Ce programme international est mené par une équipe franco-brésilienne de chercheurs en humanités, sciences sociales, arts et littérature. Il vise à la réalisation d'une plateforme numérique d'histoire culturelle transatlantique, éditée en quatre langues, pour analyser les dynamiques de l'espace atlantique et comprendre son rôle dans le processus de mondialisation contemporain. À travers une série d'essais consacrés aux relations culturelles entre l'Europe, l'Afrique et les Amériques, il met en œuvre une histoire connectée de l'espace atlantique depuis le XVIIIe siècle.

Comics in Newspapers, Magazines and Books: a Transatlantic Panorama

Ivan Lima Gomes - Federal University of Goiás

- Afrique - Europe - Amérique du Sud - Amérique du Nord
- L'espace atlantique dans la globalisation - La consolidation des cultures de masse

An overview of the history of comics from a transatlantic perspective. It is focused on the cultural forms of publication, circulation and appropriation of comics and their political implications. The entry goes from comic strips, comic books, underground comics to contemporary graphic novels.

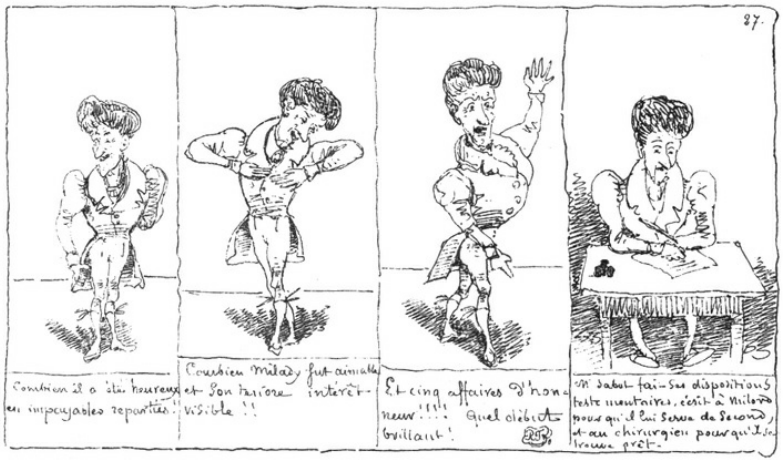
Comics are one of the principal forms of graphic communication in the contemporary world. The strength of their impact on readers of various age groups, who gain access to them in newspapers, magazines, books, or online, demonstrates the vitality of this language. Fruit of cultural exchanges which occurred in a more or less spontaneous manner during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the various names suggest an initial interpretation of this language. By integrating these in a Transatlantic perspective, we can sketch a definition: they are short narratives (*historietas* in Spanish), distributed in sequences of images in square frames (*história em quadrinhos* in Brazil; *bande dessinée* in France), and connected by texts inserted in speech balloons (*fumetti* in Italy), often using humor (*comics* in English).

One path to thinking historically about comics involves emphasizing the historicity of determined publication formats, looking at them through specific temporal foci. Initially – between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth – the emphasis falls on the establishment of the reading and the consumption of comics in periodicals, in the format of comic strips; afterwards came the emergence and consolidation of comics based on the commercial success of superheroes, between the 1930s to the 1960s; finally, the rise of *graphic novels*, in a trajectory beginning in the 1970s and continuing today. It should be highlighted that the emergence of new models of comic publishing implies additional publishing practices and new readings of established ones than the latter's replacement or disappearance – so much so the twenty-first reader can consume comics in newspapers or the internet, buy magazines on newsstands or *comic shops,* and acquire *graphic novels* in large bookshops. But it has not always been like this.

Daily modernism: comic strips in newspapers

Defining comics based on the presence or absence of formal elements has been a form of interpretation adopted by many scholars. This involves a debate about the 'real origin' of comics, in which it is claimed that they are the heirs of manifestations as varied in time and space as rock paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and pre-Colombian inscriptions, for example. In common are the presence of images 'read' in series, which helped to consolidate the expression 'sequential art' as a conceptual approach, still used among parts of the press and some specialists. Above all, the notion spread by Will Eisner (1917-2005) helped socially legitimate a graphic expression seen as culturally devalued by some of the agents involved with comics. However, this ended up losing sight of technical and cultural specifities associated with them – such as new printing technologies and practices of looking – which were developed during the nineteenth century.

According to this type of interpretation, comics emerged not in the US, but in Europe, in the work of the Swiss artist Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846). Published in 1833, the book *Histoire de M. Jabot* contained images in series accompanied by captions. Töpffer defined his work as *littérature en estampes*.



Source : https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia

Using this approach, new comic 'pioneers' can be discovered. Indeed, each country comes to have its own 'first author of comics.' Listing them would be a long task; but it is worth mentioning here the work of Angelo Agostini (1843-1910). *As Aventuras de Nhô Quim* or *Impressões de uma viagem à corte* (1869) is what makes him be considered the 'father of Brazilian comics,' so much so that one of the principal Brazilian comic awards carries his name. Of Italian origin, he spent his childhood and adolescence in Paris and migrated to Brazil at the age of sixteen. In his final years, Agostini worked on the illustrated children's magazine *O Tico-Tico* (1905-1962), which introduced in Brazil successful US comic strips at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1905) by Winsor McCay (c. 1867-71-1934) and *Krazy Kat* (1913-1944) by George Herriman (1880-1944), amongst others.

These interpretations contest the crediting of the title of first comic to *The Yellow Kid* (1895-1898), published in the illustrated supplement to *The New York World* (1860-1931), directed by Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911). Richard Outcault's (1863-1928) creation was a direct result of the development and cheapening of printing machinery and of color printing, as well as an expanding consumer public for this type of publication. The yellow pajamas of the main character – given this color as an idea to test the newspaper's print quality – called so much attention that it became a support for what the character said. Of Irish origin, the words attributed to the boy were written in a way that reproduced popular language and the accents of the poor immigrants who occupied New York at the end of the nineteenth century. It was important for the emergence of a 'mass press,' to the point of inspiring the expression *yellow journalism*, used in a critical manner to classify sensationalist periodicals, regarded as not being serious.

Source : https://cartoons.osu.edu

Outcault also created the *Buster Brown* series (1902-c.1921), which dealt with the daily antics of a blond boy with a bourgeois appearance. Unlike what occurred with *The Yellow Kid*, this time Outcault managed, after a judicial dispute, to hold onto the rights for the character. As a result, *Buster Brown* soon spread all over the country.

In addition to starring in theatre plays, radio programs, and films, Outcault licensed the character for publicity: from 1904 onwards, Buster Brown became a type of advertising star for *Brown Shoe Company* (1917-), contributing to the sale of shoes until the 1990s – with intervals between the 1960s and 1970s. In the US, the character came to denominate a type of outfit that was popular among children at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Source : https://digitalcollections.nypl.org

Source : https://digitalcollections.nypl.org

The character quickly cross the frontiers of the US. In Brazil it suffered very peculiar cultural appropriations. Published in *O Tico-Tico*, the character was rebaptized and came to be called *Chiquinho*. After a few years of the translation and adaptation of the original comics, Brazilian artists assumed the production of the series, adding new friends in stories based in Brazil. The series survived for decades after the ending of the publication of the original comic strips in the US. Although these adaptations occurred with other important comics, *Chiquinho* became the most important of *O Tico-Tico's* stories, to the point that many readers believed that it was a Brazilian comic. And was it not?

