Ivan Lima Gomes (Goiás)

# Affects and Effects Through Comics Representations of History: A Comparative Perspective (Brazil / Chile)

Specialists from diverse social areas have questioned the affects comics have aroused in readers from the very beginning of its publishing history in Latin America: children could be alienated from Latin American Culture and attracted to U.S. culture and tempted to consumerism, seduced to feel powerful and, at the same time, ashamed of their bodies. Many left-wing/reformist publishing houses in South America questioned the effects of these comics on children and have criticized the foreign production of comics – mostly superhero comics – and pushed for the publishing of new, locally produced stories. The choice (and veto) of certain episodes of the national past played a central role within the *import substitution* of U.S. comics. By representing historical heroes as present time superheroes worried about the future of their societies, the paper suggests that the *practical past* of comics was central to forge utopian Latin American children as new men of tomorrow. In this article, I shall focus on two case studies: the Brazilian comics publishing house CETPA (1961–1964) and the Chilean publishing house Quimantú (1971–1973).

## 1 Introduction

Comics have been a well-established social practice in Brazil and Chile since the 1930s. From 1931 to 1939, newspapers regularly published North American syndicated comics. Major national comics publishers started their activities in the following years, during which producers and consumers played an important role in forging a unique comic culture. On one hand, leading public figures such as Edmar Morel, Gilberto Freyre, Ariel Dorfman, Armand Mattelart and Carlos Lacerda participated actively in debates on how comics affected society. The political interest they showed in the subject helps demonstrate how comic art was seen as a potentially dangerous foreign culture by Brazilian and Chilean societies. Not only were comics considered lowbrow literature and a foreign contribution to the acculturation of Brazilian and Chilean readers, there was also a consensus on the need for state regulation of comics. On the other hand, the major names in Brazilian and Chilean comics production started to argue in favor of local content policies in order to be included in the ongoing publishing activities. These claims soon evolved into more concrete measures.

In Brazil, comics artists' unions came into existence in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Guanabara and Rio Grande do Sul. In the latter, the popularity of its governor

Leonel Brizola during the political movement of *Legalidade* led to the creation of a comics artists' cooperative called Cooperativa e Editora de Trabalho de Porto Alegre (CETPA). CETPA worked as a Brazilian comics union, dealing with the production and distribution of comics at local and national levels.

As for Chile, shortly after Salvador Allende's presidential election, the State acquired part of Zig-Zag publishing house. The inauguration as an official State publisher was on February 12, 1971, when it changed the name to Quimantú ('light of knowledge' in Mapuche language). Quimantú undertook the printing of an impressive amount of publications, and even though the primary goal was to publish low-cost books, its comic books provoked great controversy as the publishing house took on the role to 'ideologically' change them. Needless to say, it was all partly inspired by Dorfman's and Mattelart's famous ideas published in *Para leer al Pato Donald* (1971).

In order to quell the influence of North American comics in Latin American, local artists needed to create and offer new characters to the readers. The Chilean and the Brazilian historical past provided these professionals with the material from which to draw.

## 2 Historical Comics as Popular History: Fiction, Politics, History

The historical past plays a relevant role in comics. Illustrated biographies, and even an entire discussion about a comics narrative through the memories of a Holocaust survivor, are there to remind us: inspiration we acquire by studying the past is an important element to understand the development of the language of comics. As Jerome de Groot (2009) stated, comics inspired by the historical past turn out to constitute a genre in itself, the "pastness of the past" being a key to understand its use (and misuse) in comics. After having suffered several critical statements – especially during the post-Second World War years (Hajdu 2009) – comics were able to "gain a certain legitimacy and orthodoxy through authenticity" by adopting historical themes (De Groot 2009: 181).

To write and draw the past in comics format is to develop a historiographical approach, which is very distinctive in itself from the one developed in academia, certainly with the former reaching a larger audience than the latter (Berger / Melman / Lorenz 2012: 03). CETPA's and *Quimantú*'s historical comics are good examples of "public and popular histories" (De Groot 2012): published in different

formats, such as magazine and newspaper strips, once a week or twice a month, they were certainly read by children, teenagers, and adults. However, the goal to trace how readers followed comics is still a challenge, an issue not addressed in this paper. Our focus is to understand the discussion on the historical past through comics as part of a social project for comics in Latin America. At a moment when the debate on the role of the State in promoting reformist politics gained power, it intended to emphasize and contrast certain representations of the past in Brazilian and Chilean official histories.

