

## CHAPTER I

# *Billiken's Early Transitions. From a Literary Founding to a Graphic Identity (1919–1945)*

When *Billiken* first hit the newsstands on 17 November 1919 it was positioned as a modern magazine for modern children. The early issues were heavily text-based and literary-focussed; by the end of the period covered by this chapter, *Billiken* had settled into its recognised identity as a graphic magazine organised around the Argentine school calendar. This chapter explores the tensions that emerge in this lengthy period of transition, stemming from the foundational context in which Constancio C. Vigil's ideological positioning of his magazine was used to downplay commercial objectives. *Billiken's* early anniversary messages created an institutional narrative that projected a future legacy for the magazine, underscoring the founder's ambitions for this editorial project, and demonstrating that *Billiken* was never thought of as ephemeral. This narrative also projected the magazine's readers forward in time, constructing them as future citizens or, more specifically, as 'men of tomorrow' and 'future mothers'.

This chapter draws on theories of organisational imprinting to examine the continued influence of Constancio C. Vigil long beyond 1925, when he stepped away from the day-to-day running of *Billiken* to concentrate on cementing his legacy as a children's author. One of Vigil's other editorial projects, the *Biblioteca Billiken* series of books for children, has a particular bearing on the literary content of *Billiken* magazine. The interplay between the book collection and the magazine reveals a hierarchy of literary content born at the intersection of ideological and commercial preoccupations. In parallel, the influence of Constancio C. Vigil's successor, his son Carlos, can be seen in the magazine's increasing focus on graphic content and alignment to the school calendar. This chapter pays attention to the ebbs and flows in the shifting influence from father to son, and from the literary to the graphic, as a way of understanding how *Billiken* arrived at the editorial pattern that it would maintain for its life as a print publication.

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### *Billiken's early years: Constancio C. Vigil as father and founder*

Constancio C. Vigil launched his new children's magazine on 17 November 1919 with a name and a first cover that did not presage the magazine's place in Argentine national culture. The name *Billiken*, pronounced in Argentine Spanish as [biz'iken], referenced the Billiken figure whose design was patented by Kansas City illustrator Florence Pretz in 1908. In the United States, the craze for products in the image of this good-luck charm, marketed as 'The God of Things as They Ought to Be', peaked in the 1910s. Pretz herself took the name Billiken from the 1896 poem 'The Song of the Little People', by the Canadian William Bliss Carman.<sup>1</sup> Constancio C. Vigil was not the only publishing entrepreneur drawn to the name. In Venezuela, Lucas Manzano founded, also in 1919, the literary magazine *Billiken*, which he directed at an adult readership, and edited until its closure in 1958. In 1915, Saint Louis University in the United States adopted the Billiken figure as the mascot for the athletics team and prospective students are still urged in marketing campaigns to 'Be a Billiken.' The figure found its way into Alaskan folklore and also inspired the character around which Chicago's annual African American Bud Billiken Day Parade was first created. The cultural reach of this figure extended to Japan, where the city of Osaka boasts several Billiken statues.<sup>2</sup> The Billiken figure was present in Vigil's magazine until 1925. The magazine's first logo shaped the 'B' for Billiken like a Billiken doll in profile and incorporated small Billiken figures. The Billiken figure appeared occasionally on cover illustrations and was used in the advertisements for the Billiken shop, *La casa de los niños*, which sold toys and children's clothes and offered a savings scheme to 'asegurar el porvenir de los niños' [ensure children's future] (issue 303, 7 September 1925).

In the first issue, the 'borrowed' nature of the name was acknowledged but in an invented origin story that turned the Billiken into the statue of a little god who lived in a temple in India and who, after transcending his physical form to travel the world bringing joy to children, decided to settle in Argentina (issue 1, 17 November 1919). Later, a fictional man took the place of Florence Pretz in a story that could never get itself straight. In 1993, Billy Kent was an English inventor who created a model of a Hindu god (issue 3853, 15 November). In 1994 Billy Kent, from North America, manufactured the 'Billy-kent' doll but it was Constancio C. Vigil who united the two words to make 'Billiken' (issue 3907, 28 November). A special eightieth anniversary publication retained the Billy Kent story and managed to conflate Buddhism with Hinduism in its description of the Billiken as a religious idol. Pretz was finally acknowledged within the pages of *Billiken* in the magazine's centenary year.<sup>3</sup>

*Billiken's* eye-catching inaugural cover illustration showed a boy footballer with a defiant stance and evidence of match-time injuries. Now considered iconic within Argentine graphic culture, it was also taken from the United States and was a modified version of a J.C. Leyendecker illustration which had appeared on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* in November 1914. *Billiken's* founding act



**Figure 1.1:** A Billiken doll in the illustration and Billiken figures incorporated into the logo. *Billiken*, issue 105, 16 March 1920. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



**Figure 1.2:** Characters of comics featured in the magazine pay homage to a Billiken statue. *Billiken*, issue 105, 21 November 1921.

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of plagiarism, never officially acknowledged in the magazine until the time of its centenary, had always been common knowledge amongst illustrators, not least because of Leyendecker's status as a groundbreaking commercial artist. Leyendecker's footballer was 'acriollado', or 'Argentinianised', for his appearance in *Billiken*. His hair was darkened, the team flag was changed to the Argentine flag and the face guard, originally held in the boy's left hand, was removed, transforming the sport from American football to *fútbol*. The boy's unruly assertiveness remained, however, and *Billiken* was launched with an image of rebellious and modern childhood derived from the 'New Kid' of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The collage of past covers for *Billiken*'s second anniversary issue, shown in Figure 1.4, gives a flavour of the early recurring themes with images of cute toddlers, animals and toys, highlighting the incongruity of the inaugural illustration. It also reveals the influence of the graphic magazine and advertising culture of the United States, particularly in terms of the stereotypical representation of Black children.<sup>5</sup> Although the practice of leading issues with key dates in the school calendar did not become installed until the late 1930s, there were some early indications of the potential *Billiken* had to create and transmit alternative visual imagery around the founding fathers, and other symbols for





**Figure 1.3:** *Billiken*'s first cover. *Billiken*, issue 1, 17 November 1919. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



**Figure 1.4:** A collage of early covers for *Billiken*'s second anniversary. *Billiken*, issue 105, 21 November 1921. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

nation-building, as exemplified by the crossover image of a toddler incongruously draped in an outsized uniform of the *granaderos*, the mounted regiment of independence hero General San Martín. Rebellious, modern childhood (or, rather, boyhood) would not be seen regularly on the cover of *Billiken* until Lino Palacio took over as principal cover artist in 1938. It took *Billiken* 69 years to publish an image of girlhood that explicitly matched the rebellious 'New Kid' energy of Leyendecker's football boy (see Figure 1.5).

*Billiken* magazine had a better chance of survival than previous children's periodicals because it was part of a larger publishing enterprise, Editorial Atlántida. Its founder, Constancio C. Vigil, born in Rocha, Uruguay, in 1876, had a dramatic start to life: his cot bore the marks of bullets that had been meant for his father, an opponent of dictator Lorenzo Latorre.<sup>6</sup> Constancio C. Vigil moved to Argentina in 1903 and, following his early magazine initiatives, the children's *Pulgarcito* and the agrarian *Germinal*, established the magazine *Mundo Argentino* for Editorial Haynes in 1911. Vigil started his own publication, *Atlántida*, in 1918, opening Editorial Atlántida shortly afterwards. *Billiken*'s nature as a commercial product is vital for understanding the construction of children as modern consumers and, also, the product itself. The lack of



**Figure 1.5:** Echoes of *Billiken*'s first cover. From left to right: Cover illustration by Lino Palacio. *Billiken*, issue 1067, 29 April 1940. Cover illustration by Alberto De Piero for the start of the World Cup. *Billiken*, issue 3047, 6 June 1978. Cover of the supplement celebrating *Billiken*'s sixty-ninth birthday. Illustration by J. Gonza. *Billiken*, issue 3592, 14 November 1988. All images ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

business records and personal correspondence in the Atlántida archives makes it hard to determine how the company was run at any given time. In the absence of access to, or indeed existence of, commercial archives—letters, memos, accounts—that could reveal insights into the strategic or operational involvement of the different Vigil family members, the level of power of appointed editors, processes for the appointment of new staff, or the acquisition or commissioning of new content, theories from organisational or management studies provide some insights.

Particularly relevant to understanding Vigil as founder is organisational imprinting. Now a cornerstone principle of management and entrepreneurial studies, even as the concept continues to be challenged and refined, this had not even been coined during Vigil's lifetime. In 1965, Stinchcombe published his theories about how organisations embed the social and economic contexts of their moment of founding into their structure, identity and practices and can continue to bear the traces of the founding context through time. Advancing the debate on organisational imprinting, Victoria Johnson argues that not all organisations founded at the same time absorb the same imprints. Imprinting is not a passive process, but rather is conditioned by the agency of the founders (Johnson's 'cultural entrepreneurs') and other interested parties who select and combine the elements of the founding environment.<sup>7</sup> When creating *Billiken*, Constancio C. Vigil drew on Argentine, European and US influences, included pre-existing material (text and images) and magazine design conventions, used his prior experience with *Pulgarcito*, and combined different ideological and pedagogical strands in currency at the time, to

fashion a new, modern product tailored to its context. In the case of *Billiken*, the founding context of mass print modernity, increased literacy rates and public schooling is imprinted on the magazine and persists over time. *Billiken*'s early years coincided with the democratic currents of thinking about children and the role of schools espoused by the Argentine version of the New School movement. This short-lived window was framed by two periods during which the patriotic role of schools was emphasised: the centenary of independence, 1910–1916, and the 'infamous decade' of the 1930s, with its attendant rise in Catholic nationalism. *Billiken* absorbed and retained elements of these contrasting ideological imprints, and the resulting tension between innovation and conservatism is carried from the moment of foundation throughout *Billiken*'s history.

Vigil wove his life, deeds and ideologies into *Billiken*, and into Atlántida's wider institutional narratives, adjusting them where necessary to meet changes in the political climate. Alongside his involvement with the Women's Rights Association, and the advancement of women in his organisation, Vigil created magazines that perpetuated conservative notions of gender norms. Vigil wrote in *Atlántida* in support of the 1930 military coup yet promoted himself as a pacifist: in 1936, a committee was formed to present him as a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his mediation in the Chaco War. Having initially pursued anti-clericalist spiritualism, Vigil became increasingly identified as a Catholic writer, to the extent that he was awarded the Gold Papal Lateran Cross in 1949.<sup>8</sup> These shifting ideologies account for, to some degree, the contradictions at the heart of *Billiken*. Their presence in the magazine also served to draw attention away from Atlántida's commercial objectives, which were, by the standards of the time, considered unseemly, and instead situated the magazine within a loftier, more legitimate sphere. The tendency to downplay commercial ambitions brought *Billiken* into the realm of journalism, which was seen as an academic rather than commercial endeavour, and identified journalists, printers and illustrators as intellectuals and artists, rather than workers.<sup>9</sup> The chasm between this negation of the context of production, and of sociopolitical realities, is particularly wide at the moment of *Billiken*'s founding when Vigil, as a proprietor, was in direct conflict with his own workers. In late 1919, Vigil bought his own printing presses in a strategic move to give him more control over his printing workers in the context of the labour stoppages, brutal repression of strikes, and riots that had continued throughout the year. These had been sparked by the events of what is known as 'La semana trágica' [The tragic week] in the January of 1919.<sup>10</sup>

Vigil promoted himself, and was promoted as, a journalist, writer, founder and father, and not a businessman, proprietor or entrepreneur. He derived further prestige from the company he kept in literary, publishing and educational circles. In Montevideo, Vigil had founded the literary-political publication *La Alborada*, which led to fellow Uruguayan Horacio Quiroga's breakthrough when he won second prize in a short-story competition organised by Vigil.<sup>11</sup> Quiroga would go on to be considered one of Latin America's great writers, and



a master of the short story. Quiroga's first contribution to Editorial Atlántida's magazines came with the story *Juan Polti: Half-back* (*Atlántida*, issue 11, May 1918) and he went on to publish, anonymously, 10 of the series of stories now collected as 'Cartas de un cazador' [Letters from a hunter] in *Billiken* in 1924 (from issue 219, 28 January). Vigil and Quiroga were also connected through Leopoldo Lugones, the first author to be published by Atlántida's books division in 1919 and a regular contributor to *Atlántida* magazine in the early years.<sup>12</sup> Another luminary of Latin American literature involved in *Billiken* from the very beginning was the Chilean future Nobel laureate Gabriela Mistral. Vigil is widely reported to have offered Mistral the directorship of the magazine. The evidence for this claim comes from a letter that Mistral wrote to Normal School director Maximiliano Salas Marchán, just a month after the first issue was published. Mistral commented that she had been about to accept Vigil's offer but had instead decided to collaborate from Chile and asked Salas to help by sharing some of the materials he had brought back from the United States. Describing the magazine as 'escolar', a school magazine, rather than using magazine's official slogan 'la revista de los niños' [the children's magazine], she informed Salas that Constancio C. Vigil needed children's literature for *Billiken*, as well as full-page illustrations (*láminas*, or plates).<sup>13</sup>