Source : http://memoria.bn.br

The circulation of comics outside the US was due to a great extent to syndicates - distribution agencies specialized in producing and distributing comic strips to newspapers and magazines. The rapid commercial success of comics since the end of

the nineteenth century stimulated their expansion into Latin America and Europe, which soon became consumers of *comics*. After all, if a comic such as *Mutt and Jeff* (1907-1983), by Bud Fisher (1885-1954), could show that an event such as the Mexican Revolution could no longer be ignored, the reading public beyond the frontiers of the US also had to be taken into account. Towards the end of the 1960s, the Belgian Marxist oriented theorist Armand Mattelart (1936-) showed that a syndicate such as the *King Features Syndicate* (1904-) could translate its comics into more than 30 languages in more than 100 countries, publishing more than five thousand periodicals.

	1903	**1908**	**1913**
Number of periodicals with comic strips from syndicates	45	81	115
Percentage of population in cities where comic strips are obtained from syndicates	15,00 %	19,18 %	21,00 %

Table 1: Distribution of comic strips in the US, 1903-1913. Data obtained from GORDON, Ian. *Comic strips and consumer culture, 1890-1945*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998, p. 168.

Re-readings appear to have been recurrent in the greater circulation of comic strips through *syndicates,* such as those of *Buster Brown for example*. In Mexico, the *Happy Hooligan* series (1900-1932), created by Frederick Opper (1857-1937), became *Aventuras del papá de Pancholín* (1917-?) when published in *El Universal* newspaper. The main character changed from a long-suffering, but happy, member of the US lower classes to a Mexican father in search of his missing son, the star of a Mexican comic strip which finished the same year. Such transformations in the story led to severe adaptation in the texts in the speech balloons, which came to mention directly aspects of daily life in Mexico.

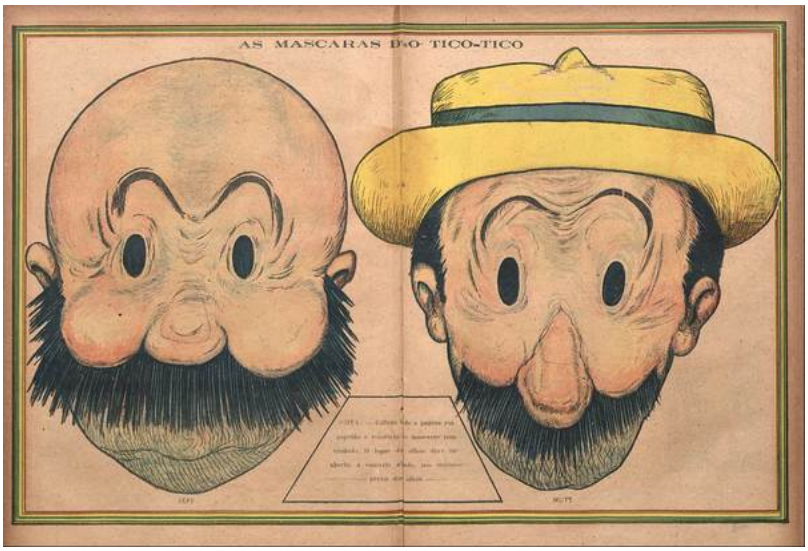
Another case of the circulation and cultural appropriation in Latin America occurred with the series *Bringing Up Father* (1913-2000). George McManus' (1884-1954) comic strip treated the experiences of immigrants and nouveau riche in the US with humor, showing the difficulties of the Irish couple Jiggs and Maggie in adapting to their new reality. In Latin America, the series helped to portray urban modernity in the first decades of the twentieth century, as well as the rise of middle class groups in various countries in the region. In Brazil, the couple came to be called *Pafúncio* and *Marocas*, inspiring humor programs until the present day; in Argentina, the series was published by the newspaper *La Nación* as *Pequeñas delicias de la vida conjugal*. In addition to a successful adaptation for the theater, it inspired songs such as *Sisebuta y don Trifón*, a "humorous Charleston" composed by Modesto Papávero (1899-1965) in 1925 which described the wife of don Trifón in the following terms: "Sisebuta with her insistence /on being the owner of the place/with special dedication /she wants her husband to be a model. /There are thousands of Sisebutas /if you want you will find her /because this woman nowadays is an authority! /She commands and nothing else." In Chile, *El Mercurio* published the series in 1922 as *Amenidades del diário vivir o Educando a papá*, inspiring an animated film – *Vida y milagros de don Fausto* (1924), by Carlos "Espejo" Borcosque (1894-1965), believed to be the second Chilean animated film that there are records of – and *Don Fausto* (1924-1964)*,* a magazine which would publish comic strips and illustrations for forty years. Crisanta, the wife, became the synonym of a dominating woman, preferentially using a rolling pin as a final argument.

Source : http://www.cinechile.cl/pelicula-1544

Cultural appropriation was not restricted to content, but also affected technical

elements of comic languages, such as speech balloons, representative of the tension which comic strips introduced in a context such as the Latin American one, where the French tradition of illustrated magazines predominated, with publications containing a series of images accompanied by captions. It was not rare for speech balloons to be removed and replaced by captions. A similar situation occurred in European countries, as Ítalo Calvino (1923-1985) points on in relation to the Italian case. For Calvino, a reader of US comics such as *Happy Hooligan*, *Katzenjammer Kids*, *Felix the Cat,* and others, until the publication of *Mickey Mouse* in Italy, the solution adopted was to suppress the text in the speech bubbles. In their place, every four images were accompanied by a type of caption, in the form of rhyming verses – solemnly ignored by Calvino. The editorial solution of using captions in the place of speech balloons was fundamental for expanding Calvino's imagination as a child, by 'thinking of images' while he interpreted them with different stories during each new reading.

Comic strips soon moved beyond comics, also impacting writers and painters. Examples of this are the Brazilian writers Monteiro Lobato (1882-1983) and Benjamin Costallat (1897-1961) and the re-readings they respectively made of *Felix The Cat* (1919-) and *Mutt and Jeff*, also pointing to the intertextuality present in the different aspects of Brazilian Modernism.



Source : http://memoria.bn.br

The impact of comics on fine arts can also be shown through the reading experience of the couple Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Fernande Oliver (1881-1966), as described by Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) in *The Autobiography of Alice Toklas* (1933). The US comic strip *The Katzenjammer Kids* (1897-1968), created by Rudolph Dirks (1877-1968), catalyzed sentiments such as anger, joy, and sadness among the young couple, who fought over who would be the next to read the cartoons in the supplements given to them by Stein. The anarchical and explosive nature of the *Katzenjammer Kids,* whose stories were based on physical humor involving a low income German-American family, seemed to represent a metaphor of the relationship between Picasso and Oliver.

The success of Dirks' comic strip can be seen in various short animated films released the year after its launch. Between 1916 and 1918, for example, 37 animations were produced. In addition, due to the First World War and the animosities with Germany, the series came to be called *The Shenanigan Kids*. It is also difficult to ignore that the *Katzenjammer Kids* was inspired by the German illustrated children's work *Max und Moritz* (1865). The ties with Germany had been reinforced a few previously in the work of Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956), now remembered for his work with Bauhaus. Despite being born and having spent a considerable part of his adolescence in New York, Feininger was part of a team of the 'most famous German cartoonists' recruited by the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (1847) for the series *The Kin-Der-Kids* (1906-1907).

