

INTRODUCTION

COMICS AND MEMORY
IN LATIN AMERICA

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Remembering's dangerous. I find the past such a worrying, anxious place.

"The past tense," I suppose you'd call it. Ha ha ha.

THE JOKER

Since the publication of Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's *Para leer al Pato Donald* in 1971, scholars of Latin America have increasingly turned to comics as objects of study. The analytical framework privileged by most of these scholars has moved beyond Dorfman and Mattelart's somewhat restrictive cultural imperialism hypothesis influenced by dependency theory. Comics, and more recently graphic novels, are increasingly understood as cultural artifacts that open unique and compelling windows not only onto mass or popular culture but also onto social, cultural, and political processes that have helped define the region since comic art began to appear in mass media in the early twentieth century (and in some cases even before) (see, among others, Foster 1989; Rubenstein 1998; Merino 2003 and 2011; Lent 2005; Fernández L'Hoeste and Poblete 2009). This book presents new research from scholars working in different disciplines, including literary theory, cultural studies, and history. The contributions explore the ways in which comics and graphic novels on and from Latin America address and express ongoing

processes of memory formation around a number of historical processes. Comics and graphic novels offer a particularly fruitful perspective through which to examine the work of memory in Latin America.

This book builds on the rapidly expanding field of Latin American comics studies. Comics scholarship on and from Latin America has in recent decades resulted in a number of works, including studies on (1) comics as popular culture (Foster 1989); (2) comics as cultural artifacts representing the advent of modernity in the region (Merino 2003); (3) the history of comics throughout the continent (Lent 2005); (4) comics as agents in the configuration of national identities in Latin America (Fernández L'Hoeste and Poblete 2009); and (5) the ideas of canon and margin in the articulation of critical thinking around comics in the Latin American intellectual context (Merino 2011). In Latin America, such initiatives as Alvaro de Moya's first exhibition in Brazil of *quadrinhos* in 1951 or the Primera Bienal de la Historieta y el Humor Gráfico in Argentina in 1968 gave way to early scholarly approaches to comics. These include *C-Línea* in Cuba from 1973 to 1977 and the quarterly Cuban *Revista latinoamericana de estudios sobre la historieta* (RLESH) from 2001 to 2010.¹ Country-focused studies, such as Anne Rubenstein's *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation* (1998), about the politics of Mexican comic books, or the collaborative project *Camouflage Comics* (2005), directed by Aarnoud Rommens, about the last Argentine military dictatorship (1976–1983), bear witness to a well-established field. In addition to these, the biannual *International Journal of Comic Art* (IJOCA), established in 1999 and edited by John A. Lent, has consistently included articles dealing with Latin American comics.² This edited volume contributes to this body of work by foregrounding the little explored work of memory in Latin American comics.

This introductory chapter examines the history of comics and graphic novels in Latin America, paying particular attention to the production of comics and graphic novels in the countries surveyed in the following chapters. Comics and graphic novels have a long history in the region, although some countries have far more developed comics industries (or comics cultures) than others. While some general trends in the development of the genre are identifiable (for example, the rise of political commentary in comics from the 1960s on), some national comic industries are characterized by idiosyncratic developments that reflect the particular historical processes of each national experience. We also consider the emergence of memory as a field of study and its development in the Latin American context. As a number of scholars have shown, memory has played a key role in the process of transition from

dictatorship and armed conflict to democracy throughout the region since the mid-1980s. It has become a privileged, if always contested, perspective from which to engage with the past—particularly the traumatic past. For some, memory is a medium that has the potential to overcome the historical traumas that have plagued the region.

We examine the interplay between memory as one means of engaging with the past (and the present) and comics, the latter taken as both a cultural form and a cultural artifact. Because of their particular formal characteristics, particularly the way they combine text with graphics, comics have allowed, even encouraged, the development of a series of visual techniques that enable the rendering of memory (or memories) in distinct and often sophisticated ways. As a result, and as students of the genre increasingly recognize, comics offer a distinct platform to relate memory (and time and space) graphically. Comics and graphic novels as material (and, when in cyber form, immaterial) objects operate as mediums or technologies of memory, similar to but also distinct from other memory devices such as photographs, memorials, or museums, which have received far more attention from scholars of memory. Comics elicit and mobilize memories in those who read and enjoy them and enable a particular engagement with the past distinct from that which may be experienced through the medium of, say, a film or a battle reenactment.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN COMICS

The development of Latin American comics does not differ significantly in format, structure, development, and periodization from its European or North American counterparts.³ In both continents, the use of images in periodical magazines increased markedly in the 1800s as a result of significant improvements in printmaking techniques such as lithography (1796), chromolithography (1837), and the rotary press (1843). Periodicals became a mass phenomenon following the introduction of offset printing (1875) and the creation of the mimeograph machine (1890). These technologies proved particularly helpful to Latin Americans who sought to articulate discourses around the nation-state and to map out the new political entity in visual terms. They enabled the visual representation not only of landscapes, heroes, fauna, and flora but also of iconographic traditions (Fernández L’Hoeste and Poblete 2009). In turn, these technologies brought about the creation of illustrated satirical magazines that commented not just on local folklore or *costumbrismo* but also on political and social struggle.⁴ In this context, graphic artists were able to develop professional careers by securing commissioned

contributions to magazines and newspapers, effectively making use of graphic humor and, later on, comics as a commodity. Audiences, usually with high levels of illiteracy across the region, used visual imagery to participate in social and political life.

The first steps in the medium of comics are largely indebted to pioneers who experimented with the disposition of images in sequence and the combination of text and image. Serialized fictions peaked in the nineteenth century in periodical publications, providing a favorable environment for the development of comics. If the history of comics in Europe owes much to Rodolphe Töpffer, George Cruikshank, and Alfred Crowquill, to mention just a few names, the modern history of comics in Latin America began with the Italian-Brazilian cartoonist Angelo Agostini (1843–1910) and the Spanish-Cuban painter Víctor Patricio de Landaluze (1828–1889).⁵ Agostini arrived in Brazil in 1859. In 1862 he was already established in São Paulo as a “pintor-retratista” (Balaban 2005: 62; Augusto 2008: 82). The “romance ilustrado,” *As aventuras de Nhô Quim ou Impressões de uma viagem à corte*, was published in the magazine *Vida fluminense* in 1869. This is Latin America’s first known comics story with a continuing character (Vergueiro 2000; Lent 2005).