Whilst not identifying *Billiken* as a school magazine, *Billiken's* editors did promote all its content as 'educational'. The 1921 anniversary message reads: 'A través de la ingenua puerilidad de sus cuentos, en sus sencillas máximas, en sus sabios consejos y hasta en la travesura de sus regoncijadas historietas, hallaréis palpable o disimulada, una enseñanza' [Through the naïve childishness of [*Billiken's*] stories, in its simple maxims, in its wise advice and even in the mischievousness of its playful comics, you will find, whether palpable or concealed, a lesson]. *Billiken*, the message continued, helps children to aim for perfection and teaches them: 'No con el gesto severo de un preceptor adusto y gruñón, sino amable, dulce, alegremente' [Not with the stern gesture of a dour and grumpy instructor, but kindly, sweetly, cheerfully] (issue 104, 14 November 1921). These early anniversary messages, serving as vehicles to transmit *Billiken's* mission and promote Vigil's ideology, reproduced the understanding of the place of children in the nation-building project as future citizens to be moulded for the nation. The 1923 message stated: 'a nosotros nos parece que al enseñar a los que hoy son niños, modelamos en el alma grande del pueblo argentino y también del pueblo americano de mañana' [it seems to us that by teaching those who are children today, we are modelling the great soul of the Argentine people, and also of the American people, of tomorrow] (issue 208, 12 November 1923). Those involved in *Billiken* anointed themselves with the right and responsibility of forming future citizens as a way of legitimising the magazine in the eyes of teachers and parents. The 1923 message stated that those working in *Billiken* are contributing to their readers' moral education, working together with their parents and teachers: '¡Es como si tuviéramos muchos, muchísimos hijos bien amados!' [It is as if we have many, so many

well-loved children!]. The parent–child relationship imagined here was also linked to the construction of Vigil as (founding) father. *Billiken* was ‘concebido y fundado expresamente para vosotros, por alguien que los ama con amor de padre y de maestro’ [conceived and founded expressly for you, by one who loves you with the love of a father and a teacher] (issue 208).

This emphasis on love, on spiritual connection, and on being good as the only guarantee to a happy life permeated many of the editorial interventions in the early decades of the magazine. Of Vigil's work and sense of purpose, Bontempo states:

Analizada en su totalidad, el objetivo principal de la producción de Vigil es proporcionar una guía para orientar a la humanidad hacia una regeneración moral. Los sujetos del cambio son los pueblos americanos y el éxito de esta cruzada depende de la formación infantil.<sup>14</sup>

[Analysed in its entirety, the main aim of Vigil's production is to provide a guide to orient humanity towards moral regeneration. The subjects of change are the American peoples, and the success of this crusade is dependent on educating children.]

The linchpin of Vigil's oeuvre, *El erial*, published in English as *The Fallow Land*, is a collection letters, parables and prayers written as a pacifist response to the First World War. The influences of José Enrique Rodó's Pan-Latin Americanism and German philosopher Karl Christian Krause's spiritualism are also identifiable in the text.<sup>15</sup> Even as *Billiken* accompanied and reinforced the nation state's project to homogenise the population through public schooling, Vigil's Krausist influences brought his editorial project into contact with more democratising pedagogical discourses. According to Carli, these coalesced around the Argentine version of the New School movement, which sought to restore considerations of the ‘nature’ of children and their ‘spirituality’ to pedagogical thought and recuperated Rousseau to emphasise children's natural tendency towards benevolence. The New School movement promoted a child-centred approach to learning that valued child autonomy and spontaneity and contrasted with the positivist influences of Sarmiento's Normal Schools.<sup>16</sup>

In 1925, Vigil's final year as director, *Billiken*'s anniversary message was written in the first person, in *Billiken*'s voice with *Billiken* presented as an entity with a body and soul: a child, growing, just like its readers. *Billiken*'s physicality is emphasised with the play on words of ‘cuerpo de papel’, literally ‘body of paper’, but commonly used to describe the main physical characteristic of an object of print culture. The heft of *Billiken*'s physical form is highlighted: the issues sold over the past seven years would weigh three million kilos and *Billiken*'s weight advantage has enabled it to knock out 20 competitors to be the only one left in the ring. *Billiken*'s weight implies a sacrifice: a whole forest of trees has disappeared to allow *Billiken* to educate and entertain its readers.

*Billiken* has, then, a debt of honour: 'Sería un crimen que mi substancia, de tan noble origen, se empleara en pervertir el corazón de los niños o en perturbar su mente con ideas disparatadas' [It would be a crime for my material form, of such noble origin, to be used to pervert the hearts of children or to disturb their minds with nonsensical ideas]. The message is not entirely taken up with ideological mission statements but also explains the economics behind *Billiken* to justify the purchase price of 20 cents. We are told that Editorial Atlántida sells each issue for 14 and a quarter cents with the remainder taken by newsboys and other sellers. The costs that must be covered by that selling price are listed and the readers are invited to compare *Billiken*, printed on high-quality paper, complete with colours and images (*grabados*), to products of an equivalent selling price such as a bag of sweets or a packet of harmful cigarettes.<sup>17</sup> This explanation is an acknowledgement of *Billiken* as a commercial product and also of children as consumers who have the power of choice but who can also be guided into making the 'right' choice. The 1925 message also contains a nod to the changing of the guard: 'Yo sé que viviré mucho, mucho más que este señor Vigil que tanto me cuida. Él se va poniendo viejo; yo estoy cada vez más fuerte' [I know that I will live much, much longer than this Mr Vigil who takes such good care of me. He is getting older; I am getting stronger and stronger] (issue 313, 16 November 1925).

These anniversary messages were self-congratulatory about the work *Billiken* had carried out to date and were used strategically to create a narrative about *Billiken* that was projected into the future, shaping the idea of *Billiken's* legacy, even when the magazine had just started. There was an awareness of the generational legacy that sustained publication would eventually create: 'Mañana, cuando seáis a vuestra vez padres, sabréis qué inmensa dicha es tener hijos bondadosos, inteligentes, capaces de todo buen sentimiento' [Tomorrow, when you become parents yourselves, you will know what an immense joy it is to have children who are kind, intelligent, capable of every good feeling] (issue 208). With these messages, *Billiken* was not just constructing children's futures but was building its own, even as it was in the nascent stages of building a readership.

The early years of *Billiken* focussed on reader participation and interaction, through the formation of communities of readers, and the organisation of events and competitions. Space was given to publishing photographs, reader letters and reports on events held by groups of children who organised themselves into *Comités Billiken*. These committees led on philanthropic initiatives, perpetuating the narrative of *Billiken* as a force for good and solidifying the emotional connections between the magazine and its readers.<sup>18</sup> Children were incentivised to buy the magazine to see if the photograph sent in of their committee's latest event had been published; mothers would buy it to see if the photograph they had submitted for the 'Mothers and children' series of portraits had appeared. This content was phased out in the 1930s as the print run rose from a weekly average of 103,000 in 1931 (issue 592) to 200,000 in 1943 (issue 1239) and to 325,000 in 1944 (issue 1283). As a general trend, the periods of high circulation in *Billiken* are those that feature fewer photographs of their child readers.



**Figure 1.6:** Billiken committees. *Billiken*, issue 268, 5 January 1925.

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**Figure 1.7:** ‘Mothers and children.’ *Billiken*, issue 25, 3 May 1920.  
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*Billiken's* high circulation figures were showcased in the magazine to reassure readers that they were buying into a successful and relevant publication, and to attract and retain advertisers. Advertisers were further informed of the calculation of five readers per copy sold, stretching the estimated weekly readership to around half a million (issue 592, 23 March 1931). Editorial notes in *Billiken* encouraged readers to pass their copy on to someone who could not afford it, reinforcing *Billiken's* identity as a middle-class magazine promoting charitable giving in the absence of a welfare state, a feature of *Billiken* analysed by critics such as Clara Brafman.<sup>19</sup> An advertisement from 1931 reads: ‘*Billiken* no es un caramelo, el que pronto se acaba; dura años y es preciso que sus lectores sepan bien esto, para prestarlo generosamente a los hermanos y también a los amiguitos que no lo pueden comprar’ [*Billiken* is not a sweet that will soon run out; it lasts for years and its readers must know this, so that they can generously lend it to their siblings and also to their little friends who cannot afford to buy it] (issue 619, 28 September). Such practices were encouraged also, presumably, because they helped *Billiken* to reach the calculation of five readers per copy sold. Constancio C. Vigil went to extraordinary personal lengths to build the *Billiken* community of readers, as demonstrated by his replies to readers’ letters published in the magazine. The following responses, selected from December 1923, are indicative of the nature of such correspondence.

**Violeta Leiva. – Montevideo. –**

Queda registrado el Comité. Envíe cuanto antes los nombres de las niñas que forman la comisión directiva.

**Angelina Grandi. – Capitán Sarmiento. –**

Las fotografías se recibieron. En breve se publicarán.

**Ana María Quiro. – Caucete (San Juan). –**

Contesto por la revista porque su carta llegó tarde y ustedes ya deben haber partido de esa ciudad. Complacido espero su visita cualquier día hábil de 15 a 18 horas en esta redacción, Patricios 233 ...

**M. Méndez. – Málaga. –** Su cartita me ha causado satisfacción porque veo que no solamente en las repúblicas sudamericanas tengo buenos amigos, sino que también en lejanas tierras ...

**Inés Margarita Stroeder. – Mamá Catalina** aceptará gustosa mantener correspondencia con usted; su cartita me demuestra que es usted una buena niña.

(issue 214, 24 December 1923).

**Violeta Leiva. – Montevideo [Uruguay]. –**

The committee has been registered. Send as soon as possible the names of the girls on the steering committee.

**Angelina Grandi. – Capitán Sarmiento**

**[Province of Buenos Aires]. –** The photographs have been received. They will be published shortly.

**Ana María Quiro. – Caucete (Province of San Juan). –**

I am answering in the magazine because your letter arrived late and you must already have left your city. I look forward to your visit any working day from 15:00 to 18:00 hours to this office, Patricios 233 ...

**M. Méndez. – Málaga [Spain]. –** Your little letter has given me satisfaction because I see that I have good friends not only in the South American republics, but also in faraway lands.

**Inés Margarita Stroeder. – Mamá Catalina** will be happy to correspond with you; your little letter shows me that you are a good girl.

Mamá Catalina, whose correspondence with readers was also published, was unmasked in the issue cited here as Carmen S. de Pandolfini, the first woman member of the National Education Council. Other contributors included Mercedes Dantas Lacombe, poet, journalist and co-founder of the Argentine Women's Club, and Margarita Rothkoff, playwright and an editor of the feminist magazine *Unión y Labor*.<sup>20</sup> School director and children's author María Leonor Smith de Lottermoser contributed to *Billiken*, as did Uruguayan writer and journalist María Morrison de Parker, who signed the 1921 anniversary message. The number of women who worked with *Billiken* and Editorial Atlántida during the early years, and Vigil's membership of Women's Rights Association, should be noted because it potentially complicates the image that is often retained of Vigil today as ultra-conservative and reactionary. Either that or it sheds light onto Vigil's strategic thinking given that both education and children's literature were worlds largely dominated by women. It also bears mentioning that, whilst women were treated with professional respect and lauded for their achievements, their treatment in *Billiken* differed from that of men. A special back-to-school issue in 1925 included photographs of the authors of some of the most widely circulated school reading books. Three women and three men authors were selected. The men were all photographed

behind their desks, indicating their erudition and formal professional credentials. The women all appeared with children, signalling how their 'natural' caregiving instincts had taken them to the path of motherhood and/or teaching, and that their writing of school reading books was a natural extension of that (issue 280, 30 March 1925).

### Men of tomorrow and future mothers

Marilú, the first of *Billiken's* spin-off products, was a site where the tensions between commercial objectives and societally appropriate values converged in the context of the disjuncture between the theory and practice of women's place in society. Atlántida's involvement with the Marilú doll came about because of Vigil's association with this product's creator, Alicia Larguía. Larguía, a divorced mother and entrepreneur, led a very different life from the vision promoted to *Billiken's* girl readers of their ideal futures. Marilú's success was fuelled by her appearance in *Billiken* in stories written by Larguía using the pseudonym Tía Susana (beginning in issue 678, 14 November 1932) and the doll was sold from Atlántida's bookshop. From 1933 to 1937, Editorial Atlántida published *Marilú* magazine weekly before turning it into a monthly women's fashion magazine. From 1948 to 1951, Marilú appeared periodically in *Billiken* in a double-spread advertorial 'El ajuar de Marilú' [Marilú's trousseau] and, throughout Marilú's commercial life, a mother/daughter discourse was consistently maintained. In 1933, readers of *Billiken* were advised that a third consignment of the dolls had been ordered from Germany following the second having been fully reserved by 'futuras mamitas' [future little mothers] (issue 695, 13 March 1933). An advertisement from 1951 for the 55cm-tall Marilú explained that girls would now be able to take this doll by the hand and walk with her like a 'verdadera hijita' [real little daughter] (issue 1657, 17 September 1951). As Daniela Pelegrinelli observes, Tía Susana offered advice about how to take care of Marilú, whilst promoting the latest accessories and clothing collections as necessary purchases, because being a 'good mother' entailed ensuring that one's 'little daughter' never went without.<sup>21</sup> Whereas Larguía encouraged her readers to spend, editorial notes in *Billiken* emphasised that Marilú was sold at cost and that no profit was made on the doll (issue 693, 27 February 1933). The Marilú stories in *Billiken* were often accompanied by dress patterns so that 'little mothers' who could not afford to buy the latest clothes could make them themselves, and, in doing so, practise some of the skills they would need to employ in their future role. Thriftiness was also an admirable virtue to be cultivated by future housewives.

