

Epilogue

New Platforms and New Narratives for a Post-Print Billiken

There are two interconnected concerns when it comes to finishing this book, or, at least, two sources of procrastination that have outweighed worries about a looming deadline. First, how to close a book on the history of *Billiken* when that history is far from over and, second, how to evaluate a story of which I have formed a part. The future of *Billiken* is being made right at this moment, creating a temporally complex space in which to write these final reflections. Making sense of my own place in the most recent chapter of the history of *Billiken* is a task I have been putting off, waiting until I was back in Buenos Aires to tackle it, hoping that being surrounded by the people I have worked with over the past few years would help the process. The awareness of my own subjectivity, and of the interconnectedness of my life with this 10-year research project, was heightened recently when I was interviewed for a profile feature article for an Argentine digital news outlet. The narrative of how I arrived at *Billiken*—via a childhood visit to the theatre to see the musical *Evita*, a stint teaching English in Mendoza at the age of 18, and a friendship with Male Puig, mother of the author Manuel, which led to a PhD in serialised radio drama—is the story of my life in relation to Argentina, repackaged for Argentine readers intrigued by the story of how an ‘English’ woman ended up writing a history of their childhood magazine. As a result of this article, I have a journalistic record of my state of mind as I attempt to conclude this book. I was described as ‘intentando destrabar las últimas líneas de un proyecto que comenzó en 2012. Es la parte más compleja de la obra: asumir un protagonismo que le aterra para transmitir, en primera persona, la experiencia, el impacto, la interpelación’¹ [trying to unravel the last lines of a project she began in 2012. This is the most complex part of the work: taking on a protagonism that terrifies her in order to transmit, in the first person, the experience, the impact, the interpellation]. It is curious that the task of writing in the first person should still be so uncomfortable

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or, indeed, terrifying, given that so much of academic endeavour entails this, sometimes before writing up a single line of research. We write in the first person in research funding applications, and then in reports to funders, and increasingly, in the UK at least, evaluations of our 'research impact'. These pieces of writing, although linked to the research, develop along their own parallel but separate tracks, with their own structural logic and their own key words: reach, significance, pathways, outputs, metrics, evaluation, dissemination. Closer in nature to the industry key words offered in the introduction to this book (the job, my colleagues, the budget, the deadlines) than to the academic keywords (intermediality, precarity, ephemerality), this third set of words represents another space in which this research project and its associated activities have been undertaken. This space, grounded in notions of accountability and evaluation, became one of negotiation and mediation between the worlds of academia and industry, in a project that brought together two sets of priorities over two hemispheres, time zones and languages.

By 2018, *Billiken's* frequency of publication was decreasing. The process of leaving paper behind had begun but with no clear future plan in place. By then, I had started to collaborate on a bilingual edition of Horacio Quiroga's *Cuentos de la selva* with Atlántida's books division. This had initially been envisaged as the first of a bilingual series of *Biblioteca Billiken* and the main co-created initiative to be undertaken with Atlántida alongside the archival research project.² In parallel, conversations with *Billiken's* director Euhén Matarozzo were starting to lead to concrete ideas about what the future *Billiken* could look like as a product based around new narratives as well as delivered via new platforms. Having analysed the persistent attention paid to Great Men throughout *Billiken's* history, it was clear to me that the first of those 'new narratives' for *Billiken* should be focussed on women. *Billiken* had spent one hundred years promoting Great Men and owed historical women a debt of representation. *Billiken* never commissioned a portrait of a woman from Raúl Manteola when building its corpus of representations of Argentina's illustrious founding men in the late 1930s. Indeed, the periodical appearance of historical women within *Billiken's* pages are notable for their infrequency. Beyond occasional pages dedicated to 'Patricias Argentinas' [Argentine patrician women], the Argentine woman who most prominently featured was Mariquita Sánchez de Thompson, remembered not in the context of her personal contributions to the Buenos Aires intellectual and cultural milieu of the early 19th century but because the first performance of the Argentine national anthem was said to have been given in her home.

The lack of representation of women within the printed collections of individuals highlighted for their significant contributions to humanity had continued under Euhén's directorship. The latest contribution to *Billiken's* long-standing cataloguing of leading historical figures had arrived in the series of 20 supplements entitled 'Personas que cambiaron el mundo' [People who changed the world] (issue 4980, 30 July 2015, to issue 4999, 10 December 2015).