In 1905, Agostini launched *O Tico-Tico*, a publication whose main character, “Chiquinho,” was a clear adaptation of “Buster Brown” (Vergueiro 2005: 88), a mischievous young boy from a middle-class family who played practical jokes, created by Richard Felton Outcault and first published in 1902 in the *New York Herald* (Gordon 1998: 44).⁶ In Cuba, Landaluze introduced the series of local folklore types with *Los cubanos pintados por sí mismos* (1852), and he published caricatures in several satirical magazines of the time, such as *Don junípero*, *El moro muza*, and *La charanga*. The autobiographical “Estudios sobre el mareo,” published in *Don junípero* (1864) is a primitive comic, in which Landaluze crafted twelve sequential panels with text at the bottom on a double page, imaging his forthcoming boat trip after leaving Havana (Barrero 2004: 86–87).

These early comics by Agostini and Landaluze, infused by the *costumbrismo* genre that dealt with customs, habits, or traditions, were followed in the 1900s and 1910s by a second stage in the development of comics in Latin America. The widespread use of comics in the U.S. press and the internationalization of U.S. comics through powerful press syndicates in Latin America became highly influential for the emerging national comics industries, as the case of “Chiquinho” demonstrates. By the 1900s, translations of comics from the United States, such as *Cocoliche* (Happy Hooligan) by

Frederick Burr Opper, made it to Argentina, and U.S. comics appeared in newspapers in Mexico in 1902 (Lent 2005: 5). According to scholar Harold Hinds (1985), the first Mexican comic strip was Andrés Audiffred's "Don Lupito" in 1903, and the first Chilean comic strip appeared in 1906, titled "Federico Von Pilsener," in the magazine *Zigzag*. In Peru the earliest examples are found in the modernist magazine *Monos y monadas*, which lasted from 1905 to 1907. Amid European influences (notably the German magazine *Simplicissimus* and Alphonse Mucha's *Art Nouveau*) and the discovery of Japanese impressionism (Barros 2008), Julio Málaga Grenet (1886–1963) experimented with the transformation of a person into an insect or an animal (metamorphoses that had a clear political motive), demonstrating an intimate relationship between illustration and literature. These developments fostered a distinctive style for Peruvian comics in such magazines as *Fray Simplón* and *Fray K-Bezón*, with an anticlerical bent (Sagástegui 2009: 134; see also Lucioni 2001).

The influence and diffusion of U.S. comics explains the structure and design of the first comic in Argentina with continuing characters and the use of balloons to represent characters' speech. In 1912 the magazine *Caras y caretas* published *Aventuras de Viruta y Chicharrón*. This was a copy of the U.S. comic strip *Spare Ribs and Gravy* by George McManus, which began that same year in the *New York American* (Seoane and Santa María 2008: 58). The comic was initially sent to Argentina for publication but, after negotiations failed, local artists Manuel Redondo and Juan Sanuy took over due to the comic's popularity (Gociol and Rosemberg 2003: 65). Three years later, in 1915, the Cuban magazine *Bohemia* published *Aventuras de Pepito y Rocamora* by Pedro Valer (who wrote under the pseudonym of Peter Relav). It continued weekly publication until at least 1922. The adventures of Pepito and Rocamora depicted various slapstick situations of a swindler couple within a local folklore substratum (Catalá Carrasco 2011: 140; 2015: 52–53).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, comics proved successful in securing audiences and helping to sell publications. By the 1930s newspaper comic strips were widespread throughout Latin America. The increasing readership facilitated comics' new format, the comic book: a publication entirely dedicated to comics. Brazil, Mexico, and the United States were the initiators of this process, which led to comics becoming more independent from the newspaper—a reflection of the stability and strength of their respective national comics industries. The first U.S. comic book appeared in 1933. *Suplemento juvenil* was published in Brazil in 1934. The first Mexican comic book, *Adelaido el conquistador*, included Mexican comics and translated

U.S. comic strips and lasted only two years (1932–1933). However, in 1934, *Paquín* became the first Mexican comic book to find a wide audience, soon followed by *Paquito* (1935), *Chamaco* (1936), and *Pepín* (1936). Reflecting *Pepín*'s prominence in the nascent industry, Mexicans began to refer to comic books as *pepines*. By 1940 comic books in Mexico were as ubiquitous as radio programs and more common than cinema (Rubenstein 1998: 13).

The golden age of comics in Latin America peaked in the 1950s through the 1970s, when the output of comics in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Mexico expanded dramatically. In those years the Argentine Héctor G. Oesterheld, one of Latin America's finest comic script writers, established Editorial Frontera and created several milestone publications in the history of comics, such as *Mort cinder* (1962, drawn by the Uruguayan Alberto Breccia) and *El eternauta* (1957–1959, in collaboration with fellow Argentine Francisco Solano López). Oesterheld was disappeared by the Argentine Junta Militar in 1977 because of his involvement in the left-wing guerrilla group Montoneros, for which he authored *Latinoamérica y el imperialismo: 450 años de guerra* and a second version of *La guerra de los Antartes* in 1974 for the publication *Noticias*, which was closely linked to the Montoneros. Argentina's most famous comic strip, *Mafalda*, was created during this period by Joaquín Salvador Lavado, better known as Quino. *Mafalda* was published in magazines and newspapers between 1964 and 1973, quickly becoming a phenomenon throughout Europe and Latin America.

In Brazil, although *O Tico-Tico* came to an end in the 1950s, the same decade saw the consolidation of several publishing houses and the field was very fertile for new ventures. Horror comics, for example, became the most popular genre of comics in Brazil during the 1950s, while the 1960s was the most productive for Brazilian superheroes (Vergueiro 2009: 158–62). However, the most significant moment in modern Brazilian comics came in 1970, when artist Mauricio de Sousa convinced Editora Abril, one of the largest publishing houses in the country, to publish a comic book with his character Mônica. In similar fashion to the Disney Corporation, de Sousa created a merchandising universe around Mônica in Brazil.⁷

In 1949 the most iconic Chilean comics character, “Condorito,” created by René Ríos Boettiger (1913–2000), better known as Pepo, was published in *Okey*. In light of its success in representing Chilean identity, Pepo compiled the first Condorito anthology in 1955. Thereafter, Condorito's predominance in the Chilean comics market grew steadily. Nine anthologies were published in 1983 alone (Fernández L'Hoeste and Poblete 2009: 36–37). The three years of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular (1970–1973) brought about

an important transformation in Chilean comics with the publication of such political comics as *La firme* (Kunzle 1978 and 2005) and an innovative orientation to children's comics better exemplified in *Cabro chico*. The national publishing house Quimantú tried to counterbalance the pervasive presence of U.S. comics, especially those produced by Disney.

