

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

*Unca Don and Unca Scrooge's Guide to  
History*

Representations of the Past in the Disney  
Comics of Don Rosa

**School of History, Culture and Arts Studies**

**European Heritage, Digital Media and the Information Society**

**Master's Thesis**

**Petra Kotro**

**April 2011**

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU  
Faculty of Humanities  
School of History, Culture and Arts Studies

KOTRO, PETRA: *Unca Don and Unca Scrooge's Guide to History.*  
Representations of the Past in the Disney Comics of Don  
Rosa.

Master's Thesis, 124 pages.

European Heritage, Digital Media and the Information Society

April 2011

-----

This thesis studies the various forms and layers of representations of the past that can be found in the Disney comics of Don Rosa. To stay true to the legacy of renowned comic book artist Carl Barks, Rosa has stopped time in the duck universe to the 1950's: the decade when Barks created his most noted stories. There is a special feel of historicalness in Rosa's duck stories, as his characters recall events that occurred in both Rosa's own stories as well as Barks'. Rosa has shed new light to the past of the characters by writing and illustrating the history of Scrooge McDuck, one of the most beloved Disney characters. Rosa is also adamant that the historical facts used in his stories are always correct and based on thorough research.

The methodological tools used in the analysis of the comics come from the fields of comic book studies, film theory, and history culture. Film and comics are recognized by many scholars as very similar media, which share elements that make them comparable in many ways. This thesis utilizes studies on historical film, narrative and genre, which provide valuable insight and comparisons for analysis.

The thesis consists of three main chapters, the first of which deconstructs the duck universe in the stories in order to understand how the historicalness in them is created, and which outside elements might affect them, including the genre of Disney comics, publishers, and the legacy of Barks. The next chapter focuses on The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series, i.e. the stories which are located *in* the past. Such stories feature similar representations of history as for example Westerns. They also compress and alter history to meet the restrictions of the medium of comics. The last part focuses on the adventure stories which draw inspiration from for example mythology, and take the characters to strange and mystical, but yet historical worlds. Such treasure-hunting stories show similarity to the action-adventure genre in film and for example their stereotypical representations of foreign cultures. Finally, the chapter addresses the problematic of historical fiction and its capability to write history.

Keywords: comics, comic books, Disney, historical fiction, historical culture, imaginary history, mythology.

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Humanistinen tiedekunta

Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos

KOTRO, PETRA: *Unca Don and Unca Scrooge's Guide to History.*  
Representations of the Past in the Disney Comics of Don  
Rosa.

Pro Gradu -tutkielma, 124 sivua.

European Heritage, Digital Media and the Information Society

Huhtikuu 2011

-----

Tässä tutkielmassa analysoidaan menneisyyden representoinnin eri tasoja ja muotoja Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuvissa. Jatkaakseen tunnetun sarjakuvataiteilijan Carl Barksin perintöä, Rosa on pysäyttänyt ajan ankkujen maailmassa 1950-luvulle, aikaan, jolloin Barks kirjoitti tunnetuimmat tarinansa. Rosan ankkatarinoissa on omanlaisensa historiallisuuden tunne, sillä tämän ankat muun muassa muistavat tapahtumia niin Rosan omista, kuin Barksin tarinoista. Rosa on myös valottanut hahmojen menneisyyttä uudella tavalla kirjoittamalla Roope Ankan historian omiksi tarinoikseen. Rosa myös painottaa usein, kuinka hänen käyttämänsä historialliset faktat ovat aina tosia ja pohjautuvat perusteelliseen tutkimukseen.

Tutkimuksen metodologiset keinot pohjautuvat sarjakuvan, elokuvan, ja historiakulttuurin tutkimukseen. Elokuva ja sarjakuva ovat monien tutkijoiden mukaan hyvin samankaltaisia medioita, ja niiden yhtäläisyydet tekevät niistä verrannollisia tutkimuskohteita monin tavoin. Tässä työssä analyysin apuna käytetään muun muassa historiallista elokuvaa, narratiiveja, ja genrejä käsitteleviä tutkimuksia.

Tutkielma jakautuu kolmeen käsittelylukuun, joista ensimmäisessä pohditaan, mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat Rosan tarinoiden ankkamaailman ja sen historiallisuuden rakentumiseen. Näihin tekijöihin kuuluvat muun muassa kustantajat, Disney-sarjakuvien geneerinen luonne, ja Barksin tarinoista juontuva intertekstuaalisuus. Seuraava käsittelyluku keskittyy Roope Ankan elämä ja teot -sarjan analyysiin, eli tarinoihin, jotka sijoittuvat menneisyyteen myös ankkujen näkökulmasta. Kyseisissä tarinoissa on havaittavissa representaation muotoja, joita esiintyy esimerkiksi lännenelokuvissa. Tarinoissa myös tiivistetään ja muokataan historiallisia elementtejä, jotta tarinankulku sopisi paremmin sarjakuvan rajoittuneeseen esittämistapaan. Viimeinen osio käsittelee seikkailullisia tarinoita, joiden juonet pohjautuvat esimerkiksi mytologioihin. Näissä usein aartenetsintään liittyvissä tarinoissa toistuvat esimerkiksi vieraiden kulttuurien representaatiot, joita esiintyy myös niin sanotuissa toimintaseikkailuelokuvissa. Lopuksi tutkielmassa pohditaan historiallisen fiktion problematiikkaa.