The *Marilú* magazine was 'dedicada a las mujercitas de mañana' [dedicated to the little women of tomorrow] and promoted as:

indispensable en los hogares donde se aspira a realizar en las hijas la mujer ideal: aquella que, junto a las dotes espirituales que la convierten

en una agradable compañera de todos los momentos, reúne los conocimientos prácticos que la transforman en hada de la casa (advertisement in *Billiken*, issue 695, 13 March 1933).<sup>22</sup>

[indispensable for households who aspire to making their daughters into the ideal woman: she who, alongside spiritual gifts which make her an agreeable companion, has the practical knowledge which will turn her into the fairy of the house.]

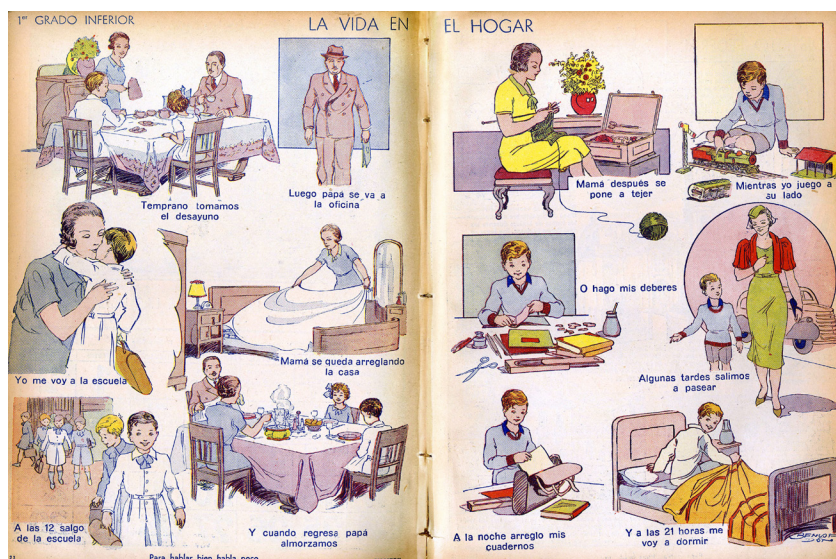
If girlhood was a waiting room for motherhood, what was a girl supposed to be and do in the meantime? A vignette in 1925 had provided the answer. Set out like an advertisement and with the title 'La patria busca una niña' [The homeland is looking for a girl], it listed all a girl should be: 'Despierta, obediente, estudiosa, sincera, agradecida, de carácter esforzado, bondadoso y leal' [Alert, obedient, studious, sincere, grateful, hard-working, kind and loyal]. She should also be: 'cariñosa con sus hermanos ... aseada en sus hábitos, dedicada en sus juegos, buena para con los animales y las plantas; sencilla, natural y veraz en toda su vida; consuelo y esperanza de su madre y de su padre, ternura y bendición de su hogar' [affectionate with her siblings ... neat in her habits, devoted in her games, good to animals and plants; simple, natural and truthful in all aspects of her life; the comfort and hope of her mother and father, the tenderness and blessing of her home]. The piece ends with the exhortation that the girl reading it should try to become the girl her country is always seeking (issue 285, 4 May 1925).

The print content of the Marilú product offered the practical guidance to turn these ideal girls into ideal women (mothers), helping them to fulfil their patriotic destiny. Other pages in *Billiken* specifically for girls had a similar function. In the early 1930s, the page 'La hermanita mayor' [Big little sister] offered dress patterns, recipes and cleaning tips, under the heading 'useful advice', which included instructions on the judicious use of ammonia in cleaning, and best practices for shining glassware and salvaging men's hats following rain damage (issue 537, 3 March 1930). A decade later, the new iteration of this page was called 'Labores para niñas' [Labours for girls], which later morphed into 'Trabajos manuales escolares' [Manual school work]. These pages reflected the school curriculum, with Law 1420 of 1884 stipulating girls' obligatory instruction in 'Labores de manos y nociones de economía doméstica' [Manual work and notions of domestic economy].<sup>23</sup> In *Billiken*, early examples of the 'Labores' pages concentrated on embroidery and were placed in issues that also contained the page 'Entretenimientos', or entertainments. The latter included practical, scientific or engineering activities such as making a lamp with a battery to take camping, decorative woodworking, and gardening tips, as well as magic tricks and games. The pages for girls were initially framed explicitly as such because all the entertainment-based content in the magazine was directed at boys, as the default male reader, with girls given their own special sections. Following this logic, the entertainments page was directed at



boys even though it was not specified as such. Of course, there was nothing to stop girls reading this page and preferring woodworking to embroidery, but there is a notable division here between, not just the nature of boys' manual work, which is ingenious and adventurous and takes place outdoors, and girls' manual work, which involves containment and individual, quiet contemplation, but also in the framing of the former as 'entertainment' and of the latter as 'labours' (issue 1157, 19 January 1942).

Elsewhere, *Billiken* was indeed preparing girls for their future labours. In school material for second grade on the theme of work, a mother bathes the baby, sews, teaches the children how to eat properly, takes them to school and looks after the house ('Los quehaceres de mamá' [Mother's tasks], issue 955, 7 March, 1938). In 'La vida en el hogar' [Life at home], material for the first grade, mother serves breakfast before father goes to work. She spends the time cleaning the house, knitting and looking after her son whilst the father only appears at mealtimes (issue 959, 4 April 1938). As the school content in *Billiken* increased, a pattern was established of using material linked to school to reinforce expected roles. Mother's Day also provided an opportunity for similar representations. In 1941, the 'homage' paid to mothers used photographs, illustrations and a poem to list everything a mother does for her children, from taking them to school to looking after the house. All but one of the representations is of a white woman. In the final image, a woman in Andean traditional dress, possibly Aimara, has her face turned away from the camera and a baby on



**Figure 1.8:** 'Life at home'. School material for first grade. *Billiken*, issue 959, 4 April 1938. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

**HOMENAJE A LA SEMANA DE LA MADRE**



Da de comer en la boca a sus hijos pequeños.



Les enseña los primeros conocimientos.



No me olvides, flor de la semana de la madre.



Solicita y cariñosa los baña cuidadosamente y los viste.

**SI TIENES UNA MADRE TODAVIA...**

(Fragmento)

**S**i tienes una madre todavía,  
da gracias al Señor que te ama tanto:  
que no todo mortal contar podría  
dicha tan grande ni placer tan santo.  
Si tienes una madre... sé tan bueno  
que ha de cuidar tu amor su paz  
sabrosa,  
pues la que un día te llevó en su seno  
siguió sufriendo, y se creyó dichosa.  
Veló de noche y trabajó de día,  
leves las horas en su afán pasaban;  
un cantar de sus labios te dormía,  
y al despertar sus labios te besaban.

E. Neumann.



Se aflige con las penas y azaú con las alegrías de sus hijos.



Los acompaña a la escuela y se preocupa de sus lecciones y deberes.



Afiende los quehaceres de la casa y cuida de la ropa de los suyos.



De cualquier raza que sean y cualquier lugar que habiten las madres son siempre tiernas y abnegadas.

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**Figure 1.9:** A homage to mothers for Mother's Day. *Billiken*, issue 1143, 13 October 1941. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

her back. There is an othering of this Indigenous woman as she is used to universalise the concept of motherhood: 'De cualquier raza que sean y cualquier lugar que habiten las madres son siempre tiernas y abnegadas' [Whatever race they are and wherever they live, mothers are always tender and self-sacrificing] (issue 1143, 13 October 1941).

Representations of girls on the covers of *Billiken* revolved around them role-playing motherhood or emulating their mothers as they carry out domestic chores. The cutesy incongruity of seeing toddler girls perform adult tasks was, presumably, more appealing to the mothers who bought *Billiken* for their children than to the children themselves. A toddler cradling a crying baby is tenderly captioned '¿Hasta cuándo, vida mía?' [How much longer, my love?] (issue 515, 30 September 1929) and the caption of a chubby-legged blonde girl tipping out the coins from her money box reads: 'Me parece que ya tengo para casarme' [It looks like I have enough to get married] (issue 523, 25 November 1929). Captioned 'El brazo derecho de mamá' [Mother's right hand], a toddler girl in an apron and headscarf grins from the top of a ladder whilst holding a feather duster (issue 491, 15 April 1929). A little girl overwhelmed by a pile of washing taller than her asks: '¿Cómo haré para colgarla!' [How will I hang it up?] (issue 854, 30 March 1936). With the early anniversary messages establishing *Billiken's* future legacy, by 1936 those in charge of *Billiken* could be confident of the role the magazine had played in the lives of this first generation of readers. The message for the eighteenth anniversary stated that all the children who held the first issue are now 'hombres de provecho, madres dispuestas y abnegadas, padres cariñosos que unieron a las enseñanzas de su hogar y de su escuela lo aprendido en las páginas de *Billiken*' [men of worth, willing and self-sacrificing mothers, loving parents who combined the teachings of their home and school with what they learned in the pages of *Billiken*] (issue 887, 16 November 1936).

In the 1940s, when the ludic covers were firmly in the domain of Lino Palacio, the contrast between girls' caring, domesticated pursuits, and boys' outdoor cheeky rebellion was visually reinforced. Whilst girls were still following the recommendations of the 1925 'A girl for the homeland' by cleaning, looking after younger siblings and acting out their future roles as mothers, boys were getting into scrapes like breaking windows with footballs (see Figure 1.10). In the 1930s, however, rebellious boyhood was mostly confined to the literary series 'Emociones futbolísticas de Comeuñas': Comeuñas, literally 'nail biter', was the nickname of the leader of a gang of boys who formed the Sacachispas football club. Bontempo notes the contrast between the interior world Marilú presented to 'little mothers' and the freedom afforded the boys in the Comeuñas stories, with the street, the corner and the neighbourhood as their domain.<sup>24</sup> The exploits of these boys recall Leyendecker's manipulated inaugural cover image for the connections made between freedom, rebellion, masculinity, football and *argentinidad*, and are in tension with the predominant construction of boyhood in *Billiken* at this time, which is concerned with the creation of 'hombres del mañana'. The men of tomorrow must be exemplary





**Figure 1.10:** Cover illustrations by Lino Palacio. On the left, girls as 'future mothers', *Billiken*, issue 1613, 13 November 1950 and, on the right, an image of rebellious boyhood, *Billiken*, issue 1085, 2 September 1940.

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pupils today, just like Eduardo, seen in Figure 1.12, who has attended school all year come rain or shine, applied himself consistently, ingratiated himself to his teacher and fellow pupils because of his good character, and has made his parents proud (issue 939, 15 November 1937). This same issue from 1937 contains the magazine's anniversary message, in which *Billiken's* mission is defined as: 'hacer más buenos e instruidos a los niños, esos hombres del mañana, de los que tanto espera la patria' [to make the children, those men of tomorrow, of whom the homeland expects so much, kinder and better educated] (issue 939, 15 November 1937).

Whilst *Billiken* was turning out future mothers and men of tomorrow for the nation, it was also turning out future readers of *Para Ti* and *El Gráfico*, Atlántida's main magazines for adults, which were divided along the same gender lines. An early notice to potential advertisers placed in *Billiken* recognised that children were today's consumers but with future purchasing power: 'El niño no sólo influye en las compras, sino que es el COMPRADOR DE MAÑANA. La impresión indeleble que queda en la mente infantil asegura el porvenir del producto que se anuncia' [The child not only influences purchases, but is the BUYER OF TOMORROW. The indelible impression left in the child's mind ensures the future of the product being advertised] (issue 123, 27 March 1922). In 1931, *Billiken's* readers were presented to potential advertisers as 'tomorrow's

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## EMOCIONES FUTBOLISTICAS DE COMEUÑAS

### LOS VERSOS PARA LA MURGA



puestos por el poeta de la barra.  
—Me da vergüenza leerlos — dijo el Lecherito en voz baja.  
—En cambio — respondió Rompehuesos, — a Pancongrasa no le da vergüenza comer.  
—¿Y eso qué tiene que ver? — le preguntaron.  
—Tiene que ver... que Pacongrasa es comilón y el Lecherito es poeta; y si al gordo no le da vergüenza comer, al poeta no tiene que darle vergüenza hacer versos...  
No le pudieron contestar, porque querarle explicar algo a Rompehuesos era perder el tiempo.  
Con voz un poco ahogada por la emoción, el Lecherito leyó:

“Esta sociedad hace lo que puede:  
come lo que tiene,  
agarra lo que viene  
y no paga lo que debe.