Source : https://www.moma.org © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Feininger's work in the press and in comics is a little known part of his artistic trajectory. It is not even possible to identify to what extent it directly influenced his paintings or his definition of art. The same can be said in relation to the work of Pablo Picasso, whose direct relationship with comics is principally known because of passages in Gertrude Stein's work. It can be objected that the interest of Stein and Picasso in comics was due to the fascination of modernist artists with mass culture, which led the US artist Stuart Davis (1892-1964) to reproduce a cartoon drawing in his 1924 picture *Lucky Strike (1892-1964)*.

Source : Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, © Estate of Stuart Davis/Licensed by VAGA, New York. https://whitney.org/WatchAndListen/1355

On the other hand, a series of drawings which served as a study for the creation of the *Guernica* mural shows that Picasso's interest in comics resulted in effective visual works. Based on new graphic and visual technologies, the Spanish painter dialogued with the history of art and the image: from the triptychs of Francisco de Goya (1746-

1828) dedicated to the horrors of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain, passing through the narratives in sequential images very present in the region of Catalonia from the modern epoch onwards and known as *aucas*, we reach the fragmented visuality used to deal with the violence and the consequences of the Nazi-Fascist bombing. Dated between January and June 1937, they construct a narrative of sequential images critical of Francisco Franco (1892-1975) and the destruction of the republican project by the Spanish Civil War, incorporating the bombing of Guernica during the preparation of the series. A few decades after their Transatlantic dissemination, comics had entered the world of politics for good.

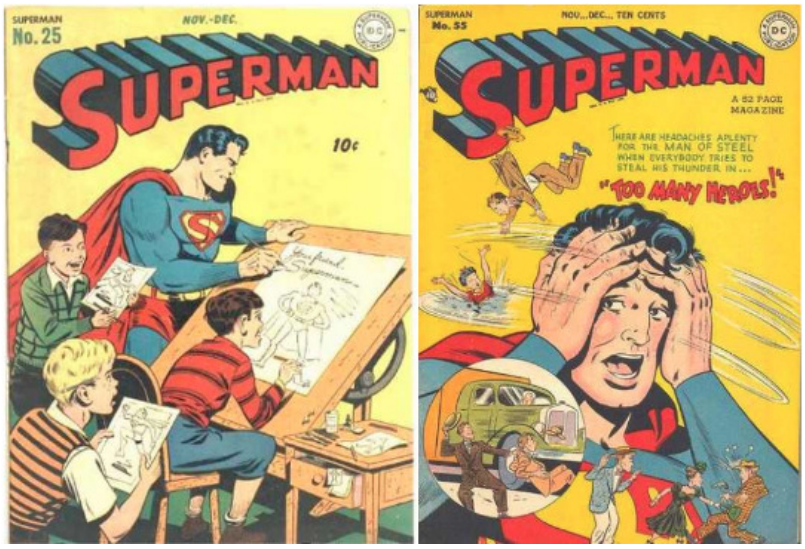
Source : http://www.museoreinasofia.es

Masked dance: superheroes appear on the scene

The production and reading of comics underwent a revolution in the 1930s, when some distributors had the idea of folding newspaper supplements and selling them as magazines – which in English came to be known as comics. This cheap solution which paid no real attention to adapting printing techniques to the new format made the graphic quality of the magazines difficult. Colors had to be primary and loud to stand out; the small size of the letters in the speech balloons suffered, reading them became difficult causing teachers to become concerned due to the harm that could be caused to vision. All of this led to a not very rigorous selection of story quality – also because associating oneself with comics could signify damage to any career with literary or artistic pretensions. They wound up becoming like *pulp* literature, published since the beginning of the twentieth century in magazines which used low quality paper – produced from cellulose pulp, thus the expression *pulp* –, selling fantasy, horror, and adventure stories on newsstands with exaggerated and attractive covers.

Source : Collection complied by The Pulp Magazines Project

Based on these technical specifications, comics came to be called *four color nightmares* by some. However, in the same period there also emerged the modern comic industry based on its iconic character: Superman, created in 1933 by Jerry Siegel (1914-1996) and Joe Shuster (1914-1992). It only became a success with the public after being published in the comic format; the authors had previously tried to publish it as comic strips, but without great success. Perhaps its combination of gaudy clothes and superpowers depended on an equally exaggerated format.



Source : Private collection

With *Superman* (1938-), a specific narrative genre was invented within the language of comics, centered on the figure of the superhero. The explosion of characters which followed *Superman* allows some of the narrative possibilities of this genre to be glimpsed. Apart from the science fiction which inspired the creation of Siegel and Shuster's character, the *hard boiled* police literature present in pulp titles such as *Black Mask* (1920-1987) and *Detective Fiction Weekly* (1924-1951) served as a backdrop for *Batman* (1939-), a masked character who initially was not afraid of murdering villains to cleanse Gotham City of crime. A boy selling newspapers gained the power of a wizard by shouting the initials of the 'gods' **S**alomon, **H**ercules, **A**tlas, **Z**eus, **A**chilles and **M**ercury– Shazam! – and became *Captain Marvel* (1939-1953), a success which soon became the principal rival of *Superman* in terms of sales.* *Wonder Woman* (1941-) integrated mythological narratives about the Greek Amazons from Themiscyra and the ideas of the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928). *Captain America* (1940-) took advantage of the political questions involving the US and the war against Nazi-Fascism underway in Europe which required the appearance of superheroes on the front – not by chance the cover of the first issue presented the character punching the German dictator Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) in the face. Alongside these better known comics, numerous others with a less glorious existence accompanied the explosion of comics caused by the appearance of superheroes. It is estimated that more than 700 superheroes peopled comics from the end of the 1930s to the first half of the 1940s, reaching the mark of 40 different titles in 1944.

Source : https://digitalcomicmuseum.com/

In addition to the internal consumption of the US, the context of the Second World War explains a large part of the rapid success of comics and the profusion of titles which can be seen from the 1930s onwards. Comics were sent to the various *fronts* and read by soldiers as a form of entertainment and as a means of overcoming their homesickness.

Source : https://timelifeblog.files.wordpress.com

A conflict of such dramatic dimensions as the Second World War appears to demand fantastic characters to be resolved once and for all. Perhaps this was the perception of the Nazi periodical *Das Schwarze Korps* which denounced in its issue of 25 April 1940 the Jewish origins and of the creators of *Superman*. Described as a "young Israelite" and "physically and intellectually circumscribed," "Jerry Israel Siegel" had created a "colored figure" of a "overdeveloped body and atrophied mind." Based on the character, Siegel "sewed hatred, suspicion, evil, laziness, and criminality in the hearts of young readers." In summary, as Joseph Goebbels (1887-1945) stated, "*Superman* is Jewish" and needed to be combated.