Brazilian *Sepé* and Chilean *El Guerrillero* circulated between fiction and history. They provided a symbolical presence of the historical past through the materiality of comics. In other words, as Rigney suggests: the emergence of new aspects that must be considered in "public memory" is connected to new ways of representation in order to reinforce these new topics socially (Rigney 2008: 79–96).

We need to consider three aspects to highlight the specificities of these works, even if their shelf lives were quite ephemeral. First, *Sepé* and *El Guerrillero* drew inspiration from faraway historical periods, which was not usual in comics at that time. Their plots took place in specific periods in Brazil's and Chile's histories. Both chose historical names considered important in the fight against the once colonized territory: while CETPA's choice was Sepé Tiarajú, an Indian associated with eighteenth century conflicts over land property in the *Missões* region, *Quimantú* focused on Manuel Rodríguez, a dissident character in Chile's independence process. Finally, *Sepé* and *El Guerrillero* can be better understood with the help of the discussions proposed by Reinhardt Koselleck regarding the "semantics of historical times" (2006). In accordance with Koselleck's theory, the reason behind CETPA's and *Quimantú*'s interest in events that occurred during the mid-eighteenth and the early nineteenth century are coherent. Moreover, it is possible to interpret the policy guidelines involved in each of these comics works using the notion of "historical culture", especially if we emphasize the significant role they played in the growth of a "national political culture". Along with the creation of inventive narratives about the past, we can say that the establishment of a reading habit on historical past subjects among Brazilian and Chilean children was a result of this process (Gomes 2007: 45–49).

In the cases in question, when heroes from the Latin American historical past came to life in new comics, their creators took part in a symbolic struggle against mass

culture heroes and in the defense of a certain national identity against the excessive foreign influence in the region. Heroes of the past, Sepé and Manuel Rodríguez were also part of a plan regarding a heroic liberation of the future. In such a battle of hegemonies over foundational representations (see Beasley-Murray 2010), affects play an important role, since the new comics must be elaborated to seduce their readers, who were already habituated to 'imperialist' North American comics. However, creating what would be the 'new man of tomorrow' – a mix of Che Guevara and Superman – in an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) for children would prove not to be easy. In the battle over hegemonies, something always escapes (Beasley-Murray 2010: 227). In our case, it seems that comics itself resisted to such political interventions on its contents. In fact, to publish new material for readers pretty aware of their feelings on comics would prove to be a challenge for publishers concerned about stretching Brazilian and Chilean imagined communities.

### 2.1 Sepé and the fight against the invader

In 1961, a little over 200 years after Sepé's death, he was made into the main character of a comics script. *Sepé* was one of the few titles CETPA published as a comic book and as a newspaper comic strip. With Flávio Colin as illustrator and Cavalheiro Lima as writer, the series was led by a character based on historical events that occurred in the region of *Missões* during the second half of the eighteenth century. Unlike what happened to other titles based on historical contents launched by the Brazilian cooperative, the *Sepé* series tried to merge history and fiction, forging a historical ambience to the fictional narrative. Sepé Tiarajú assumed a mythological *persona* and won the role of a (super) hero in the world of comics. The fact that Sepé was used twice as a historical reference by CETPA shows the prominent role he had in *gaúcho* imagery [*gaúcho* means someone or something born in Rio Grande do Sul state].

The choice of a historical character to star in one of CETPA's titles needs contextualization. Analyses by Gonçalo Júnior and Eloar Guazelli explain the editorial option for launching *Sepé* as a bet on "regionalism", which marked the cooperative's publications and did not help to promote its growth and public acceptance (Júnior 2004; Guazelli 2009). However, it is possible to go beyond this interpretation and question the discussion concerning the historical interpretations

of the Sepé Tiarajú figure. We have to ask which principles grounded these discussions and analyze how CETPA made creative use of these issues and developed them into a plot.