—¡Muy bien!... ¡Muy bien!... — gritó la barra entusiasmada contagiando al poeta que comenzó a leer más de corrido, sin equivocarse y con voz fuerte.  
—Somos como el portugués que no paga a nadie y al lechero le debe tres meses... y al panadero... — comenzó a decir el Turquito Antonio.  
—Callate, Turquito — dijo Comeuñas.  
—Aunque sea todo cierto, basta que lo digas vos para que parezca mentira.  
De tan mentiroso que era aquel Turquito, todo lo que dijera parecía mentira.  
El Lecherito prosiguió:

“Si a ustedes les gusta  
como nosotros cantamos,

A la primera reunión de la murga Aflojale que Colea, el Lecherito apareció con los versos.  
—No me salieron muy bien... Además, aquí se hizo un borrón...  
—El borrón no lo cantamos — dijo en broma Comeuñas.  
Estaban contentos los muchachos. Muy ansiosos de oír los versos com-

con darnos unas monedas muy fácil nos conformamos...  
—¡Eso es mejor! — decían. — No



hay que olvidar el pechazo, ya que para eso se hace la murga.

“El Sacachispas, señores, es el mejor cuadro del mundo, y el capitán Comeuñas tiene un tiro furibundo...”

—¡Bravo!... ¡Viva el poeta del Sacachispas!

La barra estaba entusiasmada. El Lecherito se había portado como la gente. Y conste que los versos no eran copiados.

Seguían otros versos que también el Lecherito leyó. Luego, vueltos a la calma, se habló de que la parte que se refería al capitán la tenía que cantar uno solo y que era necesario elegirlo.

—Yo fui el “solo” el año pasado — dijo Tiquiflequi medio lloroso.  
—Sí..., pero chillabas mucho — respondió Comeuñas. — Ahora te vamos a probar con Terremoto que tiene linda voz. Quien gane se queda de “solo”.

—Como en el fútbol — respondió Cabeza de Trapo. — Quien mejor juego se queda en el puesto, y el otro de suplente.

Así se estableció. Para la otra reunión se probarían los dos candidatos a “solo”. La lucha estaría entre Tiquiflequi y el rosarino Terremoto.



Es malo dormir en una pieza cerrada



Borocotó.

**Figure 1.11:** An instalment of Borocotó's stories about the Sacachispas football club members. *Billiken*, issue 697, 27 March 1933.  
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**Figure 1.12:** 'An exemplary pupil'. *Billiken*, issue 939, 15 November 1937.  
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parents' whom businesses can teach to 'comprar inteligentemente el día de mañana mostrándoles hoy la bondad y el valor de sus productos' [buy intelligently tomorrow by showing them the goodness and value of your products today] (issue 592, 23 March 1931). As part of *Billiken's* entertainment offering, the Comeuñas series of stories were designed to be for children, as opposed to being what adults wanted for their children. They also had the function of bringing boy readers into the wider Atlántida universe as they were written by Borocotó, the pen name of Ricardo Lorenzo Rodríguez, Uruguayan journalist and future director of *El Gráfico*.<sup>25</sup> In the hierarchy of literature established in *Billiken*, Borocotó's stories were at the lower end but above serialised adventure stories that appeared with no author names. This hierarchy was established in tandem with Constancio C. Vigil's wider editorial enterprises, to which he turned his attention after he stepped down from the operational directorship of his magazines.

### Hierarchies of literature: *Billiken* and *Biblioteca Billiken*

In 1925, Constancio C. Vigil's became managing director of Editorial Atlántida, handing over the responsibility of *El Gráfico* to his son Aníbal and *Billiken* to his son Carlos. The changes coincided with the company's move to the premises on Azopardo Street, located in the centre of Buenos Aires not far from the Casa Rosada. The move into this 'verdadero palacio de la industria' [veritable palace of industry] was heralded as a new era for Atlántida. It was promoted as part of a no expenses spared project that would set up the publishing house for the future and which also included the tripling of the printing presses (issue 280, 30 March 1925). From this point, Vigil devoted significant time to writing books for children as a way of building and preserving his legacy. The exact number of children's books written by Vigil is difficult to ascertain due to crossovers in some collections of stories. A previous version of the Atlántida institutional website cited 85 children's books in addition to his more theoretical works and advice manuals such as *La educación del hijo* (1941) [Your Child's Education]. Vigil tailored some books specifically for use in schools, breaking them down into manageable sections and targeting progressively competent levels of reading ability.

Five were accepted as official primary school reading books in Argentina, and this recognition extended to other Latin American countries including Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay where Vigil's books were read in schools or approved as official texts.<sup>26</sup> Vigil's success was also down to self-promotion and the leveraging of his many contacts and networks in the literary and educational worlds. The archive of Guatemalan president Juan José Arévalo contains a 1947 telegram from Constancio C. Vigil, thanking the president for 'su noble y prestigiosa ayuda para difundir mis libros en su patria' [your noble and prestigious help in disseminating my books in your country]. This is an indication of Vigil's direct action in promoting his books across the region.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 1.13:** 'Ages and books'. Constancio C. Vigil's books for different school years. Advertisement in *Billiken*, issue 1435, 5 May 1947.

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News of Vigil's growing acclaim was published in *Billiken* to reassure readers, their parents and their teachers that *Billiken* was a high-quality publication founded on solid pedagogical principles. In turn, Vigil used the pages of *Billiken* to promote his books and perpetuate narratives about his own legacy. The notes published in *Billiken* about Vigil's official endorsements and external standing functioned as advertorials, raising awareness of the publications sold by Editorial Atlántida's books division. Children's literature was an enticing commercial prospect and official inclusion into curricula also meant guaranteed sales. With the Catholic Church displaced from its traditional position of imparting moral values, school reading books like Vigil's supported the instruction of secular morality in subjects such as 'moral and civic instruction'.<sup>28</sup> Beyond school, Vigil had identified children as the most prolific of readers and, therefore, as an important market. In a letter to Gabriela Mistral, Vigil suggested publishing an anthology of her poetry as part of a series on Spanish American writers. This was designed for women readers because: 'Ella algo lee, nada el hombre, mucho el niño' [She reads a little; men, not at all; children, a lot].<sup>29</sup>

In *Billiken*'s marketing of Vigil's books, a division was maintained between the school reading books and the stories for entertainment value based on original characters. The latter were still marketed as wholesome and 'sano' [healthy], with an emphasis on their intrinsic moral value, but were distinguished by the quantity and quality of their illustrations. Two of Vigil's most enduring stories

were *La Hormiguita Viajera* [The little travelling ant] and *El Mono Relojero* [The watchmaker monkey], both of which transmit clear morality tales. The first story follows the adventures of a little scout ant who journeys home after having accidentally been carried far away. She returns to the queen, who praises her industriousness and resilience in the face of adversity. In *El Mono Relojero*, the monkey escapes his imprisonment in the watchmaker's shop and attempts to sell stolen watches to different animals. His punishment for his dishonesty is his inability to cope with the hardships brought by freedom. The story ends with his willing return to the comfort of captivity.

The Atlántida bookshop, Librería Atlántida, located on Lavalle 720 in the centre of the city of Buenos Aires, mostly sold works from other publishing houses such as Calleja, Sopena and Renacimiento, with Atlántida expanding its own book publishing in the 1930s. An advertisement for Librería Atlántida in *Billiken* from 1930 catalogues the books sold for children under the title 'Forme la Biblioteca para sus Hijos' [Form the library for your children]. The books are broken down into different series including 'Lecturas educadoras y morales' [Moral and educational reading] 'Obras maestras al alcance de los niños' [Great works within the reach of children] and 'Grandes hechos de los grandes hombres' [Great deeds of great men], as well as school textbooks and books about nature (issue 561, 18 August 1930). Later advertisements reveal that these series belonged to the Colección Araluce from Barcelona (issue 740, 22 January 1934).<sup>30</sup> In the 1930 advertisement, listed under *Biblioteca Billiken* [The *Billiken* Library] was a modest collection of titles including 350 *poesías para niños*, a collection of poems appropriate for children, if not originally created for children, from writers such as Lugones, Héctor Pedro Blomberg and Olegario Víctor Andrade, whose poem 'Atlántida' had lent its name to the publishing house. The Vigil collection of stories appeared under a separate heading and, as such, were not conceived as belonging to the nascent *Biblioteca Billiken* initiative, which published works adapted for children, as opposed to children's literature.

In 1930, in his prologue to the first edition of 350 *poesías para niños*, Constancio C. Vigil wrote that the volume was priced modestly to help it reach all Argentine homes. The book's publication was, he wrote, in the performance of a necessary duty for the nation and its future, given the precarious conditions of the local publishing industry. Vigil also emphasised the self-sacrificing nature of this endeavour, which is 'alimento del alma' [food for the soul] and chastens those who suspect 'nada más que avidez mercantil' [nothing more than commercial greed]. Vigil expressed his hope that the success of this volume would pave the way for *Biblioteca Billiken* to reach its full potential. The objective was to 'colaborar en la magna obra de la dignificación de la niñez, que es contribuir al engrandecimiento de la República, que es trabajar por la redención humana' [to collaborate in the great work of the dignifying of children, contributing to the greatness of the Republic, and working in the service of human redemption].<sup>31</sup> It took until 1938 for *Biblioteca Billiken* to fully take shape. In



the meantime, Librería Atlántida continued to sell the Araluce collections and, in 1933, moved around the corner to Florida 643. This was an arguably more prestigious location as Buenos Aires's main shopping street and the location of the renowned Harrods department store (advertisement in issue 922, 19 July 1937). A 1938 advertisement about the first releases of *Biblioteca Billiken* has the series organised into different collections colour-coded in blue, green and red (issue 991, 14 November 1938). The *Colección Azul* was for 'Vidas, Obras y Asuntos exclusivamente americanos' [Exclusively American lives, works and matters] and the inaugural publication was a biography of General José de San Martín. The *Colección Roja* was for world literature adapted for children, with *Don Quijote* already published and to be followed by *The Iliad*. The *Colección Verde* was 'reservada al estudio de grandes hombres, universales por su acción, sus obras y sus servicios a la humanidad' [reserved for the study of great men, universal by their actions, their works and their services to humanity]. Volumes on Columbus and Pasteur had already been published by this point. The next biography to be published in this series of Great Men was that of Marie Curie.

In parallel, *Billiken* magazine was publishing a series on Great Men but with a prioritising of image over text. The series 'Cuando los grandes hombres eran niños' [When the Great Men were children] in 1935 and 1936 departed visually from *Billiken*'s childhood biographies from the 1920s analysed by Varela in *Los hombres ilustres del Billiken* (see, for example, 'Hans Cristian Andersen', issue 850, 2 March 1936). The grid format with three panels by three panels was the same as that employed in comics such as *Harold Lloyd* and *Rin-Tin-Tin*, both based on silent movie stars, as well as in the recurring graphic history page 'Nuestra historia' [Our history] from 1932, blurring the boundaries between educational and entertainment content. The theme later fed back into *Biblioteca Billiken* with the publication of *Infancia de grandes hombres* [Childhood of great men] (advertisement in issue 1162, 23 February 1942). From 1938 to 1941, the magazine's image-led content on Great Men appeared regularly with the default title of 'Los grandes hombres' (such as 'Jacques Chartier', issue 982, 12 September 1938), adopting variations on the rare occasions in which women were included in the series. Isabel la Católica appeared under 'Figuras históricas' [Historical figures] (issue 1090, 7 October 1940) and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz under 'Figuras americanas' [American figures] (issue 1116, 7 April 1941).

The Great Men theme was a continuation of Bartolomé Mitre's *Galería de celebridades argentinas* (1857), which had filtered down into school textbooks. One of these was Enrique Antuña's 1904 *Moral cívica*, illustrated with examples from national history that matched great men to specific values, creating a system of role models. Independence heroes Generals Manuel Belgrano and San Martín opened the book, espousing the first theme of 'Abnegación por la patria' [Self-sacrifice for the homeland], and President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was one of the examples offered for 'Perfeccionamiento intelectual' [Intellectual improvement]. Women had their own chapter, under the heading 'Patriotismo en la mujer' [Patriotism in women], which featured a collage of

portraits of Argentine patrician women and mentions of independence heroines Juana Azurduy, Gertrudis Medeiros and Manuela Pedraza. In the same year that Antuña published this book, he co-founded *Pulgarcito* magazine with Constancio C. Vigil.

