle was a close friend of the witchdoctor Muhutu—the latter is clearly happy to meet his friend’s nephew as he holds Spirou “sur [s]on cœur” (against his heart)—and that he has entrusted Muhutu with the inheritance.¹⁵⁵ In the case of Tanzafio, very little is revealed about him in *Spirou et les héritiers*, though we know that he is “un des rares civilisés à avoir eu la chance d’apercevoir un mar... euh... mar-su-pi-la-mi” (one of the rare civilised people who have had the good fortune of seeing a mar... uh... mar-su-pi-la-mi).¹⁵⁶ While this statement suggests that Tanzafio must have spent quite some time in the Palombian jungle, we know nothing of his relationship with the Chahutas. On the other hand, in *L’homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, we find out that—like Spirou’s uncle—Tanzafio has a privileged relationship with the immortals, the people who use and guard the lake of youth in Guaracha. Tanzafio has not simply stumbled upon the lake of youth: the immortals have

¹⁵⁴ Greg, et al., “Tembo tabou” [Taboo Elephant], in *Inventions maléfiques: 1958 - 1959, Spirou et Fantasio: Intégrale*, vol. 6, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2008, 120/4.

¹⁵⁵ Franquin, “L’Héritage” [The Inheritance], in *L’Héritage, Spirou et Fantasio Hors Série*, vol. 1, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1976, 42/5-7.

¹⁵⁶ Franquin, *Spirou et les héritiers*, 49/3. Translation: Franquin, *Spirou and the Heirs*, 49/3.

revealed to him the rules governing this place and its use. Thus, he knows that Zantafio should not activate the mechanism that opens the way to the lake as his impure heart will cause the guardians to awaken.¹⁵⁷ After Tantzafio's death, when the immortals explain that Katxina and Selvo's blood has tainted the water and that it has lost its power for a very long time, they mention that "Tantzafio le savait" (Tantzafio knew it).¹⁵⁸

In light of the numerous points in common between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa, it is worthwhile looking back at the colonisation of Palombia as depicted in *L'horloger de la comète*. As has already been mentioned, according to this album, Palombia was colonised by the Portuguese. Spirou and Fantasio arrive there, or rather *then*, due to a mistake on the part of Aurélien—they never intended to visit sixteenth-century Palombia, but rather twentieth-century Palombia. Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien find themselves caught in the middle of a conflict between the Palombinos and the Portuguese settlers. The former, confusing them with the Portuguese, capture them for being white and the latter arrest them for *not* being Portuguese (and therefore potential French or even British spies). The Palombino chief's anger towards and invective against Spirou and his friends—as white people—and Spirou's comment regarding the way the Palombinos react to their presence are unambiguous condemnations of the way the Portuguese are proceeding in the colonisation of Palombia. Yet, the facial expressions of Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien suggest that they do not feel that they are to be blamed for the actions of the Portuguese: they are impressed but surprised that this anger is directed at them.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 48/5-6.

¹⁵⁸ Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*, 53/7-8.

¹⁵⁹ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 23/6 & 25/3-8.

Similarly, the conversation with Don Alvaro Moru confirms that Spirou and his friends are not involved in the colonisation of Palombia: they are arrested for being white and French-speaking, under suspicion of being spies at the service of François 1^{er}.¹⁶⁰ Their surprise at the accusations levelled against them by the Portuguese is even greater than during their encounter with the Palombinos and finding the situation ridiculous, Fantasio responds by introducing Spirou as Schulmeister, Aurélien as Mata Hari and himself as James Bond. Though this ironic and anachronistic name-dropping is amusing for the reader, Fantasio's introduction is taken at face value by Don Moru. Each of these encounters highlights the fact that Spirou and his friends do not fit in with either side and at the same time reiterate the fact that the twentieth-century visitors are *not* Portuguese settlers, English spies or French spies or involved in the colonisation of Palombia in any way.

Similarly, when the hangman Amédée reveals himself as a French spy and offers to help Spirou and friends escape, Fantasio's face registers surprise.¹⁶¹ Though the three time travellers accept Amédée's help, it is difficult to see any real solidarity between this man and Spirou and his friends as his parting words to them are “[b]ien des bonnes choses à notre souverain” ([m]y regards to our king), to which Spirou and Fantasio do not respond.¹⁶² Not only do we know that the latter do not know François 1^{er} and will not meet him, but in addition, Spirou—the magazine, the series and the character—is notoriously ambiguous regarding a national identity, constantly switching between French and Belgian.¹⁶³ Under these circumstances, Spirou's

¹⁶⁰ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 27/1 & p. 30.

¹⁶¹ Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 39/8.

¹⁶² Tome & Janry, *L'Horloger de la comète*, 40/6.

¹⁶³ For instance, when the question of national belonging was brought up in “Pas tous à la fois!” (the section of the magazine dedicated to the letters to the editor in *Spirou*) the answer presented *Spirou* as mostly alternating between French and Belgian (depending on the criteria considered) but also as a

solidarity with Amédée's cause is entirely uncertain, not only in terms of temporal impossibility but also in terms of national loyalty. It is striking that these three encounters serve to disengage Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien from the colonial activity and conflict taking place in Palombia. The characters' not being involved permits the album to overtly condemn the ways of the Portuguese and deny all responsibility in the colonisation of Palombia, and by extension Latin America. All the evil treatments are thrown back on the Portuguese and it is suggested that the French have similar intentions. But Spirou and his friends leave Palombia free of any colonial guilt: this is officially Latin America, where the indigenous are ill-treated by the Portuguese, *not* the Congo being exploited by Belgium. Yet given the strong resemblance between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa, we must question whether Spirou and his friends are as guilt-free as they appear to be in this album.

Like Haddock in *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, Fantasio inherits from a relative in *L'homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*.¹⁶⁴ Yet, there is no obvious reason why these originally Belgian heroes should inherit treasures or experiences obtained in Latin America. On the other hand, Spirou's inheritance, found partly in Africa, is not as striking considering the colonial history between Belgium and the Congo. However, when we consider the scandal around *Tintin au Congo* it is perhaps unsurprising that most "African" albums in *Spirou et Fantasio* and *Tintin* are early albums and while "Latin American" albums continue to be created, one would be hard-pressed to find a recent *Spirou et Fantasio* album set in "Africa". This possibility is not contradicted by

magazine that publishes work by authors from beyond these borders and that is read by people in some forty countries. See Uncredited, "Pas tous à la fois!" [Not All at Once!], En direct de la Rédak, *Spirou*, 10 octobre, 2012, 75 year, Issue 3887, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ Hergé, *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*; Morvan & Munuera, *L'Homme qui ne voulait pas mourir*.

the fact that questions are already being raised about the likelihood of a new controversy with the upcoming release of *La femme-léopard* (The Leopard Woman).¹⁶⁵ This *Spirou one-shot*, scripted by Yann, drawn by Schwartz and set partly in the Congo will be the first “African” album in the series since 1973 and it will be worthwhile paying attention to the reception of this album when it is published in late 2013.¹⁶⁶

In answer to the question posed by the title of this chapter, we can say yes *and* no. Yes, *bande dessinée* Latin America truly is Latin America insofar as more often than not, the fictional Latin American countries featured in *bandes dessinées* are a patchwork of real countries. In that sense, these countries can be said to contain within their borders all of Latin America rather than one single country. Similarly, more recent creations (the ones under consideration in the subsection “The Shell”) can also be said to be truly representative of Latin America. Indeed, Franquin’s various successors continue to draw from real-life contemporary events in Latin America, as well as the images of Latin America found in *bande dessinée*, in their own versions of Palombia or other fictional countries. However, though there is, to a point, a resemblance between the fictional Latin American countries and the real Latin America as a whole, these patchwork countries, simultaneously, stand in for African colonies as has been amply demonstrated through the very strong similarities between the images of Africa and Latin America found in these stories, to the point where the distance between them is entirely collapsed. In that respect, we must

¹⁶⁵ Peter, “Spirou à l’épreuve du temps”, p. 50.

¹⁶⁶ Peter, “Spirou à l’épreuve du temps”, p. 50; Uncredited, “Agenda des parutions” [Publication Schedule], (2013), <http://www.spirou.com/75ans/agenda.php> (06/02/2013). It is also worth noting that Chaland’s aborted *Spirou et Fantasio*, set in the fictional Bocongo and cut out of the official *Spirou et Fantasio* history for three decades, will finally be published as an album by Dupuis a few months before *La femme-léopard*.

answer *no*, this is not Latin America, but an Africa that does not say its name. Or rather, it is both. By shifting the adventure away from Africa and onto Latin America, these Franco-Belgian series not only circumvent the risk of being accused of holding on to a colonial past, but also distance themselves from debates concerning colonialism. On the surface, this is not Africa, but Latin America and as can be seen in Spirou and Fantasio's attitude towards Amédée in *L'horloger de la comète*, or in Tournesol's complaint about "civilisation" turning San Theodorian "savages" into drunkards, the heroes entirely disengage from the colonial enterprises of other Europeans, be they Spanish, English, French or Portuguese, criticising the abuse and destruction these enterprises have brought on.

De qui se moque-t-on ?

(The Joke's on Whom?)

In the previous chapter (“Latin America?”) I explored the ways in which many of the Franco-Belgian comics included in the corpus use fictional Latin American countries that are either patchworks of real countries or copies of other *bande dessinée* Latin American countries, or even copies of African *bande dessinée* countries. While such *bandes dessinées* have little in common with any single real country, there are some exceptions, as much within a fictional country such as Palombia (that has known many incarnations depending on the authors) as in albums such as *Le temple du soleil* and *Tortillas pour les Dalton* (that are explicitly set in existing countries).

The approach adopted by the *bandes dessinées* considered in the previous chapter can be attributed, in part, to the nature of comic art: as shown in “Ink on Paper”, caricature, ellipsis and a general essentialisation of characters are all part of the way

comics work to communicate ideas. In particular, one might expect caricatures to be even more present in humoristic comics and this has certainly been a point brought up by most authors during the various interviews I have conducted. However, this is not to say that the repetition of clichés, especially those that present Latin Americans as necessarily lacking in one respect or another, or as all essentially the same, are inevitable. Some comics adopt a different stance: they show an awareness of clichés and parody them to the extreme.

The title of this chapter is an attempt at capturing the interplay between established clichés and how they are recycled in certain *bandes dessinées* and *historietas*. The idiom “De qui se moque-t-on ?” usually serves to express outrage and dissatisfaction. Its meaning could be translated as “Is this some kind of joke?” Thus, for example, upon realising that *bande dessinée* Latin America sometimes is everything *but* Latin America, one might exclaim “de qui se moque-t-on ?” in dissatisfaction regarding the lack of veracity in the images presented to him or her. Literally, however, it translates as “Who is one making fun of?” This chapter seeks to go beyond a perspective of outrage or dissatisfaction and takes the meaning of the question literally: *who* or *what* indeed are we making fun of?

In order to answer this question, I will resort to satire and parody to compare and contrast how six works from the corpus make use of clichés and yet transcend them. The texts I will use for this purpose are *Tortillas pour les Dalton* from the *Lucky Luke* series; “Capturer un marsupilami”, *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy* from the *Marsupilami* series; *Inodoro Pereyra*; and *Los Supermachos*. While all six texts appear to take clichés head-on, they do not all have the same approach or target. I

therefore group these six texts in three categories: For impór (*Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy*), inversions (*Tortillas pour les Dalton* and “Capturer un marsupilami”) and for expór (*Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos*). After discussing parody and satire and how I use them here, I will split the chapter into three subsections titled after the aforementioned categories, in order to compare and contrast how each category uses and subverts clichés, and who or what they are making fun of.

Parody, Satire, Satirical Parody and Parodic Satire

There have been a great many theorists who have produced works on parody and satire. Amongst the most famous names is quite possibly that of Bakhtin for his work on Rabelais and the carnival.¹ I, however, use parody and satire as they are defined in Linda Hutcheon’s *A Theory of Parody*.² Hutcheon defines parody as “imitation with critical ironic distance.”³ There are a number of other important nodes in her approach to parody. One such node is that parody is an “intramural”, self-referential device.⁴ In other words, in parody, art copies art (with a “critical difference”).⁵ Paradoxically, in order to be recognised as such, parody needs to operate within a set of rules, copying either a specific work or genre closely, whilst maintaining a difference: it needs to be similar enough for the parodied text to be recognisable and different enough to be a parody. In this way, parody is necessarily an “authorised transgression”, a paradox that Hutcheon herself points out is also found in Bakhtin’s work, when he argues that

¹ Mikhail Bakhtine, *L’Œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous la Renaissance* [Rabelais and His World], Paris: Gallimard, 1970.

² Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, New York and London: Methuen, 1985, passim.

³ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 37.

⁴ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 62.

⁵ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 7.

the carnival is an official time within the religious calendar.⁶ The ambivalence of parody—different but of necessity recognisable—and its intramural scope have two linked effects. First, in “[i]mitating art more than life, parody self-consciously and self-critically recognizes its own nature.”⁷ Secondly, it creates what Hutcheon calls the paradox of parody: “[i]n imitating, even with critical difference, parody reinforces”.⁸ Another important node in her definition of parody, as she stresses time and again, is that it does not include any requirement for the parodic work to be funny or to ridicule the work it parodies, though it may and often does so.⁹ In fact, parody can also be a form of homage. Among the examples of such parodic reworkings Hutcheon includes Picasso’s *Massacres en Corée* (1950), a parody of Manet’s *L’exécution de Maximilien* (1867), itself a parody of Goya’s *Tres de mayo* (*Shootings on Third of May 1808*) (1814).¹⁰ As Hutcheon puts it: “parody can obviously be a whole range of things. It can be a serious criticism, not necessarily of the parodied text; it can be a playful, genial mockery of codifiable forms. Its range of intent is from respectful admiration to biting ridicule.”¹¹

Hutcheon offers a number of examples from famous paintings, including the aforementioned reworkings of Goya’s painting, that are thus parodied but in order to make the distinction clearer between parody and satire, I prefer to turn to examples taken from *Inodoro Pereyra* and from *Operación Bolívar*. In “La ciudad del oro” Inodoro’s words “¿Será o no será? Esa es la pregunta” (Could it or couldn’t it be?

⁶ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, pp. 26, 74-75; Bakhtine, *L’Œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous la Renaissance*, pp. 17-18.

⁷ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 27.

⁸ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 26.

⁹ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, passim.

¹⁰ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 65.

¹¹ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, pp. 15-16.

That is the question) echo Hamlet's famous "To be, or not to be, that is the question".¹² In addition, Inodoro's posture in this frame, and even more so in frame 3 of the same page, is reminiscent of the one that is typically associated with Hamlet and his "To be, or not to be" soliloquy.¹³ Despite the similarity in this posture and in the choice of words, there are two things that are "wrong with this picture". First, the words have been altered and second, the human skull, which is typically held by Hamlet, has been replaced by a cow's skull in the former frame and a denture in the latter frame. Yet, although there are several references to Hamlet and the scene is not rendered in its typical form, Fontanarrosa's quarrel is not with Shakespeare's play. There is, however, also satire in these images, and it is not directed towards *Hamlet*. The key to understanding the satire is to be found in frame 3, where Inodoro, still striking a dramatic pose, declares "¡Y acá hay una dentadura! Debe ser una dentadura ritual de las que usaban los brujos para tayar [sic] esmeraldas con la boca" (And here is a denture! It must be one of the ritual dentures that sorcerers used to cut emeralds with their mouths).¹⁴ In response to Inodoro's grand words, an unimpressed Mendieta says "Güeno [sic]... Eran indios pero no masticaban vidrio" (Well... they were Indians but they didn't chew on glass).¹⁵ Mendieta's words serve to deflate Inodoro's grandiloquence, and the satire here is directed at the mystification of the "Indian" past, a recurring theme in the series.