For *gaúcho* historiography, the years leading up to the creation of the state cooperative were marked by extensive discussions on the role of Sepé Tiarajú and the Jesuit missions in Brazilian and specifically *gaúcho* historical maps. It all started at the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico do Rio Grande do Sul (IHGRS) in 1955. At the occasion of the bicentenary of Sepé Tiarajú's death, the technical note made by IHGRS Commission of History about a request for constructing a monument for Sepé Tiarajú in São Gabriel explains the tensions within the Institute on the subject. In accordance with IHGRS historical line, Sepé defeated the Portuguese metropolis; the institution, nonetheless, was sensitive to the Portuguese colonization as a central agent in the construction of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Outside IHGRS, Sepé was an inspiration for names adopted by several *Gaúcho* Traditional Centers (Nedel 2005: 382–385). The technical note contrary to Sepé's honor was signed by the *gaúcho* historians Othelo Rosa, Afonso Guerreiro Lima and Moyses Vellinho. They claimed that it was inadmissible to put the Indian's name in a *gaúcho* heroic pantheon in order to celebrate the fact that he fought against the Portuguese and approached the Spanish Crown for a deal. Treating him as a representative of the Brazilian nation was not an option considering the erudition and the historical heuristics defended by the IHGRS. Such a treatment would rather be expected by folklorists and writers (*ibid*.: 384–385).

Discussions on Sepé kept going between members of the institute. The official story written by IHGRS – anxious to identify a pantheon of heroes integrated into a centralized nation-state – seemed to demonstrate discomfort about the possibility to include Sepé in a heroic framework. In disagreement with this historiography, there were folklorists influenced by Gilberto Freyre, for whom the characteristics of the region and the nation derived from the people. In that sense, cultural diversity was an expression of the deeply mixed character of the country's population (*ibid*.: 384–402).

The alleged 'regionalism' of CETPA's comics deserves reconsideration. The regional theme proved the diversity of cultural representations and demonstrated the viability of Brazil in producing comic books and satisfying Brazilian readers' expectations with heroes based on historical and cultural references. Moreover, the

initiative was connected to the world of comics back then, when publishers were concerned to demonstrate comics' educational potential against critics who sought to restrict their marketing, arguing that comics were harmful to the intellectual formation of their readers. Interestingly, the same Gilberto Freyre that had questioned the cultural role of comics started defending educational comics as a part of the national culture not only through press articles but also in the House of Representatives, where he was a congressman of by UDN from 1946 to 1951 (Júnior 2004: 114, 252).

When analyzing debates on the writing of Brazil's history, it is possible to resize CETPA's 'regionalism'. Using comics techniques and fragmented language, CETPA actually helped place Brazilian cultural diversity into modernity. One should not assume, however, that the state cooperative was a mere reflection of such interpretations, as the language of comics and its peculiarities plays a special role here. The opening panel of *Sepé*'s debut reinforces this idea (see fig. 1). Influenced by Will Eisner and Milton Caniff, Flávio Colin's art shows caravels in the sea along with a fragment of the poem *O Luar de Sepé* by José Simões Lopes Neto.