The colour-coding of the different collections, or libraries, of *Biblioteca Billiken* recalls the *Bibliothèque blue*, the generic name given to the collections of chapbooks sold by peddlers in 18th-century France. For Roger Chartier, these collections represented a defining moment in France's popular culture because of the control readers exerted on the market. If they bought more of a certain type of text, more texts like that were produced.<sup>32</sup> The premise of *Biblioteca Billiken* was different as it was an exercise in the selection of suitable titles and the curation of a collection, reinforcing notions of the canon and its exclusionary nature. The editors were not responding to children's tastes but were, rather, participating in an existing tradition of shaping the field of literature for children, according to established norms. *Biblioteca Billiken*'s local competition was Acme Agency's 'Robin Hood' collection, which started in 1941 and published many of the same titles.<sup>33</sup> These series can be seen as a continuation of Sarmiento's work with popular libraries, curating catalogues of useful and inspirational reading material, some of which was adapted and translated, in a nation-building initiative related to the formation of lettered citizens and their integration into the Argentine nation state.<sup>34</sup> Around the centenary of independence, cultural nationalist intellectual Ricardo Rojas published the book series *La Biblioteca Argentina*, bringing him into competition with José Ingenieros's rival series, called *La Cultura Argentina*. Both editorial projects aimed to create an Argentine canon by publishing selected political and literary works that reflected, or could be curated to reflect, their conflicting nation-building ideologies. The appeal of these series of inexpensive publications lay not in the serialisation of mass-produced novels (*novelas por entregas*) but in the promise of collecting the separate instalments to form one's own library.<sup>35</sup> The success of *Biblioteca Billiken* and the Acme Agency series lay in taking this established model and adapting it for children.

With *Biblioteca Billiken*'s most direct antecedent being the Araluce collections, the influence of Spain on the collection was extended through the exiles who settled in Argentina following the Spanish Civil War. Constancio C. Vigil invited writer Rafael Dieste to curate *Biblioteca Billiken*, and Dieste brought in other significant writers such as José Otero Espasandín and Francisco Ayala, later creating the *Colección Oro* based on geography, history and science. Pablo Medina emphasises the role played by writer Carmen Muñoz Manzano, Dieste's wife, in this enterprise.<sup>36</sup> *Biblioteca Billiken* was more than a spin-off to the *Billiken* magazine and developed into a stand-alone product. Unlike the case of Marilú, in which the doll, the *Marilú* magazine and *Billiken* magazine all worked together in a mini transmedia ecosystem, in the case of *Biblioteca Billiken* a one-way relationship was established in which *Billiken* drew readers to *Biblioteca Billiken* but *Biblioteca Billiken* did nothing for the magazine.

The nature of this relationship is uncovered when looking at the connections between *Billiken's* international influences, the treatment of Europe, and the hierarchies of literature that were established within *Billiken* magazine.

The early influence on *Billiken* from the United States, seen in the name and on the first cover, had not been openly acknowledged at the time of the magazine's launch. From there on, comics from the US and Europe and stories from Europe were sourced to fill *Billiken's* pages. An early US star to feature was Jackie Coogan of the Charlie Chapman film *The Kid* (1921), both on the cover of *Billiken* and in the *El Pibe* comic. This comic, like the *Laurel and Hardy* comic published in *Billiken* from 1930 to 1954, bears a striking similarity to the UK's comics magazine *Film Fun* and may have been taken from there, as opposed to from a US publication.<sup>37</sup> Key US imports were Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's *Superman* comic, published for the first time in Spanish by *Billiken* as *El Superhombre* (from issue 1037, 2 October 1939) and *Familia Conejín*, a translation of Walter Harrison Cady's comic version of Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*. From 1942, these were published alongside an original Argentine comic, José Vidal Dávila's *Ocalito y Tumbita*, specially created for *Billiken* (from issue 1206, 28 December 1942).

The influence of Europe on literature in *Billiken* was not confined to the 'Universal' (i.e. European) literature increasingly curated and adapted by exiled Spanish writers in *Biblioteca Billiken*. Until *Billiken* increased school material in 1937, the magazine was publishing up to eight short stories and three episodes of serialised stories every week. *Billiken* largely favoured European authors whose work required translation into Spanish. The majority of the French authors whose works appeared in *Billiken* had been originally published in the Éditions de Montsouris 'La Collection Printemps' series of adventure novels for children and included Norbert Sevestre, León Lambry and Maria de Crisenoy.<sup>38</sup> Italian authors included Milly Dandolo, children's writer and literary translator, and Emilio Salgari, prolific author of pirate adventure stories who was also widely published elsewhere in Argentina. The origins of many of the British stories published in *Billiken* can be identified thanks to Holland and Stephensen-Payne's meticulously researched British Juvenile Stories and Pocket Libraries Index. By searching authors' names and translations of story titles and cross-referencing with publication dates, it is possible to determine that most of the British stories published in *Billiken* were originally published in the boys' magazines owned by Amalgamated Press, in particular *The Boys' Friend* (1895–1927) and *Chums* (1927–1941).<sup>39</sup>

Given the historical contexts of publishing and the transnational circulation of texts, it is fair to assume that *Billiken* published this material with no authorisation from the original publishers. Like the comics studied by Gandolfo and Turnes, these stories went, to use their title, 'fresh off the boat and off to the presses', but presumably first via a translator.<sup>40</sup> Other publishing houses were employing this practice. Abraham reproduces the oral history myth surrounding chapbook publisher Editorial Tor's practices for acquiring translations of

foreign-language novels. In this account it is alleged that Tor's owner, Juan Torrendell, would place an advertisement for translators in a newspaper, send each of the applicants a couple of chapters to translate, supposedly as a test, and then stitch the chapters together for a full translation after writing rejection letters to the applicants.<sup>41</sup> Whilst, as Abraham acknowledges, this rather extreme account may have become embellished over time, it does show a general trend for publishing houses to reproduce material they had not paid for and for which they did not own the rights. There is a long trajectory of such practices. Szir identifies a multitude of strategies employed by 19th-century Latin American illustrated periodicals in the production of images including copying, plagiarising, translation and appropriation of those published in European periodicals. She also pinpoints specific practices such as the periodical *La Ilustración Argentina*, published from 1881, acquiring cliché plates from European illustrated periodicals.<sup>42</sup>

In 1935, a note in *Billiken* reported that Editorial Atlántida had been taken to court by cartographer Pedro Cantos for publishing his maps of Argentine provinces without permission. Readers were reassured, however, that Atlántida had immediately paid compensation and was now on excellent terms with Cantos. The cartographer apparently accepted that Atlántida had been the victim when it paid, in good faith, for the rights to the person who claimed to have been the creator of the maps: 'La Editorial Atlántida pagó los mapas, como todo cuanto publica, al artista que los presentó como propios' [Editorial Atlántida paid for the maps, like everything else it publishes, to the artist who presented them as his own]. The note is titled: 'La Editorial Atlántida sabe respetar los derechos de autor' [Editorial Atlántida respects copyright] (issue 806, 29 April 1935). Whilst it is hard not to assume that Atlántida was simply caught out on this occasion, it is possible that those in charge of *Billiken* did endeavour to recognise the copyright of national production but were more flexible when it came to international texts and images. In *Billiken*, the practice of publishing material from Europe without first securing the rights continued through to the 1960s at least, with comics such as Edgar P. Jacob's *Blake and Mortimer*, originally published in Belgium, appearing in translation. Such practices were prevalent across the world: Alain Lerman, in his ambitious project to map the transnational publishing contexts of *Blake and Mortimer*, has uncovered numerous instances of unauthorised publication of this comic across the Americas and Asia.<sup>43</sup>

For *Billiken*, and other magazines and illustrated periodicals, Europe was a useful source of material. When the European origins of this material were acknowledged, its provenance also provided marketing opportunities. In Argentina, Europe had long been imagined as the site of progress and civilisation and the myth of Argentina as a white nation of European cultural heritage was cultivated in different ways. These ranged from practices around the recording of ethnicity in the census, to the images circulated in school textbooks and, of course, in products of popular culture such as *Billiken* magazine. Ezequiel Adamovsky outlines how this myth impacted on the ideas of national



identity: 'el "ser argentino" tenía que ver con determinada cultura (ser "civilizado", europeo), e implícitamente se asociaba a un determinado origen étnico (blanco) y a una región (la pampeana, particularmente la ciudad de Buenos Aires)' ['being Argentine' had to do with a certain culture (being 'civilised', European), and was implicitly associated with a certain ethnic origin (white) and a certain region (the Pampas, particularly the city of Buenos Aires)]. Adamovsky also shows how consumer products were outward markers of taste and status used to organise social hierarchies.<sup>44</sup>

Elsewhere I have explored the shift from *Billiken* taking stories from European publications to commissioning local authors to replicate the style of European stories. In the case of the Sexton Blake detective stories, this occurred to preserve the commitment to publishing only stories with a suitable moral framework. The original Sexton Blake stories, created by Harry Blyth in 1893, had a similar remit to *Billiken* and were promoted as the 'healthy' alternative to the penny dreadfuls.<sup>45</sup> Sexton Blake differed from his fellow, more famous, Baker Street detective in that he was the work of multiple authors. In 1905, *The Union Jack* became 'Sexton Blake's Own Paper', and the short stories were joined by Sexton Blake novels published in 'The Sexton Blake Library'. According to Hinrich, 200 authors contributed to this collection over 65 years.<sup>46</sup> Translated versions of these made their way to other Argentine publishing houses, with the uncomfortable result of *Billiken* publishing the same stories as Editorial Tor, a mass publisher for an adult readership and which did not seek to occupy the same high moral ground as *Billiken*.<sup>47</sup> As the Sexton Blake stories of the 1930s became more targeted towards an adolescent or adult readership, they were no longer suitable for publication in a children's magazine. The solution for *Billiken*, which allowed the continued publication of a popular character without compromising on promises made to parents, was to commission locally authored, tamer versions of Sexton Blake stories, under the title 'Hazañas de Sexton Blake' [Exploits of Sexton Blake] (from issue 696, 20 March 1933). According to Abraham, Editorial Tor also started to publish unauthorised, locally authored Sexton Blake stories and even included a series set in Buenos Aires.<sup>48</sup> *Billiken*, conversely, did not draw attention to the fact that its Sexton Blake stories were now locally authored, identifying the prestige to be derived from Sexton Blake's European origins.

From 1935 onwards, author names were increasingly absent from *Billiken*, impeding the tracing of the origins of the stories. The number of stories had already started to decrease before the onset of the Second World War and the consequent difficulties in obtaining the latest European stories made *Billiken* turn to local authors but not immediately to local themes. Throughout the war, *Billiken* continued to publish coming-of-age and adventure stories with pirates, cowboys, detectives and air pilots, retaining the style of the European stories but commissioning them from local authors.<sup>49</sup> These serialised stories were published with low levels of 'visual power', a term employed by Paul Cleveland and defined as 'the degree of visual stimulus emanating from a given design: the higher the stimulus, the greater the degree for attracting attention'.<sup>50</sup> At a time

at which *Billiken* was increasingly making use of illustrations in educational material, these stories normally had only one opening illustration, repeated in each instalment. The story was slotted into columns of text, extending over several pages, and sharing space with other elements of the magazine. Reading the story required a level of commitment as the flow was frequently interrupted by having to find the continuing page. The instalments were not built around an episodic structure and did not end on cliff-hangers that would have encouraged the purchase of the following week's issue to find out what happened next.

In my previous work, I have argued that these stories were not attractively presented in a careful layout that facilitated reading, or in a structure that made the most of the serialised format, because it was assumed that the type of story was enough for children to want to read them. Instead, page layout was employed to divert children away from these stories and towards literature in books, specifically those published by Atlántida Libros.<sup>51</sup> For example, 'El león de Marruecos' [The lion of Morocco] is an adventure story set in the Tangier Garrison in the 1660s about a young English man separated from his royalist father who had followed Charles II into exile. The exoticised location and military escapades are foils for a coming-of-age story centred on the recovery of a lost identity. The historical context blends the feasible, using real dates and the names of real battles, with the improbable, including giving characters names such as Lord Danger. Each week, the story fills the available space in *Billiken* with chapters broken up across issues, and each instalment is periodically interrupted by vignettes promoting the reading, not of serialised adventure stories, but of books. In one such vignette, an illustration of children is captioned:

Estos niños y niñas que aquí se ven crecerán con los años y luego serán hombres y mujeres. Es de desear que no sólo les crezca el cuerpo, porque este también ocurre en los irracionales; es de desear, para bien de la patria y de ellos mismos, que crezcan en inteligencia y en bondad, que su cerebro se nutra y que su corazón sea embellecido con la lectura de los mejores libros escritos para ellos (issue 1205, 21 December 1942).

[These boys and girls you see here will grow over the years and then they will become men and women. It is to be hoped that not only their bodies will grow, because this happens also in the irrational; it is to be hoped, for the good of the homeland and of themselves, that they will grow in intelligence and goodness, that their brains will be nourished and that their hearts will be embellished by reading the best books written for them.]