Despite the inclusive title, the representation of women in this collection had only modestly advanced from previous iterations. Each instalment featured five principal figures, with an additional, reduced space dedicated to another under the title ‘Ellos también’ [These too].³ There was no room for women amongst the ‘Visionaries’ (Leonardo Da Vinci, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Ray Bradbury, Julio Verne, Brian Epstein, Masaru Ibuka, Larry Page, Mark Zuckerberg) and only Amelia Earhart and Valentina Tereshkova made the ‘Adventurers’ instalment, but not as protagonists. In other instalments, an effort was made to include at least one woman, but rarely amongst the principal figures. With the focus on Great Men stretching back to the earliest years of *Billiken*—itself inspired by *mitrista* history, school reading books and book series from elsewhere—and having persisted until 2015, a series on leading Argentine women seemed the obvious point of potential collaboration for my first project with *Billiken*.

Even in 2018, a focus on women was still thought of as a potentially controversial idea within Atlántida. There was a degree of creative freedom towards the end of the Televisa tenure, however, as little management interest was paid to *Billiken*. The proposed ‘Mujeres argentinas’ collection probably would have materialised had it not been for the rise in paper costs and the cancelling of all supplement products throughout the publishing house. The initial idea of a series of supplements morphed into a planned centenary publication celebrating one hundred Argentine women at around the time of the change in ownership of the publishing house and another drastic reduction in the number of employees. Thanks largely to Euhén’s endorsement of my research, the new board of directors agreed to my continued access to the *Billiken* archives and was supportive of the proposed reorientation of *Billiken* with an increasing awareness of gender representation. As part of this renewed approach, the 2019 edition dedicated to the May Revolution featured historical women—‘Mujeres de la Patria’—for the first time (issue 5140, May 2019). The board gave the green light to the centenary book project but suggested broadening out the scope from Argentina to encompass all of Latin America to create a product more in line with the regional aspirations of the newly configured Atlántida. With no concrete plan for *Billiken*, *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas* [100 Great Latin American Women] was foregrounded as the most significant action of *Billiken*’s centenary and the initiative onto which the future of the brand was projected.

100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas was a traditional, print-based product that did not materially represent a great step forward in innovation for *Billiken*. In many ways it was a continuation of *Billiken*’s editorial practice of selecting, curating and cataloguing figures who could be seen as role models for child readers that had always been taken when compiling illustrated collections within the magazine or in supplements. As such, it had the potential to constitute a reproduction of editorial gatekeeping practices. The number of women featured in the book was significant in the story of the product—one hundred

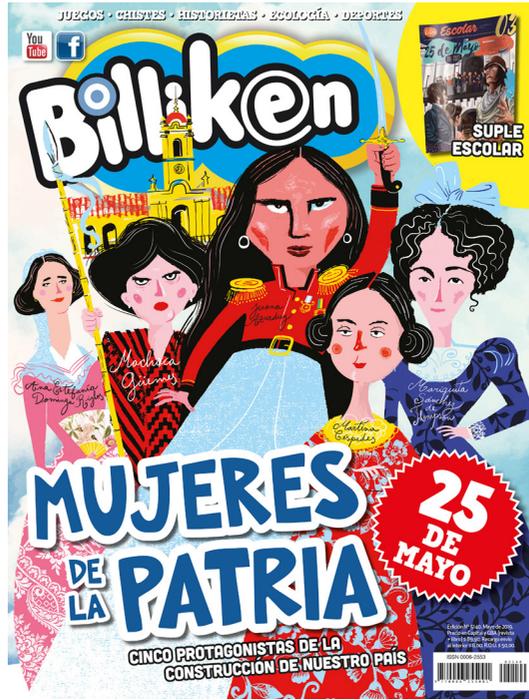


Figure ii: ‘Women of the *Patria*’. Illustrated by Javier Basile. *Billiken*, issue 5140, May 2019. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

women because of the one hundred years of *Billiken*—yet inevitably imposed a restriction on the number of women to be included, with decisions to be made regarding whom to include and whom to exclude from the countless women, past and present, who had contributed to Latin American societies. By embarking on this project, we were potentially following the pathways laid by Constancio C. Vigil for the construction, through editorial projects, of future citizens, albeit with the very different, and disruptive, objective of contributing to the advancement of a gender-just future. Situated within the wider academic endeavour to rethink the child in childhood studies, Clémentine Beauvais draws on Sartrian existentialism to rethink the adult presence in politically committed texts for children that are ‘fundamentally future-bound and revolutionary in spirit’ and destined for a child who will, ideally, live beyond the adult:

The politically committed text for children ... posits an adult-child relationship marked by a temporal imbalance between a future-bound entity, the child, and a past-laden entity, the adult. It is marked by a symbolic distribution of powers for action between the authoritative adult presence and the child who should pick up the text’s project.⁴

The inherent futurity of *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas* also contained symbolic power in that it repositioned *Billiken* as a forward-looking brand and challenged the associations of *Billiken* with the promotion of conservative discourses.

