

The Monster Within and Without: Spanish Comics, Monstrosity, Religion, and Alterity

Sarah D. Harris, Bennington College

Comics and stereotyping have a long shared history, with the prevailing idea being that comics use visual shorthand, and in so doing, zero in on racial and ethnic difference. As Leonard Rifas writes in his chapter “Race and Comix,” for example, “Cartoonists often defend the stereotypes in their work by saying that the art of cartooning fundamentally relies on simplification, generalization, distortion, and exaggeration.”¹ On the other hand, many cartoonists also use these same exaggerations of difference to call attention to them, not as a means to support or reinforce stereotypes, but rather to critique the practice of using them. Stereotyping based on ethnic and racial difference has also led to a practice whereby artists represent, and viewers understand, the “Other” as monstrous in comics and cartoons. Building on the idea that comics rely on physical exaggeration, on Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s seven theses on monstrosity, and on Spain’s multicultural and multiethnic history, this chapter explores the depiction of monstrosity and alterity from two divergent moments in Spain. More specifically, it argues that two chosen examples represent the extremes of a range of practice in using stereotypes to depict monsters, from near absolute appropriation of monstrous characteristics, on the one hand, to unadulterated “othering” of the monstrous enemy on the other.

As with many cultural products, Spanish comics have certain similarities and other peculiarities in comparison to those produced in other countries. For instance, as on the global scale, there has been some debate among scholars over what was the first

example of a comic on the Iberian Peninsula; in both cases, the answer changes depending on our chosen definition of comics. As Dirk Vanderbeke also notes, “Over the last decades, comics and graphic novels have accumulated quite a number of ancestors from high culture, chiefly in the attempt to boost the medium’s respectability in the face of the traditional accusations of mediocrity, if not outright degeneracy.”² The intent here is not to ride on the coattails of this trend, but nonetheless, if we declare comics to be sequential art, one could argue that Alfonso X (the Wise)’s School of Translators, working across at least three different languages and religions in Toledo in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, produced the first examples of sequential in Iberia. Not made for reproduction, the School’s *Cantigas* often bore illuminated and sequential images along with the text of poems or other forms of the written word. Its use of illustrations has roots in the fact that beginning as early as the tenth century, European scholars had sought out the multicultural richness of the Iberian Peninsula, and especially the city of Toledo, as a site for study. The period of Alfonso X (King of Castille and León from 1252 to 1284), significant to the second part of this article, was one of *convivencia*, the simultaneous living together of languages and religions within the geographical confines of what is today Spain. The Translators used illustrations in response to the difficulty inherent to linguistic translation, and also because of their desire to communicate clearly to a broad and linguistically diverse audience. Similarly, when Alfonso the Wise of Castile had declared that the School of Translators would abandon Latin in favour of the vernacular Castilian language, this move revealed the underlying desire that the School’s works reach a broad readership. It also anticipated the later dominance of the Castilian language and Christian religion over those of the other groups present in Toledo at the time.

The cultural and historical reality of this complex period has caused long-term and ongoing debates among scholars and the public at large, with interpretations raging from those based in nostalgic longings for *convivencia* to those who deny any multi-ethnic or multi-religious elements to Spain's "true" national identity.³ However, despite the interesting characteristics and context of the School of Translators, their works were certainly not modern comics. Most scholars consider modern comics the product of the western industrial modernity that emerged along with the printing press. Neither were the etchings of Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) modern comics, but they, too, rely on the interplay of image and text and therefore have significance for a discussion of visual representation of otherness in Spanish comics.

Francisco de Goya's most famous proto-comic, "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters" (1799), is one of the etchings in a series of prints called *Caprices*, implying whimsical playfulness.⁴ Notwithstanding the connotations of their name, these prints were far from frivolous. Meant to reveal, through the interplay of images and ironic captions, "the common prejudices and deceitful practices which custom, ignorance, or self-interest have made usual," this series suggests that Goya's Spanish contemporaries were more monstrous than the literal and figurative bogeymen they invented.⁵ In this way, these pieces directed Goya's critique not outwards to elements that "contaminated" or caused problems from without, but back towards himself and his kinsmen. A court painter, he was unflinching when producing critical representations of the court. For example, the *Caprices* critique his community's exaggerated belief in superstition, the predominant ignorance among the Spanish peasantry, abuses of power by the church, hypocrisy of courting and other rituals, failings of the educational systems, and the weak

and ineffectual ruling class. Goya also wrote a brief textual explanation to accompany each image, and prints of the *Caprices* are now displayed side-by-side with these explanations in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

As this chapter will explore in its next section, in contrast to the critique Goya had proposed in his *Caprices*, more than a century later and published under totalitarian fascist rule, several early 20th century Spanish adventure comics villainize and make monsters of the same religious elements present in Spain's multicultural period of *convivencia*. One of the best-known series, Manuel Gago's *The Masked Warrior* (1944-1980), pits a medieval Christian hero against his duplicitous and Muslim murderer-rapist stepfather.⁶ Working within the confines of totalitarianism, the comic distances itself, in time and place, from Francisco Franco's modern enemies to promote the same values as the dictator promoted: shorthanded by "One Spain, One Race, One Religion."⁷ The absolute othering of the monstrous enemy in Gago's series contrasts sharply with the position that Goya's *Caprices* take against his Spanish society in the long nineteenth century.

