

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I began my research with the aim of understanding the relationship between family and class in the turbulent Buenos Aires of the 1960s, but I soon realized I was dealing with a phenomenon that exceeded by far that period and space. That realization led to this book, which tells the social and political history of *Mafalda*—Latin America’s most popular comic strip both on the continent and in the world—and, in doing so, offers a narrative of the recent past, a past that is still present in the dilemmas faced by the region and by societies today. Undertaking research on a continental and transnational scale in Argentina is not a simple task, and neither is it easy to have the outcome of that research published in English, much less by a publisher as prestigious as Duke University Press. I am fully aware that if I have had the satisfaction of overcoming the many obstacles and challenges posed by this work it is because *Mafalda* opened many doors for me, because I had the support of countless accomplices (friends, colleagues, publishers, archivers, *Mafalda* fans) who were willing to help, and because I worked under institutional conditions that allowed me to concentrate on my research. I would like to begin these acknowledgments by giving thanks for all of that.

I conducted this study in my capacity as career researcher of the National Scientific and Technological Research Council (CONICET), headquartered at the Interdisciplinary Institute of Gender Studies (IIEGE) of the School of Philosophy and Literature, Universidad de Buenos Aires. As I write these pages, I fear for research activities in the country, as the government’s science policy suffers under budget cuts and the application of business criteria to measure intellectual production. In this sense, I would like to highlight that an offshoot of an investigation—because writing a book on *Mafalda* was not part of my original research plan—led to a book that won the Premio Iberoamericano Book Award from the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), and which was picked up by Duke University Press to be translated and published in English, and whose appeal goes beyond colleagues and people in academia. It is a book that can interest, and even excite, a wide range of people, from my Bolivian neighborhood grocer (who carefully weighed copies of my book so I could mail them) to

the children in the “Mafalda” school in Buenos Aires where I first presented my book, to the many people in Chile, Mexico, New York, and other places who shared with me their ideas about the comic strip and their memories.

I said that the project was an offshoot because I did not originally intend to focus on the comic strip, but this research is very much connected with concerns (family history, the 1960s, memory, and the dictatorship) that have interested me since my undergraduate years at Universidad de la República, in Uruguay, and my PhD dissertation work (on family mandates in the 1960s), conducted under the aegis of the History Program at Universidad de San Andrés, in Argentina. Nonetheless, I knew that I owed myself a more thorough study on these subjects. I discussed an initial idea at a 2010 workshop titled “Laughter in History: Everyday Life, Family, Gender, and Sexualities in Argentina through Humor, 1910–2010,” jointly organized by Karina Felitti, Valeria Manzano, and me (as all three of us were very interested in humor in connection with our research) and sponsored by Universidad de San Andrés, the Institute of Higher Social Studies (IDAES) of Universidad Nacional de San Martín, and the IIEGE of Universidad de Buenos Aires. The project gained strength with the feedback I received from the anonymous readers of the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (*HAHR*) when I submitted a manuscript that was a condensed version of what would become the first chapter of this book. The review process for the *HAHR* article, edited by John D. French and Sean Mannion, was also enriching. As I advanced with my research, I discussed my findings in the Program of Studies on the Middle Classes of the Economic and Social Development Institute in Buenos Aires, coordinated by Sergio Visacovsky; the Recent History Hub at Universidad Nacional de San Martín (Argentina), where I was hosted by Marina Franco and Valeria Manzano; and in the Recent History Seminar of Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), which Eugenia Allier invited me to participate in. I would like to mention in particular the members of the Group of Childhood and Family History, which I coordinate in my own institution (IIEGE), and the students in the courses I have taught during these years, in particular the students in the PhD dissertation workshop of Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Argentina). Many colleagues in each of those spaces generously contributed their thoughts and forced me to review and strengthen my arguments. In addition to those mentioned above, I would like to thank Lila Caimari, Eduardo Míguez, Ezequiel Adamovsky, Enrique Garguin, Laura Vázquez, Marcela Gené, Florencia Levín, Mauro Pasqualini, Emilio Burucúa, Mara Burkart, Rebekah Pite, and Susana Sosenski, for listening to me and for their thoughtful suggestions.

I was lucky to have the Spanish version of this book published by Fondo de Cultura Económica, in 2014. I thank Alejandro Archain, director of the publishing house, for his unconditional support and for kindly giving the necessary permission for this version in English. I would also like to thank the publishing house's talented editor, Mariana Rey, who worked with a first-rate team. The English translation and edition would not have been possible without the unwavering support of my "gringo" friends Nara Milanich, Heidi Tinsman, Charles Walker, and Pablo Piccato, the interest of Duke University Press, and the sensitivity and insight of Gisela Fosado. While I explored the comic strip's international circulation I learned that humor is one of the most difficult things to translate, as *Mafalda's* English translator, Andrew Graham-Yooll, explained to me. Laura Pérez Carrara, my translator and friend, took on the challenge of translating this book with intelligence and relentless logic.