From this effort sprang the most influential text on comics and mass culture in Latin America: Dorfman and Mattelart's *Para leer al Pato Donald* (1971; How to read Donald Duck), first published in Chile in 1971. Hugely influential for subsequent political readings of comics, *Para leer al Pato Donald* deconstructed Disney comics from a Marxist point of view, emphasizing the underlying ideological manipulation in what seemed to be the archetype of innocent comics for children. This critique coincided with the growing politicization of comics, which increasingly reflected the polarization of Chilean society and which constituted political interventions in their own right. During the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) several magazines shut down as a consequence of severe censorship and/or financial hardship, including *El siniestro Doctor Mortis* in 1974, *Mampato* in 1978, and *Barrabases* in 1979. Quimantú was then directed by General Diego Barros Ortiz and in 1977 was sold to a private investor (Pérez Santiago 2003).

In Cuba in the 1930s, Horacio Rodríguez Suriá and Rafael Fornés, along with Pedro Valer, published comics in *Cárteles* and in *Avance's* supplement "Revista Rosa." Manuel Alonso, Mike Cárdenas, Silvio Fontanillas, and Antonio Prohías (who went into exile soon after the 1959 Cuban Revolution and became a crucial contributor for the U.S. *Mad* magazine with his comic "Spy vs Spy") were other important figures in Cuba's burgeoning comics world. With the Cuban Revolution, new opportunities emerged, ranging from the avant-garde magazine *El Pitirre* (1960–1961) to the satiric communist magazine *Mella* (where Virgilio Martínez and Marcos Behemaras published several comics) until the mid-1960s. The publisher Ediciones en Colores launched four monthlies from 1965 to 1968—*Aventuras!*, *Muñequitos*, *Din Don*, and *Fantásticos*—which satisfied the increasing demand for comics. And in 1970, Juan Padrón published in *Pionero*, the first of many Elpidio Valdés's comics, as well as three films in 1979, 1983, and 1996. Cuban painter Roberto Fabelo declared that "Elpidio is one of the landmarks of current Cuban culture" (Padrón 1999: 68). In the 1980s the Pablo de la Torriente publishing house produced the weekly tabloid *El muñe*, the monthly comic book *Cómicos* and the biannual magazine for adults, *Pablo*, thus building on a readership that had already begun to expand after the general boom in adult comics in the 1970s with underground comics. Many of these initiatives

came to an end with the “Special Period,” following the collapse of the Soviet Union (1989) and the Socialist Bloc (1991), but comics artists in Cuba remain active, and the main humorous magazine, *Palante* (which began in 1961), stands out for its support of comic strips.⁸

By the 1950s, Mexico had an average of four million to five million comics readers in a nation of twenty-five million inhabitants, which made comics the largest mass-produced and -consumed cultural artifact of the time. Films were also popular, but film audiences visited cinemas no more than twice a week. By contrast, Mexicans listened to the radio and read *pepines* relentlessly (Bartra 2005: 263). A new development emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, the comic novel, with a more traditional narrative structure (introduction, climax, and conclusion), making each comic novel an independent story. Indeed, Mexican comics artists began to target adult readers some forty years before their counterparts in Europe (265). During the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s, Mexican comics reached the high point of their popularity, but clear symptoms of decline began to appear. Eduardo del Río (Rius) began his prolific career at that time with what soon became classic Mexican comics: *Los supermachos* and *Los agachados*.⁹ Nowadays, with the lack of stable and financially viable publications, amateurism poses difficulties for professional development. The only genre that has survived the long decline of comics in Mexico are the “Sensacionales” or “La revista vaquera,” low-quality black-and-white erotic adult comics, whose pocket-size book format is generally comprised of some one hundred pages, adorned with voluptuous women on their front covers.

In other Latin American countries, where there was no comics industry, comics nonetheless proved influential and became a forum for artistic and political expression. In Nicaragua there had been a weak tradition of comics and political caricatures before the Sandinista revolution. According to historian Christiane Berth in chapter 4 of this volume, the first satirical weekly was the anti-*somocista* *Los Lunes de la Nueva Prensa* in the 1940s, followed by *Semana Cómica* in the 1950s and 1960s. But the ousting of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979 opened up new spaces for artists in collaboration with the revolutionary government. In Peru, although comics can be traced to the late nineteenth century (Lucioni 2001), the 1950s represented the starting point for a graphic representation of *peruanidad* through an array of comics characters, such as “Serrucho” (an indigenous peasant who had recently arrived in Lima), “Boquellanta” (a blackface child in love with a blonde) and “Sampietri” (a depiction of the typically penniless pleasure-seeker) (Lucioni 2002; Sagástegui 2009: 137).

Among many artists, Juan Acevedo stands out for being the first to organize workshops on popular comics in Ayacucho (1974) and Villa El Salvador (1975–1977) and for introducing overtly political commentary into the comic genre. These workshops led to his book *Para hacer historietas* (To make comics, 1978). Acevedo's most famous comic strip, *El Cuy*, an anthropomorphic comic based on a guinea pig, was published originally in the weekly *La Calle* in 1979 and subsequently in *El diario de Marka*, a left-wing daily, in 1980–1981. A recent edition, *El Cuy tira*, was published in 2011. Acevedo helped pioneer the graphic novel in Peru, with texts such as *Tupac Amaru* and *Paco Yunque* (Nuñez Alayo 2010).¹⁰

In all of these countries there is clear evidence of comics participating in historical and political processes and of comics depicting those same processes. Given the dynamic and radical nature of Latin American politics and history over the course of the twentieth century, not least in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, comics, just as other cultural forms, have been part and parcel of the contentious debates over memory politics and practices.