As context for Goya's work, Spain, like many of its neighbours, was still under the shadow of the Inquisition at the time that Goya created this series. Therefore, any critique of the establishment, especially of the church could be dangerous to one's life and livelihood. However, the Spanish Inquisition was also nearing its end, and Goya enjoyed the protection provided by his recently acquired position as court painter to King Carlos IV (in 1789). In fact, it was the very attention afforded Goya from this series of etchings that led to this appointment. In apparent contradiction to this fact, Goya withdrew the series from public sale shortly after their creation, apparently fearful of

possible repercussions by the Inquisition.⁸ Overall, Goya seems to have found himself in a complicated web of being inside the structures of power through his court appointment, being willing to critique the social fabric from which he came, while also being constrained by the oppressive environment that this power structure represented.

As do the illuminated manuscripts of the Toledo School of Translators, Francisco de Goya's work exists as an important precursor to modern comics, especially with his designs (called cartoons) for tapestries, but even more so with his *Caprices* and other etchings. Goya, who went deaf due to severe illness at the age of 40, witnessed firsthand both the Spanish Enlightenment and the violence of the Napoleonic wars, eventually becoming haunted by his own dark imagination. In the words of Birgit Ellefson, "In a world that no longer believed in witches, Goya captured the dark forces of witchcraft that are present within humanity."⁹ Around the time he lost his hearing, Goya began to critique especially destructive elements in his own society through his painting and etching. The etchings central to the discussion in the present chapter show social criticism while combining images and text, but don't include the sequential component common in many definitions of modern comics. My intent here is not to wonder whether or not these definitions are accurate, nor to consider these prints as modern comics (which, of course, they are not), but rather to use them to highlight the range of practice in othering monsters.

Of Goya's monsters in the *Caprices*, Charles Baudelaire wrote: "Goya's great merit consists in having created a credible form of the monstrous [...] All those distortions, those bestial faces, those diabolic grimaces of his are impregnated with humanity."¹⁰ Rafael Argullol has noted that in Goya's dark paintings, "*lo terrible se*

presenta como la norma” [“the terrible is presented as the norm”].¹¹ As I hope will become clear, these statements support my analysis that the monstrous distortions of Goya’s etchings come from his identification with deeply human flaws, such that classifications stereotypical of monstrosity break down. I would also expand on what these two quotations say, for whereas Baudelaire emphasizes the humanity present in the monsters that Goya illustrated, and Argullol notes the monstrous normality that Goya represents, the critiques I see in many of Goya’s etchings also point more specifically at the contemporary Spanish society that surrounded him and included him. This series is not simply a reflection of the monstrosity of humanity (though it is this), but also an accusation levelled at several specific components of the environment of the long Spanish nineteenth century, including the church, aristocratic parents, courtesans, and the superstitious populace.

Not entirely unlike the critique in the *Caprices*, it is my assertion that monsters are simultaneously universal and particular: they emerge from universal societal needs, including the need to exteriorize fears and build an ‘us’ in contrast to a ‘them,’ but the particular form that monsters take speaks to the specificity of a time and place. For example, the *Caprices* represent monstrous hypocrites, abusers of power, and gluttons, likely arising from underlying fears of uncertainty, powerlessness, and lack of control. Each one of these fears, I would argue, represents a universalized human tension. However, the *Caprices* also depict these monsters in specific ways that are recognizable especially by an audience that knows something about the historical and cultural context from which Goya arose.

In addition to summarizing the works' context, to organize the characteristics of monsters, my analysis also draws on some of the seven theses delineated in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Monster Theory*. Cohen shares my assertion that monsters are particular and universal. For instance, he writes, "The monster is born only at this metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment."¹² Cohen remarks that the "monster is best understood as an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category, and a resistant Other," an assertion that bears out some of Goya's etchings.¹³ Cohen further postulates that the monster "dwells at the gates of difference," the "incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond – of all those loci that are rhetorically placed at a distance but originate Within."¹⁴ In other words, the characterization of certain people, beasts, or phenomena as monstrous represents an attempt to externalize the cause of fears. Meanwhile, the fears themselves are revelatory of the values of the society that gives rise to the monsters. In support of this thesis, Goya's etchings quite literally illustrate as monsters full members of the Spanish system of power, of the Catholic Church, and of the nobility of the late eighteenth century. Further, in my first example, Goya's written explanation of the image draws his viewers' attention to the problematic practice of making monsters.