¹² Fontanarrosa, "La ciudad del oro" [The City of Gold], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 25, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 31/1; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, London, New York, Ringwood, Toronto, Auckland & Harmondsworth: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994, Act 3, Scene 1, line 62.

¹³ Fontanarrosa, "La ciudad del oro" [The City of Gold], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 25, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 31/1 & 31/3.

¹⁴ Fontanarrosa, "La ciudad del oro" [The City of Gold], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 25, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 31/3.

¹⁵ Fontanarrosa, "La ciudad del oro" [The City of Gold], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 25, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2008, 31/3.

If there is still humour in Fontanarrosa's parody, this is not the case in Edgar Clement's work. Although there are some humorous moments, the parody itself, and in particular in the example I will use presently, is in fact very dark. Scattered across the pages of *Operación Bolívar*, one can find bits of Pablo Picasso's famous mural *Guernica* (1937) inserted as a collage onto the rest of his work (Figure 6). This very iconic painting, however, is never the subject of ridicule in *Operación Bolívar*. Instead, it is Picasso's expression of sheer horror in the face of human suffering and the utter destruction brought by war that is transmitted through the parodic inclusion of this painting. Indeed, as Campbell rightly points out, portions of Picasso's mural only appear when characters are in excruciating pain.¹⁶ Thus, we can see parts of *Guernica* integrated into the *planche* when Román is tortured and several portions of the mural are parodied in the *planches* depicting Clement's version of the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968. Within these *planches* we can also find a parody of Goya's *Shootings on Third of May 1808* (Figure 7). Although these famous paintings are parodied in Clement's work, *Operación Bolívar* is neither a critique of Picasso or of Goya's work, nor is it particularly amusing. Rather, Clement draws on the horror, violence and suffering that these paintings evoke to communicate the horror of the Tlatelolco massacre, much in the way that Hutcheon suggests that in the case of Picasso's *Massacres en Corée*, "the purpose [of parody] seems to be to increase the horror and the drama through ironic contrast of plural nameless massacres with individual romantic execution".¹⁷

¹⁶ Campbell, *¡Viva La Historieta!*, pp. 180-182.

¹⁷ Campbell, *¡Viva La Historieta!*, p. 184; Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 65.



Figure 6. *Guernica* bits in *Operación Bolívar*.¹⁸

¹⁸ Source: Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.



Figure 7. Goya & Picasso in *Operación Bolívar*.¹⁹

Although her book is titled *A Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon also devotes significant space to satire and its definition. The reason behind this is the fact that there tends to be a certain degree of confusion between satire and parody. Thus, in order to better define parody, Hutcheon must also distinguish it from satire. Although, like parody,

¹⁹ Source: Clement, *Operación Bolívar*, no pagination.

satire relies on irony, it is distinct from parody in that it is “extramural”: its target is not art, but the “social or moral”.²⁰ That is to say, parody relies on a pre-existing artistic model, be it a specific work or a genre, while satire does not. The aim of satire itself can be to initiate change or purely to ridicule.²¹ While parody and satire have distinct targets, it is possible to have in the same piece a parody of a work and a satire that is not directed at the parodied work.²² For instance, in the example from *Inodoro Pereyra*, there is a parody of Hamlet’s famous line. Though this may elicit a smile as we recognise the way in which this line has been modified and included in the work, there is no mockery directed at Shakespeare’s play here. It is something else that we eventually laugh at: the mystification of what is supposed to be “Indian” remains and the way in which this is quickly dismantled by Mendieta’s matter-of-fact reply. The explicit distinction between the targets of parody and satire, I believe, gives the title of this chapter all its clarity: the subversion in the works I will focus on in this chapter has different targets.

However, there are two more nuances to add to the picture before I can begin the analysis. Indeed, as Hutcheon specifies, the neat theoretical distinction between parody and satire is somewhat complicated by their interaction with irony and she thus introduces the terms parodic satire and satiric parody.²³ Though these terms, at first, may appear almost interchangeable, they reflect two very different stances: one is a type of satire and the other is a type of parody. When parody interacts with irony in a contesting manner, we get satiric parody. In that case, the target of the parody is

²⁰ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, pp. 49 & 62.

²¹ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 78.

²² Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 58.

²³ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 61.

“still another form of coded discourse”.²⁴ As for parodic satire, it is a type of satire that “employs parody as a vehicle to achieve its satiric or corrective end.”²⁵ While the distinctions offered by Hutcheon may not necessarily correspond to more traditional views on satire and parody, it is a model that provides a clear framework and enables us to distinguish clearly between the reutilisation and reformulation of cultural products and phenomena and the targets of such processes.

For Impór

The title of this subsection is a calque of the title used for the upcoming subsection, “For expór”. In order to avoid entering the discussion that will be carried out in “For expór” here, I will only say that the words “for expór” are taken from *Inodoro Pereyra*, where the term is used a number of times to describe certain shows performed by Inodoro Pereyra.²⁶ If in the case of Inodoro Pereyra’s “for expór” shows we can see, from a Latin American perspective, Latin Americanness being performed before a foreign audience in exchange for money, in the case of *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy*, we can see a similar process, but from a European perspective since in both albums it is outsiders who travel to the Palombian jungle in quest of exoticism to then produce a show for visual consumption outside of the Palombian jungle.

Le défilé du jaguar, the only *Marsupilami* album scripted by Kaminka and Marais, shows a newly-formed (and short-lived) friendship between the marsupilami family and the jaguar. This rather surprising turn of events comes about as the heretofore

²⁴ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, pp. 62-63.

²⁵ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 62.

²⁶ See for instance Fontanarrosa, “El diablito malambador” [The Devil Malambo Dancer] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 333; and Fontanarrosa, “Dos personajes sentados” [Two Characters Sitting] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 570.

lonely jaguar now has a family of his own and the baby marsupilamie and the female jaguar cub have become friends. It is not long before the hunter Bring M. Backalive disrupts this peaceful situation when he captures the father and the female cub jaguar to sell them to Désiré Varenne. The latter is a fashion designer who has travelled to the Palombian jungle to seek inspiration for his next fashion show. Though, as always, Backalive is unable to capture the marsupilami, the animal follows his feline friends to Chiquito as he attempts to free them. Only catching glimpses of the marsupilami, Varenne becomes obsessed with the possibilities that would open up to him if he were able to use the marsupilami's tail. As all his efforts to capture the marsupilami in Chiquito also fail, Varenne regretfully settles for the inclusion of the two heavily sedated jaguars in the fashion show. The adult jaguar eventually overcomes his drowsiness and destroys the set with the help of the marsupilami, who is present in the audience. Varenne's guests are nonetheless dazzled and as he receives many orders, the designer agrees to return the three animals to the jungle. As in the closing scene the adult jaguar attempts to eat the little marsupilamie, the truce between marsupilamis and jaguars comes to an end.²⁷

Robinson Academy immediately follows *L'orchidée des Chahutas* in the *Marsupilami* series. In this eighteenth album, the marsupilami never leaves the jungle but is visited by a number of foreigners. They have come to the Palombian jungle with the television channel TVnet for a reality show, also titled *Robinson Academy*. All but one contestant have come from outside Palombia: Tèpamalroulé, the Chahuta chief, who is still obsessed with being "civilised", joins the game in the hopes of winning the first prize—a house in the Ile-de-France region. The entire action of *Robinson*

²⁷ Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar* [The Jaguar's Fashion Show], Marsupilami, vol. 13, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, passim.

Academy (the album) revolves around the show's ratings, and in order to ensure that his show maintains its viewership and continues to attract sponsors, the producer (Artie) stages various activities and incidents. By the end, Tèpamalroulé is the favourite finalist and the host, opposed to the idea of a "savage" winning the game, goes to Émile Pistil—now Tèpamalroulé's husband—for help in sabotaging the show. With the marsupilami's collaboration, they take away all the cameras and instead of the grand finale, it is a documentary on the marsupilamis—shot by Émile Pistil—that is broadcasted. After the cast and crew have left Palombia, Tèpamalroulé can be seen forcing Artie to build her a brick house in the jungle, in compensation for the house she would have certainly won if the finale had been carried out properly.²⁸

What these two stories have in common—and what makes it possible to place them in the same subsection—is the fact that outsiders come to the Palombian jungle specifically to draw out exotic images that they can put on display in a show that will be served up to viewers in their own countries. It is true that with Varenne, it is unclear whether he is in fact a foreigner. With a name such as his, it seems likely that he is from a francophone country, yet the fact that his headquarters (complete with a statue to his own effigy) and fashion show are in Chiquito suggests that he might be Palombian. Regardless of this ambiguity, it is made clear from Varenne's first words that he is unfamiliar with the jungle, which he finds exotic and inspiring: "Haa, Tonio... /... en ce lieu paradisiaque, l'inspiration m'envahit ! Toutes ces couleurs, toutes ces formes... la jungle réveille mon instinct créatif !" (Aah, Tonio... / ... I'm invaded by inspiration in this paradise! All these colours, all these shapes... the jungle

²⁸ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, Marsupilami, vol. 18, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2005, passim.

awakens my creative instinct!”).²⁹ And following his creative instincts, Varenne very quickly picks up various elements to improvise an outfit consisting of a large piece of bark covered in moss, vines, fruits and gigantic leaves.³⁰ Following this brief incursion in the jungle, the rest of the story (save for the closing scene) is set in Chiquito, where Varenne attempts to bring the jungle to the catwalk.

The fashion show offered by Varenne is patently “fake”: dressed in a marsupilami suit, the host (who doubles up as a musician and singer) performs a ridiculous opening song consisting of roars, tweets, monkey chatters and brief lyrics taken from the Chahutas’ language. Each moment of the song that is captured in the frames is so intense and distinct from the previous one that it gives an impression of a certain lack of unity and melody but Varenne is moved to tears by this piece, and declares it is true to the jungle he experienced.³¹ Similarly, the clothes that Varenne designs have nothing in common with the way the Chahutas dress and in any case, Varenne never meets them. Instead, Varenne’s jungle chic designs are closer to the typical multilayered and extremely stylised dresses one might expect from a fashion show. What the jungle has brought to Varenne’s collection is not so much design, but colours, textures, patterns and raw material. Thus, his creations incorporate large imitation flowers, grass, gigantic leaves, jaguar spots and banana bunches.³² The stilted language used by Varenne and his entourage effectively captures the spirit of his fashion show: it is a trend that he calls “junglisante” (junglising).³³ In other words, it is inspired *by* the jungle but it does not purport to be the fashion *of* the jungle.

²⁹ Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar*, 14/1-3.

³⁰ Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar*, p. 15.

³¹ Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar*, p. 33.

³² Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar*, pp. 40-41 & 45.

³³ Batem, et al., *Le Défilé du jaguar*, 14/7.

In *Robinson Academy* the Chahutas are marginally more present, though they are not the main characters of the story. Rather, they observe and comment on the show in front of a television set that the TVnet team have given them.³⁴ With a title inspired by Daniel Defoe's famous novel *Robinson Crusoe*, it comes as no surprise that the television show places great emphasis on ensuring the contestants are presented as being stranded in a deserted jungle: they must not receive any help but must instead fend for themselves.³⁵ Thus, when the marsupilami starts helping the contestants—known as the Robinsons—the producer initially insists on editing him out of the show but as the ratings increase when viewers see some images of the marsupilami, Artie finally decides to try and *increase* the contestants' interactions with animals as much as possible. In order to achieve this, he does not hesitate to use all manner of artifice, ranging from a staged elephant stampede to paying Backalive to kidnap the marsupilamie and the baby marsupilamis.³⁶

Robinson Academy has quite a genealogy in literature and popular culture: one of the most obvious references is to Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*—where the hero, Robinson Crusoe finds himself stranded on a deserted island. This novel has also inspired other works such as the nineteenth century novel *The Swiss family Robinson* (Johann David Wyss), which tells the story of castaways on an island en route to Australia, which, in turn inspired *Lost in Space*.³⁷ The latter was a 1960s television show that told the story of the Robinson family, who was stranded on a strange planet. The title of the show and of the album is also a clear reference to two of a myriad of reality television shows that have been on television screens since the

³⁴ See for instance Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 12/4.

³⁵ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 8/1.

³⁶ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, pp. 8-39.

³⁷ Irwin Allen (dir.) *Lost in Space. Season One, Part 1*, ©2005 [13h04min]; Johann Wyss, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, New York: Laurel-Leaf, 1960.

turn of the century: it is an amalgam of *Expedition Robinson* and *Star Academy*. *Big Brother*, quite possibly the most notorious of reality television shows so far, was created in 1999 but it is in fact the Swedish television show *Expedition Robinson* (produced in 1997) that was the first reality television show of this type. In addition to numerous adaptations of the concept around various themes, *Expedition Robinson* has also spawned a number of closer adaptations such as *Koh-Lanta* and *Survivor*. In this type of show a number of contestants are sent to a deserted area (hence the name “Robinson”) for some time, have to fend for themselves and gradually eliminate fellow contestants.³⁸ As for *Star Academy* (*Star Ac’* for short), the singing talent show was first broadcast in 2001 and made a comeback on the small screen in 2012, after a four-year break.³⁹ It is similar to the *Idol* franchise in its concept but the contestants’ training, rehearsals and debriefing sessions (after performances) occupy more space in the show. *Robinson Academy* has little in common with *Star Ac’*, besides its instantly recognisable name and brief visits from family members and has-beens.⁴⁰ On the other hand, game shows such as *Survivor*, *Expedition Robinson* and *Koh-Lanta* are much more recognisable in terms of the format of *Robinson Academy*.

As in the case of *Le défilé du jaguar*, the fakery of the image of Palombia that we are presented with is highlighted in *Robinson Academy*. Not only are the cameras

³⁸ G. F., “Histoires secrètes de la télé-réalité: Les Dessous peu ragoûtants d’un genre cathodique devenu majeur” [Reality TV’s Secret Stories: The Unpalatable Hidden Side of a Now Major Television Genre], *Le Monde* 2 September 2012, p. 11; Adventure Line Productions, “Koh-Lanta”, (© 2010), http://www.alp.tv/productions/fiche_production/koh-lanta-43 (30/11/2012); Uncredited, “Cloutier-réalité: Avec Loft Story, Guy Cloutier donnera-t-il à la télé-réalité une saveur québécoise?” [Reality-Cloutier: With Loft Story, Will Guy Cloutier Give Reality TV a Quebecois Flavour?], *L’Actualité*, 1 November, 2003 28th year, Issue 17, p. 103.

³⁹ Anne-Charlotte Bonnet, “Star Academy 2012 : Les Défis du grand retour” [Star Academy 2012 : The Challenges of the Great Comeback], *Télé Première*, 27/11/2012; Uncredited, “La Star Academy revient sur NRJ12” [Star Academy Comes Back on NRJ12], *NRJ12.fr*, (30/11/2012), <http://www.nrj12.fr/votre-chaîne-4209/actu-4187/article/287009-la-star-academy-revient-sur-nrj12.html> (30/11/2012).

⁴⁰ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 32/2-3.

ubiquitous, but Artie’s various schemes are also made evident at every stage of the television show. His one and only concern is to increase his profits, which he aims to do by increasing the show’s viewership and its sponsors. The first words he utters in the album make this concern very clear: “pas de show sans business!” (no show without business!).⁴¹ As such, the plot of the story revolves around the fluctuations in viewership and Artie—the producer—introduces disruptive factors or attempts to use sex to sell his show. Artie will stop at nothing: he is as happy to broadcast images of Tèpamalroulé’s private parts, shot from below as she climbs up a tree, as he is willing to provide two female contestants with bath supplies in the hopes that they will strip in front of the camera.⁴² Ironically, Artie’s interventions are designed precisely to make the show entertaining, without it seeming like it has been edited or scripted. Thus, though we are privy to these interventions, they are not seen on the television screen (screenshots are shown in frames with rounded corners that imitate the shape of the television screens). Edith—one of Artie’s most disliked contestants—on the other hand, never losing sight of where she is or of the fact that she is being watched, constantly draws attention to the artifice of “reality” television. It is she who stops the bimbo Sabrina from stripping in front of the camera, reminding her that she is being watched by millions, and it is she again who points out that there is something odd about the presence of an elephant in South America.⁴³ Edith’s repeated reminders that they are being watched by millions of viewers only draw our attention to the fact that this is as much of a show as Varenne’s fashion show.⁴⁴ Such persistent self-awareness soon leads to Artie to label Edith an “erreur de casting” (a casting mistake).⁴⁵

⁴¹ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 5/9.