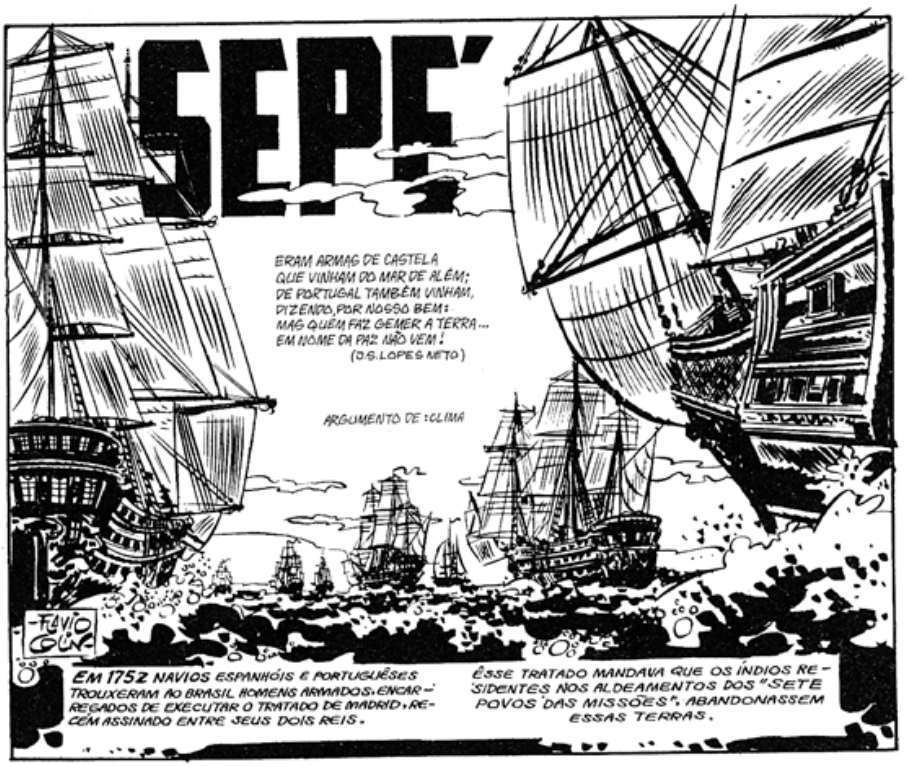


Fig. 1: Frame of *Sepé* (1962: 3, detail)

Lopes Neto's quote at the beginning of the comic strip in a magazine was removed from the comic strip version published in the *gaúcho* edition of the newspaper

*Última Hora*. In the magazine, the fragment took the form of an epigraph. Considering the "para-textual functions" outlined by Genette, we have an "epigraph-effect" here, which provides the work with a signal of high culture. Via the epigraph, authors and the work itself choose their peers and the intellectual place they intend to occupy (Genette 2009: 142–143). The act of disseminating through a magazine a quote from a recognized name of the *gaúcho* culture of those times – considered the best representative of 'modernist' regionalism in the region – can also be understood as an attempt to legitimize the comic book format and culturally solidify its relation to modern regionalism (Nedel 2005: 110).[1]

This aspect unfolds another para-textual use of the epigraph listed by Genette, which is the everyday use with which epigraphs arguably explore the role of "text comment" (Genette 2009: 144). Unfortunately, I could not find data related to the marketing of *Sepé* – number of copies sold, circulation of readings and reception of the magazine's content – during my research, which made it difficult to reflect on the "hermeneutic capacity" (*ibid*.: 142) of *gaúcho* readers around Lopes Neto's epigraph.

The figurative presence of Lopes Neto in a comics artist cooperative, which sought to represent a Brazilian alternative to North American comics, seems to assume metaphorical tones. The regional and national historiography cast a critical look at the political scene of the time: within the narrative, when Sepé Tiarajú notes that the crew on the ships did not come in peace, there is a panel focused on Sepé's face and the lunar symbol located on his forehead (fig. 2). The emblem is described by ancient *gaúcho* tradition as a holy symbol that allowed the indigenous to be guided in the darkness.[2]

---

[1] According to Rodrigues, there was a rediscovery of Simões Lopes Neto in the late 1940s. Moysés Vellinho celebrated the writer as the most complete expression of literary regionalism as Simões adapted regional language to the metrics of a poem (Rodrigues 2006: 109).

[2] According to Lopes Neto, the lunar symbol is a birthmark and "a divine emblem", having been designed "pela mão do Deus-Senhor! Que lhe marcara na testa/O sinal do seu penhor!...". Era um sinal de predestinação de Sepé Tiarajú: "Diferente em noite escura,/ Pelo lunar do seu rosto,/ Que se tornava visível/ Apenas o sol era posto;/ Assim era – Tiarajú –,/ Chamado – Sepé – por gosto." ["by the hand of the Almighty! It marked his forehead / The signal of his pledge! ..." It was a sign of Sepé Tiajurú's predestination: "He was set apart from the dark night / By the moon on his face, / Which was made visible / As soon as the sun was set; / So he was – Tiarajú – / Called – Sepé – by the night."] (Lopes Neto 2014: 218, 214. Our translation). In the first volume of *O tempo e o vento*, Erico Verissimo narrates the following: "Os feitos de Sepé e seus guerrilheiros corriam pelos Sete Povos, e testemunhas oculares das batalhas contavam que no meio da refrega tinham visto o lunar a fulgir na testa do corregedor, que passava incólume por entre as balas, brandindo no ar a espada flamejante." ["The deeds of Sepé and his guerrillas ran the Seven Peoples, and eyewitnesses told that during the battles in the middle of the fray they had seen the moon shine on his forehead, who


Fig. 2: Frame of Sepé and his lunar emblem (*Sepé*, 1962: 4, detail). He says: "My mission is to defend this land where our parents and children were born."