100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas was born from the research into *Billiken*'s history, and also came into being thanks to market conditions. Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo's *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* was largely responsible for the step change in global children's publishing that lay the ground for editorial projects such as ours. The pioneer in Argentina was the cooperative Editorial Chirimbote, which published the first in the *Anti-princesas* picture book biography series, *Frida Kahlo para chicas y chicos*, in 2015.⁵ During the timeframe of our book's creation, bookshops in Argentina were increasingly dedicating space to products for children that placed iconic women at the centre: from Frida Kahlo colouring books to Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara's *Little People, Big Dreams* collection, and the Spanish-language translation of *Good Night Stories*. The normalising of this focus on women rendered our project less controversial and facilitated gaining approval from the relevant interested parties.

The project's design was informed both by the research into *Billiken*'s past editorial initiatives and by the existing offer of collections of biographies of women written for children. Within the limitation of choosing only one hundred women, we established premises for the selection, aiming to widen the catalogue of role models by seeking out lesser-known figures. As ours was the first illustrated children's book to focus specifically on women from the Latin American region, this invited moving beyond the small number of historical Latin American women, such as Kahlo and Evita, who are considered global icons and had found their way into internationally focussed collections. We took the idea of Latin America uncritically and did not enter into debates around the contested nature of the term. We decided to incorporate all Spanish-speaking nations in South, Central and North America (thereby including women of Hispanic descent from the United States) and also, despite the language difference, Brazil. The regional focus also invited the opportunity to draw attention to the connections between the women featured across time and place, presenting individual endeavours within a wider context. Notwithstanding the regard in which we hold the pioneering *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*, we were keen to move away from fairy-tale tropes in the writing of the biographies and to conceptualise the endeavour as a project that was about women and for everyone.

The main criterion for selection was that the list of one hundred women should be as diverse as possible and represent different intersecting identities. Alongside attempting to achieve representation from a wide range of ethnicities, sexualities, ages, religions, social classes and political affiliations, we focussed on an even split between contemporary and historical women, and on showcasing a broad spectrum of professions and spheres of influence. Central

to our premise of selection was that we were not attempting to create a hierarchy of achievement and to decide upon a list of women to be promoted as the most impressive or inspirational or impactful, a proposition that the contemporary women featured in the book with whom we collaborated supported. Argentine virologist Andrea Gamarnik commented:

Me alegra figurar en el libro del centenario de *Billiken*, aunque soy consciente, que miles y miles de mujeres deberían estar. Mujeres que abrieron las puertas para que otras podamos tener acceso a la educación superior, que participaron en luchas sociales en forma ineludible, que rompieron con la exclusión en la política, que con su trabajo silencioso están cambiando el mundo.⁶

[I am happy to be included in *Billiken*'s centenary book, although I am aware that thousands and thousands of other women should be present. Women who opened the doors so that others could have access to higher education, who unwaveringly participated in social struggles, who broke with exclusion in politics, who are changing the world with their silent work.]

Carolina Contreras, a social entrepreneur and activist from the Dominican Republic who works to eradicate discrimination against Afro-textured and curly hair, identified the potential impact of her presence in the book: 'Mi deseo es que muchos niñas y niños vean esto y sepan que tienen adultos abogando por sus derechos, validando su belleza y celebrando su negritud' [My hope is that many girls and boys will see this and know that they have adults advocating for their rights, validating their beauty and celebrating their blackness].⁷ We consulted our combined network of friends and colleagues from across Latin America in order to incorporate different perspectives about which women we could include in the selection. We also actively searched for examples of leading women in specific fields, and sometimes from specific countries. The angle of diversity thus became, paradoxically, another exclusionary parameter in that some women were not included to avoid having too many women from the same country, or historical period or profession.