⁴² Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 20/9 and pp. 14-15.

⁴³ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 15/2 and 27/7.

⁴⁴ See for instance Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 6/5, 15/2 and 32/2.

⁴⁵ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 15/3.

Le défilé du jaguar and *Robinson Academy* certainly are parodic albums but neither parody one specific work of art. Rather, they parody a *type* of show: fashion shows and survival-type reality television respectively. The fakery of both shows—the fashion show and *Robinson Academy*—is not only exposed, it is also laughable. The stance of the authors towards the fashion world and reality television varies between gently mocking in the case of *Le défilé du jaguar* and strong criticism in the case of *Robinson Academy*. The narrator's words, from the introductory pages of *Robinson Academy*, invite the reader to dissociate from reality television by presenting the main character's reaction to the concept as follows: “Un jeu de télé-réalité! Le marsupilami a beau essayer, il est bien trop intelligent pour comprendre ça!” (A reality tv game show! Try as he might, the marsupilami is way too smart to understand this!).⁴⁶ Thus, if the fashion world is made fun of, it is not under attack in the way that reality television is. There is still an aspiration to a form of art—as pretentious as it may be—in Varenne's work and monetary transactions, though obviously part of his work, are never presented as his main focus. In contraposition, in *Robinson Academy*, it is made clear that there is no concern for any artistic value in Artie's line of work as only increased revenues are of importance to the producer. In this album the scriptwriter Dugomier clearly mocks the way reality television in general, and survival-type reality television in particular, function in terms of the way they are coded. At the same time, by taking us behind the scenes and denouncing Artie's concerns and tactics, Dugomier criticises the moneymaking machine at work behind such shows.

However, whether a pretentious interpretation of the jungle or an exaggerated representation of the inhospitability of the jungle, both shows are presented to readers

⁴⁶ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 6/6.

as inaccurate constructions designed for *consumption outside* of Palombia. Artie's comment makes it clear: he has no interest in the Chahutas' watching his show as they have no purchasing power.⁴⁷ Between these two albums, the only representation of Palombia that is presented as "accurate" (bearing in mind that Palombia is in itself a construct) is neither the fashion show nor the reality television show, but rather the short documentary put together by Émile Pistil and the host. This documentary, which Artie considers to be no less than treason on the part of the host, and *Robinson Academy* (the television show) are polar opposites.⁴⁸ Though the documentary has clearly been edited, it does away with the commercial aspect of the reality show and it shows "real life" in the jungle. Thus, instead of trying to keep the marsupilami off the screen, the documentary focuses on him and his family. There is no popularity contest or pretence of striving for survival in the documentary: the marsupilami family is a happy and well-fed one.⁴⁹

The paradox of parody works in interesting ways in these albums. If we laugh at Varenne's pretentious speech patterns and his eccentric use of elements he finds in the Palombian jungle, if we laugh at Artie's thwarted attempts to introduce drama into a survival game show where the contestants repeatedly receive help, and if we laugh at the failure of both men to bring together the show that they had dreamed of, on the other hand, there is no change in the way the *Marsupilami* series itself represents Palombia. Yet, the apparent truthfulness and virtue of the documentary shot by Émile Pistil is to be taken with a grain of salt for two reasons. First, the Chahutas are maintained even more at the periphery of the documentary than in the game show: the

⁴⁷ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 12/1.

⁴⁸ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, 44/6.

⁴⁹ Batem, et al., *Robinson Academy*, pp. 44-45.

only member of the tribe who appears on the screen this time is the honorary Chahuta Émile Pistil. In particular, it is rather unsettling that the documentary is designed *specifically* to keep the Chahutas off the screen: if Pistil agrees to shooting it, it is in the hopes of preventing Tèpamalroulé from winning so that she will have to stay in Palombia. Second, the documentary is almost a condensed version of the one produced by Seccotine in “Le nid des marsupilamis”, the first album dedicated almost exclusively to Franquin’s strange animal.⁵⁰ In a circular logic, then, the documentary’s accuracy is validated by virtue of its agreeing with representations that already exist in the genealogy of the series. Thus, the fakery of the fashion show and the game show becomes apparent against the familiar background of Palombia as it was created in the fourth and the twelfth *Spirou et Fantasio* albums. It is because we know how the Chahutas dress that we can understand Varenne’s fashion show as “inauthentic” and it is, in part, in comparison with the documentary that is broadcasted instead of the live finale that *Robinson Academy*’s artificiality is brought into relief. The parody in these two albums, then, does not so much reinforce the image of Latin America in fashion or reality shows as it confirms the image of Latin America found in the series itself, as it draws attention away from *bande dessinée* and towards other modes of communication.

Inversions

If *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy* target fashion shows and reality television, the targets of *Tortillas pour les Dalton* and “Capturer un marsupilami” are quite different. *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, the thirty-first album of the *Lucky Luke* series, is the story of a prison transfer gone wrong. When the prison officials in charge

⁵⁰ Franquin, “Le Nid des marsupilamis” [The Marsupilami Nest], in *Le Nid des marsupilamis*, *Les Aventures de Spirou et Fantasio*, vol. 12, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1960 (classic), pp. 10-41.

of moving the Dalton brothers (the recurring villains of the series) from one US-based penitentiary to another stop by the Río Bravo for the night, they catch the attention of Emilio Espuelas and his gang on the Mexican side of the border. Assuming that such a well-guarded stagecoach as the one in which the Daltons are being kept and transported must contain a sizeable treasure, Espuelas and his men cross the river, steal the stagecoach and take it back to Mexico with them, sparking considerable diplomatic protest on both sides of the border. Meanwhile, realising their deed will not bring them any financial benefits, Espuelas and his gang resolve to hang the Daltons but Joe, the shortest, most temperamental, most scheming and bossiest of the brothers, convinces Espuelas to let them stay. In return, the Daltons will teach Espuelas and his men new techniques in banditry in the name of international exchange. While the Daltons struggle to impart some of their supposed wisdom to Espuelas and his men, Lucky Luke is sent to find the stolen prisoners and take them back to the US. Lucky Luke sets up a trap with the help of a local *hacendero*, Don Doroteo Prieto: using a transparent excuse (Don Doroteo's fourteen years and five months of marriage) they organise a party that is sure to attract Espuelas and his men. Taking the bait, Espuelas dresses the Daltons up as *mariachis* and sends them to kidnap Don Doroteo. In the dark, the Daltons unknowingly kidnap Lucky Luke (who is passing himself off for Don Doroteo) and take him back to Espuelas's hideout. After some shootings and further chasing, Lucky Luke is able to round up all the bandits and each of them is sent to jail in their respective countries.⁵¹

⁵¹ An *hacendero* is the owner of a *hacienda*, a large landholding where workers also live on the land. Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton* [Tortillas for the Daltons], Lucky Luke, vol. 31, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 1967, *passim*.

“Capturer un marsupilami”, for its part, is a short story spanning six *planches* and featuring the recurring Bring M. Backalive. In this story, the hunter tries to enlist the help of a couple of Chahutas to fulfil his lifetime dream and obsession: to catch a marsupilami. From the very first frame, we get a sense of communication breakdown that will carry through to the end of the story: a fuming Backalive opens with “comprenez donc rien?!?” (Don’t you understand anything?!?) while one of the Chahutas asks his friend “Mais qu’est-ce qu’il nous veut ce cinglé??” (What does this nutcase want with us??).⁵² The Chahutas are eventually able to gather that Backalive likes and seeks something that is yellow with black spots and deliberately send him to Tapahudpo (literally, “you haven’t been lucky”), a character who has been banned from the village because he suffers from a contagious disease known as the *picação de limón* (lemon itch), a disease that turns one’s skin bright yellow with black spots and causes a tremendous itch.⁵³ Backalive soon leaves the jungle, taking the *picação de limón* germs with him and causing the disease to spread across more than a third of the planet within the space of a few weeks.⁵⁴

One point in common between these two stories is that they are amongst the few to be considered in a relatively positive light in Gilard’s article on Latin American clichés in *bande dessinée*. Though Gilard reproaches Morris and Goscinny for presenting Xochitecotzingo (the village where Espuelas and his men operate) as a place where economic development and prosperity is only able to start *after* Lucky Luke’s intervention together with Don Doroteo, he applauds the story for appropriating all

⁵² Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 26/1.

⁵³ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 28/10 - 31/6.

⁵⁴ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 31/7-8.

the clichés pertaining to Latin America and mocking them in this parodic series.⁵⁵ As regards “Capturer un marsupilami”, Gilard is full of praise for this story for two reasons. First, to him, rather than focusing on presenting Latin America with photographic precision, by presenting the *picação de limón* as a disease that travels across the globe within the space of a few weeks, the short story focuses on presenting the world as interconnected rather than keeping Latin America as a land far far away.⁵⁶ Second, Gilard considers the *picação de limón* as a disease that foreshadowed AIDS and its quick spread across the globe. In that sense, he believes Franquin foresaw and foretold a problem that would affect Latin America as much as other parts of the world.⁵⁷ I would argue that though it is certainly true that the quick spread of the *picação de limón* does prevent Palombia from being as far far away as the temple du soleil or the island that Tintin and Haddock seek in *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, this is only a coda to the short story and not its main point. To me, there is a pervasive inversion in both *Tortillas pour les Dalton* and “Capturer un marsupilami” that Gilard fails to explore fully in his article.

In *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, the reversal is obvious from the very first page, when Joe is shown hanging a “Home is where the heart is” frame in his prison cell.⁵⁸ Quizzed by his brothers and cellmates, Joe announces “Je m’installe définitivement! Je prends ma retraite! J’en ai assez de m’évader pour être ramené au pénitencier par Lucky Luke!” (I’m settling down for good! I’m retiring! I’ve had enough of escaping just to be brought back to the cell by Lucky Luke!).⁵⁹ Joe then proceeds to tell William off for

⁵⁵ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, pp. 124, 130, 132-133.

⁵⁶ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, p. 137.

⁵⁷ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, p. 137.

⁵⁸ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 3/2.

⁵⁹ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 3/4. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, trans. Luke Spear, A Lucky Luke Adventure, vol. 10, Kent: Cinebook, 2008, 3/4.

making a mess while digging a tunnel to escape, asks Averell to hang curtains at the windows and orders all three of his brothers to shine the bars, balls and chains.⁶⁰ This attitude, in itself, is in such stark contrast with Joe's usual obsession with escaping that Jack, William and Averell first express disbelief.⁶¹ The comedy soon escalates when the prison warden comes to announce that the Daltons are being moved to another prison, where they will be more comfortable and better guarded. All in the same frame, the Dalton brothers refuse point blank to leave, giving a barrage of absurd reasons that suggest that they are in prison by choice:

Joe: "Nous sommes assez bien gardés ici! Je refuse de sortir!" (We're rather well guarded here! I refuse to leave!)

William: "Et le tunnel que nous avons commencé à creuser ici?.." (And what about the tunnel we've started to dig here?...)

Jack: "Nous faire sortir de prison, c'est une atteinte à notre liberté!" (Taking us out of prison is an attack on our freedom!)

Averell: "Et puis d'abord comment est la cuisine là-bas? Je veux voir le menu!" (And what's the food like there? I want to see the menu!)⁶²

With such an opening, it is unsurprising that once the Daltons are in Mexico, all the usual clichés regarding Mexico and Latin America are reversed. For instance, rather than being a far far away country, Mexico is shown to be so geographically close to the US that Emilio Espuelas's statements, supposedly to highlight the great distance between the two countries, elicit, at the very least, an amused smile: sitting on horseback, he proposes to cross the river with the words "Allons faire un tour aux États-Unis. C'est une terre d'opportunité!.." (Let's go for a ride in the United States. It's a land of opportunity!...), suggesting that it is easily accessible, although not

⁶⁰ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 3/5-7.

⁶¹ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 3/3.

⁶² Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 4/2. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 4/2.

necessarily so close that it is within eyeshot.⁶³ The words Espuelas uses to announce that they are to return to Mexico once the deed is done work more strongly in that direction, as he orders one of his men “Bernardo, prends les rênes et en direction du Mexique! J’ai déjà le mal du pays!!...” (Bernardo, take the reins, and head for Mexico! I am homesick already!!...), as though they had travelled a very long distance when in reality they only do a short return trip.⁶⁴

In terms of chronopolitics, the usual clichés are also parodied in *Tortillas pour les Dalton*. For instance, with great airs of self-importance, Joe Dalton explains to Emilio Espuelas the value of keeping a cool head in their line of business, pointing out that this calm and collection “vous manquent parfois à vous, latins” (you Latinos sometimes lack).⁶⁵ Joe’s condescending body language is already rather amusing as he preaches to an Espuelas who ignores him and prefers to continue explaining the layout of Xochitecotzingo from a promontory. Doubtless noticing that Espuelas is not paying attention to his words, Joe continues to stress the point “Oui, donc je vous disais. Le calme, la pondération... / ... le sang-froid à toute épr...” (Yes, so as I was telling you, staying calm, level-headed... / ... cool-headed in any situa...) until he throws a tantrum at the sight of Lucky Luke riding in the streets of Xochitecotzingo.⁶⁶

In relation to economic development, Goscinny adopts a similar approach. Undeniably, Xochitecotzingo is everything *but* a modern, economically developed

⁶³ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 5/10 & 6/1. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 5/10. Please note the ellipses are different in the original and in the official translation.

⁶⁴ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 6/2. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 6/2.

⁶⁵ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 12/1-2. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 12/2.

⁶⁶ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 12/3-4. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 12/3-4.

city, and has no hotels or banks to speak of. Though both of these businesses are more or less established with the arrival of the Daltons and of Lucky Luke—a fact that, as mentioned earlier, Gilard disapproves of—neither can be said to be flourishing.⁶⁷ Manuel, a character who only appears briefly in the story, may complain that “Dès que les gringos arrivent la vie commence à changer et le progrès bouscule la tradition!” (As soon as the gringos arrive life begins to change and progress pushes tradition aside) but the so-called “progress” or even change is doubtful.⁶⁸ Manuel’s complaint stems from the fact that Amadeo, the bartender, has no time for him and has turned his *cantina* into a “Gran Hotel”. Yet, in reality, all this place has in common with a “Gran Hotel” is its name: its only guest is Lucky Luke, who sleeps on a straw mattress in the back room.⁶⁹ Amadeo’s later punctilious insistence on form when he consults the register before telling the Dalton brothers that Lucky Luke has checked out, although Lucky Luke has been his only guest, points to the irrelevance of “progress”—as defined by economic development à la US capitalism and embodied by the Daltons and their ideals—in a Xochitecotzingo that simply has different values and interests.⁷⁰

Although economic difference and uneven development in themselves are not entirely an inversion of clichés about Latin America, it is the cultural impermeability to the Dalton’s economic and banditry aesthetics, so to speak, that here subverts the idea of incorporating Xochitecotzingo in a global economic system. That is to say, the inhabitants may glorify the idea of “progress” and go through the motions as defined by the Daltons as indicators of economic development, but this remains a surface

⁶⁷ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁸ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 14/10. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 14/10.

⁶⁹ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 14/6 & 14/9.