As the Cold War superpowers divided the world and drew the fate of people to their own pleasure, Portugal and Spain had sealed the fate of the indigenous in *Sete Povos das Missões* region without consulting them. In the symbolic representations of the comic books, the lunar emblem served as Sepé's hero symbol, just like any other superhero symbol, such as the lightning of *Shazam* and the bat of *Batman.*

Unlike *Uraguai* – a character written by Basílio da Gama, who was close to the illustrated *pombalina* (in reference to the Marquis of Pombal) intervention in the colony and to the subjugation of indigenous tribes –, the hero of CETPA assumed a magical air, posing as a defender of local freedoms against great empires. However, he was a Catholic, and this is an important milestone for the CETPA character. It was through the Jesuits that the indigenous people learned "art skills, such as sculpture and music" (Colin / Lima 1962a: 20) and that "at a very young age they learned how to read, write and sing" (Colin / Lima 1962b: 16). We understand the dialogue with Catholicism as a strategy of social legitimization against the criticism suffered by comics in that context. *Editora Brasil América Limitada* (EBAL), the largest comics publisher at the time in Brazil, released *Séries Sagradas*, a comics work dedicated to the life of saints and Catholic popes launched between 1953 and 1961. In addition to that, Catholic authorities were often

passed unscathed through the bullets, brandishing in the air a flaming sword."] (Veríssimo 2004: 85. Our translation).

consulted during script production, which contributed to the good image of the series and its publishing house among parents and educators.

Simões Lopes Neto was an important reference to yet another script in Sepé's magazine; Cavalheiro Lima was its writer and Luiz Saidenberg its illustrator. The story was about the legend of Boitatá and it had fragments of *A Mboitatá* – a text published in a book called *Lendas do Sul* and written by the *gaúcho* folklorist Simões Lopes Neto (2009: 153). In the same script, there was a fragment of Augusto Meyer's *Guia do Folclore Gaúcho*. Writer and folklore researcher, Meyer was involved in discussions on the historical role of Sepé Tiarajú. He began to interpret the facts linked to the Jesuit Missions, taking into consideration the particular historical development of the region, in contrast to the studies that sought to see the region only as being part of Rio Grande do Sul (Nedel 2005: 382). The fragment also mentioned João Cezimbra Marques – considered patron of *gaúcho* folklore.

It is worth noting how CETPA had a historiographical perspective that clashed with its market forecasts as a publisher. To build hegemony through an integration of regional and national pasts into an international language was not a successful publishing experience. However, the interest of the state cooperative in reconciling such historiographical contentions can be interpreted by taking into consideration its broader interest in entering the Brazilian comics market as an element of conciliation that could address a varied range of subjects (religion, superheroes), serve many purposes (entertainment, education) and try different formats (strips, magazines, albums). Besides the establishment of a new hero to replace North American superheroes, CETPA also sought the dialogue with the pedagogical dimension of comics that marked part of the discussions related to the world of comics in Brazil.

### 2.2 Manuel Rodríguez, the guerrilla (super)hero

As for *Quimantú*, the publisher had a clear aim to incite the imagination of Chilean society as far as social representations were concerned. Superheroes and comics in general promoted attitudes like individualism and the fragmentation of reality. It was thus necessary to create new superheroes like the one the Chilean historical past provided.

The *El Guerrillero* series, starring Mizomba, was published in the *El Intocable* comic book. It was about hero adventures in the jungle – like Tarzan, but

*Quimantú*'s version was concerned with politically reformulating the jungle narrative. Therefore, the Mizomba character was a local guerrilla who fought for social justice on the African continent.

At the same time, new comics began to gain more currency in and outside of the comic book (see fig. 3): it was the beginning of an effective *import substitution* process in Chile's comics world.


Fig. 3: Series of *El Intocable* comic books published between 1971 and 1973, where *El Guerrillero* gradually starts to replace Mizomba

The comic book gradually developed the heroic profile of the character based on Chilean history over the course of the forty *El Intocable* editions published in the *Manuel Rodríguez* series.

Jofré's study of the role of superheroes in mass culture directly interacts with Eco's approach to Superman. In fact, Jofré uses Eco's approach to formulate the following question, which is also inspired by Gramsci: how does one question the hegemony around the role of a superhero in favor of a project contrary to the mass consumption culture that formed the role of a superhero in the first place? For Jofré, comics superheroes should be used in an early moment of the socialist revolution. As soon as the new regime is established, comics as a language should disappear; but, until then, it was necessary to refute them.