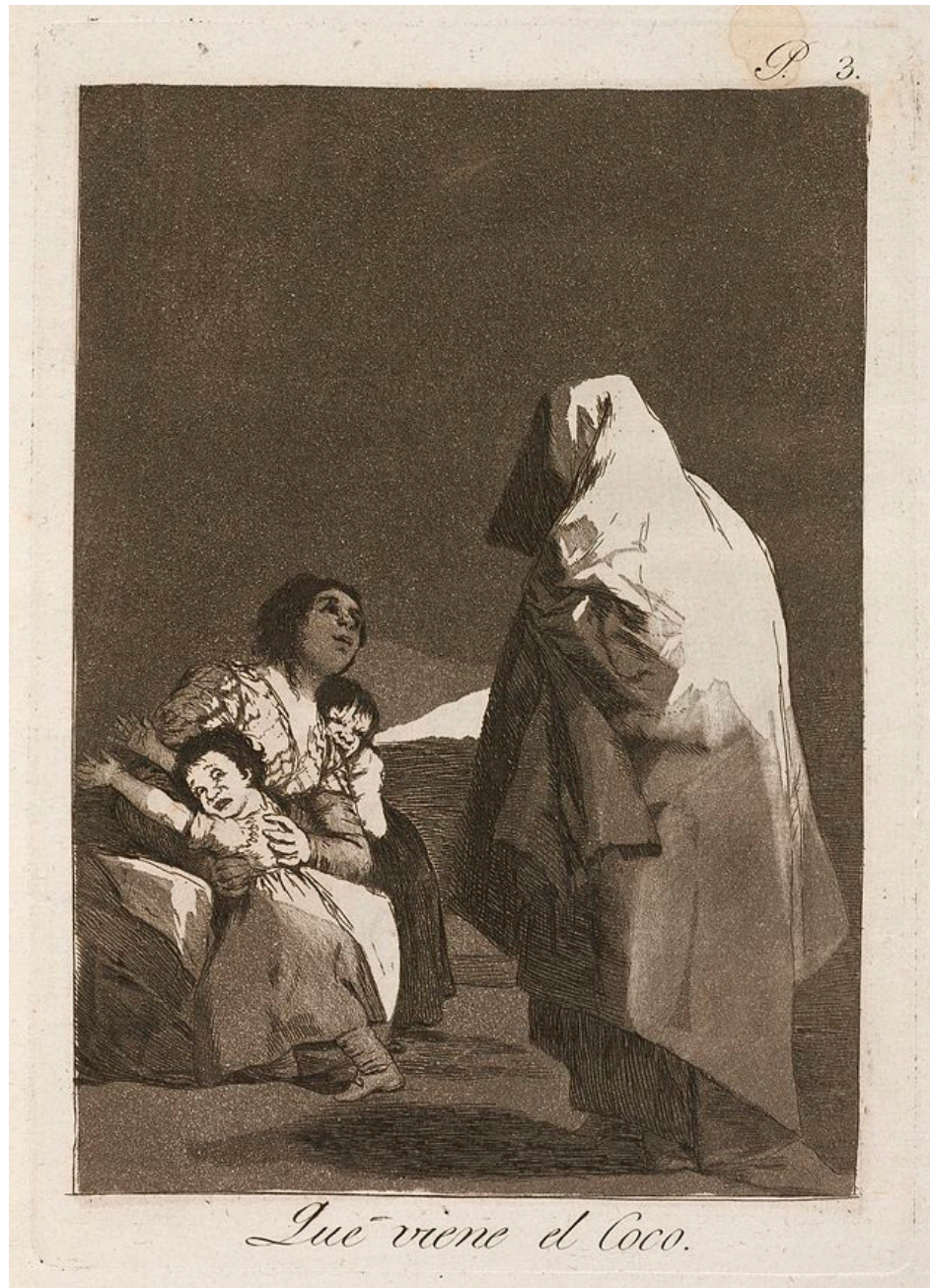


FIGURE 1: Francisco de Goya, "*Que viene el coco*" ("Here Comes the Boogeyman") from the 1799 series *Los Caprichos* (*Caprices*)

"*Que viene el coco*" or "Here Comes the Boogeyman," number three in the series of eighty etchings, critiques the common practice of parents who tell their children horror stories to induce obedience, while failing to admit that humans are, themselves, the true monsters (see figure 1). The explanation beside the print in the Prado Museum, written by

the artist himself, states “*Abuso funesto de la primera educación. Hacer que un niño tenga más miedo al Coco que a su padre y obligarle a temer lo que no existe.*”