⁷⁰ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 27/4-7.

approach and its failure undermines the universality of the system propounded by the gangsters. Morris and Goscinny make a similar point when they parody the typical western bank robbery.⁷¹ Once again, adopting a superior air of wisdom, Joe attempts to share a banditry technique with Espuelas. This time, although Espuelas explains that in the area “business” consists mostly of kidnappings, Joe insists on showing him how to rob a bank. Self-importantly, Joe summarises the essentials of a well-carried-out robbery: “Ⓐ se masquer le visage avec un foulard; Ⓑ pointer un revolver vers le guichet et exiger l’ouverture du coffre; Ⓒ s’enfuir en tirant des coups de feu” (Ⓐ cover your face with a scarf; Ⓑ point the revolver at the teller and order them to open the safe; Ⓒ run away shooting).⁷² This apparently simple model, that the Dalton brothers themselves are rather fond of, and that we may recognise from countless westerns, fails miserably when transposed into Xochitecotzingo. Unfamiliar with the protocol of bank robberies, Espuelas covers his face with his scarf but does not understand that the point of this measure is to conceal his identity. Much to the Daltons’ surprise, Espuelas is instantly identified as his name is elegantly embroidered on his scarf.⁷³ The next step proves even more problematic, in part because Espuelas does not know where the bank is, but mostly because the said bank has no teller waiting at the counter and its principal business appears to be taking bets on cockfights. There is no safe from which the Daltons can steal money (the money is kept in a shoebox) and all the money, in any case, has been lost in a cockfight bet.⁷⁴ As a result, the only step of the bank robbery that the bandits are able to carry out properly is to leave while shooting.⁷⁵ However, having failed to carry out the first two

⁷¹ *Western* here is used to refer to the film genre featuring cowboys and “Indians”.

⁷² Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 17/4. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 17/4.

⁷³ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 17/8-9.

⁷⁴ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 17/6 & p. 18.

⁷⁵ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 19/1-3.

steps according to the model, the five men hardly qualify as proper bandits at this stage. Thus, they are not perceived as villainous, but as noisy riders who are disturbing the *siesta*.⁷⁶ The typical bank robbery is further parodied when, after the Daltons leave, Perico—the banker—goes to the bar to celebrate: he is thrilled that “le progrès est enfin arrivé à ma banque!” (Progress has finally made it to my bank!).⁷⁷ Perico goes so far as taking another one of Joe’s tantrums very seriously. In response to Joe’s demands for a proper bank, with a full safe from which he can steal next time, Perico not only repaints the door to his bank, but later chases after the Daltons, telling them that the bank is now ready to be robbed!⁷⁸

Although *Lucky Luke* is a series that repeatedly parodies westerns, neither the series nor the specific album *Tortillas pour les Dalton* is to be seen as a direct criticism of the US. It is well known, after all, that both Goscinny and Morris had ties with the US and the former also paid homage to that country in another one of his *bandes dessinées*, *Astérix* (in particular, in the album titled *La grande traversée*).⁷⁹ The parody in this series is very much a respectful one, coming from two lovers of the Wild West. Nonetheless, there is a satirical reversal of clichés regarding Latin America in general and Mexico in particular that is conveyed through the parody of *Tortillas pour les Dalton*. Certainly the Daltons and Rantanplan (the penitentiary guard dog, whose name and character are parodies of the famous Rin Tin Tin) are

⁷⁶ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 19/4.

⁷⁷ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 19/6. Translation: Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas for the Daltons*, 19/6.

⁷⁸ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 18/10, 25/9 & 27/9.

⁷⁹ du Chatenet & Guillot, *Goscinny*, pp. 28 & 38-39; Goscinny & Uderzo, *La grande traversée* [Asterix and the Great Crossing], *Astérix*, 6, vol. 22, Paris: Hachette, 1999, *passim*. See also Annick Pellegrin, “‘Ils sont fous ces Gaulois!’: *Astérix*, *Lucky Luke*, Freedom Fries and the Love-Hate Relationship Between France and the US” [‘These Gauls are Crazy!’: *Astérix*, *Lucky Luke*, Freedom Fries and the Love-Hate Relationship Between France and the US], in *Comics as History, Comics as Literature: Roles of the Comic Book in Scholarship, Society, and Entertainment*, Annessa A. Babic (ed.), Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, (Forthcoming, 2013).

intellectually challenged characters originating from the US, and their legendary ineptitude is only brought into relief in comparison with their Mexican counterparts. In particular, Rodriguez (Don Doroteo's Chihuahua) repeatedly performs tricks and tasks that demonstrate what an intelligent and excellent tracking dog he is, while Rantanplan fails at each of the same tasks.⁸⁰ Similarly, the Daltons are repeatedly shown to be particularly inefficient at anything they undertake: be it a matter of speaking the other's language, staying calm, carrying out a kidnapping or playing the guitar, the Daltons are so bad at everything they attempt that they draw attention to Espuelas and his men. Moreover, the Daltons' ineptitude almost drives one of Espuelas's men to suicide and eventually leads to the arrest of Espuelas's gang as well as their own.⁸¹

The Daltons' intellectual limitations, however, do not reflect on the US as a whole inasmuch as Lucky Luke, the hero of the series, also a citizen of the US, is a very clever and righteous man and Espuelas, for his part, is not terribly intelligent, though better adapted to the customs of his own country than the Daltons. In fact, the Mexican gang is possibly even less intelligent than the Daltons, following them to their own doom. In any case the stupidity of both gangs only places them on an equal footing as Goscinny always liked making his villains stupid.⁸² Without disparaging the US, Morris and Goscinny have been able to offer a parodic satire of Latin American stereotypes through the "international exchange" Joe speaks of. What the latter claims to be essential characteristics of Latinos and Anglos (that is to say, a hot and a cool head respectively) are already reversed when Joe loses his temper. These essentialised

⁸⁰ See Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 30/1-4, 31/2-1, 36/3-8, 42/1-9, 45/7-8 & 46/4-7.

⁸¹ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, passim.

⁸² Aymar du Chatenet, ed., *Le Dictionnaire Goscinny* [The Goscinny Dictionary], Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 2003, p. 939.

characteristics are further put to the test as Espuelas calmly instructs Joe to be quiet so as not to draw attention to their lookout, then resorts to hitting Joe on the head when he continues to scream.⁸³ Similarly, while Joe confidently addresses Espuelas in broken Spanish, the latter is shown to know how to speak good “English” (rendered in French in the original) so that Espuelas is certainly not the most “backward” of the villains.⁸⁴ In addition, though Morris and Goscinny do not strike directly against the image of Latin America as a land of economic backwardness, they question the value of economic development in capitalist terms. Indeed, if it is solely for the purpose of having the honour of being robbed, it seems pointless to run a “proper” bank with a full safe. Both Perico’s enthusiastic attitude towards bank robbery as a sign of progress and Joe’s insistence on carrying out “business” like he did in the US point to the futility of imposing the same model (of economic development or otherwise) everywhere.

With “Capturer un marsupilami”, Franquin, Delporte and Will take us to an entirely different setting: the Palombian jungle. The dirt roads, Mexicans and Daltons may have been replaced with an abundant flora, Chahutas and Bring M. Backalive respectively, but the stance of the authors in this short story is quite similar to that of Morris and Goscinny in *Tortillas pour les Dalton*. Adopting a stance that is similar to Morris and Goscinny’s in the *Lucky Luke* series, but to an even greater extent, this short story reverses certain clichés regarding Latin America’s backwardness. Much like Joe Dalton, Backalive has a very short temper in this short story: he fumes, he jumps in exasperation, he screams, he hops, he falls, he leaps.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the two

⁸³ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 12/5-8.

⁸⁴ Morris & Goscinny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton*, 8/7 – 9/1 and passim.

⁸⁵ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, passim.

Chahutas with whom he is trying to communicate so desperately maintain a calm and collected attitude, with their feet firmly planted on the ground (or, alternatively, on a vine or on a branch), though they occasionally burst out laughing at Backalive's mistakes.

In "Far Far Away" I discussed the time-space distance established between Europe and Latin America. In terms of the distance established in relation to time, I was particularly interested in the denial of coevalness as described by Fabian: the persistent assignation of non-European subjects of anthropological studies to a different typological time. That is to say, these subjects are assigned to a different stage of evolution, though living in the same physical time as the anthropologist. Although the British subject Backalive and the Chahutas fail to have a satisfying verbal exchange in "Capturer un marsupilami", the fact that both their languages are rendered in French fulfils the function of dramatic irony in that it places the reader in a privileged position to understand what they say about each other and to draw conclusions about the failed exchanges. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Backalive's words reveal that he has a very low opinion of the Chahutas. In fact, in "Capturer un marsupilami" it is made quite clear that, to Backalive, the Chahutas belong to an earlier typological time: in the space of these six *planches*, he calls the two Chahutas by no fewer than thirteen synonyms of "idiot", as well as referring to them as "emplumés" (literally, feathered ones and figuratively, fledglings), "jean-foutre" (jackass) and "sagouins" (literally, tamarins, and figuratively, dirty). To these insults, we can add another five directed at Tapahudpo's intellectual abilities, and three directed at Palombia in general. The inhabitants of the Palombian jungle, however, are not to be outdone by Backalive and every character he encounters has insults for

him too. The two anonymous Chahutas who deliberately send him to Tapahudpo use nine other synonyms of “idiot” while talking about him, express great surprise at his ability to understand simple gestures and drawings and use eight additional general insults. As for Tapahudpo, he adds three more disparaging comments regarding Backalive’s intellectual abilities and even the jaguar refers to him as a “connard” (asshole).⁸⁶

Besides the numerous indications that Backalive believes the Chahutas are unintelligent and that the latter think the same of him, this extraordinary exchange of insults is strongly marked by a reversal of racist clichés typically associated with Indigenous and colonised peoples, in particular black people. The two Chahutas emit a total of five judgements that effectively place Bring M. Backalive in a remote typological time. With statements such as “tous de grands enfants” (all like children) and “ces minables peuvent être agiles comme des singes, la ressemblance est frappante: et ils sont roses au même endroit” (these pathetic people can be as agile as monkeys, the resemblance is uncanny: and they are pink in the same spot), the Chahutas infantilise Backalive and suggest that he belongs to an earlier stage of evolution, one that is not quite human yet.⁸⁷ Their surprise at Backalive’s ability to understand a simple drawing, or even grasp the concept of a drawing, and their observation that “ces individus peuvent devenir dangereux tout à coup sans raison” (these individuals can suddenly become dangerous for no reason) further point to the Chahutas’ reading of Backalive as a person who is irrational and unpredictable. Backalive does not fare much better with Tapahudpo, who, for his part, does not

⁸⁶ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, *passim*.

⁸⁷ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 26/10 & 28/8.

attack him so much based on a presupposition that he is barely human, but solely based on the fact that he is white. Thus, he greets Backalive—the first human he has seen in forty days—with the comment “pas de chance, c’est un blanc et il est blet” (no luck, it’s a white man, and he is very old) and when the hunter leaves in exasperation, he states “bon débarras: cette couleur de peau m’a toujours écœuré” (good riddance: this skin colour has always made me sick).⁸⁸

While all three Chahutas—the two warriors and Tapahudpo—make several racialising comments about Backalive, the fact that this attitude is matched by an almost equal number of insults and disparaging comments coming from the white hunter has a softening effect. The Chahutas are not necessarily cast as racist per se, but rather, are given a right of reply when Franquin puts a typical white racist colonialist discourse in their mouths. This unexpected reversal parodies the representation of non-white people (“Indians” in this particular case) as underdeveloped people incapable of rational thought that one finds in Franquin’s own earlier work as well as other *bande dessinée* albums. For instance, the Chahutas here have little in common with the Chahutas as they first appear in *Spirou et les héritiers* and a little later in *Le bébé du bout du monde*, or with the pygmies of *Tembo Tabou*. Neither unnecessarily aggressive nor naïve, the Chahutas also will not take a condescending or authoritarian attitude from an outsider.

Unlike *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy*, “Capturer un marsupilami” and *Tortillas pour les Dalton* engage with and question representations of Latin America. Gilard is right in saying that it is not photographic precision that makes the

⁸⁸ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, Marsupilami, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 29/6 & 30/1.

representations found in “Capturer un marsupilami” accurate.⁸⁹ However, rather than insisting on Franquin’s foreseeing and foretelling of a future that would affect both Latin America and the rest of the world as a proof of his accuracy, I believe the precision lies elsewhere. After all, Franquin makes clear in the last frames that the fact that it is Latin America that infects the rest of the world is a deliberate reversal and a just retribution for all the diseases the conquest brought to Latin America.⁹⁰ To me, Goscinny and Franquin’s accuracy lies in the fact that they parodied the way *bande dessinée* typecasts Latin Americans—be they more “Latin” or more indigenous—in terms of economic, cultural and intellectual backwardness or in terms of geographic remoteness. Without preaching, these two scriptwriters ridiculed the essentialisation and infantilisation of Latin Americans by reversing the clichés. Such an approach enabled them not only to question the representation of Latin America within the codes of *bande dessinée* but also to satirise stereotypes of others as backward in all respects within society at large. However, despite the fact that the approach adopted by Goscinny and Franquin is refreshing and offers a reflection on the representation of Latin America in *bande dessinée*, the parody in these two creations, much like in *Le défilé du jaguar* and *Robinson Academy*, relies on the existence and the *persistence* of clichés in order to work: without these points of reference, the humour is lost. However, given the fact that most of the clichés addressed in this thesis continue to appear in several new albums (such as the latest *Marsupilami* album, *Santa Calamidad*) and even newly-created series (such as *U.K.R.O.N.I.A. / Les brigades du temps*), it is likely that the humour and the strength

⁸⁹ Gilard, “Utopies hebdomadaires”, p. 137.

⁹⁰ Franquin, et al., “Capturer un Marsupilami” [To Catch a Marsupilami], in *Capturez un Marsupilami!*, *Marsupilami*, vol. 0, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2002, 31/8.

of the parody in “Capturer un marsupilami” and *Tortillas pour les Dalton* still have long days ahead.⁹¹

For Expór

In this last subsection, I turn to *Los Supermachos* and *Inodoro Pereyra* to look at what it is that the Latin American series laugh at. I argue that the focus of these two series is quite distinct from those of the *bandes dessinées* considered so far. If we laugh at the pompous artificiality of fashion shows (*Le défilé du jaguar*), the purely commercial artificiality of reality television (*Robinson Academy*) or clichés of Latin American backwardness (*Tortillas pour les Dalton* and “Capturer un marsupilami”) in the Franco-Belgian stories under consideration, the Latin American comics, for their part, have a different target altogether.

In “Supermales and Hyperfemales”, I focused on the question of masculinity in relation to the nation, in both *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos*. In the case of *Inodoro*, after establishing the links between the *gaucho*, nationhood, masculinity and meat consumption, I pointed out that Serafín’s presence in *Inodoro*’s family destabilised the patriarchal model and that *Inodoro*’s own excessive reactions to his nephew rendered him laughable. In the case of the *supermachos* I discussed the link between the 1968 Olympics, masculinity and patriotism (through the figures of Cuauhtémoc and la Malinche). There too, I pointed out the great irony in the *Garabatense* concept of how to be a good citizen—a concept that leads the *supermachos* to unwavering acceptance of abuse from the powerful men of the village

⁹¹ Batem & Colman, *Santa Calamidad*, Marsupilami, vol. 26, Monaco: Marsu Productions, 2012; from Kris & Duhamel, “1492, à l’Ouest, rien de nouveau (1/6)” to Kris & Duhamel, “1492, à l’Ouest, rien de nouveau (episode 6/6)” [1492, Out West, Nothing New], Agence temporelle U.K.R.O.N.I.A., *Spirou*, 23 November, 2011, 74th year, Issue 3841; from Kris & Duhamel, “La grande Armada (episode 1/6)” [The Spanish Armada], Les Brigades du temps, *Spirou*, 9 January, 2013, 76th year, Issue 3900 to Kris & Duhamel, “La grande Armada (6/6)”.

and that paradoxically leads them to adhere to the PRI discourse on masculinity and turns them into *malinchistas*. Here I propose to focus more specifically on the question of national identity, not through a discussion of sexual and culinary preferences, or of the significance of the Olympics and Superman, but by focussing on the way Mexicanness and Argentineanness are marketed, especially to tourists.