Asiasanat: sarjakuvat, myytit, historiallinen fiktio, historiakulttuuri, Disney, kuviteltu historia.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. IntroDUCKtion .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. <i>Don Rosa as comic book artist.....</i>	1
1.2. <i>Research questions and primary materials.....</i>	3
1.3. <i>Methodology and previous research .....</i>	5
1.4. <i>To be continued... The comic book as a medium.....</i>	11
<b>2. Deconstructing the duck universe in Don Rosa's comics.....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. <i>From underground fanzines to major publishing house in Scandinavia.....</i>	16
2.2. <i>The legacy of Carl Barks.....</i>	19
2.2.1. <i>Sequels or re-writes?.....</i>	23
2.3. <i>The Disney universe.....</i>	25
2.3.1. <i>The nostalgia of the 1950's in Duckburg, Calisota.....</i>	32
<b>3. The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck – Historical tales, truths, and memories.....</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1. <i>From westerns to Citizen Kane with the help of heirlooms &amp; button-nosed presidents.....</i>	35
3.1.1. <i>Family heritage as motif.....</i>	39
3.1.2. <i>Western adventures.....</i>	42
3.1.3. <i>From a poor prospector to a wealthy land owner.....</i>	45
3.2. <i>The invention of history.....</i>	52
3.2.1. <i>Alteration and compression in “The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark”.....</i>	55
3.3. <i>The past as memories.....</i>	64
3.3.1. <i>Experiencing the past in the dream world in “The Dream of a Lifetime”.....</i>	71
<b>4. Treasure hunting and adventures: Indiana Jones meets the Junior Woodchucks.....</b>	<b>76</b>
4.1. <i>The action-adventure genre in historical fiction.....</i>	76
4.2. <i>Knowledge is power – legitimating historical ‘facts’ in the narration.....</i>	81

<i>4.3. Mythological menagerie –European heritage and mythology in imaginary fantasies</i> .....	87
4.3.1. Mythology comes to life in “The Quest for Kalevala” .....	87
4.3.2. Travelling into the past in “The Once and Future Duck” .....	95
<i>4.4. The possibilities and pitfalls of historical fiction</i> .....	102
<b>6. To be concluded...</b> .....	<b>111</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>List of Images</b> .....	<b>123</b>

“Wow! History is *filled* with such real-life intrigue!”

“No book or movie can match it!”

-Huey, Dewey or Louie Duck

(The Crown of the Crusader Kings (2001). *Uncle Scrooge* 339. 2005.)

## 1. IntroDUCKtion

### 1.1. Don Rosa as comic book artist

Keno Don Hugo Rosa, born in 1951 in Louisville, Kentucky, can be seen as one of the most popular comic book artists of current times. This is especially apparent in Northern Europe, where his success is undeniable, and his fan base wide and loyal. It can be argued that what separates Rosa from many other comic artists drawing or writing under the Disney license, and what has been the key to his success, is simply put his devotion to the Disney characters, and considering himself as more of a fan than a true artist. His unique style of illustrating draws influence from underground comics of the 1960s and '70s, and is affected by his lack of formal education in illustrating.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Rosa has put large amounts of effort into creating a coherent history for the McDuck clan and other characters that frequently appear in his stories, as well as placing his stories in a continuous chronology based on the previous work of renowned comic book artist Carl Barks.

Although Rosa works with characters created by different writers who worked for the Walt Disney Company, his approach to the characters stands out from the way most writers of Disney comics utilize them. Most Disney comic book writers pay little attention to the ways in which their colleagues treat the characters, i.e. in different stories there may occur different kinds of relationships between the characters, they show different characteristics, and most writers create new characters and locations into the duck universe. Rosa has chosen to follow the duck universe created by his idol, Carl Barks (1901-2000). Although Barks started working with some existing Disney

---

<sup>1</sup> Rosa wrote and illustrated comic strips for University newspapers and fanzines during the 1970s, and the same style was transformed onto Disney comic books later on in his professional Disney comic book artist career.

characters, he created some of the most memorable characters of all time, such as Scrooge McDuck, Magica De Spell, Gladstone Gander, and the Beagle Boys.<sup>2</sup> Carl Barks is also responsible for creating the setting where most stories have been placed ever since, the city of Duckburg, Calisota. Scrooge McDuck became Barks' most used character, and consequently the same appears to have happened with Don Rosa. In Barks' stories the character of Scrooge gave information about the character's childhood, family members, and past adventures, but Barks never intended for these notions to create a coherent history for the character. When in the early 1990s Don Rosa was asked to write and illustrate a series of stories telling the history of Scrooge Rosa began his most noted work to date; *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series. Throughout this immense piece of work and almost all of his other stories, Rosa has been consistent with his loyalty to Barks' heritage. Only in some occasions has Rosa had to derail from the coherency of Scrooge McDuck's past, since if Rosa in fact took to account all of Scrooge's anecdotes about the character's past in all of Barks' stories, Scrooge would have to be well over a hundred years old.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the legacy of Barks Rosa has also decided to freeze the contemporary life of the Disney characters to the 1950s, which was the time in which Barks wrote and illustrated his most noted stories. This and the fact that Rosa's ducks have pasts full of memories, gives Rosa's duck universe a sense of historicalness that does not often show in other Disney comic books. In addition, many of Rosa's stories are based on mythology and history from all over the world, for example the history of the Knights Templar, the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, and Hindu mythology. Carl Barks also placed many of his adventure stories to exotic or historic locations, and Rosa has continued to follow his lead. In Rosa's adventure stories a special feeling of authenticity is created as Rosa spends large amounts of time in preparing his work with history research, since he insists that all of the 'historical facts' presented in his stories are correct.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Eronen 1994, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Rosa 1997, 96.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Rosa 2001b, 6; Rosa 2005, 105; Rosa 2009, 143.

## ***1.2. Research questions and primary materials***

The large amount of historical information that Don Rosa uses in his stories, and the specific nature of the coherent history he has created for the characters are the basis for this thesis. The main research question is, therefore, what kind of forms and layers of representations of the past appear in the Disney comics of Don Rosa? Furthermore, what kinds of meanings do they entail? In other words, what kinds of values are connected with history in the stories? By representations this thesis refers to both the illustrations and what is implied in the narrative, but also the way in which interpretation gives new meaning and creates new context to representations. This is why, in addition to those representations that Don Rosa actively creates through writing and drawing his stories, other representations are created passively from Rosa's own context, and more importantly, the context of the audience. In other words the main goal in this thesis is discovering the ways of representing the past in the comics and their relation to contemporary historical culture.