During the process of selection, Regina Solis started working alongside Euhén and me as the third key member of the team. Her arrival at the University of Sheffield as a master's student underscores the role of serendipity in the creation of this collaborative product. At the moment at which we were struggling with the selection of women from Central America, into our lives came a Guatemalan woman with an anthropology degree, journalism experience and a past career as a primary school teacher. Elsewhere, serendipity combined with pragmatism trumped process in the often chaotic pulling together of the book. Assembling the team (five illustrators, graphic designer Lisa Brande, editor Lea Loupias, and writer Ariela Kreimer to work alongside me and Regina)

was an exercise in deciding whom we knew and with whom we liked working combined with who was available within the project timescales and the available budget. The only criterion was that the majority of the team were women. Argentine illustrators Aymar  Mont and Sarah Jones together completed 80 per cent of the illustrations, with Javier Basile, illustrator of the ‘Mujeres de la Patria’ cover, and UK-based illustrators Emily Cuthbert and Ella Strickland de Souza completing the team. The experience of building this team to carry out a collaborative, creative product on a relatively tight schedule fed back into the archival research project. In concrete terms, it helped me to accept the impossibility of ever really knowing how decisions were made historically in *Billiken* and what was happening behind the scenes to influence decision-making at any given time. No amount of archival, or even ethnographic, research could hope to uncover the minutia of decision-making factors in the context of a product as vast and long-lived as *Billiken*, particularly when serendipity and pragmatism are accounted for. This realisation, coupled with the recognition of the tendency that each new round of initiatives in *Billiken*, including our own, built on and reconfigured past initiatives led to the use of frameworks from organisational and management studies. The branch of this field that deals with multigenerational family firms was pertinent for the context of the Vigil family’s ownership of Atl ntida in that the field is largely built on the observation of patterns in such organisations that transcend national contexts.

Parallel to the archival research undertaken for the purposes of writing what has aimed to be a balanced, critical account of the history of *Billiken* magazine, was another stream of activity concerned with developing the institutional narrative for the *Billiken* centenary. This was partly linked to my co-created work with *Billiken*, in that it sought to present the history in such a way as to contextualise, and prepare the ground for, the future phase of *Billiken*, of which the Great Latin American Women Project forms a part. It also involved assuming the role of ‘custodian’ of the legacy in creating narratives that appealed to those who fondly link childhood memories to *Billiken* whilst eliding the uncomfortable and negative actions and associations that this book has explored. I opened the first article I was asked to write, for *Gente*, in the January of *Billiken*’s centenary year with this quotation from Constancio C. Vigil: ‘[*Billiken*] Se hace m s con el coraz n que con las manos’ [*Billiken* is made more with the heart than with the hands].⁸ I knew that this quotation, originally from Vigil’s twenty-fifth anniversary message, had been republished in the fortieth anniversary. Only after publishing my article, and as I advanced in the research through the years of *Billiken*, did I see that it had also been used on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary, and also by Beatriz Ferro on the sixtieth anniversary, in 1979, and by Pablo Colazo on the seventy-fifth anniversary, in 1994. My unintentional reproduction of former editors’ anniversary narratives shows how these foundational imprints can persist over generations as a process that happens naturally, almost unconsciously, and not necessarily by strategic design. Beyond

revealing a lack of imagination on my part, or the general impossibility of original ideas, it also highlights the robustness of the original legacy discourse developed by Constanancio C. Vigil. It is possible to be drawn to the romanticism of *Billiken* as the manifestation of a higher calling even as we can simultaneously see behind, around and through that discourse.

These streams of activity, with their competing but parallel discourses, all converged at the *Billiken* centenary in November 2019. We did not know at the time that the centenary issue, number 5143, would be *Billiken*'s final print issue, at least in its entity as a magazine appearing at regular intervals. The cover was illustrated by Aymar  Mont, joining Norma (Norma B. de Adam), Carolina Parola and Chikie (Nelly Oesterheld) as the select number of women illustrators to draw a *Billiken* cover. It was designed to depict paper as the vehicle that would carry *Billiken* towards its digital future.

The centenary issue was far removed from the bumper anniversary editions of the past and was made by a vastly reduced team. Past anniversary issues had periodically featured photographic spreads about how *Billiken* was made, showing teams of designers, illustrators, writers, editors and photographers bustling around busy offices before stacks of thousands upon thousands of issues came out of the printing press and off to the newsstands. In contrast, the team producing the centenary issue comprised the director, one editor and one designer with me, on the other side of the Atlantic and reached via WhatsApp, providing the nostalgia-focussed historical articles. The paucity of the centenary issue did not go unnoticed by *Billiken*'s wistful fan base. A blog dedicated to the history of illustration in *Billiken* published an article on the centenary issue, the title of which can be translated as 'the pride of having been and the pain of no longer being so.'⁹ The blog post lamented the absence of a hardbacked catalogue of *Billiken*'s greatest illustration hits, such as had been produced for the eightieth anniversary, or a nostalgic tome like the reissue of *Billiken*'s first edition for the ninetieth anniversary, failing to identify that *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas* was the official centenary publication, designated as such as a forward-looking statement.