As with US cinema, comics were censored and prohibited in Nazi Germany. A similar process occurred in Italy after 1937, with the creation of a Ministry of Popular Culture dedicated to the promotion of Italian culture and Latinness as the formative principles for children and young people. What is curious is that Mickey – translated as *Topolino* – remained in circulation until 1942 despite the censorship of US comics. The explanations vary between the personal taste of the family of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) for the adventures of the famous character from the Disney studios and agreements between the fascist regime and Arnoldo Mondadori (1889-1971), responsible for the exclusive publication of Disney titles in the country and an editor trusted by Mussolini. As was noted by Yambo, the protagonist of *La misteriosa fiamma dela regina Loana* (2004), by the Italian writer Umberto Eco (1932-2016), echoes of fascism were clearer between 1942 and 1943, when captions began to replace the speech balloons and "Mickey [*Topolino*] was murdered" to make room for *Tuffolino*, a type of anthropomorphic Mickey. Interrupted permanently in 1943, Mondadori began to publish again in 1945, with Italian artists playing a leading role in the adaptation of the characters of Mickey and his friends in works such as *The Divine Comedy*, *Othello, and War and Peace*.

Although the Second World War did not imply great transformations in publishing techniques and practices in relation to comics, because of the war it is inevitable to think of the political dimension present in the readings of series of images. A country such as France would see the profusion of comic publications associated with groups as distinct as the Communist Party – *Le Jeune Patriote*, published in France when it was occupied by the German army, afterwards becoming *Pif Gadget* (1969-) – and the Catholic Church, through *Coeurs Vaillant* (1929-1981), which introduced *Tintin* (1929-1976) by George 'Hergé' Remi (1907-1983), to the French public. This was the first step in the character's success which would lead General Charles De Gaulle (1890-1970) to confide in the then Minister of Cultural Affairs, André Malraux (1901-1975): "Basically, you know that my only international rival is Tintin!"

The de-Americanization of comics during the Cold

War

'Bipolarity' is the word that can be used to designate the alignment of countries to the capitalist and communist regimes after the end of the Second World War. A similar idea can be applied to comics by looking, on the one hand, US comics and, on the other, the gradual and definitive establishment – starting in the 1930s – of another type of comic which would define this language from then on: the *bande dessinée* with a Franco-Belgian origin. From the anticommunist reporter who told stories full of imperialist connotations to the young adventurer around the world, the Franco-Belgian postwar world would find in *Tintin* the model par excellence of how to produce *bande dessinées*, based on the use of striking traits and contours in black with a little shadow, elements which came to compose what would be classified as the *ligne Claire* style. Hergé was a reader of US comics – obtained via Mexico through the correspondent of *Le Vingtième Siècle* newspaper, Léon Degrelle (1906-1994), for whom he would work in 1928 as a director of the youth supplement *Le Petit Vingitème* – enchanted with the new technique and the use of speech balloons in comics. In the supplement, he published his first pages starring a young man accompanied by his white dog. Soon afterwards the director of *Le Vingtième Siècle*, the Abbott Norbert Wallez (1882-1952), suggested a partnership: Hergé was to write a story where Tintin went on a journey as a newspaper reporter to cover the reality of a place chosen by Wallez, and the result of the 'report' would be published in serialized form between 1929 and 1930 in *Le Petit Vingitème.* With an anticommunist profile and fascist inclinations, *Les Aventures de Tintin, reporter du* Petit Vingtième *au pays des Soviets* was designed as a criticism of the recently created USSR. The series became a success: soon being distributed to other European countries and was published in an 'album' format in 1930.

Source : Gallica

Titles such as *Phantom*, by Lee Falk (1911-1999), the adaptations of *Tarzan* for comics produced by names such as Hal Foster (1892-1982) and Burne Hogarth (1911-1996), and, in a more general manner, the countless comics set in African jungles which represented the cultural decadence of the US at the end the 1930s for Henry Miller in his *Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (1945), helped to consolidate very specific representations of the African continent in comics. These images oscillated around a savage nature inhabited by equally savage men, lacking the leadership and order to deal with the problems of a reality still distant from any civilizing project. Another series which contributed to reinforcing this colonizing perspective was Tintin's third adventure, concerned with bringing the reporter to the Belgian Congo. Published in a series between 1930 and 1931 and in a single volume in 1931, the comic is full of ethnocentric constructions and the exaltation of the imperialist project in the region, and is not rarely accused of being racist, to the point of being the last *Tintin* book translated to English, because of the resistance of publishers to its content. No less curious is the history of the reception of *Tintin in the Congo* in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, before and after its independence from France in 1960, where it enjoyed great popularity, although for some the colonial dimension had not been lost sight of. When he met with the Congolese painter Tshibumba Kanda-Matulu (1947-1981) to discuss his works with a historic profile which would compose the work *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire*, the anthropologist Johannes Fabian (1937-) was compared by Tshibumba with Tintin – possibly because of his posture as an ethnographer and the curious perspective of a European in relation to the colonial experience.

Another admirer of comics was the Parisienne René Goscinny (1926-1977) who, after spending his childhood and adolescence in Argentina, went to the US in 1946 in search of opportunities as an illustrator. There he met Harvey Kurtzman (1924-1993) and Jack Davis (1924-2016) – who worked in *Mad* – and was introduced to the satirical humor of the comic market in the US. In 1951 he returned to Paris, where he met Albert Uderzo and started the production of classic comics, notably *Asterix* (1959-2010). The saga of the pair of brave Gauls who resisted the attacks of the Romans who were spreading through Europe won legions of admirers all over the world, curious about the wordplay which linked past and present in the series. The setting of the stories in realities essentially linked to European history led many to believe that since Rome had not crossed the Atlantic, *Asterix* would also be faced with a similar barrier against advancing towards the US public – which explained the cold reception of the series in the US. Not even a book about Asterix and Obelix going to America – *La Grande Traversée* (1975) – helped to popularize the character. However, it should also be pointed out that *Tintin* similarly received a cold reception in the US, which points to differences in the forms of circulation and reception of medias on the two sides of the

Atlantic. While the introduction of elements associated with American mass culture in Europe came in the wake of its celebration as an artistic object, such as crime films – *film noir* – and jazz, for example, a quite different path was followed with the Franco-Belgian *BDs* headed towards the US. Emerging out of a cultural environment which produced them for internal consumption and without the intention of making them into a *commodity* to be exported, this barrier was symbolized by the structuration of a very specific editorial format – the BD *album* or book, with a soft cover – which was not suited to the expectations of readers of comics and booksellers in the US. Generally speaking, they were too elaborate to be sold in the established spaces of *comic books*, but nor could they find a home in the sections of bookshops dedicated to humor and cartoons.