Whereas this exhortation explicitly encompasses boys and girls, another vignette uses just 'niño' as the default male child when stating that every child should have a collection of books and that this is as vital for development as food and clothing: 'No puede crecer un niño sin comer; tampoco puede crecer su mente sin la lectura de libros bien elegidos' [A child cannot grow without food; nor can his mind grow without the reading of well-chosen books]

(issue 1209, 18 January 1943). In other examples, the gender split between boys' and girls' futures is emphasised. Boys need to grow up to become 'hombres de provecho' [men of substance] and reading books can help them to achieve that (issue 1274, 17 April 1944). Reading the right kind of literature in the right format can also help to prevent less desirable alternative futures:

Todos los niños tienen el deseo de llegar a hombres. Pero hay hombres de muchas clases, desde los que están en la cárcel hasta los que merecen la estimación y el cariño de cuantos los conocen. A ti te interesa ser un hombre de mérito. Para esto tienes que alimentar tu cerebro, y tu cerebro ha de nutrirse con la buena lectura. Procúrate, pues, buenos libros y serás lo que quieres ser, lo que debes ser, lo que es preciso que seas (issue 1269, 13 March 1944).

[Every boy has the desire to become a man. But there are many kinds of men, from those in prison to those who deserve the esteem and affection of all who know them. You would like to be a man of merit. For this you must feed your brain, and your brain must be nourished by good reading. Seek out good books, and you will be what you want to be, what you ought to be, what you must be.]

A vignette focussing on a girl reader seems to suggest that reading is one of the ways to knowledge that will ultimately contribute to her future competence as a housewife. Luisa wanted to help her mother and started to iron but ended up scorching a handkerchief:

Esto es el resultado de la ignorancia. En todas las cosas de la vida pasa lo mismo. ¡Hay que aprender, hay que saber, hay que salir de la ignorancia! Unas cosas se aprenden en el hogar; otras en la escuela y otras en los buenos libros que es necesario que tengan Luisa y todas las niñas (issue 1221, 12 April 1943).

[This is the result of ignorance. It is the same in all things in life: one has to learn, one has to know, one has to overcome ignorance! Some things are learned at home; others at school and others in the good books that Luisa and all girls need to have.]

These vignettes served as advertorials for Atlántida Libros, planting the idea of the importance of literature in book format and then invariably following up a few pages later with a full-page advertisement for *Biblioteca Billiken* or for Vigil's children's books. Such interventions, which place the literature in books at the top of the literary hierarchy, construct the literature within the magazine as lesser and more ephemeral. Atlántida ensured the continued relevance of Vigil's works in cases in which the political and ideological landscape had shifted from the time of their original publication. Continued publication of



**Figure 1.14:** Advertisements for *Biblioteca Billiken*. Left: ‘The best present for life’. The titles are colour-coded by series. *Billiken*, issue 1204, 14 December 1942. Right: ‘With *Biblioteca Billiken*, school is a home and home is a school’. *Billiken*, issue 1173, 11 May 1942. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

*El erial* brought Vigil’s earlier spiritualist influences to new generations of readers even as Vigil was reorientating himself towards the Catholic nationalism of the 1930s.<sup>52</sup> Vigil’s *Vida espiritual*, another earlier work that constructed morality tales from examples of children’s behaviour, took its place in the new political context and was marketed as a gift both for the Day of the Virgin (8 December), and for children’s First Communion, offering an alternative to the traditional gift of a Bible.<sup>53</sup> Conversely, the lack of investment in, and attention paid to, children’s literature published in the magazine hastened *Billiken*’s transition from being a predominantly text-based literary publication to an image-based educational and ‘edutainment’-focussed product.

### Establishing *Billiken*’s cyclical pattern: patriotic anniversaries and the school calendar

When Carlos Vigil took over as editor in 1925, the change in direction was marked by the dropping of the Billiken figure from the logo. The final cover to feature this logo was that of issue 271, 6 January 1925. The Billiken figures were retained in the logo on the title page for a few more weeks until issue 279, 23 March 1925. This issue also contained an advertisement for the



following week's one-off special back-to-school issue, which boasted 16 extra pages and a total of 20 pages of glazed paper. The issue, priced as normal at 20 cents, contained school material and anecdotes from former teachers, as well as articles about school life across the country (issue 279, 23 March 1925). That same year, *Billiken* began to include full-colour central double-pages (*láminas*), which could be used to supplement visual materials found in schools. From February 1931, these *láminas* were referred to as '*láminas escolares*' (issue 588). Such *láminas* were a vital visual resource that had lined the walls of classrooms since the 19th century, with key themes including Argentine flora and fauna, buildings of historic importance, and portraits of the founding fathers. According to Szir, the use of *láminas* was inspired by Pestalozzi's intuition principle, which called for children to learn via sensory experience. Images were thought to serve as a substitute for seeing objects in real life or visiting buildings and monuments.<sup>54</sup>

Georgina Gluzman's work on Adolfo Pedro Carranza, the founder and director of the National Historical Museum who also oversaw two accompanying illustrated periodicals, demonstrates the awareness of the importance of visual imagery for nation-building. As Gluzman states, 'El uso de la imagen impresa, con su capacidad de llegar a públicos amplios, fue una de las estrategias de Carranza en la constitución de una Argentina unificada por un imaginario común' [The use of the printed image, with its capacity to reach wide audiences, was one of Carranza's strategies in the constitution of an Argentina unified by a common imaginary].<sup>55</sup> Mantovani y Villanueva look at the use of images in school reading books around the time of the centenary, singling out Carlos Imhoff and Ricardo Levene's 1910 *Historia argentina de los niños en cuadros* [Children's history of Argentina in pictures]. Joaquín V. González's prologue to the book sets out the argument for the use of illustration in history books: 'La historia, más que ilustrada, es referida por la imagen misma' [History, rather than being illustrated, is referred to by the image itself].<sup>56</sup> Mantovani y Villanueva also discuss the short-lived Oficina de Ilustraciones y Decorado Escolar [Office of School Illustration and Decoration] (1908–1911), the work of which included creating a catalogue of images in different series. The themes, which included portraits of illustrious Argentines and founding fathers, reproductions of historical monuments, flora and fauna and great works of art, were the same ones which continued through to *Billiken*.<sup>57</sup>

As Argentina approached its centenary, intellectuals such as Ricardo Rojas were concerned that the heterogeneous immigrant population constituted the 'new barbarians', and a threat to achieving a cohesive Argentine national identity.<sup>58</sup> The teaching of history was, for Rojas, the key to unlocking the nation-building potential of schools. In his 1909 report on education, *La restauración nacionalista*, he championed the teaching of history across the curriculum, along with the development of 'un ambiente histórico' [a historic environment] beyond school, to develop a culture of living 'historically' and not just in the present: 'Vivir de una manera histórica ... es dar un valor

y una permanencia morales a la vida, reviviendo en recuerdo el ayer que huye, y anticipando el mañana en la vislumbre de un ideal colectivo' [To live historically ... is to give a moral value and permanence to life, reliving in memory the yesterday that escapes and anticipating tomorrow in the glimpse of a collective ideal].<sup>59</sup> The magazine and periodicals industry had the potential to become a powerful contributor to the development of this lived historical environment as it serviced a mass readership with products appearing at regular intervals.

Carlos Vigil's inclusion of *láminas* in *Billiken* as the centrepiece of the magazine's educational content places him in this pedagogical tradition, which linked visibility, history and nation-building. His contribution to book publishing, which would not appear to withstand comparison with his father's prolific output, can also be seen within this vein. Whereas Constancio C. Vigil poured his efforts into children's literature because 'reading is key to a happy future', Carlos Vigil published only two volumes, both serving to provide catalogues of visual material for educational purposes: one volume on historical monuments featuring photographs and descriptions, and the second an illustrated guide to the birds of Argentina and South America.<sup>60</sup> The latter was first published in 1973 but with illustrations that had been commissioned for *Billiken's láminas* three decades previously. These were the work of French artist Henri Lachaud de Loqueyssie, resident in Argentina and the recipient, in 1944, of a prize for foreign painters in the thirty-fourth national exhibition of fine arts (issue 1297, 25 September 1944). This painter, known to *Billiken's* readers as Don Enrique de Loqueyssie, had died in 1958.<sup>61</sup>

*Billiken's láminas* and the use of illustration in educational materials were not pioneering initiatives. However, Carlos Vigil made a distinctive contribution to the development of *Billiken*, shaping it into the type of magazine it would become and largely remain. Like his father before him, Carlos Vigil's innovation lay in the repackaging of existing ideas and products and in making them available on new platforms and to a mass audience. By including *láminas* within the magazine he was also able to bring down the cost of these materials. The central *lámina* for the 1925 back-to-school issue, for example, was a pull-out map of Argentina created by the cartographic publishing house Bemporat. This would normally sell for 30 cents but was included within *Billiken* for the magazine's normal price of 20 cents. The inclusion of *láminas* helped to establish the use of *Billiken* in schools as, instead of purchasing *láminas* separately, schools and teachers could get them with the magazine for the same price or cheaper. In 1932, the *láminas* were joined by other educational material, such as descriptive maps and pages to inspire written compositions (issue 678, 14 November). By 1938, *Billiken* had amassed a whole back catalogue of *láminas* that were advertised as available for purchase separately from the magazine (issue 963, 2 May). *Billiken's* school material was the subject of an exhibition in Bahía Blanca that same year, complete with the assembled versions of *Billiken's* cardboard models (issue 982, 12 September).



**Figure 1.15:** Children looking at the display of *láminas* at a 1938 exhibition in Bahía Blanca. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

Towards the end of the 1930s, *Billiken* started to take the shape it would maintain for the duration of its life as a print publication. Contents started to follow the school calendar more closely, with issues leading with the *efemérides*, the anniversaries of nationally significant events and their historical protagonists. Silvia Finocchio argues for the agency of teachers in creating the daily social reality of school and producing shifts in imaginaries through the practices they chose to follow and the knowledge they produced. She identifies the 1930s and 1940s as the moment when ‘los docentes hicieron de la formación nacional la principal razón de su práctica cuando una parafernalia de artefactos vinculó el día a día de la escuela con contenidos, liturgias, símbolos nacionales’ [teachers made national education the main reason for their practice when a paraphernalia of artefacts linked everyday school life to contents, liturgies, national symbols].<sup>62</sup> By no coincidence, this was the moment when *Billiken* refined the cyclical alignment to the school year that would come to define it. *Billiken* was a source, and resource, of this ‘paraphernalia’, adopted by teachers and integrated into classrooms across the country. This coincided with the increasingly nationalistic context of the *década infame*, seen in the reinforcement of rituals, patriotic traditions, and the introduction of national holidays in commemoration of independence heroes Belgrano and San Martín in 1938.

*Billiken* increased all of its school-focussed content, not just content linked to patriotic education, from issue 911 (3 May 1937) with eight additional pages, labelling the content with specific primary school years, or grades. There was

no systematic approach, or sense of trying to cover the whole curriculum, and different topics, ranging from literacy to numeracy to history and geography, were tailored to different grades on different weeks. This new approach was formally launched the following March for the start of the school year, with a note to readers stating that the following issue would contain more colour pages, 'dedicadas en su mayor parte a los distintos asuntos de programas escolares en vigencia' [mostly dedicated to the different matters pertaining to current school curricula] (issue 954, 28 February 1938). The increase in *Billiken's* educational content has been seen as a response to the arrival on the market, in 1936, of the magazine *Figuritas*. Unlike educational magazines directed at teachers, such as *La Obra*, *Figuritas* was a magazine for children, making it *Billiken's* direct competitor. The slogan for *Figuritas*, 'la revista argentina del escolar' [the Argentine magazine of the schoolchild], signalled the prioritisation of educational material and differentiated it from *Billiken*, 'la revista de los niños' [the children's magazine].<sup>63</sup> Alongside the competition from *Figuritas*, the change in *Billiken's* content was also related to the upgrading of the printing presses, with new machines being shipped in from Germany (issue 887, 18 November 1936). Ultimately, *Billiken's* transition from a literary/textual to an educational/graphic magazine in the late 1930s was not so much a shift in direction but rather a development of Carlos Vigil's focus on education through visual materials that also recognised, and sought to meet, both the rising demands of teachers for material and the new national political context.

The visual identity that accompanied *Billiken's* new phase was led by Chilean artist Raúl Manteola's portraits of the Great Men of the nation. Prior to commissioning Manteola, *Billiken* had used images of the *próceres* already in circulation such as the portrait of San Martín painted in Brussels by an unknown artist that had been reproduced in Adolfo Pedro Carranza's *Ilustración histórica argentina* in 1908. Gluzman shows how this image was reproduced in periodicals' consumer product advertising, including of the San Martín brand of cigarettes, and credits its appearance in *Billiken* with bringing it into schools.<sup>64</sup> The commissioning of a large collection of portraits specifically for *Billiken* was part of the magazine's investment in illustrated content, along the lines of the commissioning of Lachaud de Loqueyssie for the illustrations of birds. Manteola's first portraits for *Billiken* were of José María Paz and Juan Lavalle, two military heroes of independence remembered for their later opposition to federalist General Juan Manuel de Rosas, and identified, as such, within the current of *mitrista*, official history (issue 922, 19 July 1937).