The event to mark the *Billiken* centenary was held at the National Congress of Argentina at which the Chamber of Deputies bestowed upon *Billiken* the honour of 'declaration of interest'. The esteem in which this centenary was held was further underscored by the participation of both the national minister of education and the minister of education for the City of Buenos Aires. The event also doubled as the book launch for *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas*. The following quotation from a *Para Ti* article shows Atl ntida's institutional messaging around the centenary:

En el encuentro en el Congreso qued  claro que en su centenario *Billiken* est  en plena transformaci n y construyendo su futuro, expandi ndose a nuevos soportes y generando nuevas narrativas para continuar



Figure iii: The cover of the *Billiken* centenary issue. Illustration by Aymara Mont. *Billiken*, issue 5143, October/November 2019. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

a la vanguardia de los contenidos infantiles. 'Nuestra misión es que los niños y niñas de hoy y de mañana vivan su propia experiencia *Billiken* –expresó su actual director- Y queremos que sea tan significativa para ellos como lo fue para las generaciones pasadas'.¹⁰

[At the event at the Congress it was clear that in its centenary year *Billiken* is in full process of transformation and building its future, expanding to new media and generating new narratives to continue to be at the forefront of children's content creation. 'Our mission is that the children of today and tomorrow can live their own *Billiken* experience', said its current director, 'and we want it to be as meaningful for them as it was for past generations.']

Billiken's move to digital, which began in earnest around the time of the centenary and was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has been carried out against the backdrop of transformational change in Atlántida and is, at the time of writing, an ongoing process. For much of its history, Editorial Atlántida was a magazine and books publishing company with headquarters at the building on Azopardo. As of 2022, this building is being redeveloped into a tower of offices and apartments with the principal historical features to be retained: one more in a long line of historical buildings to undergo such a transformation, much to the displeasure of those who seek to preserve the city's architectural heritage. Grupo Atlántida, now a digital media company, currently operates out of a converted modernist textile factory in a gentrified suburb. Along with the new location and new branding has come a new business model, the implementation of which requires new skill sets and areas of professional expertise. The transformation can be felt at the level of the key words used around the offices: deadline, printing, distribution and readership have been replaced by search engine optimisation, community management, metrics and audience.

Within this environment, *Billiken's* post-print transformation has been taking place in tandem with the development of the Great Latin American Women Project.¹¹ This transmedia, educational project responds to two of the UN Sustainable Development Goals—Quality Education and Gender Equality—and was supported by the UK's Grand Challenges Research Fund. The funding application was submitted in February 2020, just before we realised how the global health crisis was about to change all our lives, and we implemented the project entirely remotely. Continuing the working relationship that Euhén and I had developed in coordinating *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas*, we turned the book into a transmedia platform. We built new teams to create content for children, in the form of 21 short, animated films, and content for teachers in the form of downloadable educational resources, all based on the lives and work of leading Latin American women. *Billiken's* significant corpus of existing educational material had the virtue of being accessibly written and attractively

designed but was, essentially, reference material, in the manner of *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas*. The use of either in a classroom situation would require a significant investment in time and effort on the part of teachers in order to design appropriate activities around this material. In response to this concern, we worked with a team of teachers to develop a classroom-ready product as a way of rebuilding *Billiken's* historical links with the teaching profession that my historical research had identified as central to *Billiken's* past success.

Following a pilot of resources on Quiroga's *Cuentos de la Selva*, the model for the resources developed for the Great Latin American Women Project became the model for *Billiken's* current educational offering. The resources are grouped thematically in a way that traverses the curriculum so that one topic, centred on the life or work of one woman, can be looked at from a number of curriculum areas including language, maths, social and natural sciences, and art. The aim was to show how women and their contributions can be integrated into the school curriculum to the extent that men already were. The project offers subtle ways of achieving this simply by normalising the presence of women in different professions, matching their work to areas covered in the curriculum. For example, children can learn about photosynthesis via the work of Mexican botanist and pioneering cactus expert Helia Bravo, or cover the solar system whilst learning about Ellen Ochoa, the first woman of Hispanic descent to go into space. The resources also offer opportunities to look at gender equality and intersectional identities in more depth through projects on female suffrage, the history of women's participation in scientific fields, the work of Indigenous leaders in conservation, and through artistic activities that promote cultural diversity. The animated films, which we produced in conjunction with animation studio Nuts Media, were envisaged as sparking the interest of children to know more about the women's lives. They do not adopt a documentary style but rather are based around an idea, anecdote or episode in the life of the woman. Each has a different style and original music as a visual and aural anchor to the project's commitment to diversity. We also designed an open access platform to host all the project's audio-visual and educational resources.