Unlike the Franco-Belgian series, that tend to present Latin America as a whole, *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos* are very nation-specific. Within the national frame, both *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos*—and even *Operación Bolívar*, although it is not a humoristic work—target official and political discourse in general and the idea of an official national identity in particular. I begin this subsection by discussing the use of parody and satire—in relation to national identity and tourism—in *Los Supermachos*, using three specific episodes: episodes 1, 2 and 32. I will then turn to a number of *Inodoro Pereyra* episodes to explore how Fontanarrosa uses parody to question what María Alejandra Minelli refers to as “la resemantización y esencialización de la figura del gaucho como símbolo nacional” (the resemanticisation and essentialisation of the figure of the *gaucho* as a national symbol) and how he then uses this to satirise folkloricism.⁹²

Though they can be read separately, episodes 1 and 2 of *Los Supermachos* are very closely linked. The first episode is not available in any of the *Mis Supermachos* volumes published so far but can be read online, in colour and remastered by Victor Hernández.⁹³ As the very first episode of the series, it opens with an introduction to

⁹² Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4.

⁹³ Rius, “Los Supermachos 1”, Victor Hernández, (17/02/2004), <http://toliro.webspaceforme.net/supermachos/> (21/12/2012).

San Garabato and its inhabitants. All the main characters are promptly united under the same roof as Don Perpetuo del Rosal has called a meeting to discuss a matter of some import: he wishes to bring tourism to San Garabato. Once a plan and a campaign are set up, Calzónzin is sent to the hill to watch out for any tourists who might be on their way to San Garabato. Unfortunately for the *Garabatenses*, the only tourist they succeed in attracting, the Texan Lulú Smith, takes to her heels before they are able to properly greet her: the shots they fire to welcome her and the traditional “Indian” garb they have donned only provoke great fear in her as she mistakes them for Comanches and flees.⁹⁴

The following day is recounted in the second episode, which opens on a discussion between Don Perpetuo and police officer Arsenio about attracting more tourists to San Garabato. Soon after these two characters have entered Don Fiacro’s bar, Calzónzin rushes in from the hill to announce that Lulú Smith is coming back to San Garabato. Having come to the conclusion that “Indians” scare tourists away, Don Perpetuo carries out what he calls Operación Éxodo (Operation Exodus). He rounds up the entire village and announces that an atomic bomb will be dropped in San Garabato. Using this fabricated news as an excuse, he attempts to rid San Garabato of 89% of her inhabitants by declaring that the indigenous and mixed population are to go seek refuge on the hill while the white population stays in San Garabato to bravely face the bomb. This time, the welcoming committee is dressed in formal western attire. Unfortunately for Don Perpetuo, Lulú has turned back because she has decided that she does want to see “Indians” after all. Though Lulú does not run away this time, she is confused by the new turn of events and enquires about the “Indians”.

⁹⁴ Rius, “Los Supermachos 1”, *passim*.

When Don Perpetuo reassures her that there is not even a sample “Indian” in San Garabato, Lulú leaves the village in disappointment.⁹⁵

Episode 32 of *Los Supermachos* is quite distinct from episodes 1 and 2 in that it involves a dream. It all begins as indebted Chón is forced to work for Don Fiacro until he has paid what he owes the Spanish bar owner. As he breaks several glasses by accident, Chón finds himself forced to work for Don Fiacro for longer than expected. Resenting all the hard work Don Fiacro makes him do, Chón has an argument with the Spaniard about the cost of the Spanish colonisation to Mexico and walks out. Once at home, the exhausted Chón goes to sleep and dreams about the conquest of Mexico. Though the dream at first appears to be quite faithful to history, it takes a very different turn when Chón—appearing as an Aztec messenger and spy—asks an anonymous character what would happen if the Spanish succeeded in reaching Tlaxcalteca. Beginning with the anonymous character’s anachronistic response—“Pues... ¡Bienvenidas las inversiones extranjeras!” (Well... Welcome foreign investments!)—the dream becomes a parody of historical accounts of the conquest. Chón’s negative response to the arrival of the Spaniards results in his being labelled a communist and being beaten up by the two police officers—Lechuzo and Arsenio—who appear in his dream as Aztec warriors. Chón wakes up to find that Lechuzo and Arsenio, though not Aztec warriors, are really hitting him and he is arrested for leaving work and for assaulting Don Fiacro. After a summary trial presided by Don Perpetuo, Chón is sentenced to working for Don Fiacro for another month in compensation for damages despite his protests that he is innocent. At the end, it is

⁹⁵ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, *passim*.

revealed that it was in fact Chón's mad aunt, Doña Cuca Marina, who assaulted Don Fiacro, thinking he was a spy.⁹⁶

What the first two *Los Supermachos* episodes bring to the discussion is the very fact of attempting to present oneself in a certain way in response to the others' expectations. Despite the fact that neither of the first two episodes can be said to be parodying any particular work, they nonetheless offer a satire of self-exoticisation in order to meet tourists' demands. Importantly, it is very clear from the beginning that the reason behind all the efforts made by the *Garabatenses* is none other than profit: they want to make San Garabato a tourist destination in order to bring money to the village.⁹⁷ From the beginning, then, their objective is to offer an image of Mexico that will sell and it is made clear that veracity or authenticity are not major concerns. Thus, they decide that since Pancho Villa enjoys great popularity amongst US citizens, they will circulate the news that the revolutionary's skull (from when he was still a child!) is in San Garabato.⁹⁸

Lulú Smith's relationship with the *Garabatenses* is similar to that of the Daltons and Espuelas's gang: though Lulú Smith—the only person to have read and believed the news—is presented as someone who is particularly unintelligent, the *Garabatenses* are more laughable than she is. Don Perpetuo's efforts to match Lulú's fickle expectations are ridiculed: San Garabato's inhabitants are neither purely pre-Columbian untouched Aztecs nor purely white people with an entirely "western"

⁹⁶ Rius, "Los Supermachos" (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, passim.

⁹⁷ Rius, "Los Supermachos 1", pl. 7.

⁹⁸ Rius, "Los Supermachos 1", pl. 8 & 16-18.

culture.⁹⁹ In both cases, Don Perpetuo is presenting his village under a false light. Though this is visually more striking on the first occasion, as none of the characters normally dress in pre-Columbian clothes, the very fact that showing San Garabato as entirely white entails hiding almost 90% of the population is enough to highlight the artificiality of the image Don Perpetuo wishes to present the second time Lulú Smith comes to San Garabato.¹⁰⁰ However, it is interesting to note that ultimately, the false image that Lulú comes to prefer is the first one she encounters. In that respect, the words uttered by the del Rosales and by Lulú regarding “Indianness” are worth paying attention to. As they await Lulú’s second visit, Doña Pomposa (Don Perpetuo’s wife) declares that they must “demostrarle que estamos civilizados y somos cultos” (show her that we are civilised and that we are cultured), which Don Perpetuo promptly paraphrases as: “le debemos mostrar que no somos indios” (we have to show her that we are not Indians).¹⁰¹ To the del Rosales, then, being “Indian” means to be uneducated and uncivilised. This equation finds an echo in Lulú’s words as she travels back to San Garabato: when, for reasons unknown, she confuses vultures for hotel keepers, Lulú runs away exclaiming “¡.. me perseguir [sic] a mí la civilization [sic]! Mi quierro [sic] llegar a los indios...” (Civilisation pursue me! Me want to reach the Indians...).¹⁰² For Lulú, then, the authentic Mexico that is worth visiting is one that is still in pre-Columbian times and that is untouched by “civilisation”. The fact that Don Perpetuo initially seeks to sell this image only further confirms that for the tourist business to work between these two countries, San

⁹⁹ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 23/3/.

¹⁰⁰ The census figures for San Garabato are as follows: 13 whites, 20 *mestizos* and 82 “Indians”. See Rius, “Los Supermachos 1”, pl. 24/1; Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 21/3.

¹⁰¹ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 35/2 & 35/5.

¹⁰² Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 2), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 1, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2004, 23/3.

Garabato's image needs to be maintained at an earlier, more exotic, typological time, thus reinforcing Mexico as a far far away destination in the foreigner's imaginary.

The thirty-second episode of *Los Supermachos*, without broaching the question of masculinity in itself (though the main characters' supermaleness is, by now, a given), shares many concerns with the episodes considered in "Supermales and Hyperfemales". Here, patriotism, *malinchismo* and foreign influence are evoked both literally and figuratively. In this episode, Rius adopts a different approach from the one used in the first two episodes of the series and pushes the point raised in these early stories even further as he delivers a parable of the situation in Mexico under the guise of a dream. As he parodies historical facts, peppering the dream with anachronistic concerns such as foreign investment and communism, Rius establishes a comparison between the conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century and more recent history.

Three of the four Mexican figures explored by Paz can be found in this story. In fact, *la chingada* and *el chingón* are not only present figuratively, but also literally, since both Doña Marina and Hernán Cortés are present as actual characters in Chón's dream. La Malinche (named by not one, but *two* variants of her name in this dream: Doña Marina Malinche) is, as in historical accounts, Hernán Cortés's lover and translator. However, doña Marina has been updated as she is shown wearing sunglasses and carrying out business with the Spaniards as a tour guide and jewel trafficker. Her behaviour towards the *conquistadores* remains, nonetheless, true to type and while she may find the Spanish obsession with "el oro inservible" (useless gold) laughable, she enjoys the "utilísimas y carísimas cosas" (supremely useful and

expensive things)—mostly mirrors, it seems—that she obtains in exchange for the precious metal.¹⁰³ Cortés, for his part, is portrayed by none other than the bar owner, Don Fiacro, whom Chón resented so much before falling asleep. Rius could hardly have presented Doña Marina as more treacherous to her people: not only does she willingly engage in this business with the Spanish but she is also shown bowing down adoringly to them and it is even suggested she sleeps with more than one of them.¹⁰⁴ As for Cortés/Don Fiacro, he makes no secret of his intentions for Mexico: “es que ya me urge empezar a despojar a esos pobres indios de sus cadenas...!” (I have a pressing need to start stripping these poor Indians of their chains..!). And to ensure it is clear what such an operation entails, one of Cortés/Don Fiacro’s men adds “De oro” (made of gold).¹⁰⁵

Although we do not see Cuauhtémoc himself in Chón’s dream, the latter certainly embodies the values that the figure of the young grandfather stands for. While most of the population applauds the business deal between Mexico and the Spanish and makes statements such as “¡[b]ienvenidas las inversiones extranjeras!” (welcome foreign investments!) and “[y]o apoyo la libre empresa y la iniciativa privada!” (I support free enterprise and private initiatives!), happily taking on the same role as doña Marina, Chón is the only one to protest... and to suffer for it.¹⁰⁶ As he reports back to the official who sent him to find out about the *conquistadores*, he explains “Las inversiones extranjeras no sirven para nada! ¡Nos van a dar en la torre!” (Foreign

¹⁰³ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 104/1 and 104/5.

¹⁰⁴ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, pp. 104–105.

¹⁰⁵ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 105/4.

¹⁰⁶ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 103/3 & 103/4.

investments are useless! They are going to screw us over!).¹⁰⁷ As his compatriots continue to rejoice over the trade agreement with the Spaniards, Chón protests even more vehemently “¡Go home Cortés! ¡Mueran los invasores! [...] ¡Moctezuma es un entreguista: les va a vender el país a los conquistadores! ¡Muera Cortés!” (Go home Cortés! Death to invaders! [...] Moctezuma is a sellout: he is going to sell the country to the *conquistadores*! Death to Cortés!).¹⁰⁸

While such denunciations only earn Chón a number of blows, it is striking that on both sides, the argument put forward is invariably that of the nation. For example, even before finding out whether the Spaniards have arrived, in response to an anonymous character’s enthusiasm for the conquest, Chón asks “¿Pos qué clase de mexicano es usted? ¿A poco hemos necesitado ayuda extranjera pa hacer las pirámides..?” (Well what kind of Mexican are you? Did we require foreign help to build the pyramids..?).¹⁰⁹ Chón’s opponents, for their part, argue that the coming of the Spaniards will benefit the nation: “Sólo nos vienen a civilizar y a ayudar para que prospere la nación..!” (They are only coming to civilise us and to help the nation prosper..!).¹¹⁰ The use of the nation and patriotism on both sides links back to the points raised in relation to supermachismo in the chapter “Supermales and Hyperfemales”, namely that the Supermachos, in their attempt to honour Cuauhtémoc

¹⁰⁷ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 108/1.

¹⁰⁸ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 110/6-7.

¹⁰⁹ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 103/4.

¹¹⁰ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 107/6.

and behave as patriots, end up buying into the PRI discourse of masculinity and nation, and behave more like la Malinche in their absolute passivity.¹¹¹

The concepts of *malinchistas*, *cuauhtémiquistas* and *chingones* are relevant here for multiple reasons. First, there is the obvious fact that Cortés and La Malinche are actual characters in this episode. Second, while the dream itself is set in a sixteenth century that has been mixed with some contemporary elements, the episode within which this dream occurs is placed in a time that is much closer to ours. Third, Cortés and La Malinche, whilst actual characters, are also used as *figures* in relation to the time of the creation of the episode (mid to late 1960s). The dream relates quite closely to the “reality” of the *Garabatenses* and besides the fact that it is Chón’s argument with Don Fiacro about the Spanish conquest that provokes the dream, it is striking how closely the trial scene and the dream match. Chón experiences an almost seamless (albeit painful) transition from sleep to wakefulness as the same men who were beating him in his dream are beating him in reality. His disagreements with Cortés and Don Fiacro result in Chón being labelled an antipatriot and a communist in both cases.¹¹² In addition, Don Fiacro’s words echo what was said about the coming of the *conquistadores* in Chón’s dream: he claims to have come “desde lejos pa ayudar desinteresadamente a este pobre país” (from afar to selflessly help this poor country), a fact that is very doubtful given that he owns a business.¹¹³ As for Don Perpetuo, he tearfully comes out in favour of Don Fiacro, putting forward, much in the same way as Chón’s compatriots in the dream, the fact that Don Fiacro has come to Mexico “pa [...] civilizarnos y [...] ayudar al país a prosperar” (to [...] civilise us and [...] to help

¹¹¹ See pp. 131-154.

¹¹² Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 108/2 & 113/4.

¹¹³ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 114/3.

the country prosper).¹¹⁴ The obvious conclusion to this whole affair is the one that Chón draws as he discusses his situation with his brother Gedeón: “uno que cree en la independencia y resulta que todavía estamos en la colonia.. / y todavía hay indios atarantados que piden relaciones con España..” (here I was, believing in the independence and it turns out that we are still a colony../ and there still are silly Indians who ask for relations with Spain..).¹¹⁵

As regards *Los Supermachos*, I would not go so far as to say that through Chón’s dream Rius pays homage to the Spanish conquest as he parodies it, but I would argue that the Spanish conquest is not his primary target here. By parodying a rather well-known part of Mexican history, and by incorporating other important moments of Mexican history (such as the Santa Anna sale), Rius is able to satirise PRI *entreguismo* (sellout behaviour). In that respect, La Malinche’s activities as a tour guide and the *garabatenses*’ efforts to bring tourists to the village in the first two episodes of the series are only illustrations of how Mexico tries to market herself. Though neither of the self-representations they come up with are genuine, the wish to satisfy tourists’ expectations, in itself, is relatively harmless in comparison to distorting values to the point of labelling patriots as antipatriotic.

Undeniably, Chón’s comment ties in neatly with decolonial thought—much as the mise en abyme of the dream enables us to draw a parallel between the time of the conquest and the current situation in San Garabato, I argue that this episode has two targets. At the same time as it is clearly about the Spanish conquest, there is a more

¹¹⁴ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 114/6.