Affirming this bipolarity in such a categoric manner excludes other paths which showed the diversity of the Transatlantic experience of comics. Generally speaking, the first comic publishers in Latin America emerged in the post-war period, as in the cases of Editora Brasil-América Limitada (EBAL-1945-1995), the Mexican Editorial Novaro (1948-1985), and Editorial Abril (1947-1992), amongst others. EBAL was directed by Adolfo Aizen (1907-1991), an immigrant Russian Jew who had migrated at the age of ten to Brazil and who for many became the 'father of comics in Brazil.' The Mexican Editorial Novaro (1948-1985) soon became one of the giants of comics and its products spread over a large part of Latin America. Editorial Abril was founded in 1941 by the Italian-American Cesare Civita (1905-2005) in Argentina, responsible for the distribution of various Disney characters in Latin America. Of Jewish origin, Civita had to leave Italy in 1938, emigrating to Argentina, bringing his experience as an editor of Disney comics in Mondadori. Soon afterwards he would push the publisher towards the production of comics, sheltering many Italian cartoonists after the Second World War, including Dino Battaglia (1923-1983) and Hugo Pratt (1927-1990), amongst others. It was the first step in what is usually called the 'Italo-Argentine tradition' of comics. Alongside names such as the Argentines Alberto Breccia (1910-1993) and Hector Germán Osterheld (1919-1977) and the Brazilian João Mottini (1923-1990), Pratt would become one of the artists celebrated in the 'course of twelve famous artists' offered by the Escuela Panamericana de Artes, under the direction of Enríque Lipszyc. After returning to Europe at the end of the 1950s, Pratt's experiences as a traveler would be incorporated in his work with the sailor *Corto Maltese*, whose stories were based in places as distinct as Brazil, Ethiopia, and French Guyana.

In 1945, Aizen contacted Civita in Argentina, with the aim of producing a Portuguese edition of a magazine with Disney characters, illustrated texts, and pastimes. Despite the weak commercial return, *Seleções Coloridas* and *Coleção Walt Disney* introduced Aizen to the comic market. However, in Brazil, Disney was also in the hands of the Civitas. In 1949, Victor Civita (1907-1990), brother of Cesare, migrated to São Paulo, assuming the task of creating a publishing house in the country. Editora Abril was launched in May 1950 with *Raio Vermelho*, a magazine in a horizontal format containing comic strips of an Italian origin already published in Argentina. In July of the same year *O Pato Donald* comic was launched, which has continued to be published ever since.

Comics related to the Walt Disney universe would also be launched in various countries in the Transatlantic world after the end of the Second World War. Apart from the already mentioned Italian case, a well known exception is France, where the consolidation of Disney characters dates from the 1930s with the publication of *Journal du Mickey*, a comic edited by Paul Winkler (1898-1982), director of Opera Mundi and representative of King Features syndicate in Europe. A country such as Germany would receive its first comic with Disney characters in 1950, five years after the downfall of the Third Reich and the prohibition of Disney comics during the Nazi regime. In South Africa from the middle of the 1950s, entire comics with Disney characters originally published by Dell Publications were reprinted and translated to Afrikaans by Zebra Publications, which also began to publish works by DC Comics and literary adaptations of the US series *Classics Illustrated*. While its origins went back to animated cinema, Disney comics quickly attracted a legion of readers, contributing to the Transatlantic consolidation of comic language and publishing practices.

Comic strips in newspapers and those published as separate magazines (*comics*) received quite distinct receptions. While the former enjoyed the recognition of critical culture and became shared family reading in newspapers, comics quickly came to be regarded with increasing suspicion. An example is the case of *The Spirit* (1940-) series by Will Eisner. To the contrary of *Superman*, *Batman,* and other superheroes published in comics, its author would not be pestered by critics who followed the ever more expressive sales of these publications. Why? *The Spirit* was a type of superhero comic published as a Sunday newspaper supplement. By entering other contexts, the frontiers

between comic strips and comics could be blurred, causing some very specific interpretations of comics and their characters. The case of superheroes in some Latin American countries can serve as an example here. In some countries they entered the print market in parallel with other heroes lacking 'superhero' attributes and in genres as distinct as detectives, jungle adventures, and science fiction. They came out together in newspaper supplements and comics maintained their indistinction of genres. The case of EBAL is interesting here. Its first superheroes in their own comics were released in 1947, under the title of *Herói*. A few months later, the company published *Superman*. On the cover, the well-known superhero is accompanied by Batman and Robin. However, what calls attention is the editorial presenting the comic, which shows Superman to be one of the 'Supermen,' as are also Batman, Joel Ciclone – the name adopted for the character *Flash* (1940-) – and other characters more or less gifted with superpowers.

Source : http://guiaebal.com/superman01.html

Characters as distinct as Superman, Batman, Dick Tracy (1931-), and Mandrake the Magician (1931-), amongst others, were understood in an indiscriminate form, as if all had the same superpower: the power of belonging to the US Empire. The US became a type of Krypton, Superman's land of origin – whose Latin American office was Mexico. Through the intermediation of Editorial Novaro (then Editorial SEA) and the special authorization which allowed them distribute comics from syndicates to other Spanish speaking Latin American countries, US comics published in Mexico took over the Latin American comic market during the 1940s and 1950s. In accordance with Marxist references in the 1960s and 1970s, according to the Chilean intellectual Manuel Jofré (1944-) Editorial Novaro represented "(...) a key institution in the hegemonic and ideological apparatus of the United States, used to expand the adhesion of the US in Latin America."

Obtained at very reduced prices, superheroes were possibly considered a product that was very specific to US culture and valorized as such. These characters would never disappear from the cultural horizon, nor would comics, despite occasional declines in sales, which intensified in the 1950s thanks to factors as distinct as the arrival of television is US homes, the regulation of the distribution of magazines, and the exhaustion of demand, amongst others. While the number of superhero comics published during the 1950s fell – as they suffered a decline in the post-war period, when they lost space to publications such as romantic, western, and terror magazines, for example – in the following decade they rebounded, based on the success of the characters of Marvel Comics. On the other hand, the absence of national superheroes in contexts as distinct as the French, Argentine, Spanish and Mexican, amongst many others, is striking.

While, for many, the Congo could be resumed as the distant and exotic place described in Tintin, much can be said about its comics and more specifically about a superhero born in the region, one of the first found on the African continent. Published in 1957 in *L'Avenix* newspaper, *Sao* is a typical superhero: hyper-masculinized, defender of order, and combating the vices present in the Belgian Congo. Original forms of the circulation of superheroes also occurred in Ghana, in the cities of Accra and Kumasi, in the middle of the 1970s, when Marvel Comics' characters were mixed with well known figures from Axante/Twi folklore. As in the case of *Spiderman*, who dialogues in a given story with

Anansi, a mythological character who assumes the form of a spider and is considered the spirit of all the narratives of the world. Both unite to defend Ghanaians from the violence of soldiers and the greed of all politicians but, persecuted by them, they had to hide among the population of Ghana. Together, they acted in favor of justice and the defense of values associated with the glorious past of the country, using superpowers and/or popular mobilization. Published in the form of mimeographed pamphlets, they assumed an effectively syncretic connotation by incorporating figures from distant origins in favor of other narratives, re-signifying mythological references and proposing a critical interpretation based on elements of mass culture.

Captain Africa, published in the middle of the 1970s in Nigeria, is another example of the cultural appropriation of the aesthetic and language of superheroes outside the US context. The work of a Ghanaian artist Andy Akman and edited by African Comics Ltd., *Captain Africa* was conceived as a response to the homonymous 1950s US series, where Captain Africa was sent to Africa to resolve conflicts in the region, as well as questioning 'imperialist' comics such as *Tarzan* and *Phantom*. With a duly uniformized character – which included a cape for speed and the silhouette of the African continent printed on his chest –, *Captain Africa* told the story of a successful businessman who lived in a type of idealized Africa and who assumed the superhero identity to combat problems that were well known to Nigerian readers in the 1980s, such as kidnappings and the murder of children. It gained popularity among critics after an article praising it in the *New York Times*, however, more detailed information about its production, regularity, and circulation is still lacking.