We created our project for all children, on the premise that gender equality is everyone's responsibility and that it is not just girls who benefit from learning about women. Since we first embarked upon this project in 2018, advancements have been made in Argentina in the area of women's rights, principally with the legalisation of abortion in December 2020. The Ministry for Women, Genders and Diversities was established and further advances in inclusionary initiatives include the implementation of a one per cent quota for trans workers in civil service jobs. The #NiUnaMenos [Not one less] movement, from 2015 onwards, has been key in driving social, political and legal change, including with the implementation of Micaela's Law, in 2019, requiring public sector workers at all levels in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government to undergo training in the issue of gender and gender-based violence. The law



100 GRANDES MUJERES LATINOAMERICANAS

COORDINADORES
LAUREN REA Y EUHEN MATAROZZO



ATLANTIDA



Figure iv: The cover of *100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas* [100 Great Latin American Women]. Illustrated children's book published for the *Billiken* centenary. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

GRANDES MUJERES LATINOAMERICANAS



Figure v: The protagonists of the transmedia, educational Great Latin American Women Project. ©Editorial Atlántida. Reproduced with permission.

was named after Micaela García, a victim of femicide at the age of 21 in 2017, a year in which one woman was killed in Argentina every 28 hours. More recent figures show only scant progress: in 2021 the figure was one woman every 35 hours.¹² In the Latin American region and beyond, the achievement of gender equality, women's economic empowerment, the eradication of violence against women and girls, and the dismantling of gender-based stereotypes that limit the horizons of all children remain urgent issues. Effecting change requires large-scale action from all sectors of society and the cultural and creative industries have a role to play as part of a much larger and multilateral agenda of direct actions. The response from these industries in recent years has been largely encouraging. It would no longer be thought of as controversial to feature biographies exclusively of women when publishing a book for children on leading Latin Americans, and, indeed, other similar volumes have followed in the wake of our book, such as Lucía De Leone's *Mujeres faro*.¹³ Projects developed around the same time as ours include Brazil's *Mulheres fantásticas*, an animated series produced by TV Globo that narrates the biographies of inspiring women from around the world, and *Científicas de Acá*, an Argentine initiative to visibilise local women scientists, which started life as a blog before later publishing the biographies in an illustrated children's book. So established is the niche of feminist children's publishing that the usefulness of such an approach that celebrates women by separating them out is starting to be contested. Furthermore, there are signs that the change seen in children's publishing will not carry through to the world of animation, and to this particular 'edutainment' niche that such stories about women occupy.¹⁴

Even as trends in children's content creation can be seen to be moving on from the championing of women's achievements, the change at the level of school curricula and availability of materials focussed on gender equality is still pending.¹⁵ In this way, the Great Latin American Women Project is a step towards the creation of an inclusive curriculum, along the lines proposed here by UNESCO:

Los currículos y los materiales didácticos que adoptan una perspectiva patriarcal suelen agravar la desigualdad de género, reforzando la dominación de las mujeres por los hombres. Los estereotipos de género están vinculados a representaciones mentales sociales. Los varones se asocian con la producción, el poder, la racionalidad y la esfera pública, mientras que las mujeres con la reproducción, la debilidad, las emociones y la esfera privada ... Un currículo inclusivo, como esfuerzo colectivo, debe incorporar y valorar una serie de fuentes y formas de conocimiento de todos los miembros y comunidades de la sociedad.¹⁶

[Curricula and teaching materials that adopt a patriarchal perspective often aggravate gender inequality, reinforcing the domination of women by men. Gender stereotypes are linked to social mental representations. Men are associated with production, power, rationality

and the public sphere, while women are associated with reproduction, weakness, emotions and the private sphere ... An inclusive curriculum, as a collective effort, must incorporate and value a range of sources and forms of knowledge from all members and communities of society.]