MEMORY STUDIES

The field of memory studies, largely nonexistent some thirty years ago, is today well established. Indeed, it is codified in particular ways through the creation of a broad scholarly armature that legitimizes it as a bona fide field of scholarship attracting an increasing number of scholars. A number of journals are dedicated to the field, including the recently launched *Memory Studies* and the more established *History and Memory*. Perhaps more important, studies of memory appear regularly in mainstream disciplinary journals, while monographs and edited collections on all aspects of memory are published by prestigious university presses. Countless conferences are organized each year that bring together scholars from all over the world who work on ever more diverse research and who are organized in transnational memory research networks. Such rapid growth in the field of memory studies has led at least one scholar to speak of a metastasis of collective memory (Olick 2008). Often interdisciplinary, memory studies scholarship takes place in dialogue or within specific academic disciplines such as literary and cultural studies or history. As such, there are arguably different types of memory studies, shaped by different methodologies and concerns, and increasingly by different types of memory studies literatures (Sturken 2008).

Genealogies of memory studies usually reference the sociological work of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory and the monumental study of *lieux*

de memoire (memory places) directed by the French historian Pierre Nora in the 1980s as seminal moments in the establishment of the field.¹¹ Later scholars have refined the conceptual toolbox of memory studies, contributing such concepts as cultural memory (Assmann 1995, 2011), postmemory (Hirsch 1992–1993, 1997), prosthetic memory (Landsberg 2004), or multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2009) to account for the myriad ways in which memory manifests itself and is operationalized. These concepts express in different ways how memory is increasingly seen as “a dynamic process that is the result of the practices of individuals and groups” rather than as being contained in objects (Sturken 2008: 74). Cultural memory, Egyptologist Jan Assmann (1995: 130) has written, “works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual or contemporary situation.” Memory, therefore, is as much about the present as it is about the past. It is mediated by technologies of memory, such as photographs or indeed memorials, in which memories are experienced and produced. While some memories are indeed expressions of lived experience, others can be inherited (Hirsch 1997) or acquired through involvement in mass culture (Landsberg 2004).

Yet while these scholarly origins, and conceptual refinements, are key to the development of the field, the locus and moment of the irruption of memory discourses and practices, which formed the basis for the establishment of memory studies, is of equal importance. As scholar Andreas Huyssen (2000) has suggested, memory discourses emerged in the 1960s in the context of global processes of decolonization and the emergence of diverse social movements. They were given further impetus in the 1980s when attention focused again on the Holocaust and a globalized discourse on the Shoah emerged. Holocaust memory discourse, Huyssen argues, shaped understandings of and responses to the genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s. These, in turn, helped to further establish memory as a way to engage the traumatic past.¹² By the 1990s, memory discourses had spread to most parts of the world and generated locally specific, if transnationally informed, memory discourses and practices. Indeed, the growth in memory discourses and practices globally has led some scholars, including those working on Latin America, to question whether memory has generated its own political economy and whether such a development risks trivializing the work that memory does or the projects of transitional justice that often engage it (Bilbija and Payne 2011).¹³

In Latin America, memory discourses and practices emerged in the context of processes of democratization and armed conflict resolution throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These processes were characterized, at least initially,

by postdictatorial or postconflict settlements (most of which were imposed unilaterally) that included amnesties for perpetrators of human rights abuses and, more generally, a politics of amnesia that, so some claimed, would enable countries like Argentina and Chile to leave behind the trauma of the past. In this context human rights organizations and civil society groups such as, most famously, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, began to challenge the postdictatorial settlements and to mobilize politically and culturally. As memory entrepreneurs, they began to articulate a memory discourse consonant with their political objectives. A politics of memory (or memory struggles or battles for memory) over the experience of military dictatorship developed, pitting so-called memories of salvation, which drew on narratives that focused on the ways in which the armed forces had intervened to save the nation from Communist threats, against human rights memories, which homed in on the abuses perpetrated by the armed forces and on the need to challenge the culture of impunity that they had imposed.¹⁴

The establishment of Truth Commissions in several Latin American countries played a key role in the evolving politics of memory. Truth Commissions in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Peru, and other countries gave added legitimacy to the challenges posed to the memories of salvation promoted by perpetrators of human rights abuses, such as amnestied generals in the Southern Cone or authoritarian rulers like Peru's Alberto Fujimori. In most cases, the Truth Commissions had as an explicit or implicit objective to establish a narrative on the past that could become official (and hegemonic) and overcome the fractious politics of memory. However, as a number of scholars have shown, Truth Commissions rarely succeeded in implanting such a narrative and, as a result, more often than not became caught up in, rather than being able to overcome, the politics of memory.¹⁵ This outcome owed in part to the fact that often the memory of salvation had powerful backers. But this was only part of the story. In the Peruvian case, for example, a memory discourse put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, or CVR) at the national level proved of little use to, and indeed came into conflict with, the everyday practices of some of those people trying to reform communities that had been fractured by conflict. These people therefore needed to generate their own mnemonic practices that were not always commensurate with the memory practices privileged by the CVR.¹⁶

In studying memory discourses and practices in Latin America, scholars have paid particular attention to how memory is mobilized in the context of particular memory sites, such as monuments like the Ojo que llora in

Peru or the Parque de la Memoria in Buenos Aires or places associated with human rights abuses in times of dictatorship or conflict, such as the Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) in Buenos Aires or Villa Grimaldi in Santiago de Chile, which have sometimes been referred to as trauma sites.¹⁷ However, scholars have focused their attention more and more on other, initially less obvious and less material, “sites,” or perhaps more properly, technologies of memory. Indeed, scholars increasingly recognize the potential of a whole range of media for mobilizing memory and therefore for functioning as technologies of memory (Sturken 2008). Such media include visual and performance art, music, digital artifacts such as YouTube or Facebook, landscapes, and, of course, comic books and graphic novels.¹⁸ In the main these media constitute, as historian Cynthia Milton (2007) has called them, “unofficial modes of truth telling” and as such are best understood as alternatives to the “official” memories that both Truth Commissions and state-sanctioned memorials seek to present. However, as numerous studies show and as several of the chapters in this volume confirm, neither the official nor the alternative modes of truth telling are uncontested.

The field of memory studies in Latin America is intimately linked to the politics of memory that shape, and are shaped by, historical processes of democratic transition and postconflict settlements. However, scholars are starting to examine memory in other historical contexts or, to put it differently, scholars are increasingly acknowledging the role that memory plays in how Latin Americans make sense of the past, and not just the past shaped by local inflections of the “long” Cold War (the periods of military rule in the Southern Cone, the civil wars in Central America, or the Shining Path insurgency in Peru). Historian Paulo Drinot (2011), for example, has examined how memory discourses on the War of the Pacific (1879–1884) inform the way that Peruvians and Chileans perceive each other (and themselves). Cultural historian Ana Lucia Araujo (2010) has also approached the topic of Atlantic slavery from the perspective of memory. Studies such as these point to the still largely untapped potential of memory, whether in its guise as collective memory, cultural memory, postmemory or prosthetic memory, to act as a productive process for thinking about Latin America past and present, beyond the still dominant focus on the second half of the twentieth century. Comics and graphic novels can amply fulfill this potential.