In chapter two I will take a closer look at how Don Rosa's own past, i.e. his path to becoming a comic book artist, and his work history might affect the way history is represented in his work. Most importantly we can consider how the work of Rosa's own idol, Carl Barks, has affected his comics, i.e. how Rosa has created a historical universe for the ducks based on the work of Barks. The genre of the comics, being first and foremost Disney comics, also has an effect of their content and style.

Chapter three focuses on the analysis of *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. The 12 part series of stories is commonly considered Rosa's most valuable contribution to the duck universe. After finishing the original series Rosa created companion stories for *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* following similar narrative as the original series, but with some important changes. The main stories are located in the past, telling the life story of Scrooge and the McDuck clan as well. The companion stories' narrative differs from the original series in that they have frame narratives, which are located in the present time of the ducks, with the main plot located in the past. The stories have several similarities to historical films and their narrative techniques, and their analysis will be largely based on theories on historical film and narrative theory in general. In the latter parts of chapter three I will consider another layer in the historical representation in the companion stories – the characters'



memories. Memories and the act of remembering or re-living past events have an effect on how the past is represented in these stories.

In chapter four I will take a closer look at those adventurous stories that are located in the present time of the ducks, but which use heritage and mythology as basis for storylines. These stories can often be considered treasure hunting adventures, but they can also lead the characters directly into the past. These stories often take a turn to fantasy literature, featuring events that could certainly not take place in reality but are well suited for the fantastic universe of the Disney ducks. This also means, however, that in these stories history, heritage and mythology are mixed with fantasy adding new elements to the representations of the past. In chapter four I will also take a look at how Rosa presents historical facts in his stories; how he legitimizes including (and excluding) certain historical facts and presenting them as the truth by using “legitimate sources” such as the Junior Woodchuck Guidebook and academically educated characters such as professors. I will also consider Rosa’s relationship and approach to historical research and how it might affect his stories, as well as his conventional style of aiming for a realistic look and feel of the surroundings in which his stories are located, and how these elements convince the reader of the historical accuracy of the representations of the past.

The primary materials consist of *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* and its companion stories, and selectively other Don Rosa stories related to the subject, such as “The Treasury of Croesus” (1995), “The Guardians of the Lost Library” (1993), “The Once and Future Duck” (1996), “The Crown of the Crusader Kings” (2001), and “A Letter From Home” (2004), which will be analyzed in more detail.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, certain Carl Barks stories will be used for reference to Rosa’s work, as well as Rosa’s own earlier, non-Disney published comic books. The primary materials will not be limited according to publisher or the time of publishing. Rosa has created in total 86 stories which have originally been published by seven different publishers. He first began writing and illustrating Disney comics in the United States in 1986, and after 20 years of working for different publishers, he published his last story in 2006. During the 21st century Rosa has experienced health problems related to his eyes, which are the

---

<sup>5</sup> For a full chronological list of all of the Disney comics drawn and/or written by Don Rosa, see for example [http://disneycomics.free.fr/index\\_rosa\\_date.php](http://disneycomics.free.fr/index_rosa_date.php) (accessed 17.3.2011). For a list of the particular stories used in this thesis, see primary materials in the bibliography section.

main cause of his ending his career. He still writes introductions to his stories for different publications, but he is apparently unable to perform such detailed illustrations that constitute one of his trademarks. The introductions Rosa has written for different compilation publications of his stories provide valuable information on Rosa's own views on his stories. This thesis utilizes Rosa's writings from eight Finnish publications. Out of the entire production of Rosa, the stories selected for this thesis are chosen for their content and relevance to the subject matter. For example the so-called gag stories, shorter stories which are concentrating on comical effect, and do not necessarily provide any new information or coherence to the history of the characters, will be excluded. It is impossible in the confinements and limitations of this thesis to analyze all of the stories which are based in historical topics. So in hopes of more quality analysis I will focus on close readings of a limited number of stories instead of trying to include too much material.

### ***1.3. Methodology and previous research***

The academic study of comic books has been on the rise since the 1980's and resulted in a group of academics referred to as comic scholars. Studies on ideology in comics, comics as a medium or as narratives, or comics as products of popular culture can now be found more easily. Some main works include Thomas M. Inge's *Comics as Culture* (1990), Martin Barker's *Comics: ideology, power and the critics* (1989), or the more recent collections of articles by comic scholars such as Inge, Barker, Thierry Groensteen, Ariel Dorfman and Bart Beaty, *A Comic Studies Reader* (2009), or *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium* (2004) in which literature theorists such as Umberto Eco and Marshall McLuhan consider comics from different point of views. There are also studies which focus directly on how history is dealt with in comic books. For example Joseph Witek's *Comic Books as History* (1989) offers insight on both how to analyze comic books and studying their representations of the past, although Witek deals with the art form of graphic novels.

There are currently four master's theses in Finland specifically concerning the Disney Comics of Keno Don Rosa. Two of these are from literary studies, Marja Ritola's *Ankkojen aika: Intertekstuaalisuus ja lukija Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuivissa* (2000), which focuses on intertextuality in the Disney comics of Don Rosa, and Katja Kontturi's *Ankkalinn - portti kahden ulottuvuuden välillä: fantastisten maailmojen*

*ilmeneminen Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuvissa* (2009), which analyses the stories as fantasy literature. One thesis comes from linguistics, Marika Rantala's *Humour in Don Rosa's comics and their Finnish translations* (2001). The fourth is a cultural history thesis by Kai Saarto, *Tähteyden ongelma ja sarjakuvantekijä: Don Rosa tekijänä ja fanina* (2006), which takes a biographical look at Rosa as an artist and a comic book enthusiast. Especially Ritola's and Kontturi's works offer comparison points for analysis in this thesis.