According to Jofré, the historical orientation of *Manuel Rodríguez* facilitated its adaptation to the comics format, "there were a few excesses in action (fight after fight Rodrigues [sic] was always victorious)", and also some antagonists were designed to represent evil (Jofré 1978: 126–127). Furthermore, the historical orientation of the comics allowed a temporal dimension to be present in the script, to the extent that the conflict between the Chilean liberator and the Spanish power could not be eternal and, therefore, should be resolved throughout the narrative, giving it a conclusive character.

Unlike *Superman*, *Manuel Rodríguez* took such a temporal course towards an inevitable conclusion that it could never be a modern myth based on escaping reality. This work suggests replacing the superhero with a revolutionary figure: just as a superhero comics narrative culminates in the superhero defeating enemies in every episode, so does the guerrilla narrative depend on defeats and victories:

> [...] neither the hero nor the values he postulates definitely win in each episode. Some battles are won by the hero, others by the Spaniards. But the war continues. Short-term conflicts are resolved, but the long-term contradiction remains. (Jofré 1978: 128)

Among defeats and victories of the past, the comics accumulate narratives related to the achievement of a future: the revolutionary (comics) history.

Contrary to the argument of Jofré, *Manuel Rodríguez* did have elements of a mythical personality based on massive consumption benchmarks. Far from being just another Chilean in search of freedom, Manuel Rodriguez had a physical representation that resembled gallant comics protagonists (see fig. 4) …


Fig. 4: Frames (details) of Manuel Rodríguez (*El Intocable presenta El Guerrillero* 1972b: 12. *El Intocable* 1971a: 30)

… which helped Rodríguez to become the hero that would awaken "asleep consciences" in favor of the "revolutionary cause of Chile" (*El Intocable* 1971a: 32) (see fig. 5).


Fig. 5: Frame (detail) of Manuel Rodríguez and the struggle for the "revolutionary cause of Chile"

Over the episodes of *Manuel Rodríguez* in *El Intocable* magazine, the main character became more and more a fantasy-like Chilean heroic character, almost super-heroic. He was recognized for having taken refuge inside and outside the country and for having circulated without being arrested. Manuel Rodríguez's ability to disguise himself in order to promote the struggle for Chilean emancipation was highlighted in each chapter of the series.

Regardless of victories or defeats, Rodríguez's battles took center stage. For example, he approached the enemy forces without fear of his peasant disguise being unmasked. In another moment of the script, he assumed the features of a local elder in order to "create a true revolutionary climate" (*El Intocable* c. 1971b: 34) (fig. 6).


Fig. 6: Frame (detail) of Manuel Rodríguez in disguise

Manuel Rodríguez became invisible to enemy forces, who could not find the revolutionary fugitive when disguised as an ordinary person. With his disguises, Rodriguez represented the yearnings of reversing the social order: if he could disguise himself as any man, then all Chilean carried a little of the revolutionary soul of Manuel Rodríguez. The historical past in this comic book provided clues to Chilean population: they were the protagonists in the revolutionary process of social emancipation.

The enemies of Manuel Rodriguez and his troupe were well defined: the army represented royalty and the rulers connected to the dominant Spanish metropolis. The former used to be represented as oppressors of the people, often manifesting themselves aggressively and showing overwhelming force.

Finally, other *Quimantú*'s editorial initiatives helped to better understand how comics improved Manuel Rodríguez's historical value. It is fair to say that other comic books also rebutted interpretations of the past during the UP government. Between the months of July and August 1973, discussions around a history textbook released by *Quimantú – Capítulos de la historia de Chile* – made the headlines of the main opposition newspaper, *El Mercurio*. Released days after the first military attempt to overthrow Salvador Allende, which occurred on June 29, 1973, the work was credited to Ránquil. The nickname honored both the town that had suffered severe state repression against an indigenous and peasant rebellion in 1934 and the

main rural workers' association of the period (Klublock 2010: 121–159).[3] The book went out in the *Camino Abierto* collection, added to other works on Chilean history, Latin American social reality and the theoretical thinking of the left; they were all for the 'working class'.[4]

Amid the tough hard debate in the press after the release of the book, the work was the focus of an article signed by Paul Drake and Peter Winn – PhDs and researchers of Latin American history at the universities of Illinois and Princeton, respectively. The article – "Historiadores Revisionistas" – argues that the Ránquil book was a "typical example of historical revisionism", one of the hallmarks of the historiographical tradition of those times. Therefore, before even addressing the "quality or [the] patriotism" of the work itself, they claimed the legitimacy of it, because the "fight over interpretations" was the very "essence of [modern] history", rather than mere compilation of dates, names and facts (Drake / Winn 1973: 2). On the eve of the coup, the article written by Drake and Winn sounded like a timely political defense of democracy.).