Source : https://africainwords.com

Other works sought to stand out through the criticism of the cultural imperialism represented by US comics and the way of life they portrayed. *Mafalda* was published between 1964 and 1973 and became one of the most successful Latin America characters in the Transatlantic comic world. Originally conceived to serve as advertising for household appliances, the idea did not work, and free of advertising prerogatives, Quino's (1932-) character became a type of Latin American *Peanuts*, dealing with the afflictions of the Cold War from the perspective of a child.

When questioned about the famous character, the Argentine writer Julio Cortazar (1914-1984) stated: "it doesn't matter what I think about Mafalda. What matters is what Mafalda thinks of me." A very distinct position from what he assumed when he discovered that he himself had been transformed into a comic, in a special participation in an edition of the Mexican *Fantomas, la Amenaza Elegante* (1966-1985), published by Excelsior. Despite taking as a reference the famous character from popular French literature created by Marcel Allain (1885-1969) and Pierre Souvestre (1874-1914), in Mexico and in part of Latin America *Fantomas* became better known in the post-war world through its comic version. In it the character goes beyond the original characteristics of the person associated with the world of crime and assumes a hybrid profile: part superhero, part *James Bond*, part *Robin Hood,* and also had some sort of intellectual pretension. In a special comic, *Fantomas* had to prevent an unknown person from apprehending and destroying all the books in the world. For this, he sought aid from the writers Alberto Moravia (1907-1990), Octavio Paz (1914-1998), Susan Sontag (1933-2004), and Cortazar himself. When told about this, Cortázar read it and decided to produce another comic staring *Fantomas*, this time showing that the 'bibliocide' he was investigating was not caused by a type of lunatic, but by the imperialist culture of the large multinational corporations. Resulting from this was one of his most creative works, where he intermixes photography, prose, and comics, entitled *Fantomas contra*

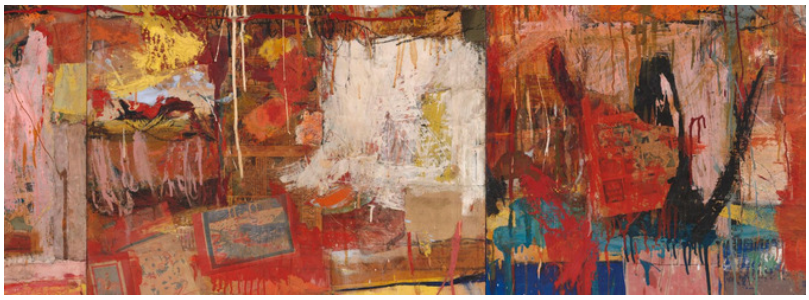
los vampiros multinacionales.

The promotion of authoritarian state policies regarding comics continued over the years, as the case of the publisher Afri-Comics illustrates. This company published comics sympathetic to apartheid. Information about it is somewhat vague, above all due to the fact that it had a short life – from 1975 to 1977. It was part of a policy of producing media content in English as a form of defending the racial segregation project then in vogue – or in the words of one of the collaborators, "to help to educate black men about the path of Western society, social concerns, and free enterprise." The comics had been produced by a US publisher which sold its rights to the publisher of a pro-apartheid newspaper, leading to the exclusion of ones that were sympathetic to leaders such as Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973), replaced by adaptations of folklore and biographies of football players. Two titles were published: *Mighty Man* and *Tiger Ingwe*, with monthly print-runs greater than 40,000 copies. In relation to *Mighty Man*, the plots starred black characters, including the title character, a policeman shot trying to prevent a robbery who acquired superpowers by being brought to the depths of a lake in a secret cave. After this he became Mighty Man and assumed for himself the prerogatives of freeing his city – very similar to Soweto, a city contiguous to Johannesburg created to segregate the black population – from drug gangs and local criminals. The end of Afri-Comics is most likely related to the scandal which erupted in 1978 involving the diversion of funds from the Ministry of Information to favor publications sympathetic to the regime, but the official version states that during the Soweto uprisings many newsstands were burned for spreading the comic and other pro-apartheid publications. It is somewhat ironic to image that a character such as Mighty Man was defeated by those who he sought to defend.

Source : http://idep.library.ucla.edu/afri-comics

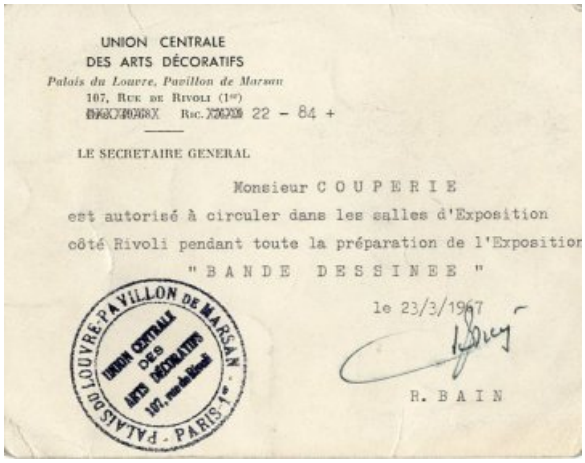
From comics to books: graphic novels. Perspectives for the twenty-first century

The gradual cultural recognition of comics began with debates about the possible circulations between erudite culture and mass culture, already foreshadowed by important names from cinema and the arts. In *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* (1956), by Alain Resnais (1922-2014), Mandrake comics are displayed near the bibliography available in the National Library of France. In the US, Robert Rauschenberg produced a series of works between 1953 and 1955 which brought together comic pages and advertisements, strips of cloth, and bursts of paint in a violent aesthetic which seemed to dialogue with the debates about the harm caused by the reading of comics.



Source : http://www.sfmoma.org

Produced during the period he lived with Rauschenberg in New York, *Alley Oop* (1958), by Jasper Johns, starts with the famous strip with the same name by Vincent Hamlin (1900-1993) to produce a work of abstractionist orientation based on elements from the language of comics, such as speech balloon and pictures in sequence. Also of importance was the *Bande dessinée et figuration narrative* exhibition in *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* (Paris, 1967), preceded by the First International Exhibition of Comics in Brazil (1951), containing originals by Eisner, Milton Caniff (1907-1988), and other names of comics seen as representative of the current comic aesthetic.



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le 23/3/1967

R. B A I N

PALAIS DU LOUVRE-PAVILLON DE MARSAN - PARIS 1er

Source : http://neuviemeart.citebd.org/spip.php?article752

While the French exhibition generated a catalogue which would become an obligatory reference for the study of comics in the country, the Brazilian exhibition also counted on the collaboration of the future university professor Álvaro de Moya. Intellectuality had already surrendered to comics years before through Umberto Eco and his collection of essays *Apocalittici e Integratti* (1964). In Latin America, *Para Leer al Pato Donald* surpassed the initial expectations of its authors, Ariel Dorfman (1942-) and Armand Mattelart. Written as an acid political libel and good humored, the work spread among the faculties of Communication of Latin America, becoming a basic bibliography in many courses.