Some insightful pieces of information on Rosa can only be found on fan sites on the Internet. They may have information gathered in interviews, where the author has developed a friendly relationship with Rosa, or even contain statistical data such as Sigvald Grøsfjeld Jr.'s Internet site "*The D.U.C.K.man*", in which he presents the results of his statistical analysis of Rosa's stories, and offers more information about, for example, the productivity of Rosa during the years, than can be found in any other source.<sup>6</sup> Many sites have gathered Rosa's own commentary from the Disney Comics Mailing List, in which Rosa participated actively during the 1990's. The material provided online will be taken into account in this thesis, but it will be considered critically.

Accordingly, the special nature of the primary materials for this study requires the use of several different methodological perspectives. To study comic books one needs to understand, for example, their structure and narrative qualities. As a basic guide to the medium of comics this thesis uses Juha Herkman's study *Sarjakuvan kieli ja mieli* (1998). Herkman's approach will be considered concurrently alongside other studies on narratives in different cultural texts, utilizing the theoretical foundation of for example Arthur Asa Berger. Herkman's primary concern is to provide tools for analyzing and understanding comics as cultural texts, which create meanings in the context(s) of the comics and their reader. A comic is at the same time a textual and a visual medium, with which both need to be taken into account and studied simultaneously. In narratology it is common to separate two elements from the narrative, the *story*, or *what* is being told, and the *discourse*, or *how* (the story) is being told. It is also possible to study a third concept, *narration*. Since the term *discourse* is so connected to *discourse analysis*, Herkman prefers the term *narration* when studying

---

<sup>6</sup> See <http://duckman.pettho.com/>.

*how* stories are told in comics.<sup>7</sup> Structuralist theory suggests that to each narrative there is the story, the chain of events or the content, the characters and other items, and the discourse, the means by which the content is communicated.<sup>8</sup> The approach is similar to Herkman's where the narration would be the same as the discourse.

Herkman also questions whether or not it is possible at all to distinguish a uniform story from a comic that the readers would interpret the same. In comics the story and the narration are so attached to one another because of the nature of the medium that it is virtually impossible to dislocate the story from the way in which it is told.<sup>9</sup> Narration can therefore be applied to both the visual and textual elements of the narrative. The medium of comics is bound to affect the way they represent the past. Even at their lengthiest, the stories may feature an enormous amount of information and events are compressed to very limited space. Rosa may have to condense epic literature into for example one single page to create an understandable background to his story, which will obviously affect its representation. Additionally, a comic can be analyzed as two different kinds of text. Firstly, as its own separate entity, where the textuality of the comic means purely what it expresses in the textual narrative, or where the entire comic is seen as a 'text' which consists of different signals and mechanisms or narrative. Secondly, a comic can be seen as a cultural text which consists of a wider range of meanings than the first alternative. As such, new meanings are created actively, and the meaning of the reader is exemplified. In this thesis both the narrative in the comics and the nature of the comics as cultural texts will be considered, as this thesis aims to study the comics and their relationship to the reader and the surrounding environment, and their interaction.<sup>10</sup> The reader is considered when considering the interpretations that may occur in the close reading of the comics, mainly through how the reader's cultural context can affect the interpretation. The environment, i.e. other elements which affect the comics as cultural texts are the writer, i.e. Don Rosa, and also his employers, as in the different publishing houses he has worked for, and lastly on top of everything, the Disney company and its universe of entertainment production. When creating narratives the medium the artist works in affects greatly the texts they create and the way people

---

<sup>7</sup> Herkman 1998, 114-115.

<sup>8</sup> Berger 1997, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Herkman 1998, 115.

<sup>10</sup> Herkman 1998, 15-16.

respond to them. The texts are affected by the medium, the society, the artist(s), and the audiences they are created within or for.<sup>11</sup> No work of fiction can tell everything, and writers select certain things to tell and assume that readers will fill in the blank spaces with their own existing knowledge.<sup>12</sup> It should also be noted that also my own interpretations in this thesis are affected by a long-lasting relationship to the comics at hand here; being a fan of Don Rosa for almost two decades could affect my judgment, but I will strive to maintain a critical approach to the subject and interpret the subject through the context provided by research literature concerning the topic. On the other hand, being thoroughly familiar with the stories beforehand can also be considered as an asset.

The academic study of comic books has been closely related to film research, since the two are often perceived as very similar types of media. Thomas Inge suggests that comics are closest to drama in that both rely on the dramatic conventions of character, dialogue, scene, gesture, compressed time, and stage devices, but probably the motion picture is closer. He also notes how renowned comic artist Will Eisner, distinguished for his visual innovations in comic art, has stated that “*comics are movies on paper.*”<sup>13</sup> Comic books are still a part of the printed medium, since they are mainly published in newspapers, magazines, or in book format, and cannot in that sense be called a medium by themselves per se.<sup>14</sup> However, their visual nature differentiates them from other literature. This brings us to other visual media such as film. Although film and comics have been compared in research and analyzed with similar methods, Herkman feels that the elements that separate film and comics are more profound than those that link them together. Even though the visual nature of the narrative in both media resembles each other, according to Herkman the nature of comics as a printed product is profoundly different than that of film as a reflection on a screen. Films use moving image and sound, whereas the sound effects or display of movement in comics are always created by either text or other graphic form.<sup>15</sup> Despite Herkman’s critical approach, it can be established that comics and film share many qualities. Comics and

---

<sup>11</sup> Berger 1997, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Berger 1997, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Inge 1990, xx.

<sup>14</sup> Herkman 1998, 24-25.