[“Deplorable abuse in a child’s early instruction. Making the child be more afraid of the Bogeyman than of his parent, obliging him to fear what does not exist.”]¹⁵ It is clear from Goya’s inscription that the critique here has to do with the very othering of monsters. Parents lie to their children, a practice that likely sparks a universal fear of uncertainty and unreliability. The lie in question here is specifically about causing children to fear a nonexistent monster, when in truth the lying parents are the real monsters. Several interpretations of this print have suggested that the cloaked figure could be the mother’s lover, an interpretation that suggests it is also the breakdown of the structures of family that underlie the warning. Here, the figure that the mother calls the “*Coco*” or “Bogeyman” faces away from the viewer of the print, highlighting the uncertainty that lies and sexual transgressions can cause.

Cohen’s fifth thesis states “The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible [thus preventing] mobility (intellectual, geographic, or sexual), delimiting the social spaces through which private bodies may move.”¹⁶ We can see that the mother in this image takes advantage of this innate power of monsters to delineate limits of behaviour, scaring her children into obedience by allowing their fear of this made-up monster to keep them in line. As evinced in the interaction of the image and text, Goya disproves of the practice of causing fear of things that don’t exist, when the true monster, here, is most certainly human. While we cannot see the face of the monster, he is not important (except in relation to his effect on children). Our inability to see the figure’s face also echoes the metaphor of masks and hidden identity that runs through the series. Overall, I see this

print as a sharp critique of the practice of naming as monsters those who are different or unknowable (i.e. *El coco*) when human foibles are the root of real monstrosity.¹⁷



FIGURE 2: Francisco de Goya, “*El de la rollona*” (“Nanny’s Boy”) from the 1799 series *Los Caprichos* (*Caprices*)

A second example of Goya’s depiction of monstrosity is in the fourth of this series, “*El de la rollona*” or “Nanny’s Boy.” This figure comes closer to echoing (rather

than deconstructing) some of Cohen's theses in that the child depicted is a monstrous deformation of the social order. Whereas the children in the earlier print are attractive and vulnerable, this child is, through no fault of his own, a visual abomination (see figure 2). The explanation from the Prado states "*La negligencia, la tolerancia y el mismo hacen a los niños antojadizos, obstinados, soberbios, golosos, peritosos e insufribles; llegan a grandes y son niños todavía. Tal el de la Rollona.*" ("Negligence, tolerance, and spoiling make children capricious, naughty, vain, greedy, lazy and insufferable. They grow up and yet remain childish. Thus is Nanny's boy"). This child exists at the uncomfortable intersection between maturity (he has a moustache) and infancy (he sucks his thumb), thus illustrating Cohen's third thesis, "The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis [because it] refuses to 'participate in the classificatory 'order of things','" instead presenting a disturbing hybrid emerging from a time of crisis.¹⁸ This child's monstrosity exists because of very human practices, however, those of spoiling the children of the rich, leaving the parenting responsibilities to nannies, and pacifying with sweets that promote gluttony. Like in the earlier etching, this image uses a specific composition of lights and darks to emphasize or spotlight, as an inquisitor might, the target of the main "problem area." Here, the spotlight falls on the child's distorted face. Though "Nanny's Boy" is not a particularly personal reflection, Goya was not an artist to shy away from self-examination. He completed many self-portraits and lived in the very face of dark and nightmarish personal paintings (e.g. *Saturn Devouring his Son*). In fact, he painted several of the works of his "Black Paintings," non-commissioned works that were not intended for sale, directly on the surface of the walls of his own home. The paintings on the walls of his home (known as the "Deaf Man's Villa") suggest that Goya was willing,

perhaps even compelled, to come face to face with the demons he saw around him.



FIGURE 3: Francisco de Goya, "*El sueño de la razón produce monstruos*" ("The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters") from the 1799 series *Los Caprichos* (*Caprices*)

Taking yet another tactic in (what I would deem) the non-othering of monsters, the forty-third *Caprice* is "*El sueño de la razón produce monstruos*" or "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," one of several self-portraits. In the most famous etching from the *Caprices*, and one of Goya's most famous pieces overall, the artist sits, head in