In the analysis of the use of the Great Latin American Women Project resources, early indications are that there are barriers to their integration into existing curricula and that they will primarily be of interest for educators to use around International Women's Day (8 March) and other specific dates such as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February) and the International Girls in ICT Day (the fourth Thursday in April). Whilst this reflects wider debates about the usefulness of such dates for advancing the gender equality agenda, in the case of Argentina the idea of the school calendar, and the linking of materials to anniversaries and key dates, is so firmly embedded that it is difficult to challenge the idea that activities that promote gender equality can feature in the classroom at any point in the year and not just in March. As this book has shown, *Billiken* played a key role in installing and amplifying the idea of the cycle of the school year through the content related to *efemérides*: key dates and anniversaries. It is ironic, then, that *Billiken's* past success in this area should now prove an obstacle to the success of its post-print flagship project.

This is just one example of the ways in which *Billiken's* past impacts its present, and of the difficulties encountered when thinking about what *Billiken* beyond print can be, and could come to mean, for children, their families, their teachers and the wider public. In the talks we gave around the time of the centenary, Euhén would often use the metaphor of the film *Avatar* to describe the challenge of having *Billiken* transcend its 'cuerpo de papel' [body of paper] and to transfer the spirit of *Billiken* across to new planes of existence in the form of different supports, experiences and platforms. One of the themes in this history of *Billiken* has been the symbiotic relationship between the material (the magazine as object, the archive, the turning of the pages) and the intangible (the creation and maintenance of a narrative legacy, and the notions of memory and nostalgia). This book has explored how *Billiken* expanded beyond the pages of the magazine from the outset, developing what we could now call a brand identity, even though the concept was not formulated as such in the 1920s. The early drive to create a community of readers through events, competitions and the fostering of *Billiken* reader committees, as well as the focus on building a legacy, all transcended *Billiken's* 'cuerpo de papel'. At the same time, the reporting on these initiatives created content for the magazine itself. Over time, *Billiken* increasingly became a container—or storehouse—for other physical products including encyclopaedias, free gifts and spin-off magazines and supplements. Can the digital transformation be seen as just the next stage in the evolution of the brand as it expands to encompass new products, services and experiences? In addition to asking what *Billiken* is beyond paper, we can also ask what *Bil-*

liken is beyond Argentina and to what extent *Billiken's argentinidad* is constituent of its identity. In today's interconnected, globalised world, there is greater potential for *Billiken* to build a presence across Spanish-speaking territories with a digital, multiplatform, transmedia product. This recalls Constancio C. Vigil's pan-Latin American foundational dream for *Billiken*, which was partially realised but not sustained.

Billiken's place in the Argentine national consciousness is driven through with notions of nation, citizenship, culture, identity, inclusion, exclusion, history, memory, tradition, preservation and aspiration. The memories and feelings associated with *Billiken* are sometimes negative and often contested. The history of *Billiken* is complex, contradictory and, at times, uncomfortable. At its best, *Billiken* celebrated the dissemination of knowledge, the encouragement of curiosity, the invitation to play, and the showcasing of high-quality work produced by talented professionals, all whilst being a commercially viable product. Can this process of transformation provide the opportunity to select, reconfigure and diversify the positive associations at the core of *Billiken*? These are just some of the questions that need to be answered if *Billiken* is to rebuild the place it once held but as a vastly different product in a vastly different world. Other challenges will include balancing the need for forward thinking innovation, anticipating the direction in which children's engagement with digital culture is travelling in offering solutions to meet a demand that has not yet been identified, with the awareness of, and sensitivity to, the ongoing realities of digital inequalities in Latin America. The major challenge for *Billiken*, if it is to preserve its main constituent identity as a children's brand, remains reconnecting with children. The magazine's waning presence in the last phase of its life has led to a generational gap in the knowledge of *Billiken's* existence, let alone in the accumulation of memories of *Billiken*. *Billiken* was always a collective endeavour, the work of heterogeneous groups of illustrators, editors, writers, translators, educational consultants, graphic designers, photographers, art directors, advertisers, teachers, purchasers, reader contributors and child readers, as well as those involved in the magazine's printing and distribution infrastructure. It will be today's children who decide whether *Billiken* can transcend its 'cuerpo de papel'. They will decide what new meanings will be ascribed to *Billiken* as it moves beyond the 'deixis of homeland', beyond an expression of the national 'we' and of 'our' national memories, to encompass more diverse understandings of what constitutes the national 'we', as well as encompassing those of us who belong outside those groupings.¹⁷ And today's children will decide whether *Billiken* can speak to them, whether it can be a product for them, and whether they can make enough of an emotional connection to it to continue the generational transmission that was always key to the perpetuation of *Billiken's* legacy. It will be today's children who determine the future of *Billiken* as they decide whether to participate in the reconfiguring and diversification of a brand that was once the world's longest-running children's magazine.