<sup>15</sup> Herkman 1998, 94-95.

films both have similar aesthetic qualities and formal properties, such as frames and panels. They both require similar things from the audience, i.e. the reader or the viewer must fill in gaps in presentation and narrative which are left open with the change of a scene or the “empty space” between two still images in a comic.<sup>16</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century has even experienced a significant rise in films based on comic books, which would suggest that their relationship works in both directions.<sup>17</sup> As methodological tools this thesis will use the theoretical approaches to history in films by Pierre Sorlin, presented in his work *The Film in History* (1980), and Robert Rosenstone’s *Visions of the Past* (1995). The study of genres in (Hollywood) cinema offers comparison points for analysis as well, since it can be established that many of the stories by Rosa that are either located in the past or deal with history in other ways so similar representations and narratives as for example the Western or so-called action-adventure films. Comic books can also be associated with their animated brothers and sisters, cartoons and animated films, which are often categorized according to their generic conventions including escapism and fantastical elements similar to horror movies, science fiction and musicals.<sup>18</sup> Hence we can consider the entertainment factors and utopian representations of film as comparison points to Rosa’s work. There is also correlation in the actual method of analysis of both comic books and films, since a close reading of panels, still frames, is one of the main tools used in film studies. Such a method is used in this study with a close reading of certain stories or important segments in them. However, close reading will not be applied to every part of every story, since the thematic analysis and approach also require looking at the stories in a broader cultural context, and also in relation to each other.

Comic books and strips have a tendency to react to changes in their cultural or social environment and display the latest whiffs and whimsies of culture. One could even say that comics are an excellent mirror to an era.<sup>19</sup> For example when looking at Disney’s entertainment production, the comic books and animated films that were created during the Second World War reflect their time by for example displaying

---

<sup>16</sup> See for example Berger 1997, 101.

<sup>17</sup> On films based on comic books see for example *Film and Comic Books*, edited by Gordon, Ian; Jancovich, Mark; McAllister, Matthew P. The University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Neale 1999, 103-104; Dyer 2002, 23-34; Goldmark 2005, 2-4.

<sup>19</sup> Herkman 1998, 12.

Donald taking his pots and pans to a metal collecting drive, or even placing Donald in Nazi Germany in the animation *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943).<sup>20</sup> As has been done in film research by for example Pierre Sorlin, comic books could also be analyzed though how they reflect their own age of creation as historical comic books. In this thesis, however, the approach is not to refer to comics as historical artifacts (as the comics at hand are of relatively new production), but instead to how the 'write history' in their own way, how they represent history. In addition to the actual methodological techniques used to locate and analyze the representations of the past, this thesis can therefore be considered a work of historical culture or historiography. Among its other focuses, historical culture expresses a new way of understanding the effective and affective relationship that a human group has with the past, with *its own* past.<sup>21</sup> Representations of this aspect of historical culture can also be found in the world of Don Rosa's ducks. The past has different meanings and values in the comics: this can be simultaneously seen as educational guidance for the readers towards developing their relationship to the past, as well as representation of the historical culture from where the comics have evolved through their creator. For example, popular culture references (which are mostly anachronistic) shape the reader's understanding of history. Historical culture is mainly derived from the German research on *Geschichtskultur*, history culture. It is also closely related to the idea of public history, which is a term more commonly used in American history studies. Public history can refer to both the idea of writing popular history which is meant not just for the academic world but for the public to read, but also to the representations and uses of history in contemporary society. Hannu Salmi has defined historical culture through five ways in which the past shows itself in current times. These are the past as memories, the past as experience, the past as practices, the past as artifacts, and the past as commodities.<sup>22</sup> All of these aspects can also be discovered within the representations of the past discovered in this thesis. Historiography, the history of history, mainly focuses on studying the history of history writing, but for example Pierre Sorlin has considered the use of the concept in regards to studying historical films. Sorlin does not label filmmakers historians, but is trying to identify what filmmakers have regarded as objects of historiography. He is trying to define the

---

<sup>20</sup> Wasko 2001, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Sánchez Marcos 2009 [www].

<sup>22</sup> Salmi 2001, 137.

conception of historical mechanisms in films.<sup>23</sup> Sorlin's ideas can be transferred to the study of comics, and how they, as products of popular culture such as films, write history in their own way. Furthermore, the cinematographic conception of historiography does not necessarily coincide with the historian's conception of historiography, as in cinema it would refer more directly to the way in which people and their relations in the past are described. To Sorlin historiography consists of the various ways of retrieving and ordering the past. It is a way of determining the important events that happened in the past and the defining connection between them.<sup>24</sup>

#### **1.4. To be continued... The comic book as a medium**

Comic book, comic strip, graphic short story, graphic novel... There are many different nominators for different kinds of illustrations. What should we call the Disney comics of Don Rosa in this wide array of terms? According to Joseph Witek, comic strip refers to those "gag" strips, usually three or four panels length, ending each day with a punch-line that are applied with little continuity and published in daily newspapers.<sup>25</sup> Witek also states that the comic book came to life with the earliest anthologies of comic strips, but has further developed into its own respective media that are tailor-made for specific audiences.<sup>26</sup> The most recent addition to these terms is the *graphic novel*. Some find that it is a more appreciative term of the art that writers and illustrators create and therefore more appropriate than the more generic and perhaps dismissive word 'comic book'. However, graphic novel usually refers to a single, longer piece of graphic narrative, and it also implies an 'auteur'-like approach<sup>27</sup>. Don Rosa can be seen as an auteur in the sense that he both writes and illustrates his own stories with only minor exceptions.<sup>28</sup> Most of Rosa's stories could also be seen as what Juha Herkman calls

---

<sup>23</sup> Sorlin 1980, 41-42.

<sup>24</sup> Sorlin 1980, 79, 109, 143.

<sup>25</sup> Witek 1989, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Witek 1989, 6-7.

<sup>27</sup> The concept of auteur was developed by French film theorists during the 1950's, and it contended that the director of a film could stake the claim of being the principle auteur, i.e. 'author' of the film when the film reflects the director's personal creative vision. See for example Pramaggiore & Wallis 2005, 366-368.