hands, attempting to protect himself from the onslaught of animals associated with witches (see figure 3). Again, the composition creates a sense of accusation or interrogation, with brightness illuminating the problem area, here Goya himself. The artist, in critiquing through his Enlightenment ideals, his time and place, is haunted by the very tools of his trade, the animals he evokes through art. Although, due to its evolution (and the dual meaning of *sueño*) there is debate about the meaning of this etching, it seems to affirm the ideals of the Enlightenment, for when reason sleeps (the critical, rational artist rests), the monsters of his creation torment him, potentially leading him to madness. In Goya's accompanying text, we read that "*La fantasía, abandonada de la razón, produce monstrous imposibles; unida con ella es madre de artes y origen de las maravillas*" ["Fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of their marvels"]. In other words, Goya proposes that fantasy and reason must exist together to maintain a healthy and sane society. Here, the monster comes from within the artist himself, but takes on the exteriorized form of an Other (another species, a hybrid of species). As in "Nanny's Boy," this etching calls attention to the practice of projecting outwards something that originates within. In all three of these pieces, the monster is recognized as part of Goya's own society, and finally, as part of his own mind, thus calling into question the very tendency to *other* monsters rather than claiming them as our own. This message, potentially very dangerous for an artist to promote, survived only through some of the very corruption Goya critiqued (the simple-mindedness of the royal family and the connections he had to them with their patronage).

To preface a large chronological leap, I should note that my next examples from Manuel Gago's *The Masked Warrior* are, unlike Goya's prints, without a doubt modern comics. Modern Spanish comics reached an apotheosis in popularity and production in the 1940s and 50s, when they were, because of political, technological, and economic realities in the country, the most popular entertainment medium.¹⁹ Further, because of the extreme poverty that prevailed following Spain's Civil War, comics were traded, and re-sold, such that several fans often read each copy printed. During this time, only publishing houses authorized by the official and state-run political party had the right to access resources, such as paper, printing presses, and ink, necessary to print comic books. The importation of American comics was, likewise, strictly limited to those properties that didn't present the Axis Powers as enemies. Overall, the climate was one of powerful control over production, and consumption by a large readership.

In stark contrast to the phenomenon depicted in Goya's etchings, whereby the artist points out his own and his countrymen's monstrosity, Manuel Gago's comic book sensation, *El guerrero del antifaz* or *The Masked Warrior* (1944-1980), became a bestseller by fully endorsing the *othering* of evil, both in time and cultural identity.²⁰ The national government that controlled and censored the production of comic books declared its mission of seeking cultural uniformity essential to reestablishing Spain's moral wellbeing, even if this meant ignoring or rewriting large swaths of history. Illustrative of Cohen's fourth thesis about monsters, that "Representing an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic," this series locates the action of the Masked Warrior in the Middle Ages.²¹ It recasts the pluralism of the Medieval period as a battle of good versus evil, justifying the original events of the

Christian Iberian Reconquest and Inquisition, while also rendering the recent Civil War heroic in its purportedly analogous battle for purity and uniformity, and against difference and chaos.

Spain's 20th century had brought propagandistic publications of comic books from both sides of the Civil War. During the subsequent totalitarian dictatorship, "*tebeos*," on the one hand cheap and escapist means of gaining adventurous and funny entertainment, and on the other, a component of the propagandistic apparatus of the regime, rose to great popularity. In the case of the masked Christian hero, a medieval Lone Ranger who fought against Muslim enemies, the regime promoted the dominant mythology, one that depended on revisionist history and homogenization of Spain's people. This series was also part of a broader group, one that included such comic book best sellers as *El Capitán Trueno* [Captain Thunder], *El Cachorro* [The Lion Cub], *El Jabato* [The Wild Boar], and *El Coyote*.²²

The Spanish action hero, unlike American superheroes of the same era, exhibited no superpowers. Owing to the political climate of the time, the image of a hero that stands up to power, or that takes on divine-like powers, was ill suited to Spain's early or mid-twentieth century.²³ Rather, this hero and others of his ilk were men of perfect virtue and ideal attributes, as defined by the fascist ideology that controlled the country's publishing houses. A "Spaniard" from a time when Spain didn't yet exist, the Masked Warrior wore armour and defended Christianity through the liberal use of his sword. Yet another manifestation of the sword / cross hybrid, the Masked Warrior was also a replica of the dictator's public image. In fact, Franco was represented in an official painting wearing armour, under the protection of an avenging angel, preparing to eradicate the

“tentacles of the evil that were corroding national-Catholic Spain (communism, the Republican party, freemasons...).”²⁴ Another “tentacle of evil,” was, of course, the perennial Other of non-Catholics.