¹¹⁵ Rius, “Los Supermachos” (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 115/7-8.

veiled criticism of neo-colonialism. When we compare the thirty-second episode with the first two episodes, as well as other *Supermachos* episodes such as the ones that address the question of the Olympics, it is clear that San Garabato's concern is always with the US. In the first two episodes, this concern with marketing oneself to the US, in the person of Lulú Smith, is shown quite plainly whereas in this thirty-second episode, the critique is more subtle. If we turn once more to the dream, it becomes clear that while it *mostly* parodies the Spanish conquest of Mexico, it is peppered with references to the relationship with the US. In particular, it is striking that, though the Aztecs are officially dealing with Spaniards, on a number of occasions it is English that is used, rather than Spanish, in the dealings with the *conquistadores*. Thus, in what one might suppose is La Malinche's shop, there is a sign that reads "Mexican curios" and in his invective against Cortés, Chón proclaims "¡Go home, Cortés!".¹¹⁶ What is more, though Chón claims that Moctezuma will sell Mexico to the Spaniards, it is president Antonio López de Santa Anna who is known for literally selling parts of Mexico to the US in 1853. As for the PRI—rendered as R.I.P. in Rius's work—their propensity to encourage foreign investment and allow US intervention has already been discussed in "Supermales and Hyperfemales". For this reason the small sign reading the amusingly contradictory message "Vivan los rubios R.I.P." (long live the blond ones R.I.P.), held by an anonymous character in the crowd while Chón complains about Moctezuma being an *entreguista* (a sellout), is a small key to unlocking Rius's encoded message. He is suggesting a parallel between the PRI enthusiasm for foreign investments, Santa Anna's sale of Mexican land to the US and the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish: it would seem La Malinche has more than one heir.

¹¹⁶ Rius, "Los Supermachos" (*Los Supermachos* 32), in *Mis Supermachos*, vol. 3, México D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010, 104/5 & 110/6.

When it comes to *Inodoro Pereyra*, while there is certainly a good dose of satire, we find no such serious accusations of treason. Inodoro Pereyra is one in a long line of paper *gauchos* and it is worth noting that when Fontanarrosa created *Inodoro Pereyra*, folkloricism was fashionable in the author's city, Córdoba.¹¹⁷ In fact, according to Fontanarrosa's friend and fellow *historietista* Crist, in the Córdoba of the seventies, folklore enjoyed such popularity that "todo el mundo andaba con una guitarra o si no andaba desnudo [...] ¡y ver a los tipos vestidos de gaucho por Córdoba era normal!" (everyone walked around with a guitar because walking around without one was like walking around naked [...] and seeing guys dressed up as *gauchos* was normal!).¹¹⁸

From the earliest episodes, it is clear that *Inodoro Pereyra* is a parody of *gaucho* literature in general and of *Martín Fierro* in particular. The very first episode of *Inodoro Pereyra* is in reality a compact summary of the first half of the poem, titled "El gaucho Martín Fierro". Inodoro Pereyra enters a *pulpería*, gets into a fight, acquires a friend in the midst of this fight and kills a number of men. Though many details have been left out the poem can still be recognised, but at the end of this short parody, Inodoro decides to follow a different path. While Martín Fierro and his friend in arms (Cruz) decide to go and live amongst the "Indians" at the end of the first half of the poem, don Inodoro, for his part, announces that he will not do so because "a esto ya me parece que lo leí en otra parte y yo quiero ser original" (I think I have already read this somewhere and I want to be original).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari & Silvia L. López, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 252.

¹¹⁸ Crist in Sasturain (dir.) *Fontanarrosa e Inodoro Pereyra*.

¹¹⁹ Fontanarrosa, "Cuando se dice adiós" [When One Says Goodbye] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 1), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 19; José Hernández, "El gaucho Martín Fierro"

If *Inodoro Pereyra*'s roots in *gaucho* literature show very clearly from the beginning, these classics are not under attack in Fontanarrosa's work. In fact, not only did Fontanarrosa admit to having great respect for *Martín Fierro*—referring to it as “the *gaucho* bible”—but in addition, Inodoro himself refuses to have a bath for two months after hugging Don Segundo Sombra (the hero of another famous *gaucho* work) and suggests he may be related to Martín Fierro.¹²⁰ Moreover, only a few years before his passing away, Fontanarrosa was called upon a number of times to illustrate *Martín Fierro* and his instantly recognisable line can be found in no fewer than three distinct cultural products titled *Martín Fierro*. The first one, released in 2004, is an edition of the original poem by José Hernández, with illustrations by Fontanarrosa.¹²¹ A few years later, Fontanarrosa was asked to provide illustrations for an animated film adaptation of *Martín Fierro* that was released in 2007.¹²² Finally, another edition of *Martín Fierro* was released posthumously in 2007, this time accompanied by copious stills from the aforementioned animated film.¹²³ The requests for these illustrations of *Martín Fierro* are as much testament to the popularity that Fontanarrosa and *Inodoro Pereyra* had gained as to the recognition of Fontanarrosa's respectful stance towards *Martín Fierro* in his own work. After all, the film directors

[The *gaucho* Martín Fierro], in *Martín Fierro: con ilustraciones de Fontanarrosa*, Jorge Ezequiel Sánchez, et al. (eds.), Buenos Aires: Arte Gráfico Editorial Argentino, 2007, passim; Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4; Campa, *América Latina*, p. 40.

¹²⁰ Miguel Frías, “La (re)construcción [sic] del héroe” [The (Re)Construction of the Hero], *Clarín*, 07/11/2007, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2007/11/07/espectaculos/c-00811.htm>; Fontanarrosa, “Ni el agua bendita” [Not Even Holy Water] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 20), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 647.

¹²¹ José Hernández, *Martín Fierro: ilustrado por Fontanarrosa* [Martín Fierro: Illustrated by Fontanarrosa], Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2004.

¹²² Norman Ruiz, et al. (dir.) *Martín Fierro: la película* [Martín Fierro: The Movie], 2008 [1h28min].

¹²³ José Hernández, *Martín Fierro: con ilustraciones de Fontanarrosa* [Martín Fierro: With Illustrations by Fontanarrosa], eds. Jorge Ezequiel Sánchez, et al., Buenos Aires: Arte Gráfico Editorial Argentino, 2007.

were quite clear about why they chose Fontanarrosa: “queríamos *Inodoro Pereyra* en el diseño” (we wanted *Inodoro Pereyra* in the drawing).¹²⁴

While Fontanarrosa did not take a stance against *gaucho* literature in his parodic *historieta*, he certainly satirised the “civilisation and barbarism” dichotomy and the concerns with defining the *ser nacional*. In the aptly titled episode “El ser nacional”, an expert declares that Inodoro Pereyra is without doubt the best representative of the national being. This finding provokes great admiration in his colleague as, while everyone is struggling to define the *ser nacional*, this expert claims to have found him.¹²⁵ However, being the national being incarnate does not make Inodoro exempt from attempts to glamorise his image and a mere three episodes after having been declared the near perfect embodiment of the national being, Inodoro is visited by an official who reproaches him for *not* being representative of the *ser nacional*. According to this official, Inodoro is too short, not altruistic, trustworthy or pious and does not offer a realistic representation of life. To remedy this perceived lack of realism, the official gives Inodoro new clothes and turns him into Supereyra. While Inodoro retains his basic *gaucho* clothes, he now has a cape flowing over his shoulders, an “I” emblazoned on his shirt and his *chiripá* is smaller and tighter than usual, to resemble the superhero underwear-over-tights look.¹²⁶ This choice of costume—hardly a realistic look—is further ridiculed as Inodoro strikes a superheroic pose, arms akimbo, and tells Mendieta that the adventures of Supereyra need to be

¹²⁴ Guillermo Bergandi (dir.) *Making of* (bonus feature of *Martín Fierro: La película*), 2007 [26min43sec].

¹²⁵ Fontanarrosa, “El ser nacional” [The National Being] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 313.

¹²⁶ A *chiripá* is a piece of fabric that *gauchos* wear over their *calzoncillos* (a long undergarment that resembles a pair of trousers, sometimes featuring fringes or intricate embroidery on the lower part). The *chiripá* is passed between the legs and held at the waist by a belt. It vaguely resembles a nappy in terms of shape but it falls around knee-length.

realistic—an unlikely outcome given his outfit.¹²⁷ Yet another episode in which official representatives intervene in order to mould don Inodoro into a good representative of the nation is the episode titled “Patrimonio de la humanidad”. This time, Fontanarrosa pits two international organisations—the UN and the IMF—against each other. Just as the local authorities find him to be perfect as he is, then attempt to change him, Inodoro reveals that he has been declared world heritage and is thus not allowed to change his hairstyle without consulting with the United Nations first. However, this wish to keep him frozen in time is in sharp contrast with the demands of the other UN agency, the IMF, that wants Inodoro to work, although this damages his image of lazy *gaucho*.¹²⁸

María Alejandra Minelli suggests that the government officials, journalists, tourists and intellectuals who come to visit Inodoro Pereyra represent “civilisation”, while Inodoro himself is ascribed to “barbarism”.¹²⁹ Inodoro, however, shakes the foundations of this dichotomy and does not accept this imposition. His methods for blurring the edges include scepticism, irony, silence and misinterpretation.¹³⁰ Inodoro also explicitly assigns himself and Mendieta to the category of “intelectuales” (sic), although he is unable to recognise an *inodoro* (a toilet) and interprets it as a modern sculpture.¹³¹ In addition to assigning himself to the category of the “civilised”, Inodoro openly questions Sarmiento’s choice of “civilisation” over “barbarism” as he looks up at the sky and asks: “Domingo Faustino... ¿Pa qué elegiste la civilización... si con la

¹²⁷ Fontanarrosa, “El gaucho, ese símbolo” [The *Gaucho*, that Symbol] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 316.

¹²⁸ Fontanarrosa, “Patrimonio de la humanidad” [World Heritage] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 599.

¹²⁹ Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4.

¹³⁰ Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4.

¹³¹ Fontanarrosa, “Los pampas del cacique Lloriqueo” [Chief Lloriqueo’s Pampas Indians], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 27, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 64; Fontanarrosa, “El cacique Aguila Mocha” [The Chief Aguila Mocha], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 24, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2000, pp. 76-77.

barbarie estábamos tan contentos?” (Domingo Faustino... what did you choose civilisation for... if we were quite content with barbarism?).¹³²

Yet another method used by Inodoro and Mendieta to unsettle the dichotomy is to deflect the concept of the *ser nacional* in a number of ways. In “Dos personajes sentados”, Inodoro brings the issue down to a more local level by telling Mendieta that he is more concerned for the provincial being than for the national being.¹³³ Mendieta, for his part, fragments the idea of a homogenous nation by declaring “the International being” a more accurate description of the nation than the national being in “Un raviol a la cruz”.¹³⁴ In another episode, as Inodoro wonders about the future of the national being, Mendieta’s response points to the futility of such a concern, as he reinterprets the question as being related to the verb “to be” (“ser” can be the noun “being” or the verb “to be” in the infinitive), which he obligingly conjugates in the future for Inodoro.¹³⁵

However, Fontanarrosa does not always resort to the direct intervention of authorities, and sometimes leaves it to don Inodoro and his household to comment on the *ser nacional*. If, after the visit of representatives in “El ser nacional”, Inodoro declares that “como futuro mío, no me convenzo” (as my own future, I find myself unconvincing), there are many instances where don Inodoro broaches the subject of

¹³² Fontanarrosa, “El esqueleto de su tío Pedro” [His Uncle Pedro’s Skeleton], in *Inodoro Pereyra*, vol. 27, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 26.

¹³³ Fontanarrosa, “Dos personajes sentados” [Two Characters Sitting] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 570: “rather than worrying about the national being, I worry about the provincial being”.

¹³⁴ Fontanarrosa, “Un raviol a la cruz” [A Cross Raviolo] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 14), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 479.

¹³⁵ Fontanarrosa, “Dos personajes sentados” [Two Characters Sitting] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 570; Fontanarrosa, “Un raviol a la cruz” [A Cross Raviolo] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 14), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 479.

his own accord.¹³⁶ Though it is known that *gauchos* are of mixed origins (“Indian” and Spanish, as well as the less advertised black element), much in the same way as the official representatives are eternally trying to define the *ser nacional*, as the *ser nacional* incarnate, Inodoro himself is very confused and inconsistent about his own origins.¹³⁷ Early on, in a conversation with Mendieta, don Inodoro satirises the essentialisation of the *gaucho* as a symbol of Argentineanness by assimilating the southern part of his body with the southern part of Argentina, that is to say, Patagonia. He announces to a couple of “Indians”: “Yo soy mezcla de indio con español. Y creo que mitá [sic] india es la de abajo / porque es inesplorada [sic] salvaje, áspera y bastante infiel” (I am a mix of Indian and Spanish. And I think that my Indian half is the lower one / Because it is unexplored, savage, rugged and quite unfaithful).¹³⁸ If he clearly claims “Indian” and Spanish origins on that occasion, Inodoro sometimes speaks of himself as being purely white and sometimes he is so confused about the *ser nacional* that he does not know whether he is a creole, an immigrant or a refugee from Laos.¹³⁹

The satire, however, does not always come from Don Inodoro’s overt rejection of the concept of a *ser nacional*, be it in conversation with official representatives or with Mendieta. On the contrary, he sometimes embraces this model for his own purposes. For example, the ridicule reaches new heights when a very impatient Inodoro decides

¹³⁶ Fontanarrosa, “El ser nacional” [The National Being] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 313; Fontanarrosa, “El gaucho, ese símbolo” [The *Gaucho*, that Symbol] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 316; Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4.

¹³⁷ Paullada, *Rawhide and Song*, p. 30.

¹³⁸ Fontanarrosa, “Mezcla de indio con español” [Mix of Indian with Spanish] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 18), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, 607/4-5. Note that Inodoro uses the word “infel”, which translates as both “unfaithful” and “infidel”.

¹³⁹ Fontanarrosa, “Siempre hay un indio espiando” [There is Always an Indian Spying], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 29, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 58; Fontanarrosa, “El peor de los pecados” [The Worst Sin] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 12), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, 431/2-3.

to use his own pulse to measure time, claiming that “[e]l gaucho es la medida de todas las cosas” (the *gaucho* is the yardstick for everything), and entirely disregards the fact that his pulse is probably accelerating as he is growing irate.¹⁴⁰ On more than one occasion, Inodoro also embraces his own iconicity to earn some money. Like the “Indians”, and the *Garabatenses*, Inodoro Pereyra is a tourist attraction and those tourists who come to see him generally treat him like a circus animal.¹⁴¹ Eulogia, Mendieta and Inodoro are all aware of this “for expór” nature of folklore, although they have different attitudes towards it. In “El diablero malambador”, one of the rare episodes where the story is told from Eulogia’s perspective, the latter expresses great concern for her partner’s safety, lest he should kill himself while performing a *malambo* show featuring *boleadoras*.¹⁴² All her fears are quickly allayed when Inodoro appears with several local crafts that he purchased with very little money. Don Inodoro’s prowess, we are given to understand, is not in his performing a difficult and potentially dangerous dance, but in his savvy management of limited funds.¹⁴³ Mendieta, for his part, is quite prosaic regarding folkloric shows: when all of Inodoro’s physical exertion to entertain God results in a dollar note falling from the sky, the dog simply states that it was a very “for-expór” show.¹⁴⁴ As for Inodoro himself, he advertises the espadrilles “BANDIDAS” Malambo in an early episode and

¹⁴⁰ Fontanarrosa, “Una sopa de lentejas” [A Lentil Soup], in Inodoro Pereyra, vol. 28, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2007, p. 57.

¹⁴¹ See for example Fontanarrosa, “A la derecha: un gaucho” [On Your Right: A *Gaucho*] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 7), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 258 and Fontanarrosa, “¿Dónde vas, gringo?” [Where are you Going, Gringo?] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 1), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 42.