<sup>28</sup> In his 1995 introduction to the first Finnish compilation publication of Rosa's works, famous Finnish Disney comics' translator Jukka Lindfors described Rosa as an auteur and a creative artist, and on of the



*graphic short stories*<sup>29</sup>, as they are often close to the length of a single comic book. Regardless, since the characters and even some basic ideas for plots come from the Disney comic genre, the most common publication for Rosa's stories is a comic book, i.e. magazine, the length of the stories differs greatly, and longer stories are often serialized into two or three parts published in different numbers of the magazine, I find the term graphic novel inappropriate in the case of these stories. For the sake of consistency I will refer to Rosa's stories as plain *comics* in this thesis.<sup>30</sup>

Comic books can be considered somewhat of a minority in the diverse field of literature, even though more and more serious writers are choosing them as form of expression.<sup>31</sup> Not everyone enjoys reading comic books. The reason lies in the fact that reading them requires so much more than just reading. Sorlin notes a similar aspect in film: "*We can read a text once and then discuss it; we are all used to this kind of exercise. With a film it is more difficult: we are trained to read, rather than to watch.*"<sup>32</sup> Consequently, one could even argue that comic books would be twice more difficult to analyse than film or text, since comic books require both reading and watching at the same time. Following both the textual and visual narrative can feel off-putting even if one were an avid reader of traditional literature. In his article Rocco Versaci defines the unique nature of comic books as a distinctive medium as such:

"Unlike more "traditional" literature, comic books are able to quite literally "put a human face" on a given subject. That is, comic books blend words and pictures so that, in addition to reading text, readers "see" the characters through the illustrations. What is more, the interplay of the written and visual is a complicated process; a comic "does not 'happen' in the words, or the pictures, but somewhere in-between, in what is sometimes known as 'the marriage of text and image'"."<sup>33</sup>

The Disney comics of Don Rosa are also defined by the generic nature of all Disney comics. The main characters in all of Rosa's stories have been invented by

---

first artists, alongside Carl Barks, whose name had been printed in the cover of a Disney magazine alongside the name of Walt Disney. Lindfors: Don Rosan suuret ankkatarinat in Rosa 2001a, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Herkman 1998, 105.

<sup>30</sup> For more detailed definitions of the different terms presented here, see Witek 1989, 3-11; Herkman 1998, 104-110.

<sup>31</sup> Witek 1989, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Sorlin 1980, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Versaci 2001, 62.

other artists and writers, as well as the basic setting of the stories, Duckburg. Although Don Rosa is one the most easily recognizable artists within Disney comic genre because of his unique style, the context of many readers has been affected by the stories of other artists and writers. Rosa's creation of a coherent history of the Disney ducks also requires taking notice of intertextuality. In its most simple meaning this stands for the ways Rosa has incorporated the works of another comic artist, mainly Carl Barks, and other popular culture references from cinema and literature into his own storylines and visual representations. As Daniel Chandler notes: "*The concept of intertextuality reminds us that each text exists in relation to others. In fact, texts owe more to other texts than to their own makers.*"<sup>34</sup> However, in a more complex manner intertextuality can also refer to the way the reader's cultural context, i.e. history and knowledge of such cultural references, affect the way the reader interprets the graphic stories. In fact, the semiotic notion of intertextuality can refer to either connecting the author and reader of a text, or to connecting the text to other texts.<sup>35</sup> In this thesis both of these notions of intertextuality are important, since Disney comics rely so strongly to their respective genre, and also the readers are most likely to be, if not experts in the area, very familiar with those features. Arthur Asa Berger has suggested that comics in general can be described as "an iterative art form", in which the reader's familiarity with characters grows over the years that are often spent following the same comics, increasing the reader's pleasure in following their adventures.<sup>36</sup> This would seem to be a very appropriate description of Disney comics. Most importantly, however, the concept of intertextuality in this study relates to how the historical reality of the characters in the stories is formed.

Since Disney comics are continuously printed in different publications, in several countries, they sometimes face minor changes to their content due to publication demands: for example, a longer story can be published in either one issue of a magazine or it can be divided into two or three parts published in different issues. This sometimes results to differences in the actual story, when in a continuing story readers need to be reminded of the happenings in the previous issue of the magazine. Pivotal parts of a comic book story are the first and last panels of each page. In literature studies it is

---

<sup>34</sup> Chandler 1994 [www].

<sup>35</sup> Julia Kristeva cited in Chandler 1994 [www].

<sup>36</sup> Berger 1997, 102.

considered that what is presented in the beginning of a story can have crucial consequences to how the reader interprets the rest of the story. This can also be applied to comics, where in addition to the beginnings and endings of each story the first and last panels of each page can be just as meaningful. For example Carl Barks showed significant skill in locating pivotal dramatic cliffhangers in between the turning points of his stories.<sup>37</sup> Rosa shows similar skill in his use of dramatic effects especially in between full-length stories that he has had to divide into two or three parts. There is often a cliffhanger panel in the end of part one and a large recap panel in the beginning of the second part of a serial story. The panels in such pivotal parts of a story are often larger in size and can cover the space of several rows of panels. Such larger panels are called *splash panels*.<sup>38</sup>

The need for original panels to be replaced with recap panels depends on whether or not the artist has known about the need to recap before doing the illustrations. Also translations can affect the story, since they need to be adjusted to the cultural context of the intended readers, which is why it is importance to use the original language versions. However, these are usually minor changes and when necessary they will be mentioned in the analysis. The primary materials used in this thesis are the original English language versions of the stories. As the primary materials consist of digitized copies of different publications such as Uncle Scrooge magazines or hard-back publications from the United States, page numbers are often omitted. Therefore, while introducing a new story and paraphrasing the plot and events, I will not be referring to direct page numbers or panels in the story. Whenever a direct quote or extracted image (single panel or row of panels) from a certain story is used, it will be referred to its respective publication. It should also be noted that since comics are a verbal, but non-audio medium, they often use other ways to emphasize certain parts of what the characters in them might say. Don Rosa frequently uses bolded letters to emphasize certain words, and almost every sentence ends in an exclamation point.<sup>39</sup> When siting a

---

<sup>37</sup> Herkman 1998, 110.

<sup>38</sup> Herkman uses the term *splash pages* instead of *splash panels*, where the term splash page can refer to an entire page where a larger panel in between smaller ones captures the reader's attention, or a page consisting of one single panel. Herkman 1998, 109.