In this simplified and falsified version of the Medieval historical context, everyone inexplicably speaks the same language, and the fight against Islam occurs anachronistically and in geographical regions that don’t reflect the historical reality of Spain in the era of the Reconquest, before the kingdom of Granada (the final remaining part of Al-Andalus) was reclaimed by the Christian kings. Further driving home his Christianity, the protagonist of the series goes by the historically relevant nickname *el león cristiano* [Christian Lion]. His sidekick is named Fernando, like the Catholic King whose 1469 marriage to Isabel had consolidated the monarchy across much of Iberia.²⁵ Nonetheless, by displacing the battle of good and evil to a far-away time and place, in relation to Spain of the 20th century, the apparently escapist comic managed to name a monster that spoke to the fears and dangers of the current situation as well.²⁶

Thus, this property provides a compelling example of Juan Marsé’s statement that “some of those comics [...that the children read to escape their reality...] contained the Falangist seed of the nightmares lived by the children.”²⁷ The comic books, in other words, provided an apparent – yet false – escape for the children of the brutal postwar. In fact, I would further argue that the Masked Warrior also enforced the same values of rigid delineation of national identity that the Catholic Kings and Francoism promoted, and that the instructive characteristic of postwar adventure comics demonstrates Cohen’s fifth thesis, “The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible.”²⁸ Essentially, in a time of obvious cultural repression, the limits of acceptable behaviour were illustrated through

apparent escapist entertainment that was actually quite directive in its message. Under the dictatorship, and as supported by its many popular slogans, repeated *ad infinitum*, Spain was to return to the ideals of the “*Reinado de los Reyes Católicos*,” the Kingdom of the Catholic Kings, in which this comic book story explicitly locates its action. This hero fights against the very religion that the Catholic Kings of the late fifteenth century, and the dictator of the 20th century, and conservative anti-immigration politicians of today, considered a main threat in defining Spain as a purely Christian nation. Through promoting a revisionist and idealized version of the Christian hero, the Falangist doctrine effectively delineated the very narrow limits of permissible ‘social space’ as “One Spain, One Race, (One Language,) One Religion.” The legacy of the various languages and religions present both in the Medieval School of Translators of Toledo, and the long nineteenth century, was sacrificed in favour of order under Francoism. Spain was recast, as it had been under the Catholic Kings, as one nation, under Christianity, and under Castilian Spanish.

In the comic book fiction that Manuel Gago wrote and illustrated, and that millions of young Spaniards read, then, who is the monster? While the Masked Warrior takes on many different opponents throughout the decades of his storyline, his *raison d'être* is vengeance against a monstrous stepfather, the Muslim petty king Alí Kan. In this simplified war of good (Christian) against evil (Muslim), the enemy is almost laughably obvious. Alí Kan, the story goes, kidnaps the young and faithful bride of a Christian Count, taking her to his exotic palace, raping her, and then treating her as both wife and slave. When she gives birth to Adolfo, the future Masked Warrior, Alí Kan raises the boy as his own, believing him to be so. He trains him in the secret (in other words, different,

frightening, yet desirable) techniques of his people, with the intent being that he is training him to kill Christians.²⁹ The complex situation of simultaneous repulsion and attraction by the Muslim people is further illustrated by the Masked Warrior's eventual fascination with the exotic beauty of Zoraida, Aixa, and other Muslim women.



FIGURE 4: Manuel Gago, *The Masked Warrior*, “*El Guerrero del Antifaz*,” Cover for Issue One, 1943. © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid.

When Adolfo comes of age and discovers the truth of his (pure Christian) bloodline, he turns his training against his former teacher. At the hands of their kidnapper, Adolfo's mother dies for betraying the truth to her son, thereby giving rise to the Masked Warrior and causing him to spend the rest of his life seeking vengeance against his sworn enemy (see figure 4). Like a traitor spy who has immersed himself in the mind of the Other, the Masked Warrior is able, then, to take the powerful dark arts he has learned under the tutelage of his mother's captor and use them for good. Overwhelmed with guilt and regret over his mother's death, the Masked Warrior dons a mask to hide his identity, contributing to his mystery and attractiveness, and he dedicates

his life to battling against his former cohort of Islamic warriors. The mask and the large cross on his chest indicate this character's entire *modus operandi*. The mask both hides and becomes the mark of his identity, while the cross represents the weight of his past and the strength of his moralizing quest for vengeance. Meanwhile, Alí Kan bears the symbol of the half-moon, both on his helmet and on his tunic, as well as the beard and turban that signify his religious beliefs. These markers are also, along with the cross and mask of the Masked Warrior, visual shorthand for their heroic and anti-heroic status in the comic.

The character of Alí Kan also illustrates many of the classic characteristics of the monstrous Other. First, "The Monster's Body Is a Cultural Body."³⁰ This comic's enemy is clearly defined by the era from which it came, while also representing universal fears. Alí Kan is one of the approved enemies of the Francoist regime, just as the Masked Warrior is one of its approved heroes. In fact, anxiety and disapproval of religious difference, and a reappropriation of the models of Medieval Christianity by the totalitarian regime make an Islamic petty king the ideal enemy. Further, his transgressions slide easily from one realm to another, as Alí Kan, in classic Orientalist depiction, is both a religious and sexual other, overly sexualized to the extent that he destroys bonds of Christian marriage in kidnapping and raping the wife of another man.³¹ At the same time, Alí Kan represents the universal fear of the perceived unknowability of one's patrilineage, as represented in the Roman law principle *Mater semper certa, pater nunquam* (The mother is always certain, the father never). The man Adolfo has considered his father during much of his upbringing is in fact an evil and duplicitous

kidnapper, and not his biological father at all. Therefore, the figure of Alí Kan represents a monster bred of universal and particular fears.