COMICS AND MEMORY

Given that Latin America has played host to the Cold War act of disappearance

and acted as the testing ground for global neoliberal policies that are highly suspicious of holding on to the past, it is unsurprising that the region's comics and graphic novels have played a significant role within the huge corpus of cultural productions that address this history of upheaval and absence. In the Southern Cone alone, to take one illustrative corpus, the dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s have recurred in graphic form, whether mimetically or obliquely. On the one hand, comics magazines such as *Fierro a fierro* in Argentina or *Trauko* in Chile provided a sphere where activities and interests otherwise repressed by military rule—especially sex, drugs, dress, music, and other forms of counterculture—could be celebrated. On the other hand, comics took the dictatorships and the legacy of trauma as their subject matter.

The artist Carlos Reyes (2011) has highlighted how in *Trauko*, for example, the threat of authoritarianism was evident in stories such as “Si una desconocida te ofrece una flor,” written by Leo Prieto and drawn by Patricio De la Cruz (in 1989), which related how a police officer takes advantage of a vulnerable street seller. More recently, scholar Aidalí Aponte (2011) has read the volume *Zombies en la Moneda* (2009) as an attempt to engage with the “disappearance” of the Chilean dictatorship itself within the country's collective memory. In Uruguay the graphic novel *Acto de guerra*, drawn by Matías Bergara and written by Rodolfo Santullo (2010), which draws together four fictional stories based on real-life stories of the Uruguayan dictatorship, has had considerable success. In the wake of works addressing the Argentine dictatorship, including *Buscavidas*, *La batalla de Malvinas*, *Perramus*, and *Sudor sudaca*, Carlos Trillo and Lucas Varela's recent *La herencia del coronel* (2010) provides a sinister portrait of a military repressor's son struggling to come to terms with his sexual and violent fetish for dolls in the postdictatorship period.

Works such as these have played a key function as sites of memory, from the physical copies of historic comics productions, which circulate among collectors and fan clubs, to discussion pages and forums that have provided opportunities for readers and consumers to debate the past. Indeed, the nature of the comics market has meant that during the time of political upheaval and in its aftermath, comics have often been able to respond with great speed and actuality to historical events and debates in the public sphere. The relatively low cost of production, the manner in which comics are often shared between enthusiasts, and the blend of the visual and the written that makes up comics means that they have the potential for fast distribution and dissemination among a large, and often diverse, reading public. At the height of the Argentine dictatorship and despite strict censorship, for example, the

satirical comics magazine *Humor* was able to sell some 350,000 copies every fortnight (Ostuni et al. n.d.: 5–6).

Argentina offers some good examples of the ways that comics function as sites of memory beyond the page, having an increasing impact in and on the public sphere. The disappearance of Héctor G. Oesterheld in 1978, one of the most famous victims of the dictatorship, provided a cultural figurehead for the brutality of the dictatorship. An early example of the way that comics were used to frame that disappearance can be seen in the well-known poster “¿DONDE ESTA OESTERHELD?” included in the October 27, 1983, edition of the magazine *Feriado nacional*. The image, drawn by Félix Saborido, depicts the Avenida de Mayo in Buenos Aires, filled with a silent crowd carrying a banner that demands the return of the comics writer. In a clever fusion of comics history with human rights marches, the protesting crowd is entirely made up of characters taken from Oesterheld’s works, including Sargento Kirk, Ernie Pike, Mort Cinder, and El Eternauta. The latter, a famous time traveler, was used to pay homage to Oesterheld in a stencil campaign that began in the city of Rosario in 2006. The wanderer went viral via graffiti throughout the country, enshrining the figure as a symbol of resistance. More recently, the artist Lucila Quieto has drawn on the legacy of Oesterheld, fusing scenes from his series *Sargento Kirk*, which relates the friendship struck up between a disillusioned U.S. soldier and Plains Indians in the nineteenth century, with photographs of the 1968 uprising in Córdoba, the Cordobazo, in artworks that play with cultural and political history to construct new visions of the past. Comics thus constitute sites of memory that elicit and mobilize memories of the past, a politics of the present, and a project for the future.

Of course, many comics also recount past events on and through the page as well, adding a further dimension to the way they function as sites of memory. Often, and particularly in the field of graphic biography, the intention is simply to use comics to provide a visual history, a graphic retelling of the past, an approach evident in, for example, several graphic depictions of Latin American lives, including *Castro* (Kleist 2010), *Gabo: Memorias de una vida mágica* (Pantojo et al. 2013), or the graphic biographies of Ernesto “Che” Guevara analyzed by James Scorer (2010)—namely the 1968 work *Che: Vida de Ernesto Che Guevara* (Oesterheld, Breccia, and Breccia 2008) and the more recent *Che: A Graphic Biography* (Rodríguez 2008) and *Che: A Graphic Biography* (Jacobson and Colón 2009). Other works draw heavily on the past to provide a historical context within which to locate a fictional narrative. Oesterheld, for example, made extensive use of history in many of his

fictional works: in *Ernie Pike* (1957–1971) he used a World War II journalist to highlight the brutality of conflict for victors and losers alike, and in *Sargento Kirk* (1953–1973) he turned to the frontier struggles of nineteenth-century U.S. history to think through concepts of colonialism and heroism. Similarly, Juan Acevedo’s two volumes on Tupac Amaru (1987–1988) recount the life of the leader of the late eighteenth-century Andean rebellion that shook the Spanish Empire.¹⁹ In these works, historical events, periods, and characters (whether fictional or not) are presented with little or no framing that affects the nature of the narrative itself. As a result, the process of history telling and memory are often not self-consciously presented as a theme for reflection.