<sup>39</sup> The texts in comic books often use several kinds of 'effects' to imitate sound, emphasise certain matters, create new meaning to the story or even to feature a story within a story, i.e. a *metastory*. Such

direct quote from a story, the bolded emphasis will also be included in the citations. If the emphasis is added later on by me, it will be mentioned in parenthesis after the citation.

---

effects are for example a person speaking pleasant words can be written in cursive penmanship, or characters of different nationalities “speak” in native lettering, i.e. Germans speak in Gothic letters etc. For detailed information about the textual effects of comic books see for example Herkman 1998, 40-47.

## 2. Deconstructing the duck universe in Don Rosa's comics

### 2.1. *From underground fanzines to major publishing house in Scandinavia*

Before Don Rosa got employed by a Disney publisher, he wrote and drew comic books that can be considered as underground comic books, his style similar to other underground comic book artists in the United States during the 1970's. Certain denominators of underground comics can be for example a rather unrehearsed style of drawing, crammed panels full of intricate details, and of course the narratives and subjects of comics ranging from socially and politically opinionated to completely psychedelic. According to Joseph Witek underground comics (or *comix*, as they may also be called) were independently published, low-budget, black-and-white comics that flourished in the late 1960's and early 1970's as outlets of youth counterculture.<sup>40</sup> Well-known underground comic book artists are for example Robert Crumb and Gilbert Sheldon, and although Rosa's comics never featured topics quite as raunchy as the comics filled with sex, violence, and drugs by Sheldon and Crumb, the style and taking a stance on societal issues are still there. Rosa's style of drawing is very similar to underground comic book artists. Rosa is not formally trained to draw comic books, and his self-learned style has remained the same ever since.

Rosa wrote two different series of comic books for university magazines and fanzines, *The Pertwillaby Papers* and *Captain Kentucky* series.<sup>41</sup> The first one followed a young student called Lance Pertwillaby, who can easily be seen as the picture of his creator, Rosa. In the *Captain Kentucky* series Lance Pertwillaby had his own alter-ego, *Captain Kentucky*, a superhero who gained his powers from nuclear waste. Both these series featured intricate stories where the main characters sought for treasure, fought adversaries or even travelled in time in ways which are actually quite familiar to Rosa's current audience. This is because Rosa ended up re-writing some of his underground stories and making them into Disney versions. He has said to have done so, because when he was not yet a professional comic book artist employed by

---

<sup>40</sup> Witek 1989, 51.

<sup>41</sup> Both series have been printed as compilation works in 2001 as parts I and II of *The Don Rosa Archives* published by Gazette Bok.

Disney publishers, he had already thought that his earlier comic book stories would work well, or better even, as Disney stories featuring the characters Rosa loved, i.e. Scrooge McDuck along with Donald and his nephews.<sup>42</sup> Professor Nils Lid Hjort also sees other similarities with the Pertwillaby Papers and duck stories, such as character names and traits, as well as the plot constructions that carry signs of inspiration from the duck universe stories by Barks.<sup>43</sup> Captain Kentucky was a parody of the superhero comic books that were, and remain to be, so popular in the United States. One role model for the character of Captain Kentucky was Captain America, created by Jack Kirby and Joe Simon in 1941. Captain America was “the ultimate superpatriot” as Professor Oystein Sorensen accurately put it, and Captain Kentucky was more like a local or regional patriot. In fact, the Captain Kentucky stories are filled with local references that may be too obscure to especially European readers.<sup>44</sup>

There are quite a few stories which are based on storylines Rosa created for the comics which he drew before going into Disney comics. Rosa has said that in many of these stories he had originally thought that they would suit better as Donald Duck or Scrooge stories, but he had to settle for using his own characters instead.<sup>45</sup> Since Rosa started working for Disney publishers, he then had the opportunity to rewrite and draw these storylines with his favorite Disney characters. However, he did make some changes compared to some of the original stories. After all, the original stories were written for either college newspapers or fanzines, which were targeted towards perhaps a more mature audience. This meant that not every quirk or punch line would be appropriate for Disney versions. The detail in Rosa’s style that transferred from his “underground stories” can be seen in the amount of detailed texts in many panels of his Disney stories. Rosa places text in more than just the speech bubbles in his panels. Text in elements such as posters, signs, newspapers, books etc. can have important meanings in regards to the story, and naturally they also have humoristic elements.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Rosa 2001c, preface.

<sup>43</sup> Hjort: “The absurd, logical, fantastic world of Lancelot Pertwillaby” in Rosa 2001c.

<sup>44</sup> “So you thought Don Rosa didn’t like superheroes?” by Oystein Sorensen in Rosa 2001d.

<sup>45</sup> See for example Rosa 2001c, preface.

<sup>46</sup> Herkman 1998, 43.

Throughout his career, Rosa has had problems with his publishers. The Disney license demanded that authors and artists are not credited for their work as they should, but everything is named with the globally known “Walt Disney” label.<sup>47</sup> David Kunzle notes that Rosa’s inspiration and predecessor, Carl Barks, experienced the same kind of problems:

“The satire of his [Carl Barks] late period was also propelled, I believe, by personal frustrations over the treatment of his work by Western Publishing, the Disney comics franchise: more and more cutting of good pages to make room for advertisements and other editorial tampering, continued refusal to give him personal recognition for his work (all of which is signed simply "Walt Disney"), and the same poor rates of pay for perhaps the best-selling and most prolific comic-book artist in the country.”<sup>48</sup>

Rosa’s first Disney publisher, Gladstone, had started reprinting Walt Disney stories in 1986, becoming a success and coincidentally making Don Rosa a success little by little. But in 1990 the Disney Company decided to reclaim the franchise because it wanted to try out this successful path itself.<sup>49</sup> Rosa fled to Egmont as Disney required Gladstone not to return the original drawings of each story to their respective makers, which Rosa was not willing to accept.<sup>50</sup> Disney’s enthusiasm waned in time and they returned the franchise to Gladstone in 1993.<sup>51</sup> According to Janet Wasko Disney’s obsessive control is a theme that runs throughout the Disney universe, whether in academic studies or in the popular or trade press.<sup>52</sup> Wasko has also written that Disney has a long history of tough enforcement of its intellectual property rights and litigation against potential copyright violators.<sup>53</sup> The Disney copyright policy also insists that if anyone should send any kind of suggestions for stories or submit any other kind of material to Disney, the company claims all rights to such material in the entire universe and shall be entitled

---

<sup>47</sup> Andrae 2006, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Kunzle 1990.