Second, like all monsters in Cohen's postulates, Alí Kan always escapes.³² Time and again, the monster prevents the Masked Warrior from fully avenging the rape and murder of his mother. This perennially thwarted satisfaction is a classic characteristic of both comic book series and also of monsters generally. The series requires an ongoing battle, "To Be Continued," while some monsters, the "revenant by definition" go so far as to return from the dead.³³ Third, as Cohen notes, monsters are a threat to the existing power structure (especially as "they threaten to mingle" and jeopardize "group 'purity'").³⁴ Alí Kan threatens the official status quo imposed by Francosim in his very relationship with the Christian mother. It is through intermingling, biblically and familiarly, with the Christians that Alí Kan becomes such a despicable and disturbing character. The capture and rape of the mother in *The Masked Warrior* is both the impetus for the main conflict in the series, and a representative fear of the period in which the comic arose. Francoist propaganda specifically harkens back to the same purity of Christian blood and Castilian Spanish that the Catholic Kings demanded.

While *The Masked Warrior* imagines a medieval space in which all characters communicate without linguistic difference, this comic property also brings to the forefront the notion of *barbaric* as unintelligible (and its etymological connection to the Berber people of Morocco).³⁵ In the comic, the spoken language of Alí Kan is Castilian Spanish, but his behaviour is unintelligible, foreign to the acceptable social norms of twentieth century Spain. Throughout the comic, the patriarchal values that the dictatorship extols also prevail. Violence is the answer to the protagonist's problems, as

he draws upon the skills in battle learned under the tutelage of his enemy, and a plethora of women find him irresistibly attractive. Also in accordance with the moral restrictions of Francoism, the Masked Warrior's relationship with his beloved (Christian) Ana María is absolutely chaste.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that, first designed by Gago as a teenager, this comic book was immensely popular and long lived, a popularity that speaks to its ability to pinpoint the very fears and needs of its readership as well as those behind the relevant rules of the censors. In addition to its liberal use of the "*Continuará*" ["To Be Continued"], which left readers hungry for more, and its portrayal of non-stop action, this property clearly underscores a specific social and cultural moment. It is not simply that the dictatorship prohibited all other discourse, then, but also that the characterization of Alí Kan resonated with a generation (or more) of Spanish readers indoctrinated to see their Muslim multicultural past as foreign. Following the death of the dictator in 1975, the series (then at the hands of new artists) eventually strayed from its national-Catholic principles of conformity and anti-Islamic sentiment. By then, however, the series had lost much of its fan base to other modes of entertainment.

Overall, these two examples represent extremes in practices of othering an enemy that threatens Spanish society. Of course, there are myriad other differences that contrast the creation, reception, and relevance of each of these two series, but the intention of this chapter has been to highlight the range, from intentional appropriation of the monstrous, to its projection outwards in time and place. Perhaps this particular contrast can be read to suggest that Francisco de Goya, even though he lived under the Inquisition, had relative freedom, due to his protection within the system, to critique himself and his own people.

This same type of criticism, meanwhile, would have been impossible for Goya under the strict and specific censorship of Francoism. Further, the fact that Goya attempted to have the *Caprices* removed from sale, while Goya's series enjoyed wild and long lived commercial success, speaks to the dangers of claiming monsters as our own.

In ongoing and current debates surrounding the financial crisis in Europe, and the frequent scapegoating of immigrant "others" in this crisis, it bears keeping in mind the ways in which imagery makes monsters of the dangers to perceived national wellbeing. Comics, but not only comics, exaggerate and stereotype the Other to undermine his or her humanity. Recast as a War on Terror, or the need to protect national borders, this perennial battle comes to the fore regularly in a variety of media. Within this milieu, comics and proto-comics still contain powerful messages that can reveal values underlying their creation and consumption, so understanding them within their context allows for a fuller appreciation of their messages. When it comes to representing the enemy of a society's wellbeing, especially in creating a monster of the other, we should consider the fears, both universal and particular, underlying monstrous representation. For Goya and other like-minded Enlightenment thinkers during the creation of the *Caprices*, the monster is acknowledged within us, or it flows from us. The monster comes from within the Catholic Church, within the superstitions and hypocritical social practices of Goya's kinsmen, as the composition of his etchings casts a bold accusing eye on all of us. However, Goya's approach might also be taken with caution, as the monsters he saw within and around him seemed to come to haunt the walls of his own home and mind, thereby leaving him no safe haven.