Notes

- ¹ Milton Del Moral, 'Manuel Puig, radionovelas y un libro sobre *Billiken*: la académica inglesa que está fascinada con la cultura popular argentina', *Infobae*, 22 August 2022, <<https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2022/08/10/manuel-puig-radionovelas-y-un-libro-sobre-Billiken-la-academica-inglesa-que-esta-fascinada-con-la-cultura-popular-argentina/>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ² Horacio Quiroga, *Cuentos de la selva – Jungle Tales*, Nueva Biblioteca Billiken (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 2018).
- ³ Here, the masculine plural of 'ellos' [those] is used as the default gender and, according to grammatical rules, includes women in the same way as *Billiken*'s use of 'niños' generally denotes children as opposed to boys unless specified. Debates on inclusive language that consider whether the binary of morphological gender invisibilises girls and women were not as prominent in 2015 as they are at the time of writing.
- ⁴ Clémentine Beauvais, 'Thinking the Adult-Child Relationship with Existentialism', in *Reimagining Childhood Studies*, ed. by Spyros Spyrou, Rachel Rosen and Daniel Thomas Cook (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 57–71 (pp. 61, 64).
- ⁵ On this editorial project see the reflections of *Antiprincesas* author and Chirimbote founder Nadia Fink, 'Cada vez más revueltas. Un recorrido feminista en el periodismo y la literatura infantil', in *De la cultura al feminismo*, ed. by Marcela A. País Andrade and Belén Igarzábel (Buenos Aires: RGC Ediciones, 2021). Kindle ebook.
- ⁶ 'Científica del Instituto Leloir en "100 Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas" de *Billiken*', *Fundación Instituto Leloir*, 25 November 2019 <<https://www.leloir.org.ar/cientifica-del-instituto-leloir-en-100-grandes-mujeres-latinoamericanas-de-Billiken>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ⁷ Carolina Contreras. Facebook post. 8 February 2022, https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=479346780338705&_rdr [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ⁸ Lauren Rea, '100 años de la revista infantil que acompañó nuestra historia' (*Gente*, issue 2789, 1 January 2019. Online version: <https://www.infobae.com/gente/lo-ultimo/2019/01/05/Billiken-os-100-anos-de-la-revista-infantil-que-acompano-nuestra-historia/>) [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ⁹ Luis Alberto, 'Centenario de *Billiken*: El orgullo de haber sido y el dolor de ya no ser', *Blog Top-Comics*, 6 November 2019 <<https://luisalberto941.wordpress.com/2019/11/06/centenario-de-Billiken-el-orgullo-de-haber-sido-y-el-dolor-de-ya-no-ser/>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ¹⁰ '*Billiken* cumplió 100 años y fue homenajeada en el Congreso', *Para Ti*, 25 November 2019 <<https://www.parati.com.ar/Billiken-cumplio-100-anos-y-fue-homenajeada-en-el-congreso/>> [accessed 22 August 2022].
- ¹¹ The project was supported by the UKRI GCRF Collective Programme [grant number AHV003267/1].

- ¹² 'Registro Nacional de Femicidios: durante 2021 se produjeron 251 víctimas letales de violencia de género en todo el país,' *Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación*, 2022 <<https://www.csjn.gov.ar/om/verNoticia.do?idNoticia=5982>> [accessed 23 August 2022]; 'Federalization of the Micaela Law (AR0091); *Open Government Partnership* <<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/argentina/commitments/AR0091/>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ¹³ Lucía De Leone, *Mujeres faro: 40 mujeres luminosas de toda América* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 2021).
- ¹⁴ 'Netflix Cancels Meghan Markle Animated Series Pearl', *BBC News*, 2 May 2022 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-61294978>> [accessed 18 September 2022].
- ¹⁵ Regina Solis, 'La plataforma Grandes Mujeres Latinoamericanas fomenta la igualdad de género desde la escuela primaria', *Billiken.lat*, 2022 <<https://billiken.lat/educadores/por-que-es-importante-fomentar-la-igualdad-de-genero-en-las-aulas/>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ¹⁶ Global Education Monitoring Report Team; SUMMA; UNESCO, 'Informe de seguimiento de la educación en el mundo, 2020, América Latina y el Caribe: inclusión y educación: todos y todas sin excepción', pp. 62–63 <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374615>> [accessed 23 August 2022].
- ¹⁷ On the 'deixis of homeland', see Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 2012) <<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221648>> Chapter 5.