¹⁴² Fontanarrosa, “El diablero malambador” [The Devil Malambo Dancer] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, 333/6. *Boleadoras* or *bolas* are a *gaucho* weapon of indigenous origin typically consisting of two or three round weights attached at the end of a string. Though traditionally used to catch game, they are also used as part of malambo dance shows. In such shows, the *boleadoras* can be used “as is” or can be on fire (*boleadoras de fuego*).

¹⁴³ Fontanarrosa, “El diablero malambador” [The Devil Malambo Dancer] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 333.

¹⁴⁴ Fontanarrosa, “Dos personajes sentados” [Two Characters Sitting] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 17), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 570.

seems quite convincing and convinced about their quality, until he walks away, expressing disbelief at “[l]as cosas que hay que hacer [...] pa ganarse unos patacones” (the things one needs to do to earn a few bucks).¹⁴⁵ Despite this, later in the series, and out of his own initiative, Inodoro tries to earn money by declaring the front and the back of his shirt advertising spaces.¹⁴⁶

What the attitudes of Eulogia, Mendieta and Inodoro towards these shows and advertising campaigns tell us is that they are all acutely aware of the artificiality of such shows and of the concept of an Argentinean national being. As can be seen in the way local and international authorities behave, as well as in don Inodoro’s inconsistency when it comes to his origins, the *ser nacional* is, to say the least, elusive. Despite the difficulty in defining the *ser nacional*, authorities seem to agree that this national being is perfectly embodied by don Inodoro. The latter responds to “la resemantización y esencialización de la figura del gaucho como símbolo nacional” (the resemanticisation and essentialisation of the figure of the *gaucho* as a national symbol) by emphasising his folkloric side in order to meet the expectations of tourists and thus earn some money.¹⁴⁷ However, it is clear that, for the most part, don Inodoro is not entirely convinced by the folkloricism that was fashionable at the time the series was created.¹⁴⁸ By marketing himself in this way, paradoxically, don Inodoro questions and distances himself from folkloricism, as he underlines that his shows are only for the benefit of tourists... as well as his own financial benefit. These are the

¹⁴⁵ Fontanarrosa, “Al que me hable mal del caucho” [To he who Badmouths the Rubber] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 7), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 265. Espadrilles are typical rural shoes, *Bandidas* is a reference to both the brand Adidas and the banditry often associated with *gauchos* (*bandido/bandida* = bandit).

¹⁴⁶ Fontanarrosa, “Al toro que tiene mañas” [To the Bull That Has Bad Habits] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 7), in *20 años con Inodoro Pereyra*, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 253.

¹⁴⁷ Minelli, “La Pampa de los senderos que se bifurcan”, p. 4.

¹⁴⁸ García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, p. 252.

very ideas expressed succinctly in Eulogia's words when she describes Inodoro's imagined performance as "la argentinidá for expór" (Argentineanness for export).¹⁴⁹ Or, as Rosalba Campra puts it *Inodoro Pereyra* "denuncia [...] l'assurdo di una volontà di far sopravvivere il *gaucho* a se stesso [...] [e] rivela cioè la natura puramente letteraria dell'« essere nazionale » rappresentato dal *gaucho*" (denounces [...] the absurdity of a will to make the *gaucho* outlive himself [...] [and] thus reveals the purely literary nature of the "national being" represented by the *gaucho*).¹⁵⁰

It is striking that in both Latin American series, the national representatives—the supermachos and the *gaucho*—are simple people rather than upper class people, a concept that ties in with the notion of the nation-popular, and that the image that is instinctively projected "for export" is precisely the one that corresponds to the "barbaric" side.¹⁵¹ Don Perpetuo may equate "Indianness" with a lack of "civilisation", it is nonetheless the image that he wishes to offer Lulú Smith during her first visit and it is the one that she ultimately prefers. Similarly, in *Inodoro Pereyra*, the *gaucho* may well claim he belongs to the "inteletuale", but he is far from being affluent. Ironically, and as is most visible in episode 32 of *Los Supermachos*, dealing with outsiders and foreigners is understood as a means of bringing money, civilisation and prosperity to the country. However, it would seem that the sine qua non of gaining access to money and "civilisation" is to remain "barbaric", to use Sarmiento's terms, or through uneven development, in Harvey's terms. Rius highlights this in the second episode of *Los Supermachos*: San Garabato's only tourist is not interested in visiting any longer when don Perpetuo arranges for all

¹⁴⁹ Fontanarrosa, "El diablero malambador" [The Devil Malambo Dancer] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 9), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 333.

¹⁵⁰ Campra, *América Latina*, p. 40.

¹⁵¹ Rowe & Schelling, *Memory and Modernity*, pp. 5, 8 & 10.

“Indians” and *mestizos* to be hidden and their tourist industry dies there and then. Episode 2 of *Los Supermachos*, however, is not the only one that makes this point and the same can be said of episode 32, where we can appreciate how the relationship to foreigners is still one where authorities play the role of the grateful destitute.

Despite their satirical approach to an essentialised national character and to the image Mexicans and Argentineans export, both *Los Supermachos* and *Inodoro Pereyra* seem to have been co-opted into the national imaginary. As I have pointed out earlier, there have been no fewer than three different *Martín Fierro* illustrated by Fontanarrosa. In addition to this, Inodoro Pereyra is the face of the Feria de Mataderos—a fair that takes place almost every weekend in Mataderos (province of Buenos Aires) and celebrates all things folkloric—despite the fact that folkloricism was very much satirised in the series.¹⁵² In addition to being on the official poster of the *feria* (Figure 8), don Inodoro is omnipresent at that fair and he can be found on the banner of an *asado* stall (Figure 9) or engraved on a metal demijohn at a stall that specialises in engraved *mates* (the cups, not the drink; see Figure 10), for instance. Perhaps more surprisingly—given the fact that don Inodoro deflected the *ser nacional* so many times—Fontanarrosa himself was almost declared the best representative of the *ser nacional* in 2007. Indeed, he was the first runner-up in the “popular arts and journalism” category on *El gen argentino* (The Argentinean Gene), a television show that aimed to “encontrar el ADN de nuestro ser nacional” (find the DNA of our [Argentinean] national being).¹⁵³ Furthermore, Inodoro Pereyra himself has become a

¹⁵² Uncredited, “La Feria de Mataderos...”, (© 2009), <http://www.feriademataderos.com.ar/feria.htm> (01/05/2010).

¹⁵³ Runner-ups and winners in other categories included Argentinean figures of world renown such as Eva Perón, Che Guevara, Jorge Luis Borges and Diego Maradona. See Uncredited, “La argentinidad al palo”; Luis María Hermida, “Cerca del ser nacional” [Close to the National Being], *Clarín*, 29/08/2007, <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2007/08/29/espectaculos/c-00501.htm>.

national icon, and he was chosen to be the face on the stamps commemorating the world cup in 2006, although in the series Inodoro much prefers barbecuing the ball to kicking it.¹⁵⁴



Figure 8. Feria de Mataderos poster
Photograph taken 20/09/2010.

¹⁵⁴ Fontanarrosa, “La tradición del Indio Guayta” [The Indian Guayta’s Tradition] (*Inodoro Pereyra* 10), in 20 años con Inodoro Pereyra, Buenos Aires: La Flor, 2003, p. 338.



Figure 9. Asado stall in Mataderos
Photograph taken 20/09/2010.



Figure 10. Engraved demijohns with Martín Fierro (left) and Inodoro Pereyra (right)
Photograph taken 20/09/2010.

As for Rius, his status is rather more complex as authorities appear to recognise his contribution to Mexican culture but continue to have an uneasy relationship with the nature of his work. Though, like Fontanarrosa, he was approached to create a stamp, the project did not come to a successful conclusion as Rius was asked not to use any of his usual characters.¹⁵⁵ It would appear, then, that the content of Rius's satirical work is still too prickly to be officially co-opted, though the author's importance is undeniable. Not so in the case of *Inodoro Pereyra*, which, for all the satire, has become a national icon in real life. This does not, however, take away the strength or value of Fontanarrosa's comments on the *ser nacional*. Indeed, while he may reject the binary of "civilisation" and "barbarism", deflect the *ser nacional* and satirise folkloricism, Fontanarrosa does not deny the existence of this last phenomenon or that of the aforementioned discourses. Rather, he confronts them and shakes the foundations of the civilisation-barbarism dichotomy, without necessarily privileging one over the other and shows them both as being part of what makes the *ser nacional*, in all its complexities. As Ana Merino puts it: "*Inodoro Pereyra* is the perfect example of the conflict between tradition and modernity. This Fontanarrosa work is a reinterpretation of the Argentinean folkloric past that became present through the mass media space of comics."¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

The great difference between the Franco-Belgian comics and the Latin American comics considered in terms of their target is that the Franco-Belgian ones tend to be more internal in their reflexions on the image of Latin America, whereas the Latin

¹⁵⁵ Rius, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Merino, "Inodoro Pereyra, a 'Gaucho' in the Pampa of Paper and Ink", p. 190.

American ones tend to be more external. That is to say, whether, like the two *Marsupilami* albums, they mock a certain representation of Palombia in a fashion show or a television show, only to confirm that the representation in the world of *bande dessinée* itself is the correct one, or whether they question and invert the representation of Latin America in *bande dessinée*, the conversation is still within the walls of *bande dessinée*. The satire, for its part, may or may not relate to questions outside of the world of *bande dessinée*. On the other hand, Latin American comics do not concern themselves with the way Latin Americans are represented in *historietas* or in other kinds of literature—*Martín Fierro*, for instance, was never under attack. The concern with the image of Latin America is at the satirical level, and addresses official constructs of a national identity, be it the *gaucho-cum-ser nacional* or the self-contradictory patriotic *entreguismo*. This difference goes a long way towards explaining the difference between the national-specific setting of Latin American comics, and the extensive use of patchwork fictional countries in *bandes dessinées*.

Conclusion(s)

Writing about the imperialist function of *Donald Duck* in the Chile of the seventies, Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart said that: “Mientras su cara risueña deambule inocentemente por las calles de nuestro país, mientras Donald sea poder y representación colectiva, el imperialismo y la burguesía podrán dormir tranquilos” (As long as he strolls with his smiling countenance so *innocently* about the streets of our country, as long as Donald is power and our collective representative, the bourgeoisie and imperialism can sleep in peace).¹ This project has some points in common with Dorfman and Mattelart’s work—namely the focus on Latin America and on comics, a Francophone’s perspective and a marked interest in imperialism/coloniality. However, the aims of the present project depart considerably from the concerns raised by Dorfman and Mattelart. Much more than the reception of

¹ Dorfman & Mattelart, *Para leer al pato Donald*, p. 4. Translation by David Kunzle, Ariel Dorfman & Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans. David Kunzle, New York: International General, 1975, p. 99 (added emphasis in original translation).

foreign comics in Latin America and the possibility that such comics might be designed to sell a way of life in Latin America, the project has concerned itself with images of Latin America that Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics sell in their *own* markets. Rather than studying the imposition of an imperialist vision of “elsewhere” to which the here-and-now-and-us of Latin America should aspire, the comics studied in this thesis shift the focus to how “Latin America” itself is portrayed in popular European and Latin American cultures.

When taken at face value—or, to use more technical terms, when considered at the level of the sign—most of the *bandes dessinées* included in the corpus of this thesis cast Latin America in a position of coloniality from the perspectives of sex, gender and economic development. In albums such as *Le trésor de Rackham le Rouge* and *Le temple du soleil*, Latin America is presented as a remote land that belongs to the past and from which riches can be extracted to generate wealth in Europe. In other albums, such as *Baby Prinz*, *L'orchidée des Chahutas* and *Red Monster*, Latin American males alternate between an animalistic hypersexuality and a weak homosexuality, but they are never cast as desirable partners.

As for Latin American comics, though they may touch on the same topics, the way they represent themselves is quite distinct. *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos* offer the opposite configuration to “far far away” by being in the “here and now”: neither Inodoro nor the supermachos are presented as removed from Argentina or Mexico in terms of typological or chronological time and they are very much rooted in their countries and cultures of origin, stating explicitly their Mexicanness or Argentineanness time and again. *Operación Bolívar*, however, goes beyond the “here

and now” and offers a real subversion of the remote time/space location of Latin America by creating a multitemporal geography. Such a configuration invalidates the idea that time can be neatly separated into periods, be they chronological or typological: the Mexico of *Operación Bolívar* is at once in the “past” and in the present. As regards masculinity and the nation, like Franco-Belgian comics, *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos* present a strong heterosexual masculinity as a desirable attribute and as tightly linked to the nation. However—and again, like Latin Americans in the Franco-Belgian comics—Latin Americans fail to fully realise this ideal, even though don Inodoro and the supermachos are strongly attached to it. While Inodoro’s family is shamed by Serafín’s vegetarianism, the supermachos patriotically adopt a submissive behaviour.

Looking beyond the plane of the sign, the plane of the myth in *bande dessinée* tells a different story. Though there may be points in common between the Latin American and the Franco-Belgian comics in terms of the position of Latin America in relation to the rest of the world as concerns the time/space nexus and gender/sexuality, and though they may even coincide in the way they present Latin America in certain aspects (such as the dysfunctional sexuality and machismo of Latin Americans) *bande dessinée* Latin America is very distinct from *historieta* Latin America. I would go so far as to say that there *is* no *historieta* Latin America. In the case of the Latin American comics considered, cartooning is used as much for characters as for the representation of the countries themselves, to varying degrees. However, unlike the Franco-Belgian comics, the so-called Latin American comics do not in fact approach Latin America as a whole. Rather, *Inodoro Pereyra* and *Los Supermachos* address primarily national concerns and the village of San Garabato stands as a token for

Mexico, not the whole of Latin America. As for Inodoro Pereyra's hut in the middle of the Pampas, its exact location cannot be determined because the Pampas are vast and have few landmarks. However, it is explicitly placed in the Pampas rather than a fictional area or village of Argentina. As discussed in relation to the figure of the *gaucho* in "Supermales and Hyperfemales", with Inodoro Pereyra, the (existing) region of the Pampas itself comes to stand in for the nation so that the point of focus is even more localised than in *Los Supermachos*. In fact, the only Latin American comic of the corpus to consider Latin America as a whole, while remaining distinctly Mexican, is *Operación Bolívar*, and the possibility of a united America from north to south is presented in a very negative light as it entails nothing more and nothing less than the uneven development of Latin America through a drug trade agreement led by the US, to benefit the US.

As for *bande dessinée* Latin America, it certainly exists, and much more so than *historieta* Latin America, in the sense that with the exception of *Tortillas pour les Dalton* and *Le temple du soleil*, the Latin American countries visited by the heroes are almost invariably fictional patchwork countries that stand in for Latin America as a whole, drawing from different geographical regions depending on the story being told in each particular album. If certain images of Latin America remain constant in *bande dessinée*, it is partly for the sake of continuity and recognisability, especially in the case of long-running series that are passed on from one author to another: the series need to maintain a certain internal logic. Yet, none of these series have turned to entirely phantasmagorical lands. While there may be elements of pure fantasy (there is no such thing as a marsupilami) they also draw from real-life Latin America to sustain the fictional countries. In that sense, *bande dessinée* Latin America can itself

be seen as a sign and a myth. An entire region of the world is represented in each of these fictional countries and in the same way as comic characters are rendered through cartooning rather than with photographic precision, the fictional Latin American countries found in *bande dessinée* are cartooned representations of Latin America. While these cartooned signs are put to different uses by different authors, their outer appearance remains essentially unchanged as they are appropriated by myth.