In contrast, for Gago and, as such, pro-Francoist ideology, the monster is foreign, known but unknown, the ghost of Spain's true multicultural past condemned to return and remind twentieth century children of the danger that attracts and repels. As they often do in recent media portrayals of immigration, images of penetration permeate this story; there is physical penetration of Adolfo's mother, emotional invasion of the secret stepson, military penetration in the conquest of Al-Andalus, along with constant stabbings and swordplay. More generally, the monster defines and penetrates the borders between 'Spanish' and 'non-Spanish,' an ideology that the Francoist doctrine so carefully cultivated. Similar rhetoric, echoing in classrooms, movie theatres, and in political speeches under the dictatorship, delineated an 'us' in contrast to a foreign and undesirable 'them,' a dynamic that played out perfectly in the most popular adventure comic of the Spanish Golden Age of Comics. Thus, in presenting itself as "escapist," the comic book series actually reveals the regime's revisionist attempts to exteriorize through stereotyping, the Islamic presence in Iberia's past, present, and future.

¹ Leonard Rivas, "Race and Comix," in Frederick Luis Aldama, ed., *Multicultural Comics: From Zap to Blue Beetle* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 33.

² Dirk Vanderbeke, "In the Art of the Beholder: Comics as Political Journalism" in Mark Berninger, Jochen Ecke and Gideon Haberkorn, eds., *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 70.

³ For a more thorough introduction to this phenomenon, see María Rosa Menocal's *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. (Boston, New York, and London: Little, Brown, 2002)

⁴ Goya, Francisco de. *Los Caprichos*. 1799. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. *Museo Nacional del Prado*. Web. 30 March 2014: My translation.

⁵ Linda Simon, "The Sleep of Reason," World and I, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://www.worldandi.com/newhome/public/2004/february/bkpub1.asp>

⁶ Gago, Manuel. *El Guerrero del Antifaz*. Editorial Valenciana. 1943-1980. Print.

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- ⁷ Cf. David Herzberger, *Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
- ⁸ See Robert Hughes, *Goya* (New York: Knopf, 2003) for more biographical information about the artist.
- ⁹ Birgit. Ellefsen, "Representations of madness and the irrational in the Age of Enlightenment," 4, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/making-sense-of/madness/project-archives/4t/session-9-madness-and-the-arts-1/>
- ¹⁰ Moshe Barasch. *Theories of Art, 2: From Winckelmann to Baudelaire*. New York: Routledge: 1990, 381
- ¹¹ Rafael Argullol, "Goya en su infierno" *Revista Colombiana de Psicología* No 2, 1993, 137-142.
- ¹² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 1996), 4
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, x
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7
- ¹⁵ Goya, Francisco. *Los Caprichos* 1799. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. *Museo National del Prado*. Web. 30 March 2014: My translation.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* 12
- ¹⁷ For more on monsters and borders, see Michael Uebel's compelling chapter in *Monster Theory*, "Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity," where he writes referencing Michel de Certeau, that "borders simultaneously partition reality, by separating continua into discrete entities [...] flickering between contact and avoidance, interaction and interdiction, border lines are thus spaces in between, gaps or middle places symbolizing exchange and encounter" (265). Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 1996),
- ¹⁸ Cohen, 6
- ¹⁹ Viviane Alary, "The Spanish Tebeo." *European Comic Art* 2.2 (2009), 254
- ²⁰ Gago wrote and illustrated the series without interruptions until 1966, at which time the series was paused. The original series was reedited in full color starting in 1972, and then reborn as *Las nuevas aventuras del Guerrero del Antifaz* [*The New Adventures of the Masked Warrior*], which continued being published until 1980.
- ²¹ Cohen, 8
- ²² Alary, 267.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 15
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16
- ²⁵ Though it is likely the material for another article, and not the purview of this one, there are odious characters that represent stereotypes of Jewishness as well.
- ²⁶ Javier Conde, *Del tebeo al cómic: Un mundo de aventuras*. (Madrid: Libsa, 2001), 42-53.
- ²⁷ Carlos Giménez, *Todo Paracuellos*, (Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2007), 1.
- ²⁸ Cohen, 12
- ²⁹ Thesis VI: Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire: "the linking of monstrosity with the forbidden" (17), there is simultaneous repulsion and attraction. We distrust and loathe at the same time we envy the monster freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair. "Escapist delight gives way to horror only when the monster threatens to overstep these boundaries, to destroy or deconstruct the thin walls of category and culture" (Cohen 17).
- ³⁰ Cohen, 4
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 4

³³ Ibid., 5

³⁴ Ibid., 15

³⁵ For more on the Muslim religion as “the culmination of all heresies,” see Uebel, 269 in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 1996),