In other works, however, the comic form is expressly used as a means of engaging with the nature of retelling the past and with practices of memory. Certainly other cultural mediums have their own particularities and potencies when it comes to memory, but comics can mobilize the past in particularly challenging and productive ways. The way that comics can “spatialize memory” (Chute 2011: 108), and use the panel structure to allow for a multiplicity of temporal moments and for moving forward and back in time, indicates how they invite a series of “negotiations” between the reader and the text-image over which path to take when engaging with the narration of time on the page. In some cases, the multilinear narrative lines that result (Bredehofft 2006: 885), combined with the empty spaces of the gutter, have been deployed by comics creators to try and capture the unreliability of single-narrative pasts and the inaccessible voids that inevitably emerge in the process of remembering. Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, the seminal work in any analysis of comics and memory, is a case in point, mobilizing the “trauma fragment” not only to connect past and present (Hirsch 1992–1993: 26) but also to highlight memory’s unreliability and the tensions between truth and history, symbolized by the author’s treatment of Vladek not remembering the orchestra at Auschwitz (Spiegelman 2011: 29–31).²⁰ Though obviously not a Latin American work, *Maus* (in a similar vein to the work of Joe Sacco) has been pointed to by scholars like Ana Merino (2010) for its testimonial nature. Latin America is innately tied to the history, development, and theorization of testimony as a memory practice.²¹

Such ties to testimony, itself a hotly contested form of memory, means that it is unsurprising, as this book demonstrates, that Latin American comics creators have also turned to the comic form to express and engage with memory. In *Che: Vida de Ernesto Che Guevara*, for example, Oesterheld’s narrative is split between two interweaving histories: the story of Che’s life on the one hand (drawn by Alberto Breccia) and his final days in Bolivia on

the other (drawn by Enrique Breccia). It is not just the patchwork nature of the narrative, moving back and forth from past to present, that engages with memory; it is also the dramatically different drawing style of Breccia father and Breccia son. Alberto's highly detailed, complex frames, with his sometimes experimental use of graphic patterns, relate to the more precise nature of the "agreed" historical narrative. Here too we find facsimile copies of Che's birth certificate (Oesterheld, Breccia, and Breccia 2008: 10) or his handwritten farewell letter to his children (56), images that exaggerate the authenticity of this part of the narrative. Enrique's frames, on the other hand, are drawn with much less detail and with greater use of block areas of black and white. The shapes of his figures are less precise, and some characters have childlike faces, exaggerating the fantastical, mythic nature of these passages. Enrique's stylistic approach relates more directly to the nature of retelling Che's Bolivian experiences, which were reproduced from Che's own campaign diary and thus more subjective and personal. The dual narrative reflects the beginnings of the transformation of Che the historical figure to Che the myth.

Other stylistic means of engaging with the past in comics can be seen in works like *La herencia del coronel* (Trillo and Varela 2010), where a color shift is used to distinguish between the narrative present (full color) and the memories of the protagonist (blue tone, with the occasional use of red for the images of torture), or *Parque Chas* (Barreiro and Risso 2004), a series comprised of stories told to the protagonist by different inhabitants of the eponymous neighborhood in Buenos Aires. On the first page of the episode titled "Batalla de otoño," for example, one frame includes both past and present by having the foreground of the image depict the hands of the storyteller pouring sugar into his coffee cup inside the bar, whereas through the window we can see his former boyhood self walking down the street with his friends. Such simultaneity of times can also be seen in *Beya* (*Le viste la cara a Dios*) (Cabezón Cámara and Echeverría 2013), an expressive critique of enforced prostitution. On one page the narrator's voice (expressed via text) initially describes the abuse that was happening to the protagonist, before shifting tenses to describe that abuse as if it were taking place in the present (30). At the same time, the images, which are themselves partly superimposed on each other and on the text boxes, a visual representation of the fragmented nature of what is being related and the nature of the exploited body, depict the abuse that is taking place in both the past and present. The speech box included in one of the frames, in which the abuser insults the women, only intensifies the manner in which what has happened is being played out once

more in the here and now. Finally, in the recent Colombian work *Los once*, the use of visually dense images, of quotes from historical testimonies blended with fictional narrative, and of animals to represent humans, intensifies the difficulty of unpacking past events, in this case the 1985 raid on the Palace of Justice in Bogotá by the guerrilla group M-19 and the subsequent confrontation with state forces during which, in addition to many being killed, several people were disappeared (Jiménez, Jiménez, and Cruz 2014).

Whether as memory processes that frame the past (whether fictional or not) to delve into the metanarrative processes of history telling and memory or as sites that provide the means to consume, debate, and work through the vagaries of history and memory, in both form and object comics remain privileged sites for memory in Latin America. Although comics have adopted different historical, aesthetic, thematic, or contextual strategies, they nonetheless form a key formal, cultural, and social space for memory practices and debates about approaches to the past.

DESCRIPTION OF CHAPTERS

The contributors to this volume consider this engagement with memories of the past in Latin America via comics. In chapter 1, Jorge L. Catalá Carrasco considers the Spanish-Cuban-American War (1898) revisited by the Cuban comic *La emboscada* (1982). The comic, by Ernesto Padrón and Orestes Suárez, is a metaphorical reconstruction, influenced by post-1959 historiography, which seeks to reclaim Cuban agency in the conflict. It serves as an example of Alison Landsberg's "prosthetic memory" (2004), allowing Cubans to apprehend a historical narrative with a more personal, deeply felt, memory of a past event with peculiar connotations for Cuban national consciousness. The comic provides a case study for Jan Assmann's concept of "cultural memory" (1995)—more precisely, its *concretion of identity* and its *capacity to reconstruct*, shedding light on how the inscription of a 1980s Cuban revolutionary discourse onto the 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American War, demonstrates the enduring nature of certain collective memories.

In chapter 2, Edoardo Balletta looks at two works by Argentina's most famous comics writer, Héctor G. Oesterheld, both written at a time when Oesterheld was working for the armed left-wing guerrilla organization Montoneros. Balletta highlights how *Latinoamérica y el imperialismo: 450 años de guerra* (drawn by Leopoldo Durañona) and *La guerra de los Antartes* (drawn by Gustavo Trigo) reappropriate the past to intervene in the present as a graphic, revolutionary act. Taking cultural memory to be socially

constitutive, Balletta sees these two works as contributing to the way the Peronist Left attempted to position itself as the hegemonic voice of Argentine politics. In *Latinoamérica y el imperialismo*, a revisionist history of rebellion and colonialism in Latin America, the authors try to fuse Latin American insurrection with national-popular Peronist discourse and to use temporal circularity to present past events as explaining and justifying the present and vice versa. *La guerra de los Antartes*, a science-fiction account of how aliens invade Latin America after creating a pact with world superpowers, also engages with such mutable temporalities. Balletta suggests that the revolutionary fervor and potential of *Latinoamérica y el imperialismo* has itself become an inaccessible memory.