Also in the field of fine arts, some works which dealt in a pioneering manner with themes which would be developed by US pop artists were anticipated in Europe. The German Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948) incorporated comics in a 1947 collage which seemed more a fragmented postcard of the US presence on the continent shortly after the end of the Second World War. The inspiration for the collage had also come from the Dadaist Kate Steinitz (1889-1975) who, having emigrated a little more than ten years previously to the US, wrapped letters to Schwitters with pages of comics, in order to present him with a little of the vibration of US society.

Source : https://www.wikiart.org

In dialogue with Rauschenberg and his defense of the multiplicity of code of representation and social meanings of each media brought together in a single work, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* by Richard Hamilton introduced a greater iconic load in the preparation of discourses within the work. Currently it is considered fundamental for the comprehension of *Pop art* due to its dialogue with practices such as publicity and design, the debate about a consumer society and the use of creative processes such as collage and the juxtaposition of distinct cultural and historical references.

Source : http://www.tate.org.uk

Amongst the various elements which compose Hamilton's *pop* mosaic, the citation of the *Young Romance* magazine stands out, an item defined by its 'pictorial information,' in accordance with the list made by the artist for the composition of the collage. Launched in 1947 by Crestwood Publications, *Young Romance* consolidated the genre of romantic comics based on scripts and drawings by Joe Simon (1913-2011) and Jack Kirby, the creators of *Captain America*. Seen by many as trivial, a publication such as

Young Romance helped to consolidate a style of drawing which would inspire the composition of narratives of the Marvel superheroes – mostly created in a partnership between Kirby and Stan Lee – in the 1960s and would serve as inspiration for *Pop Art* and, more specifically, Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997).

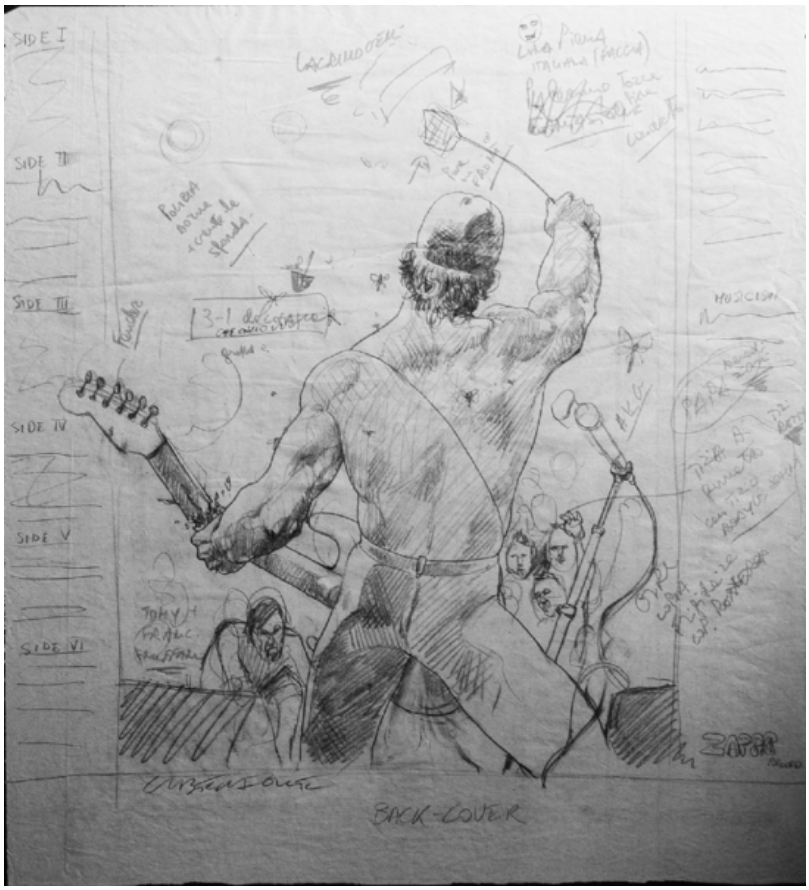
Lichtenstein's work is recognized as highlighting the formal aspects of the art of comics, obtaining expressive artistic results. Elements of comics with striking colors, gross and well defined traits, and Ben-Day dots were constituted in a massifying aesthetic, naturalized through daily consumption; Lichtenstein reproduced them manually and promoted formal alterations in them, in a meticulous exercise of dialogue with the consumer society of his time. However, *pop art's* appropriation of comics was not always well received by the artists involved in the production of magazines. Accusations of plagiary are still common, mobilizing comic artists and fans to valorize the artists who served as inspiration for Lichtenstein's work. Neither Jack Kirby, Gil Kane (1926-2000), nor Irv Novick (1916-2004), just to mention the best known names, ever received credit from Lichtenstein. Comics, however, did not remain inert to the aesthetic and cultural questions raised by *Pop art* in relation to them and references soon began to occupy pages of some magazines; the TV series of *Batman*, for example, was directly inspired by the *pop* aesthetic and, thanks to its great success, it helped to increase the sales of the *Batman* comic at the end of the 1960s.

Another publishing innovation in the comic universe began at the end of the 1960s with publications distributed independently of the large comic publishers, in the wake of the contracultural atmosphere of the US. Authors such as Robert Crumb (1943-) and Gilbert Sheldon (1940-) began to publish their comic strips in independent and alternative vehicles, consolidating what became associated with a *fanzine* culture in the 1970s. Their works came to compose what were classified as *underground comix*, a category which covered works with a satirical profile, raw drawing, attacks on the *American way of life*, and which were distributed independently. This allowed them dribble the prior censorship of editors and publishing regulations, such as the *Comics Code Authority*, regulations created in 1954 by the principal US publishers in response to criticisms made in the 1940s and 1950s. This signified repositioning *underground comix* not in newsstands or drug stores, but in comic ships, shops specialized in counterculture products, or *head shops*. This was the embryo of the so-called *Direct Market* that is still in force, based on previous orders and a lower scale, sold in specialized places. The lesson taught by William Gaines (1922-1992) in the 1950s appears to have been well learned by the following generation: in the middle of the pressures he suffered due to his horror comics and on the verge of bankruptcy, and responsible for EC Comics (*Educational Comics* and afterwards *Entertainment Comics*), he adapted *Mad* (1952-) transforming it from a comic into a magazine containing texts alongside the comic strips. This allowed *Mad* escape the *Comics Code* and transform it into an international phenomenon.

The aiming of comics at an adult public was consolidated in the 1980s in works containing complex themes and elaborate plots, thought of as complete works and which came to be called *graphic novels*. Among the formats discussed until now, the *graphic novel* is certainly one of those which most benefitted from Transatlantic artistic exchanges. We can think of it consisting of two movements: first, European artists seeking to enter the US market; second, European publications spreading in the US. In relation to the movement of European artists, what is usually called the 'British invasion' of comics exemplifies this. A generation of names who had already worked in the production of comics in Britain found space for themselves in the large US publishers Marvel Comics and DC Comics, promoting an effective about-turn in aesthetic terms. Names such as Alan Moore (1953-), Neil Gaiman (1960-), Dave Gibbons (19149-), and Brian Bolland (1951-), amongst others, contributed to reformulate superhero comics with somber and violent tones and philosophical inclinations. For the editor Karen Berger, responsible for the creation of Vertigo – DC Comics' label for comics with an adult profile –, this generation of British artists was gifted with a "sensibility and points of view with a different freshness" from the majority of US artists.