The numerous Manteola portraits afforded *Billiken* a revolving cast of Great Men to be periodically showcased in the magazine. Within this, the protagonists were Manuel Belgrano, José de San Martín and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, easily identified at the top of the hierarchy of *próceres* for being featured year after year in their dedicated issues. In the case of Belgrano and San Martín, this hierarchisation reflected their national status, with the anniversaries of both of their deaths declared national holidays from 1938 onwards.



The date of Belgrano's 'passing into immortality' was designated the Day of the Flag and his military contribution to the Wars of Independence has become diluted in the national imaginary to accommodate his identification with the foremost national symbol of the newly independent nation that he is credited with creating. In contrast, San Martín is remembered for being San Martín. He is *the* founding father, and his centrality in the national story will be further considered in the following chapter. There is no national holiday dedicated to Sarmiento and the anniversary of his death, 11 September, only officially became the Day of the Teacher in Argentina in 1945, following the designation of this day at the Panamá Educational Conference of 1943. Sarmiento had been appearing in *Billiken*, and on *Billiken's* covers, since the 1920s but in the main school issue that launched the school year in March and not in his later allocated slot around 11 September.<sup>65</sup> In 1940, the Manteola portraits of San Martín, Belgrano and Sarmiento appeared on their respective covers for the first time.

The graphic identity of *Billiken's* year started to fall into place around the dates dedicated to these three protagonists and other key dates with iconography less intimately tied to a leading man. The May Revolution of 1810, which started the Argentine War of Independence, provided the opportunity for at least two patriotic covers each year. The issue closest to 25 May was either represented by the crowd gathered in what is now known as the Plaza de Mayo, on 25 May 1810, to press for the resignation of the viceroy, or by a Manteola portrait of a member of the Primera Junta [First Assembly], which formed a provisional government on that day. The previous week's issue was generally represented by a cover dedicated to the 'Día de la escarapela' [Day of the Cockade]. The *escarapela*, one of three national symbols alongside the flag and the coat of arms, was instituted by decree in 1812 and the National Education Council named 18 May as the Day of the Cockade only in 1935. The signatories of the Declaration of Independence on 9 July 1816 all had Manteola portraits but these were more likely to appear inside the magazine, sometimes as pull-out posters, than on the cover. The Casa de Tucumán, where the declaration was signed, was the cover image of choice to represent this date. From 1938, another new date was added to the school calendar: the anniversary of the birth of José Hernández, creator of the *Martín Fierro* epic poems, on 10 November 1834, became the 'Día de la tradición' [Day of Tradition].<sup>66</sup>

The addition of the Day of the Cockade and the Day of Tradition to the school calendar was a further manifestation of the continued nation-building impulse in the 1930s and the reinforcement of the link between school, patriotic ritual and the formation of a national consciousness based on the national story. According to Anny Ocoró Loango, during this time, 'La nación se fue narrando a través de la escuela y la celebración de efemérides que contribuyeron a construirla discursivamente' [The nation was narrated through the school and the celebration of anniversaries that contributed to constructing it discursively].<sup>67</sup> The nation was also narrated through *Billiken*, and *Billiken's* narration found its way into schools and homes. Under Carlos Vigil,



**Figure 1.16:** Children interacting with *Billiken's* printed ephemera. The photograph was included in *Billiken*, issue 1304, 13 November 1944. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



**Figure 1.17:** Children and their teachers with the completed *Billiken* models of the Plaza de Mayo. Editorial Atlántida photographic archive (undated). ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.



**Figure 1.18a:** The *Billiken* School calendar by month (pt 1).

Row 1 (left to right):

Presents from the Three Kings. Illustration by Lino Palacio. Issue 1259, 3 January 1944.

Carnival. Illustration by Lino Palacio. Issue 1266, 21 February 1944.

Back-to-school in March after the summer holidays. Illustration by Lino Palacio. Issue 1269, 13 March 1944.

Row 2 (left to right):

Easter. Illustration by Lino Palacio. Issue 1272, 3 April 1944.

The Day of the Cockade as part of the commemorations of May Week. Illustration by Lino Palacio. Issue 1278, 15 May 1944.

Portrait of Manuel Belgrano by Raúl Manteola for the Day of the Flag. Issue 1335, 18 June 1945.

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*Billiken* completed its transition from a text-based literary magazine to a vehicle for this graphic and material narration of the national story. The prioritisation of a visually attractive design, abundant use of images and provision of paper or card-based craft activities encouraged reader participation. *Billiken* invited active, engaged readers to take part in the making and remaking of the nation's story as they cut round images of the founding fathers to stick in school workbooks, made cardboard models of landmark historical buildings, and lined the walls of the classroom with posters of Argentina's flora and fauna.

Figure 1.18 shows the pattern of the *Billiken* year, which emerged from the late 1930s and was established by 1945, visually represented by the Manteola portraits of key founding fathers and by Lino Palacio's more ludic treatments. Palacio's covers were arranged around annual placeholders such as Epiphany (when children receive presents from the Three Kings), the school summer holidays, Carnival in February, back-to-school in March, the winter school holidays in July, and Christmas and New Year. The Day of the Cockade and the Day of Tradition were two patriotic dates that shared the distinction of being entrusted to Palacio. The former invited reworkings of Palacio's familiar gender dynamics with older girls sewing the *escarapelas* on their little brothers' jackets in a performance of patriotism and future motherhood, similar in theme to the back-to-school issues in which older girls march their reluctant younger brothers to school. On the Day of Tradition, boys played at being gauchos and children performed folkloric dances in traditional dress. Other annual placeholders were Easter, which generally incorporated a religious theme, and 12 October, still then called the Day of the Race, often featuring a reproduction of an existing painting of Columbus, as opposed to a commissioned Manteola portrait or a Palacio cover.

Outside of these key daters, Palacio produced dozens of covers annually, often returning to the same themes of rebellious boyhood and responsible girlhood, but always on the side of the children, with adults suffering a fair amount of leg pulling and broken windows. Palacio's tenure as the principal cover artist coincided with the longest-standing use of the same logo, from 1939 to 1967, representing the most sustained period of graphic identity in *Billiken*'s history. The Palacio artwork is considered by many to be quintessentially representative of *Billiken* and his tenure coincides broadly with *Billiken*'s most successful years, tempting the identification of Palacio with a 'golden age' for *Billiken*. Beyond the Palacio and Manteola years, the pattern of the ludic and the patriotic persisted with new generations of illustrators. By July 1945, *Billiken*'s weekly paid circulation had risen to 400,000, representing the highest ever circulation for a magazine in Spanish (issue 1338). *Billiken* went into the Peronist era as an established publication with a clear vision for its content, a recognisable graphic identity, and plans for further Latin American expansion. Backed also by the successful Editorial Atlántida, *Billiken* was in a strong position to weather the challenges of the coming years.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Nigel Pennick, *The Ancestral Power of Amulets, Talismans, and Mascots: Folk Magic in Witchcraft and Religion* (Rochester: Simon and Schuster, 2021), p. 63.
- <sup>2</sup> María F. Sigillo, 'La Caracas aniversaria: Lucas Manzano', *Opinión y noticias*, 25 July 2018 <<http://www.opinionynoticias.com/opinioncultura/33164-sigilo-m>> [accessed 8 September 2022]; Nancy Gates, *The Alaska Almanac: Facts about Alaska* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 2006); Sachiko Gomi and Edward R. Canda, 'The Billiken: Bringer of Good Luck and Cultural Competence', *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*, 18.1 (2012), 73–82.
- <sup>3</sup> The commemorative publication was included with issue 4170, 29 November 1999: *Billiken 1919–1999: la vuelta a la infancia en 80 años* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 1999). On Pretz in *Billiken* see Lauren Rea, *¡Un nombre perfecto! Billiken*, issue 5141, June/July 2019.
- <sup>4</sup> Gary Cross, *The Cute and The Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 51–53, 67. The original Leyendecker image is reproduced in Michael Oriard, *The Art of Football: The Early Game in the Age of Illustration* (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), p. 140.
- <sup>5</sup> Cynthia Bailin, 'From Picanniny to Savage Brute: Racialized Images and African American Stereotyping in Turn-of-the-Century American Advertising', in *We Are What We Sell: How Advertising Shapes American Life...And Always Has*. Vol. 1., ed. by Danielle Sarver Coombs and Bob Batchelor (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 87–101. For an analysis of racial stereotyping in *Billiken*'s early years and the interplay between imported stereotypes from the US and stereotypical representations derived from the local context see Alejandra Josiowicz and Mayra Juarez, 'Estereotipos en blanco y negro: la negritud en la revista *Billiken*. Argentina 1919–1946', in *Literatura infantil na América Latina. A infância y a diversidade de imaginários (sociais, raciais y de gênero)*, coord. by Alejandra J. Josiowicz and María Carolina Zapiola (Rio de Janeiro: Dialogarts-UERJ, 2022), pp. 353–393. This chapter includes an analysis of early comics characters such as los Betunes from *La familia de Betuncete*, visible in Figure 1.2.
- <sup>6</sup> Luis Villaronga, *El sembrador, Constancio C. Vigil* (San Juan: Biblioteca de autores puertorriqueños, 1949).
- <sup>7</sup> Victoria Johnson, 'What is Organizational Imprinting? Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Founding of the Paris Opera', *American Journal of Sociology*, 113.1 (2007), 97–127 <<https://doi.org/10.1086/517899>>.
- <sup>8</sup> On Vigil's membership of the Asociación Pro-Derechos de la Mujer, see Dora Barrancos, *Inclusión/Exclusión. Historia con mujeres* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002), p. 61. On the 1930 coup see Constancio C. Vigil 'La revolución del 6 de septiembre', *Atlántida*, 18 September,

1930. On the Nobel committee see Serafin Cordero Criado, *Por la paz mundial* (Comité Central Americano pro Premio Nobel de la Paz a Constancio C. Vigil, 1936). An article about the award of the *Cruz Lateranense* appeared in *Billiken*, issue 1556, 10 October 1949.

- <sup>9</sup> James Cane, *The Fourth Enemy: Journalism and Power in the Making of Peronist Argentina, 1930–1955* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2011), pp. 81, 121. I previously examined the tensions surrounding the commercialisation of children's culture in 'Education, Popular Literature and Future Citizenship in Argentina's *Billiken* Children's Magazine (1919–1944)', *Global Studies of Childhood*, 8.3 (2018), 281–91 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610618797403>>.
- <sup>10</sup> Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2013), pp. 32–33; María Silvia Badoza and María Inés Tato, 'Cuando Buenos Aires se quedó sin diarios: los conflictos de 1919 en la prensa gráfica argentina', *Sociohistórica*, 19–20 (2006), 113–38.
- <sup>11</sup> Emir Rodríguez Monegal, 'Introducción', in *Diario de viaje a París de Horacio Quiroga* (Montevideo: Número, 1950), p. 39.
- <sup>12</sup> In 1919, when Lugones published *La torre de Casandra* and *Las industrias de Atenas*, the books division was not yet formally constituted. The name of the publisher was Talleres Gráficos Atlántida, as opposed to Editorial Atlántida, referencing the printing presses, rather than the publishing house. See also Lauren Rea, 'Trajectories in Argentine Children's Literature: Constancio C. Vigil and Horacio Quiroga', *International Research in Children's Literature*, 12.1 (2019), 76–89 <<https://doi.org/10.3366/ircl.2019.0292>>.
- <sup>13</sup> Gabriela Mistral, '[Carta], 1919 dic. 19, Punta Arenas, Chile [a] Maximiliano Salas M.', Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile <<http://www.biblioteca.nacionaldigital.gob.cl/bnd/623/w3-article-553262.html>> [accessed 30 June 2022].
- <sup>14</sup> Paula Bontempo, 'Los niños de Billiken: Las infancias en Buenos Aires en las primeras décadas del siglo XX', *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Históricos 'Prof. Carlos S.A. Segreti'*, 12 (2012), 205–21 (p. 209).
- <sup>15</sup> Constancio C. Vigil, *El erial* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Heliográficos de R. Radelli, 1915).
- <sup>16</sup> Sandra Carli, *Niñez, pedagogía y política: transformaciones de los discursos acerca de la infancia en la historia de la educación argentina entre 1880 y 1955* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2002), pp. 94–95; Sandra Carli, 'The New School Movement in Argentina', *Paedagogica Historica*, 42.3 (2006), 385–404 (pp. 390–97).
- <sup>17</sup> On the topic of sweets, the Argentine confectionary company Billiken Golosinas has no commercial connection to the magazine even though it does use one of *Billiken* magazine's former logos in its branding.
- <sup>18</sup> María Paula Bontempo, 'Los lectores y las lectoras de Billiken se asocian. El desarrollo de los Comités Billiken. Argentina, 1919–1925', *Trashumante*.