## 3 Conclusion: An Unlikely Place for History?

It is noteworthy that a definition of comics as cultural practice implies discussing the historicity of their daily production of meaning, which is a source of disagreement between several social groups involved in the "comics art world"[5] (Becker 1982; Beaty 2012). Instead of the formalism – which has driven several analyses on comics throughout the last years – a focus on case studies reinforces creative openness and the artists' faculty to recreate themselves via the language of comics.

In the comics art world of the 1960s and 1970s in Brazil, CETPA proposed continuities and ruptures in favor of the creation of new paradigms for Brazilian comics canon. Instead of superheroes, it proposed historical heroes from the Brazilian and Chilean past.

---

[3] Among the rural union confederations that exist in 1971 and 1972, Ránquil – aligned to the UP government – had the largest number of affiliations. There are no available data on 1973 (Kay 1978: 125).

[4] There are no precise data on the circulation of Ránquil's book; we only know that between 1971 and 1973, the *Camino Abierto* collection has a global circulation of 395,000 numbers, divided into 44 titles (Bergot 2004: 20).

[5] Beaty discusses the idea of "comics art world" as a key to understand comics as a social practice. Inspired by Howard Becker and Pierre Bourdieu, Beaty suggests comics should be understood as "products of a particular social world, rather than as a set of formal strategies" (2012: 43).

What both case studies can contribute to current debates on the theory of history and its representations is to question the distinction suggested by Hayden White when discussing "historical" and "practical past" (2010). There is not much of an opposition between the two terms. The comics discussed here articulate creative art, market issues and several levels of historiographic discourse. In CETPA, folklorists and historians were used, although not always by the clearest criteria; and *Quimantú* dialogued with the socialist revisionism of the past. Both publishing houses have in common the attempt to integrate historical and practical past in order to contribute to a "practical construction of the historical past" through comics – which resembles Lorenz's criticism of White's arguments (Lorenz 2014). For Lorenz, even though White has correctly stated the role of historians as theoretical creators of the historical past, what he "forgot to consider is that the same goes for the practical past, because from the beginning it has functioned as the normative counterpart of the – supposedly strictly factual – 'historical past', to begin with in the guise of *Geschichtsphilosophie*" (*ibid*.: 45–46).

As a massive project, these comics integrated public debates over interpretations of the past. No innocence can be found in their discourses: they assembled ideas of intellectuals, iconography, and other visual elements to elaborate a representation of the past. In Brazil, the effort faced difficulties to integrate regional and national narratives of the past in a context of anti-imperialistic cultural criticism; in socialist Chile, the struggle was to reinforce popular heroes of the past in opposition to military and official figures of the historical pantheon.

These narratives of the past were created in the form of comic strips in a way to (re)create a comics art world in Brazil and Chile. The objective was to question North American comics as agents of imperialism and create new ones, forging a national and popular culture for children. It resulted in a genuine Latin American production of its own – yet controversial – heroes as role models for the young generation. However, the strategy of "recuperation of those 'affected' into the striations of disciplinary systems" (Beasley-Murray 2010: 131) by left-wing State governments proved to fail. Both publishing houses infantilized their readers and tried to overcome their preferences and affects over comics.

Such a perspective can suggest that not only Art Spiegelman's *Maus* – the comic analyzed by De Groot – but also other comics "are able to treat the most complex

and horrible of stories with compassion, verve, and accuracy. In this unlikely place, then, history is not effaced but relived and presented anew". (De Groot 2009: 228)

**Works cited**

Anderson, Benedict (1983): *Imagined communities*. *Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso Editions/NLB.

Anonymous (1973): "Historiadores revisionistas – cartas", in *El Mercurio*, Aug. 30, 02.

Beasley-Murray, Jon (2010): *Posthegemony*. *Political Theory and Latin America.* Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

Beaty, Bart (2012): *Comics Versus Art*. Toronto/Buffalo/London: Univ. of Toronto Press.

Becker, Howard (2008): *Los mundos del arte*. *Sociología del trabajo artístico*. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.