In chapter 3, Isabella Cosse examines the ways in which Quino's *Mafalda* has been resignified and mobilized at different times since the 1970s, both within Argentina and internationally. In the 1980s, Cosse shows, *Mafalda* resurfaced in the context of Argentina's democratization, when the comic strip was used by Quino and others to make sense of, and denounce, the experience of the military dictatorship and its impact on Argentine society. In this process, *Mafalda*, and the values associated with it, acquired a talismanic character as a symbol of Argentina's new democratic project. As the neoliberal experiments took hold in Latin America and elsewhere, Cosse argues, *Mafalda* was subjected to the forces of globalization, with its popularity growing throughout Latin America and Europe. Cosse suggests that within this process, *Mafalda* served to mobilize memories about the 1960s and the values that became associated with that period. Cosse concludes by looking at how *Mafalda* has more recently come to connect with, and articulate, an emerging nostalgia in Argentina for the disappearance of the very sector of Argentine society that *Mafalda* was perceived to embody—namely the middle class.

Christiane Berth's chapter 4 focuses on comic books, comic strips in the Sandinista newspaper *Barricada*, and other media such as pamphlets published in the 1980s to analyze how comics were used in political and educational campaigns and how they contribute to Sandinista memory politics. In a largely illiterate society like Nicaragua, Berth suggests, comics could play an important role in disseminating the revolutionary government's message as they had done in Cuba and Allende's Chile, countries that influenced Sandinista visual communication strategies and, more broadly, their popular education campaigns. Comic books on the insurrection sought to construct a collective memory on the prerevolutionary period (linking the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional [FSLN] firmly with Augusto César Sandino's

own struggle) and on the heroic nature of the 1979 revolution. At the same time, they constructed an invariably negative image of both Somoza and the United States. Comic strips employed in the health campaigns drew on such representations to present the Sandinista public health strategy as a continuation of the struggle against the social and political legacy of Somoza and his regime, with Somoza often represented as a bacterium. Less successful were the graphic strategies developed in the context of the campaigns to explain the FSLN's economic policies. These comics were overly reliant on text, pointing to the limits of the Sandinista's use of comics as part of its broader education campaigns and the memory politics to which they contributed.

Chapter 5, by Paulo Drinot, considers the ways in which an online version of *El Cuy*, Peruvian comic artist Juan Acevedo's most famous and popular creation, elicits and helps construct memories about recent Peruvian history. Acevedo's "El Diario del Cuy," a blog that the artist manages himself, is updated on a regular basis with a number of different items but most often with a daily upload of the comic strip *El Cuy*, originally published in several Peruvian newspapers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A highly political strip, which reflected a highly politicized period in Peru's history, and in particular in the history of the Peruvian Left, *El Cuy* left a very deep impression on many readers who read the comic strip when it was first published or who read it subsequently in book form. Drinot analyzes the comments that a number of posters leave on the blog. He focuses on the ways in which the comic qua blog mobilizes memories of the Peruvian Left and the emergence of Shining Path, the insurgent movement that initiated the internal armed conflict in 1980 and that produced some seventy thousand victims, according to Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Drinot suggests that the memories mobilized by the blog result in a largely critical evaluation of the Left, more specifically of its failure to produce a viable political project in the early 1980s as Peru emerged from over a decade of military dictatorship. These memories reflect a critical evaluation of the Left's position with regard to the rise of Shining Path and more generally of the Left's failure to reemerge as a political force.

Peru's Shining Path receives further consideration in Cynthia E. Milton's chapter 6, which discusses the work of a collective of artists and researchers (Luis Rossell, Alfredo Villar, and Jesús Cossío), particularly the graphic novel *Rupay*, published in 2008, which draws on but departs from the *Final Report* of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) in presenting a narrative of the internal armed conflict that Peru experienced in the 1980s and 1990s. In her analysis of *Rupay*, Milton considers the comic book

form as a means to recount this violent past and its unresolved legacies. She focuses on a particular episode of the internal armed conflict, the massacre of a group of journalists in Uchuraccay in 1983, a case study chosen by the CVR as emblematic of the conflict. Milton notes the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in the way events or protagonists are depicted in *Rupay* and in the CVR's *Final Report*. These differences, she suggests, are expressive of the editorial decisions taken by the authors of *Rupay* (which in turn reflect the range of sources they used in putting together the graphic novel) but also of the comic book format, which allows for forms of truth telling (for example, the simultaneous presentation of several views of a process) not available to the CVR. In some ways the format enables Cossío and his collaborators to tell a much more complex, if partly fictitious, account of the massacre. Such comics as *Rupay*, Milton concludes, must be understood as important elements in the memory debates in Peru that have developed in the wake of the CVR.

James Scorer's chapter 7 analyzes Gonzalo Martínez's *Road Story*, a graphic adaptation of a short story written by one of the leading figures of the loosely affiliated McOndo generation, Alberto Fuguet. Fusing the theories of prosthetic and cultural memory, Scorer argues that *Road Story*, in its comic rendition, offers a constructive form of memory production. Contrary to the way that Fuguet is often understood, as a figure of Chile's transnational, neoliberal, and ahistorical present, Scorer suggests that Martínez's graphic techniques transform the dangers of postmodern division into a positive multiplicity of fragments. Crucial to that graphic rendition of appropriated cultural memories is the road trip, a genre that he suggests has always been closely tied to Latin America. Drawing on a genre inherently tied to movement and identity transformation, and thus to memory and forgetting, *Road Story* demonstrates how the visual exchanges inherent in contemporary cultural production can be deployed as a means of moving on from the stasis of trauma.

In chapter 8, Edward King highlights how comic book artists and writers in Brazil have used the interstices inherent in the graphic form, itself located between literature and image and between discourse and technique, to reformulate the relationship between individual and collective identities. His essay is focused in particular on *Morro da favela*, a work by André Diniz that blends traditional woodcut styles with photographs (the latter taken by Maurício Hora) to explore the dialogues between individual, regional, and global cultural imaginaries and forms. The woodblock form, for example, allows for a link to be established between the urban favela and the *sertão*, the Brazilian hinterland. On the one hand, King argues, that might be read

as reproducing the way spaces of urban poverty are reified as alien to the rest of the city; on the other hand, because the artwork is clearly a digitized rendition of the woodblock, it is also a reminder of the way technology and graphic techniques have participated in negotiations over modernity and its popular memories.