Many people made this investigation possible. I turned again and again to Daniel Divinsky, director of *Mafalda's* publishing house Ediciones de la Flor, who gave me access to his company's archive. Alba Lampón and Sergio Morero helped me enormously with their memories, material, and contacts for interviews with Quino himself and with his wife, Alicia Colombo, who was also his agent and is no longer with us. It was a privilege to be able to talk with both of them at length and to finally meet them personally after years of studying *Mafalda*. As I was only able to examine part of Quino's archive—which was very important for my work—in order to complete my research I resorted to multiple other archives, large and small, specific and wide ranging. My investigation would not have had the scope it achieved were it not for the support of Patricia Reynal at Editorial Perfil's documentation center and of Claudio Martyniuk, who allowed me to consult the archives of the newspaper *Clarín*. I would also like to express my appreciation to the archivists and librarians of the documentation center of Círculo Sindical de la Prensa y la Comunicación de Córdoba, the archive of the Córdoba newspaper *La Voz del Interior*, the archive of the newspaper *Río Negro*, the documentation centers of the newspapers *El País de Madrid* and *La Vanguardia* in Barcelona, and the documentation center of the newspaper *Excelsior* in Mexico. In Argentina I would like to thank the Library of Universidad de San Andrés, the library archive of Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, the research center and libraries of Instituto Ravignani, and the IIEGE. I would also like to mention Vanessa Fuentes, who gave me access to the press material of the publishing house Tusquets in Mexico; Antonio Torres, of Club del Comic, who gave me access to his collection of magazines and invaluable toys; and Doctor Pablo Yadarola, the legal director of Department 23 of the Twelfth Federal Criminal and Correctional Court, who allowed me to

consult the criminal files on the Pallottine murders. My work would have been impossible without those sources and documents. No less important was the help and support from colleagues, friends, and relatives who provided me with material and contacts: Esther Acevedo, Paula Alonso, Martín Bergel, Paulina Brunetti, Avina Celotto, Julieta Di Corletto, Leny Durán, Ana B. Flores, Judith Gociol, Rafael Grompone, José María Gutiérrez, Micaela Libson, María Inés Loyola, and Coleta Ravoni.

The interviews I conducted were invaluable for my research. They are included in the list of sources but I would like to express my thanks here in particular to Rodolfo Capalozza, Francisco Chirichella, Norberto Firpo, Miguel García, Andrew Graham-Yooll, Pablo José Hernández, Pablo Irrgang, “Chiche” Linari, Eduardo Longoni, Rolando Sabino, Juan Sasturain, Sergio Suppo, Carlos Torrenzo, Jorge Tovar, and Luis Tovar. Equally important were the readers of *Mafalda*, whom I do not identify by name so as to respect their privacy, but who shared their individual stories and allowed me to explore their subjective experience. Also valuable were the countless informal conversations and impromptu talks I held with a range of people, as well as the discussions triggered by the publication of the book in Spanish.

The research moved forward almost effortlessly. It was in itself an enjoyable experience for me, even though it had its share of obstacles and tough moments. Encountering the many readers and fans of the comic strip and the surprises that writing this book brought me has been enormously gratifying. Similarly of great value were the feedback from colleagues who reviewed the Spanish edition and the discussions at the many book presentations I gave, not just in Argentina but also in Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, the United States, and Peru. Bearing those contributions in mind, I made some changes to the original book, but the English edition is essentially the same. Also useful were the very interesting discussions I had with Nara Milanich, Heidi Tinsman, Pablo Piccato, and Elizabeth Hutchinson, colleagues I met during my time on a Fulbright-CONICET postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University’s Institute of Latin American Studies. Moreover, my contact with Paulo Drinot led me to build on some of the ideas developed in chapter 5 and to contribute a chapter to *Comics and the Past in Latin America* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), a book he coedited with Jorge L. Catalá Carrasco and James Scorer.

My research was supported by a CONICET grant to the Multiannual Research Project “A Micro-Historical Study on Couples” and assisted by the Hada and Ruper Foundation. I was able to conduct interviews and consult newspapers and archives in Mexico City thanks to the opportunity afforded by an invitation to participate in the colloquium “Los niños, fuentes y per-

spectivas,” coordinated by Delia Salazar and Eugenia Sánchez Calleja. Unfortunately, I was unable to travel to Italy and Spain, but I made extensive use of digital newspaper libraries and conducted many interviews over the telephone. I also had the determined help of Giulia Venturi in Verona, Guillermo Aquino Falfan in Mexico City, David Candami in Barcelona, and Caitlin Reilly in Washington, DC. In Buenos Aires, Inés Ibarlucia helped me put a sensible limit to my ever-growing sources, and for specific matters I had the support of Claudia Patricia Ríos in La Plata and of Cristina Fuentes in Córdoba.

With *Mafalda*, as never before, I had an object of study that met with passionate interest at social gatherings and casual meetings, prompting stimulating conversations. The full list of those who helped me is too long to include, but I would like to thank some not yet mentioned who understood (and put up with) my *Mafalda* obsession: Mariana Alcobre, Paula Bruno, Marcela Ceruti, Rosa Czerniuk, Verónica Devalle, Ana Rita Díaz, Christine Ehrick, Mercedes García Ferrari, Mateo García Haymes, Sandra Gayol, Patricia Gonzalez, Karin Grammatico, Valeria Llobet, Vania Markarian, Daniel Mingorance, Emiliano Núñez, Camila Núñez Pérez, Sandra Olstein, Valeria Pita, Amanda Salvioni, Cristiana Schettini, Leandro Stagno, Carla Villalta, and José Zanca. I also enjoyed talking to my parents, Gustavo and Silvia, about this project as I was working on it. I valued Marta Crenzel’s help, Mariana Cosse’s and Isabel Larghero’s enthusiasm, and the “commitment to the cause” displayed by Rafael Grompone, who was willing to lug the heavy Italian editions of *Mafalda* all the way down south to Argentina for me.

I never would have been able to turn my research into a book were it not for my husband, Emilio Crenzel. He—my representative of the anti-*Mafalda* public—convinced me of its importance. He discussed the key arguments of my interpretation with me, revised each and every page, and when he sensed my exhaustion, he surrounded me with loving care. My son, Tomás, was only two when I came upon him staring entranced at the image of *Mafalda* in the bright orange cover of the *Mafalda inédita* compilation. Today, more than ten years later, I am pleased to discover in him a sense of humor that is all his own. These pages are dedicated to them both, my treasures.