However, it seems odd that series that are primarily Belgian in origin would take such interest in Latin America, and present it in a position of coloniality, given the fact that there is no colonial history between Belgium and Latin America. Turning to the nature and the inner workings of comics as an elliptical genre that relies on sign and myth to convey meaning, I have posited in this thesis that *bande dessinée* Latin America might be a stand-in for something else beyond Latin America. That is to say, *bande dessinée* Latin America does not only cover the whole of Latin America, but *also* covers *bande dessinée* Africa in terms of the imagery used. Thus, while the scriptwriter Yann, for instance, has drawn from very specific moments in the history of particular places in Latin America in his work, other authors, including Franquin, have used their fictional countries as stand-ins for Latin America *and* as stand-ins or replacements for *bande dessinée* Africa.

One feature that *bandes dessinées* and *historietas* have in common, however, is their exploitation of pre-existing myths found outside of the world of comics, such as a strong Latin American masculinity or the figure of the dictator. It is not the exploitation of such myths as such that is problematic, but rather *how* these myths are

employed. For example, even as Rius draws upon the figures of la Malinche and Cuauhtémoc and Paz's configuration of the four Mexican figures (the virgin, the *chingada*, the father and the son), he turns this model upon its head to deliver a very strong commentary on Mexican society and politics. Similarly, Goscinny and Franquin, while relying on existing clichés about Latin America, brilliantly reverse them in *Tortillas pour les Dalton* and "Capturer un marsupilami". If in works such as *Baby Prinz*, *L'or de Boavista* and *L'oreille cassée* these caricatural countries are used as vehicles to refer to very real and tragic events in different countries of Latin America, others, such as *Le défilé du Jaguar* and *Robinson Academy* use these countries as a vehicle for something else altogether. In these albums it is the world of fashion and reality television shows that are under scrutiny while the authors do not question the internal logic of representation within Palombia.

While the use of a fictional Latin America to comment on historical events in real-life Latin America or in Europe is creative and admirable, there is something unsettling about the use of Latin America as a stand-in for Africa as it is seen in creations such as *L'horloger de la comète* and *Spirou et les héritiers*. When we consider the time/space distancing created between Europe and Latin America and the assignation of complicit masculinity to Latin Americans that occurs in some of the Franco-Belgian comics of this corpus, it appears that Latin America is repeatedly placed in a position of coloniality. However, in light of the fact that there *is* no history of colonial relationship between Belgium and Latin America, that Africa has become more and more of a rarity in the series under consideration and that there are such numerous echoes between *bande dessinée* Latin America and *bande dessinée* Africa, it would seem that in *bande dessinée*, Latin America effectively *replaces* Africa. Such a

replacement is not problematic insofar as we find numerous instances of criticism and condemnation of colonial enterprises in Latin America. As much in *Le temple du Soleil* and *Tintin et les Picaros* as in *L'horloger de la comète*, characters come out against the destruction brought on by colonisation. Even *Les brigades du temps / U.K.R.O.N.I.A.* eventually broaches the question of the brutality of the colonisation of Mexico. However, we must take issue with the fact that these albums and short stories, while condemning the colonisation, colonialism and colonality exerted on Latin America by *other* powers (be they from Europe or the US), are in no way a mea culpa as they serve to disengage the heroes from these colonial activities. But observe Spirou and Fantasio's surprise at the reproaches levelled against them by the Palombino chief, Emile Pistil's insistence on keeping his wife Tèpamalroulé away from Europe, or Tintin's explanation that the Sanders-Hardmuth expedition was not ill-intended. Meanwhile, Tintin and Haddock do return from their visits to Latin America considerably wealthier and Spirou, Fantasio and Aurélien de Champignac continue to consider Palombia as Europe's tree nursery, while Daggy and Montcalm of *Les brigades du temps / U.K.R.O.N.I.A.* have, for now, succeeded in preserving their way of life by ensuring that Mexico's indigenous population is subjugated by colonial powers.

Although there may be an ambiguity in the position of Franco-Belgian comics, as they condemn colonial relationships between Latin America and other countries but do not speak of their own relationship with the Africa that this fictional Latin America partly represents, that is not to say that *bande dessinée* Latin America is condemned to being solely a stand-in for Africa. As mentioned earlier, *bande dessinée* Latin American countries *also* serve as a stand-in for the whole of Latin America and

engage with Latin American concerns. Moreover, each time an author appropriates one of these fictional countries, he or she may give it a new meaning. Morvan and Munuera's *Guaracha*, for instance, while taking its roots in the work of Franquin, relies on more up-to-date events in real-life Mexico and points out that the fight may no longer be between indigenous and descendants of *conquistadores*, but rather between the poor and the powerful who run the country.

Finally, *bande dessinée* Latin America is not the only Latin America that a francophone readership has access to in comics. *Inodoro Pereyra*, *Los Supermachos* and *Operación Bolívar* may not have been translated in French, but *Operación Bolívar* and *Inodoro Pereyra* have been part of exhibitions showcasing Latin American comic production in France.² In addition, other works by Latin Americans have been translated into French and are readily available on the market. For instance, Quino, the father of the very famous comic strip *Mafalda*, which has been available in French for a number of years, was recently named Officer of Arts and Letters in France.³ More recent works, such as *Bandonéon* [sic] and *Chère Patagonie* by the Argentine Jorge González have been translated and published by Dupuis, giving readers access to very localised representations of Latin America, far removed from the ones they would find in *bande dessinée*.⁴

² Uncredited, "Exposition La bande dessinée du nouveau-monde - Rendez-vous BD d'Amiens" [Comics of the New World Exhibition - BD Rendez-Vous of Amiens], http://bd.amiens.com/expositions/expos_la_bande_dessinee_du_nouveau_monde_44.html (22/03/2013); Robert Chesnais, et al., *Historieta: Regards sur la bande dessinée argentine* [Historieta: Gazing Upon Argentinean Comics], trans. Elsy Gomez & Matteo Stagnoli, Paris: Vertige Graphic, 2008.

³ DP, "Quino, l'auteur de Mafalda, reçoit (enfin) ses insignes d'officier des Arts et des Lettres" [Quino, Author of *Mafalda*, (Finally) Receives His Officer of Arts and Letters Insignia], (22/03/2013), <http://www.actuabd.com/+Quino-l-auteur-de-Mafalda-recoit+> (22/03/2013).

⁴ Jorge González, *Bandonéon*, Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2010; Jorge González, *Chère Patagonie* [Dear Patagonia], Marcinelle: Dupuis, 2012.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote that “aimer ce n’est point nous regarder l’un l’autre mais regarder ensemble dans la même direction” (to love is not to look at one another but to look together in the same direction”).⁵ In the case of Franco-Belgian and Latin American comics, neither of these options is entirely realised. While Franco-Belgian comics gaze steadily at Latin America and comment on events taking place there, Latin American comics seldom return this gaze. While Franco-Belgian comics use *bande dessinée* Latin America to mock practices taking place in Europe (be they external to *bande dessinée*, such as reality television, or the way *bande dessinée* itself functions), Latin American comics comment on situations pertaining to Latin America. While Franco-Belgian comics gaze simultaneously at Latin America and Africa as a whole, the interests of Latin American comics remain quite close to the national level. Thus, though *bandes dessinées* and *historietas* may look at Latin America, they are (not) looking together in the same direction.

⁵ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des hommes*, London: Heinemann, 1951, p. 132.

Afterword: On *Dans les griffes de la Vipère* and Lending a Helping Hand

On 11 July 2011 I conducted my very first interview on French soil. On what turned out to be pretty much the only scorching hot day of an otherwise miserably cold and rainy summer I met up with Fabien Vehlmann, the current scriptwriter of the classic series *Spirou et Fantasio*, as part of the fieldwork for the present project. At the time, the prepublication of *La face cachée du Z* had only just started in *Spirou*. After two hours of a captivating conversation I left with copious notes, an irrepressible smile and a spring in my step.

During the interview, and in answer to a direct question, Vehlmann briefly mentioned that Spirou might visit a Latin American country in the future, without giving too much away.¹ I did not press for more information but made a mental note to keep an

¹ Vehlmann, interview.

eye out for a *Spirou et Fantasio* album set in Latin America. Little did I know that Vehlmann would enlist my help in creating this Latin American country the following month!

Very briefly, the part of the album set in Latin America is as follows: the sequence opens with Spirou and Seccotine talking in a square of the capital city of a Central American country. Pursued by a man with countless financial, legal and technological means at his disposal, Spirou has escaped to the Republic of Aguaschatas and is keeping a low profile in her capital city. Seccotine has brought him money and a fake passport to help him return to Europe but Spirou is still unsure how he will fight against this new foe. It is not long before Spip spots two badly disguised mariachis (in reality CIA agents) in the square and Spirou, Spip and Seccotine run away as the “mariachis” and two more CIA agents chase after them, shooting left, right and centre. Seccotine and Spirou quickly part ways and despite the latter’s best efforts to lose the CIA agents, they continue to follow hot on his heels. Spirou realises that there is still a chip on Spip (an earring), removes it and throws it away in a hurry, while still running. Unaware that Spirou has rid himself of the earring, the CIA agents break into a patio where Spip’s earring has landed, all guns ablaze, to find themselves face to face with six very large police officers. One of them greets the agents with “La CIA, vraiment?... L’agence qui prend notre pays pour la cour de récréation des USA?” (CIA, really?... The agency that takes our country for the playground of the USA?). The sequence closes with the incarcerated agents pleading “we love le Guatchatcha! [sic]”.²

² Yoann & Vehlmann, “Dans les Griffes de la vipère (episode 3/6)” [In the Viper’s Claws], *Spirou et Fantasio*, *Spirou*, 21 November, 2012, 75th year, Issue 3893, pp. 9-12.

Initially Vehlmann contacted me to call upon my knowledge of Palombia and of *bande dessinée* Latin America but over time my involvement grew with every discussion. My most direct input was in the form of providing names for the fictional Central American country that Spirou visits in *Dans les griffes de la Vipère* (Aguaschatas) and her capital city (Chispa). Additionally, Vehlmann asked me to pick some major clichés that he would try his best to avoid. Aside from suggesting Jacques Gilard's article and Néstor García Canclini's *Hybrid Cultures* as starting points, I picked as a specific cliché what I then termed the "salade russe" (the mishmash), and what I now term the patchwork in my chapter "Latin America?".³ Incidentally, some of the points I raise in that chapter were formulated clearly for the first time as I answered Vehlmann's questions, although they had been on my mind for some time.

Though Yoann was already behind on the illustration of the fifty-third *Spirou et Fantasio* album, I was given the opportunity, not only to read the script of the four relevant *planches* in order to suggest some graphic sources and locations, but also to discuss the content of the script with Vehlmann. At this point I should specify that Gilard's and García Canclini's works, as well as our first email exchanges, had visibly been taken into consideration in the script that Vehlmann sent to me and that it contained, in my eyes, several gems. As such, the concerns I raised were small and the plot, in essence, remains unchanged, although Vehlmann altered some of the settings and scenes—after consulting with Yoann—in response to my comments. One such change is the outfits worn by the CIA agents: they were originally meant to wear ponchos. As I voiced some reservations due to the fact that there are several types of wraps across Latin America, including in the country on which Aguaschatas is

³ Gilard, "Utopies hebdomadaires"; García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*.

modelled, Yoann and Vehlmann opted for semi-mariachi outfits. The use of ponchos might have struck a well-established cliché much more directly but the mariachi outfits mark Aguaschatas as *not* the same as Mexico, a point that Vehlmann wanted to make quite clear. At the same time, I was relieved to see that in the final version Vehlmann's idea is not entirely lost as ponchos, *zarapes* and sombreros are noticeably absent from the streets of Chispa, giving an image that is quite distinct from the overabundance of ponchos, *zarapes*, and sombreros that Gilard so laments in his article.⁴

The extent of my input, however, was limited inasmuch as the final decision remained, of course, with the authors. Moreover, if Vehlmann shared the content of these four *planches* with me quite early on, and revealed enough elements of the plot for me to join the dots, guess at many elements of the story and have a very broad idea of what will happen in the next album (vol 54), I did not see the entire script of the album nor was I involved in any stage of the creation of the album outside of those four *planches* set in Chispa. I first discovered the finished product in the pages of *Spirou*, at the same time as all of the readers and subscribers of the magazine. And though I knew about several elements of the plot before seeing the finished work, all the information that Vehlmann had revealed in the preparation stages did not prove to be spoilers but rather improvers, so to speak: they only enhanced my enjoyment of the finished work. Never have I, literally, held a *bande dessinée* so close to my nose! At least, not while fully awake.

⁴ Gilard, "Utopies hebdomadaires", pp. 122, 124 & 128.

As stated earlier, the original script had several gems in it and the CIA agents are one of them. These characters are decidedly the scapegoats of these few pages and the way in which they are depicted is patently closer to caricature than the way in which Chispa and her inhabitants are depicted. Aside from the change in their choice of clothes, these characters and their actions are entirely the work of Yoann and Vehlmann. And, regardless of what one might say about the caricature, I cannot help but find the words that the police officer directs at the agents (in a patio!) gratifying in light of the many years of *patio trasero*.⁵

Undeniably, there are still a number of clichés and approximations in the representation of Chispa and her inhabitants and Vehlmann is the first to admit it.⁶ The most striking one, to me, is quite possibly the banner in the police station patio, consisting of an odd mixture of Italian and Hispanicised French rather than any proper Spanish words.⁷ A late addition to the work, the words on this banner are more the result of a lack of time than a lack of care on the part of the authors.⁸ Yet, one must admit that the phrase on the banner is much more easily comprehensible for a francophone readership than real Spanish would be (compare the text used on the banner [Buon anniversario commandante], the correct phrase in Spanish [Feliz cumpleaños comandante] and the correct phrase in French [Bon anniversaire commandant]). Despite the presence of these few approximations, Vehlmann's openness to discussing parts of the script that I was uncomfortable with and his commitment to steering clear of the "salade russe" (sometimes stronger than my own!) bear testimony to his wish to present a less stereotypical Latin American

⁵ *Patio trasero* (literally, "backyard") is a term commonly used to refer to the dynamics of US/Latin America relationship, whereby the US perceives Latin America as its backyard.

⁶ Vehlmann, Personal Communication (email), 21 November 2012.

⁷ Yoann & Vehlmann, "Dans les Griffes de la vipère (3/6)", 12/7.

⁸ Vehlmann, Personal Communication (email), 6 December 2012.

country, within the limits allowed by the story he wanted to tell (and what a story!) and the *Spirou et Fantasio* universe.

If Vehlmann's name comes up so often in this account, it is because it was always him who contacted me to ask for some input on what would become the Republic of Aguaschatas. However, it is a known fact that Vehlmann discusses his scripts with the artists he works with and it is clear to me that every comment or suggestion that was taken on board (and that in many ways affected Yoann's work more than Vehlmann's) was first sanctioned by Yoann.⁹

I cannot, at this stage, for reasons of time and space limitations, delve into a more detailed analysis of the representation of Chispa. I do not, however, intend to let the invaluable insight that I have gained into the way Yoann and Vehlmann work or into how these *planches* were created go to waste. I will therefore look into avenues for sharing this insight in a more sophisticated manner. In the meantime, and in light of the points raised by this thesis, I *must* mention that despite the fact that the Republic of Aguaschatas is yet another fictional country and despite the fact that little is revealed about its location in the story, it is not presented as far far away, nor is it a patchwork country. My only regret is, perhaps, the fact that Aguaschatas is only seen very briefly in this story.

There is no telling if this small contribution—Aguaschatas, after all, does not carry the same weight as the mythical Palombia in *bande dessinée*—will have a significant impact in the future. However, *Spirou et Fantasio* is one of the very cradles of *bande*

⁹ Damien Perez, "Vehlmann pyramidal", Interview with Vehlmann, *Casemate*, June 2008, Issue 5, p. 41; Vehlmann, Personal Communication (Skype conversation), 24 May 2012.

dessinée Latin America and in that respect, Yoann and Vehlmann's approach is a small but significant step towards a more nuanced representation of Latin America. I am truly grateful for their generosity, kindness, accessibility, flexibility, trust and open ears.

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