Overall, the chapters in this book exemplify the productive dialogue that can be established between the fields of comics and memory studies in the Latin American context. These contributions show that, because of their graphic form and because of the subjects that they address, comics in Latin America offer a unique and compelling perspective on memory that sheds new light on key historical and cultural processes in Latin America. Comics in Latin America have been rarely explored in terms of how Latin Americans remember, forget, and make sense of a wide range of issues—from the constitution of national identity, to narratives of resistance to colonialism and imperialism, to the construction of revolutionary traditions, to authoritarianism, political violence, and its traumatic legacies. In this sense, this volume should be read as a contribution not just to the fields of comics studies and memory studies but also, and more generally, to Latin American studies—a field that has explored both comics and memory but that has never offered a sustained reflection on the interplay between the two. While certainly not the last word on comics and memory in Latin America, this volume provides insights that others can draw on to examine further how comics can inform not just the study of memory but also other key issues at stake in Latin American studies.

NOTES

Epigraph: Moore and Bolland (2008 [1988]).

1. See *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Sobre la Historieta* (RLESH), online at <https://archive.is/8eN5>.
2. Earlier academic publications in the United States, such as the *Journal of Popular Culture* (first published in 1967) or *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* (first published in 1982), have also included pieces about Latin American comics. In the United Kingdom three academic journals focusing on comics have been established: *European Comic Art* (since 2008), *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (since 2010), and *Studies in Comics* (since 2010).

3. Some critics and artists (Masotta 1982 [1970]; Del Río 1983; McCloud 2004 [1993]; Merino 2003) take the discussion of the origins back to cave painting, the Trajan Column, or the Bayeux Tapestry—all seen as precursors of modern comics for the primitive sequential disposition of images, one of the main characteristics many scholars attribute to comics. In the Latin American context, the *Codex Azcatitlan* (1500s) and the *Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno* (1615) by Guamán Poma de Ayala are often cited as similar antecedents.
4. For the Peruvian case, see Ayala Calderón (2012).
5. Töppfer is considered the father of comic strips (Kunzle 2007). His *Histoire de M. Vieux Bois* was published in 1837. It was subsequently published in the United States in 1842 as *The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck*. For a detailed account of these artists' contributions to the development of early comics, see Smolderen 2009.
6. Outcault was the creator of the “The Yellow Kid,” the lead comic strip character in *Hogan's Alley* that ran from 1895 to 1898 in Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and later William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. U.S. scholarship on comics has tended to assume “The Yellow Kid” as the foundational moment of modern comics.
7. In 2007, Panini became the publisher of the Mónica conglomerate, using new projects, including a TV show, to diversify consumers by targeting adults as well as children (Vergueiro 2011: 144–45).
8. The *Bienal Internacional de Humorismo Gráfico* (which celebrated its eighteenth edition in March 2013), which highlights graphic humor and comics, is held annually at San Antonio de los Baños.
9. Rius's international success came with the 1976 English-language publication of *Marx for Beginners*, a translation of his *Marx para principiantes* (1972), following the first English edition in 1970 of *Cuba para principiantes*. *Marx for Beginners*, a comic strip representation of the life and ideas of Karl Marx, became an international best seller and kicked off the *For Beginners* series of books from Writers & Readers and later Icon Books.
10. On Acevedo's graphic adaptation of César Vallejo's *Paco Yunque*, see Faverón Patriau (2011).
11. Useful introductions to the field include Olick and Robbins (1998); Huyssen (2000); Klein (2000); and Kansteiner (2002).
12. More recently, the Holocaust memory discourse has been mobilized in the context of Argentine memory struggles as part of an attempt by some to frame the Argentine experience as a genocide. See Robben (2012).
13. On this point, see Sturken (2007) for the U.S. case.
14. The literature on this issue is far too large to cite here. See, however, Jelin (1994, 2003) and Stern (2006).

15. See Grandin (2005); the special issue of *Radical History Review* edited by Grandin and Klubock (2007); and Klep (2012). On Truth Commissions more broadly, see also Hayner (2002) and Payne (2008).
16. See Theidon (2012); and Riaño-Alcalá and Baines (2012).
17. See, among others, Meade (2001); Jelin and Langland (2003); Jelin (2007); Hite (2007); Gomez-Barris (2008); Hite and Collins (2009); Drinot (2009); Bell and Paolantonio (2009); Violi (2012); Milton (2011); Andermann (2012); and Hite (2012).
18. See, for example, Taylor (2003); Drinot (2011); Sosa and Serpente (2012); and Milton (2014).
19. Beyond Latin America, there are a vast number of examples of historical comic narratives. Some notable examples include Jason Lutes's saga *Berlin* (2001) or Vittorio Giardino's 1999–2008 account of the Spanish Civil War *No pasarán!* (published in 2011). Spain itself has seen a wealth of publications about the Civil War, including Francisco Gallardo Sarmiento and Miguel Gallardo's *Un largo silencio* (2012), Paco Roca's *Los surcos del azar* (2013), and Vicente Llobell Bisbal's *Un médico novato* (2013). The Ley de Memoria Histórica (Law of historical memory), passed by the socialist government in 2007, has created a context within which comics artists have created a diverse body of work that addresses the legacy of trauma in Spain (Merino and Tullis 2012: 224).
20. Joe Sacco's work, notably *Palestine* (2003), has many similarities with Spiegelman's testimonial approach in *Maus*.
21. Visual engagements with the process of storytelling itself are often even more prevalent in autobiographical comics and graphic novels, works sometimes described as "autographies" (Gardner 2008). This particular genre of memory is less prevalent in Latin America than it is in North America and Europe. Some examples from the latter regions include Craig Thompson's *Blankets*, which includes one frame that is erased on a simultaneously internal and metavisual level by a paint roller that is initially enclosed within a frame but then appears outside the frame, sweeping across the page to eventually leave a white emptiness (Thompson 2005: 540–43); Paco Roca's *Arrugas*, which uses half-drawn blurred faces (Roca 2013: 95) and then an entirely blank two-page "splash" (98–99) to represent the absent memories brought about by Alzheimer's disease; and Alison Bechdel's memoir *Fun Home*, which uses multiple narrative times, frames that function as historical documents (Bechdel 2006: 8, 32), and drawn pictures of photographs (71, 100–101), all of which blur visions of the past and intensify uncertainty over the veracity of memory.

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