Berger, Stefan / Lorenz, Chris / Melman, Billie (ed.) (2012): *Popularizing National Pasts*. *1800 to the Present*. New York/London: Routledge.

Bergot, Solène (2004): "Quimantú: editorial del Estado durante la Unidad Popular (1970–1973)", in: *Pensamiento crítico* 4, 1–25.

Colin, Flávio / Lima, Cavalheiro (1962a): "Sepé", in: *Última Hora*. Porto Alegre, dec. 7, 20.

Colin, Flávio / Lima, Cavalheiro (1962b): "Sepé", in: *Última Hora*. Porto Alegre, dec. 8, 16.

De Groot, Jerome (2009): *Consuming History. Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*. New York/London: Routledge.

De Groot, Jerome (2012, ed.): *Public and Popular History*. New York/London: Routledge.

Dorfman, Ariel / Mattelart, Armand (1971): *Para leer al pato Donald*. Valparaíso: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso.

Drake, Paul / Winn, Peter (1973): "Historiadores revisionistas", in: *El Mercurio* Aug. 28, 2.

*El Intocable* 117 (1971a). Santiago de Chile: Quimantú.

*El Intocable* 121 (1971b). Santiago de Chile: Quimantú.

*El Intocable presenta El Guerrillero* 135 (c. 1972a). Santiago de Chile: Quimantú.

*El Intocable presenta El Guerrillero* 136 (c. 1972b). Santiago de Chile: Quimantú.

Genette, Gérard (2009): *Paratextos editoriais*, trans. by Álvaro Faleiros. Cotia: Ateliê Editorial.

Gomes, Ângela de Castro (2007): "Cultura Política e cultura histórica no Estado Novo", in: Abreu, Martha/ Soihet, Rachel/ Gontijo, Rebeca (ed.): *Cultura política e leituras do passado*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, Faperj, 43–63.

Guazelli Filho, Eloar (2009): *Canini e o anti-herói brasileiro. Do Zé Candango ao Zé – realmente – Carioca.* Master Thesis. São Paulo: São Paulo University (School of Communication and Arts).

Hajdu, David (2009): *The Ten-Cent Plague*. *The Great Comic Book Scare and How it Changed America.* New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus. and Giroux.

Jofré, Manuel (1978): "As histórias em quadrinhos e suas transformações", in: ibid. / Dorfman, Ariel (ed.): *Super-homem e seus amigos do peito*, trans. by Robert Pechman and Felipe Doctors. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 87–170.

Kay, Cristóbal (1978): "Agrarian Reform and the Class Struggle in Chile", in: *Latin American Perspectives* 5.3, 117–142.

Klublock, Thomas Miller (2010): "Ránquil: Violence and Peasant Politics on Chile's Southern Frontier", in: Grandin, Greg; Joseph, Gilbert (ed.): *A Century of Revolution*. *Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War*. Durham/London: Duke Univ. Press, 121–159.

Koselleck, Reinhardt (2008): *Futuro passado. Contribuição à semântica dos tempos históricos*, trans. by Wilma Maas and Carlos Pereira. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto/Ed. PUC-Rio.

Lopes Neto, João Simões (2014): *Contos gauchescos e lendas do sul*. Porto Alegre: L&PM.

Lorenz, Chris (2014): "It Takes Three to Tango: History Between the 'Practical' and the 'Historical' Past", in: *Storia della Storiografia* 65.1, 29–46.

Nedel, Letícia Borges (2005): *Um passado para uma história em crise: regionalistas e folcloristas no Rio Grande do Sul (1948–1965)*. PhD Thesis. Brasília: Brasília University (Human Sciences Institute).

Rigney, Ann (2008): "Fiction as a mediator in National remembrance", in: Berger, Stefan / Riksonas, Linas / Mycock, Andrew (ed.): *Narrating the Nation*.

*Representations in History, Media, and the Arts*. New York/Oxford: Berghahm Books, 79–96.

Rodrigues, Mara Cristina de Matos (2006): *Da Crítica à história. Moysés Vellinho e a trama entre a província e a nação*. PhD Thesis. Porto Alegre: Rio Grande do Sul Federal University (Philosophy and Human Sciences Institute).

*Sepé* 1 (1962). Porto Alegre: CETPA.

Veríssimo, Érico (2004): *O tempo e o vento, parte I: o continente I*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

White, Hayden (2010): "The Practical Past", in: *Historein* 10.1, 10–19.