In relation to European publications in the US, of special importance is a magazine such as the French Métal Hurlant (1974-2004), originally published by Les Humanoïdes Associés, a publisher created by comic artists such as Jean 'Moebius' Giraud (1938-2012), Jean-Pierre Dionnet (1947-), and Philippe Druillet (1944-). Translated, it came to be called *Heavy Metal* and has been published in the US since 1977, though with some intervals. Through *Heavy Metal*, the US public was able to come into more permanent contact with a series of French artists dedicated to works of science fiction – in addition to the already mentioned, Enki Bilal (1951-) and Philippe 'Caza' Cazaumayou (1941-),

amongst others – and Italians, such as the author of erotic comics Milo Manara (1945-) and the duo Stefano Tamburini (1955-1986) and Gaetano 'Tanino' Liberatore (1953-). Tamburini and Liberatore were the creators of *RanXerox* (1978), a type of punk anti-hero created by joining parts of photocopies of the Rank Organization, distributor of the Xerox Corporation in Europe. The character was so successful that even Frank Zappa became a type of *RanXerox*, in according with Tamborini's illustrations for the album *The Man from Utopia* (1983). Integrating the two movements which brought European artists and publications to the US, it is worth noting that *Heavy Metal* is currently under the command of the Scot Grant Morrisson (1960-).



Source : http://art.cafimg.com

While Eisner is one of the names who helped establish the *graphic novel* as a privileged format for the writing of comic narratives, the work of Art Spiegelman (1948-) represents a significant awareness of the limits and possibilities of this language. In *Maus: a survivor's tale* (1978-1991), the limits of the representation of the Holocaust are approached through the language of comics, raising the following question: is it possible to 'comically' – i.e., in the format of comics – represent or adapt the experience of the Holocaust? Winner of a Pulitzer prize in 1992, the work is representative of the circulation of comics between erudite and popular culture, in discussing the memory of the Holocaust based on a wide-ranging work of icongraphic, bibliographic, and archival research, and interviews with the author's father, a survivor of Auschwitz who migrated to the US after the war.

One of the forms of perceiving *graphic novels* as a moment of affirming the authorial nature of comics is through the profusion of works of works of an autobiographical profile dedicated to linking personal experiences and political questions. *Persepolis* (2000-2003), by Marjane Satrapi (1969-) is an important reference here. This book work describes the author's perceptions of the political and cultural transformations caused by the Iranian Revolution through her childhood memories. Among the comings and goings, the reader accompanies Satrapi in Teheran, Vienna, and to escape the ever more suffocating atmosphere of the Iranian regime to which she will return, Strasbourg. With its *bildungsroman* structure, *Persepolis* was a public and critical success, and was even adapted for the cinema.

Conflicts in the Middle East also contributed to the work of Joe Sacco (1960-). Born in Malta, he migrated to the US after spending his childhood in Australia. He involved himself in *underground comix* and he graduated in Journalism from the University of Oregon. Associated with Sacco is the expression *comics journalism,* due to works such as *Palestine* (1996), *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009), *Safe Area Goražde* (2000), and *The Fixer*

(2003). The first two are concerned with conflicts between Palestinians and Jews and are based on extensive fieldwork carried out in Gaza, while *Footnotes in Gaza* is a journalist and historic investigation related to the Suez Crisis (1956). While *Safe Area Goražde* and *The Fixer* deal with the Bosnian War (1992-5), focusing respectively on interviews carried out by the author and on a type of guide for journalists in Bosnian conflict zones.

The *graphic novels* format maintains the Transatlantic orientation which guided the historic construction of comics as a cultural practice. It was part of the de-Americanization process of comics experimented in the Cold War years in Europe, above all in the Franco-Belgian world of BDs, to the point of being taken as a type of 'Europeanization' of comics. As a specific format for editing and publishing, it indicated the influence of publishing practices closer to European – and more specifically Franco-Belgian - publications of comics in 'albums.' While the works of Hergé, Goscinny, and Uderzo allowed the establishment of the foundations of a sober and clear aesthetic associated with the *ligne claire* – which could be brought together in coherent albums, the generation of new artists who worked in magazines such as *Pilote* (1959-1989) and *Métal Hurlant* contributed to the production of comics with denser themes with a philosophical profile.

Alongside the *graphic novels*, recent decades have witnessed the dissemination of publishing and reading practices associated with the Japanese *manga*, with new modes of reading associated with the visuality of this comic school. It is a very lucrative market involving billions of dollars in Japan and millions more in countries such as France, Canada, and the US. Young Westerners seem to have been educated since very an early age in the reading of *mangas*, dealing in a very natural form with the fact that this is from right to left, instead of the opposite Western practice. In terms of the knowledge in circulation which shaped Transatlantic notions of comics, the current scenario points to a global dimension of this language.

The dislocation of the production, circulation, and consumption of comics beyond the US allows the reconfiguration of a new geography of this cultural practice, assuming the Transatlantic space as a fundamental reference for cultural exchanges. From New York which saw the emergence of the first Sunday supplements and which sheltered – and continues to shelter – comic publishers, we now have a city such as Lagos, in Nigeria, a center of the contemporary production of African comics. Comics of numerous genres and formats are produced there, especially the re-readings of superheroes based on references to the culture of African peoples.

The set of publishing practices related to comics presented here is synthesized in the career of the Brazilian Mauricio de Sousa (1935-). Since the middle of the 1960s, Sousa has been the most important name in the comic industry in Brazil, forging an entertainment empire and often being compared to Walt Disney (1901-1966). His success is due to a strategy of insertion in the comic publishing market which consisted of launching his first comic strips and personally dealing with their distribution in various newspapers. In parallel, he organized a comic production team to advance towards the specific segment of comic books and other licensed products – from diapers to tomato extract. More recently, however, two other breathtaking initiatives stand out: the celebration of the memoirs of the principal characters together with the adult public with the 'Graphic MSP' collection, dedicated to publishing *graphic novels* with characters from *Turma da Mônica*; and the *Turma da Mônica Jovem* series, which added a juvenile content to Sousa's child characters based on a *manga* aesthetic. Looking at the printing, publication, and reading of comics on a global scale of cultural circulation the wealth of information present in comics can thus be perceived.

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Auteur

- Ivan Lima Gomes - Federal University of Goiás

  Professor Adjunto de História Moderna e Contemporânea/da América Latina na Universidade Federal de Goiás. Doutor em História Social (Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da Universidade Federal Fluminense, com bolsa de pesquisa do CNPQ). Suas áreas de interesse em pesquisa relacionam-se ao estudo historiográfico das práticas culturais, com foco particular na estética, história e teoria das histórias em quadrinhos, história editorial, cultura visual e História Contemporânea e da América Latina.

  Ivan Lima Gomes is a Adjunct Professor of Modern and Contemporary/Latin American History at Federal University of Goiás. He holds a PhD in Social History (PostGraduate Program of History, Federal Fluminense University, supported by the CNPQ funding research). His research interest concern the historiographic study of cultural practices, with a particular focus on the aesthetic, history and theory of comics, publishing history, visual culture, and Latin American and Contemporary history.