- Revista Americana de Historia Social*, 8 (2016), 32–57 <<https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.trahs.n8a03>>.
- <sup>19</sup> Clara Brafman, 'Billiken: poder y consenso en la educación argentina (1919–1930)', *Todo es historia*, 25.298 (1992), 70–88 (p. 74).
- <sup>20</sup> On Pandolfini, see Cintia Mannocchi, 'Huelga de maestros en 1912. En contra del Estado educador y del docente servil', *Historia de la educación. Anuario*, 14.1 (2013), 43–64 (p. 64). Mamá Catalina is unmasked as Pandolfini in issue 214, 24 December 1923. On Dantas Lacombe see Juan Carlos Maubé and Adolfo Capdevielle, *Antología de la poesía femenina argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ferrari Hermanos, 1930), p. 179. On Rothkoff see Edit Rosalía Gallo, *Periodismo político femenino: ensayo sobre las revistas feministas en la primera mitad del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Cruz del Sur, 2013), p. 17.
- <sup>21</sup> Daniela Pelegrinelli, 'Prodigiosa Marilú', *Boca de Sapo: Revista de arte, literatura y pensamiento*, 7.9 (2011), 14–19 (p. 18). See also Bontempo, 'Enseñando a las niñas a consumir. La revista infantil *Marilú* (1933–1937)', *Avances del Cesor*, 7.13 (2015), 107–32.
- <sup>22</sup> In the original, 'hada de casa' is presumably a play on 'ama de casa' or 'housewife'.
- <sup>23</sup> *El Monitor de Educación Común*. Year 3, N°. 63, 1884. Quoted in Lucía Lionetti, *La misión política de la escuela pública: formar a los ciudadanos de la República (1870–1916)* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2019). Kindle ebook. Chapter 10.
- <sup>24</sup> Bontempo, 'Los niños de *Billiken*', p. 220.
- <sup>25</sup> On Borocotó's journalistic formation of the idea of a uniquely Argentine style of football see Eduardo P. Archetti, 'Estilo y virtudes masculinas en El Gráfico: la creación del imaginario del fútbol argentino', *Desarrollo económico*, 35.139 (1995), 419–442.
- <sup>26</sup> Amongst numerous other examples, the educational authorities in Uruguay acquired Vigil's story collection *Marta y Jorge* for primary schools (issue 1175, 25 May 1942). The Dominican Republic adapted Vigil's books for use as textbooks (issue 1327, 23 April 1945). Bolivia (issue 1429, 7 April 1947) and Honduras (issue 1504, 13 September 1948) officially recognised *El erial* for use in schools.
- <sup>27</sup> Constancio C. Vigil, 'Telegrama de Constancio C. Vigil', 30 June 1947. Archivo personal de Juan José Arévalo Bermejo. Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica <<http://cirma.org.gt/glifos/index.php/ISADG:GT-CIRMA-AH-045-004-002-008-024-009>> [accessed 15 May 2023]. I came across this telegram when looking for correspondence related to Arévalo's first wife, the Argentine school teacher and children's writer Elisa Martínez de Arévalo. A series of graphic adaptations of national and world literature including *Facundo* and *Don Quijote* was published in 1949 and 1950 with adaptations by E. de Arévalo. Whilst I found no proof that the First Lady of Guatemala was writing for *Billiken*, she made visa applications



to travel to Argentina around this time and she and her husband were acquaintances of one of Constancio C. Vigil's sons—another Constancio—from the time they spent in the Argentine province of San Juan.

- <sup>28</sup> Rubén Cucuzza, 'Retórica de la escena de lectura en las carátulas del libro escolar', in *La lectura en los manuales escolares: textos e imágenes*, org. by Roberta Paula Spregelburd and María Cristina Linares (Buenos Aires: UNLu; UNNE, 2009), pp. 13–29 (p. 22). On the commercial benefits of writing officially endorsed texts see Rea, 'Trajectories in Argentine Children's Literature'.
- <sup>29</sup> Constancio C. Vigil, '[Carta] 1941 Oct. 17, Buenos Aires, [Argentina] [a] Gabriela Mistral', Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile <<http://www.biblioteca.nacionaldigital.gob.cl/bnd/623/w3-article-144121.html>> [accessed 10 September 2022].
- <sup>30</sup> Teresa Julio, 'María Luz Morales y la colección «Las obras maestras al alcance de los niños» de la editorial Araluce ante la censura franquista', *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 99.320 (2020), 665–701.
- <sup>31</sup> 350 *poesías para niños*, Biblioteca Billiken (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 1930) <<http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/libros/00076947/00076947.pdf>> [accessed 8 June 2022].
- <sup>32</sup> Roger Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 38.
- <sup>33</sup> Carolina Tosi, 'La emergencia de las colecciones de literatura infantil y juvenil, y su impacto en la industria editorial. Los casos Robin Hood y Biblioteca Billiken', *Catalejos. Revista sobre lectura, formación de lectores y literatura para niños*, 1.1 (2015), 132–58.
- <sup>34</sup> Javier Planas, 'Para un catálogo atractivo: libros y políticas editoriales para las bibliotecas populares. La propuesta de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento', *Información, cultura y sociedad*, 20 (2009), 63–81.
- <sup>35</sup> Fernando Degiovanni, 'The Invention of the Classics: Nationalism, Philology and Cultural Politics in Argentina', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 3.2 (2004), 243–60.
- <sup>36</sup> Pablo Medina, *Gallegos. Sembradores de ideas* (Buenos Aires: Centro Betanzos, 2016). My thanks to Amanda Salvioni for sharing this resource. On Dieste and *Biblioteca Billiken* see Ana Pelegrín, 'Una aproximación a los libros infantiles en el exilio español (1939–1977)', in *Pequeña memoria recobrada: libros infantiles del exilio del 39*, ed. by Ana Pelegrín, María Victoria Sotomayor and Alberto Urdiales (Ministerio de Educación, 2008), pp. 13–42 (pp. 18–24).
- <sup>37</sup> See 'Bill Wakefield (1887–1942)', *UK Comics Wiki* <[https://ukcomics.fandom.com/wiki/Bill\\_Wakefield\\_\(1887-1942\)](https://ukcomics.fandom.com/wiki/Bill_Wakefield_(1887-1942))> [accessed 9 September 2022].
- <sup>38</sup> The original titles can be seen in this website, 'Collection Printemps – FORUMPIMPE.NET' <<https://www.forumpimpf.net/viewtopic.php?t=44917>> [accessed 9 September 2022].

- <sup>39</sup> Steve Holland and Phil Stephensen-Payne, 'British Juvenile Story Papers and Pocket Libraries Index' <<http://www.philsp.com/homeville/bjisp/0start.htm>> [accessed 25 June 2022]. *Chums* was started by Cassell and Company in 1892.
- <sup>40</sup> Amadeo Gandolfo and Pablo Turnes, 'Fresh off the Boat and Off to the Presses: The Origins of Argentine Comics between the United States and Europe (1907–1945)', *European Comic Art*, 12.2 (2019), 45–76 <<https://doi.org/10.3167/eca.2019.120204>>.
- <sup>41</sup> Carlos Abraham, *La Editorial Tor. Medio siglo de libros populares* (Buenos Aires: Tren en Movimiento, 2012), pp. 56–57.
- <sup>42</sup> Sandra M. Szir, 'Imágenes y tecnologías entre Europa y la Argentina. Migraciones y apropiaciones de la prensa en el siglo XIX', *Nuevo Mundo Nuevos Mundos* (2017) <<https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.70851>>.
- <sup>43</sup> Email correspondence in 2021 following a request for me to locate the Blake and Mortimer episodes in *Billiken*.
- <sup>44</sup> Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de la clase media argentina: apogeo y decadencia de una ilusión, 1919–2003* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2009), pp. 65, 68–70.
- <sup>45</sup> Ernest Sackville Turner, *Boys Will Be Boys: The Story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton et al.* 3rd edn (London: Michael Joseph, 1975), p. 102. On Sexton Blake and *Billiken* see Rea, 'Education, Popular Literature and Future Citizenship in Argentina's *Billiken* Children's Magazine (1919–1944)'.
- <sup>46</sup> Derek Hinrich, 'The Other Baker Street Detective', *Blakiana* <<http://mark-hodder.com/blakiana/bakerstreet.html>> [accessed 18 June 2022].
- <sup>47</sup> For example, *The House of Silence* by G.H. Teed, first published by Amalgamated Press in 1930, was then published by Editorial Tor as *La casa del silencio*. Between November 1930 and February 1931, this same story was serialised in *Billiken*, in a different translation from Editorial Tor, and under the title *La mansión del silencio*.
- <sup>48</sup> Abraham, p. 165.
- <sup>49</sup> Preliminary research into the interplay in *Billiken* magazine between serialised adventure stories and advertisements for *Biblioteca Billiken* was published in Lauren Rea, 'The Newsboy's Good Deed: *Billiken* Magazine's Construction of Argentine Childhood In 1942', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 12.1 (2019), 68–87 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2019.0004>>.
- <sup>50</sup> Paul Cleveland, 'How Much Visual Power Can a Magazine Take?', *Design Studies*, 26.3 (2005), 271–317. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2004.05.007>>.
- <sup>51</sup> See Rea, 'The Newsboy's Good Deed' for a discussion of the use of page layout in *Billiken* in the establishment of a literary hierarchy.
- <sup>52</sup> Carli, *Niñez, pedagogía y política*, p. 229. On the 'infamous decade' more generally see David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement*,

*its History and its Impact* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1995).

- <sup>53</sup> *Vida espiritual* first appeared in *Billiken* in excerpts from issue 977 (8 August 1938). See 1045 (27 November 1939) for a Day of the Virgin advertisement and 1193 (28 September 1942) for a First Communion advertisement.
- <sup>54</sup> Sandra Szir, 'Discursos, prácticas y formas culturales de lo visual. Buenos Aires, 1880–1910', in *Travesías de la imagen: historias de las artes visuales en la Argentina*, ed. by María Isabel Baldassare and Silvia Dolinko (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 2012), pp. 65–93 (pp. 80–83).
- <sup>55</sup> Georgina Gluzman, 'Imaginar la nación, ilustrar el futuro. *Ilustración Histórica Argentina e Ilustración Histórica* en la configuración de una visualidad para la Argentina', in *Atrapados por la imagen: arte y política en la cultura impresa argentina*, ed. by Laura Malosetti Costa and Marcela M. Gené (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2013), pp. 47–73 (p. 69).
- <sup>56</sup> Cited in Larisa Mantovani and Aldana Villanueva, 'Libros escolares y enseñanza de la historia: El manual ilustrado *Historia argentina de los niños en cuadros*', in *Ilustrar e imprimir: Una historia de la cultura gráfica en Buenos Aires, 1830–1930*, ed. by Sandra Szir (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ampersand, 2016), pp. 179–211 (p. 196).
- <sup>57</sup> Mantovani and Villanueva, pp. 182–85.
- <sup>58</sup> Rafael S. Gagliano, 'Nacionalismo, inmigración y pluralismo cultural. Polémicas educativas en torno al Centenario', in *Historia de la educación en la Argentina II: Sociedad civil y Estado en los orígenes del sistema educativo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1991), pp. 281–307 (p. 293). See also Jean H. Delaney, 'Imagining "El ser argentino": Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Argentina', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 34.3 (2002), 625–58 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X0200648X>>.
- <sup>59</sup> Ricardo Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista: crítica de la educación argentina y bases para una reforma en el estudio de las humanidades modernas* (La Plata: UNIPE, 2011 [1909]), pp. 267–69 <[http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/Argentina/unipe/20171121055305/pdf\\_336.pdf](http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/Argentina/unipe/20171121055305/pdf_336.pdf)> [accessed 1 July 2022].
- <sup>60</sup> Carlos Vigil, *Los monumentos y lugares históricos de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 1959); Carlos Vigil, *Aves Argentinas y Sudamericanos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 1973).
- <sup>61</sup> An obituary notice was published in *Billiken* in issue 2035, 5 January 1959.
- <sup>62</sup> Silvia Finocchio, 'La historia inventada por los docentes (o de cómo la cultura escolar recrea la enseñanza de la historia en un contexto de transformaciones intensas)', *Revista Práxis*, 2 (2011), 21–30 (pp. 22–23).
- <sup>63</sup> On *Figuritas* magazine see Mónica Demarco, 'Constitución del espacio literario en la escuela de la Argentina Moderna: El caso de la revista *Figuritas*', in *La lectura en los manuales escolares: textos e imágenes*, org. by Roberta Paula Spregelburd and María Cristina Linares (Buenos Aires: UNLu; UNNE, 2009), pp. 141–58.

<sup>64</sup> Gluzman, p. 57.

<sup>65</sup> On the designation of 11 September as the 'Día del maestro' see 'Decreto n°. 21.215', *Boletín del Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública de la Nación Argentina*, Year 8, N° 67 (1945), pp. 1313–14 <<http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/monitor/Boletin-del-ministerio/Boletin-del-ministerio-1945-a8-n67.pdf>> [accessed 10 September 2022].

<sup>66</sup> The poem was published in two parts: *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872) and *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1879).

<sup>67</sup> Anny Ocoró Loango, 'La emergencia del negro en los actos escolares del 25 de mayo en la Argentina: del negro heroico al decorativo y estereotipado', *Pedagogía y saberes*, 34 (2011), 33–50 (p. 37).