<sup>49</sup> Gabilliet 2010, 96.

<sup>50</sup> Saarto 2006, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Gabilliet 2010, 97.

<sup>52</sup> Wasko 2001, 83.

<sup>53</sup> Wasko 2001, 84.

to unrestricted use of the submissions for any purpose whatsoever, and all without compensation to the provider of those said submissions.<sup>54</sup>

It was working at Egmont that lead Rosa to go even further with taking influence from Barks – one of the first things that his editors over at Egmont told him was that readers in Europe demanded sequels to those beloved Barks stories!<sup>55</sup> Rosa now had the opportunity to continue some of the stories he held most dear, and which ended up shaping the way he would write all stories ever since.

## ***2.2. The legacy of Carl Barks***

Rosa has written numerous stories which are either loosely based on or precise sequels to old Carl Barks stories. It was in fact a wish of his to be able to continue his favorite Barks stories when he first started drawing Disney comics of Gladstone publishing, but at that time Disney comics were so unknown in the United States, that Gladstone did not recommend it. However, the winds turned as Rosa started working for Egmont, where editors expressed their own wishes for sequels to Barks' stories, which were very well known and loved in Europe.<sup>56</sup>

What Rosa did was to take all of the casual remarks made by Barks over the years and turn all of them into a cohesive narrative. However, the coherency of the narrative has expanded beyond just the Barks references, creating a narrative throughout all of Rosa's stories, including those that are not per say a part of for example Scrooge's history. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, intertextuality is an important element in comics as it is in other types of literature as well. It can be discussed in literature through different views, ranging from the idea of all 'texts' being linked to each other through cultural convention to the more detailed, explicit areas of intertextuality. In this thesis the more 'hands-on' approach of Juha Herkman's areas of explicit intertextuality becomes more useful, since it helps us locate the ways in which Rosa's work is connected to Barks' creation, the Disney universe, and popular culture in general, and finally historical events, people, and our common heritage. Herkman lists six areas of intertextuality, which can be found in comics: the traditional ways of

---

<sup>54</sup> Wasko 2001, 86.

<sup>55</sup> Rosa 2001a, 144.

<sup>56</sup> Rosa 2010, 6.



expression in comics, style, generic conventions, references to people, references to facts, and finally quotations.<sup>57</sup> In Rosa's case his works are linked to both the traditional way of expression in underground comics as well as Disney comics. His underground comics were distributed through publications which can be considered usual for underground comics. On the other hand his Disney production has been significantly labeled by his Disney publishers.

What Herkman calls references to either people or other subject matters based on either fact or fiction can be found in both textual and visual form in comics.<sup>58</sup> It can be direct and explicit, or indirect, more like a hint or personal jest by the author. Rosa is known for his numeral references to both historic of mythical people, events, places, and from the other hand references to even his own personal life, or to films that he enjoys. He has even placed himself and his wife sitting on a cliff in the desert in "The Dutchman's Secret" (1999).<sup>59</sup> As for direct quotations, Rosa has in several stories re-drawn panels from Carl Barks' stories that his own stories have been based on.<sup>60</sup> It is not a common thing to do in Disney comics, and since a comic book is not a medium one could stick footnotes on for explaining quotations, they are not always that easy to identify. In most occasion Rosa has, however, distinguished the re-drawn panels by identifying them as for example as memories from Scrooge's past. In addition to 'quoting' from his own role model, Rosa has also drawn inspiration from artists such as Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who painted the most well-known imagery of the Finnish epic Kalevala during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.2.1.

---

<sup>57</sup> Herkman 1998, 181.

<sup>58</sup> Herkman 1998, 187-188.

<sup>59</sup> Another similar metatextual reference by Rosa can be found in "The Richest Duck in the World" (1994), where he drew the Will Eisner Comic Industry Award he had himself received in 1995 on the wall of Scrooge McDuck's mansion. Rosa has noted that drawing the award in a comic situated in 1947 breaks the inner realism he usually strives to achieve, but in this case it was too funny to be left out. Also Carl Barks had a tendency to incorporate unrealistic, silly details in paintings or other billboards hanging on the walls in his stories. Rosa 1997, 271-272.

<sup>60</sup> For example in "The Billionaire of Dismal Downs" Rosa re-drew a scene from Barks' "North of the Yukon" (1965) and another scene from Barks' "Only a Poor Old Man" (1952). Rosa has also re-drawn a panel from "Only a Poor Old Man" in "The Raider of the Copper Hill" (1993). All of these re-drawn scenes and panels display images from Scrooge's past when he was a prospector in either Montana or Klondike. In "The Billionaire of Dismal Downs" he even re-drew a scene from one his own earlier stories, "The Last Sled to Dawson" (1988). Rosa 1997, 198-199.

Style is an important part of the intertextual nature of comics, because it helps to connect and evaluate comic book artists into the tradition of comic books. It is often the perception of readers, critics, and other artists that create such evaluations as Carl Barks being the greatest Disney comic book artist of all time, or that Don Rosa is the most unique Disney comic book artist today. Style is a part of the experience and interpretation of expression in comics, and is therefore linked to the conventions of comic book culture.<sup>61</sup> During their history, comics have twice changed their readership, i.e. audience, being first meant for adults during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only to be relegated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to children's press. The latest change of course is "re-conquest of the adult readership" since the 1960's.<sup>62</sup>

Thierry Groensteen suggests that comics (as art form) suffer from four handicaps: 1) being a hybrid of text and image, 2) storytelling tends to remain in a "sub-literature" level, 3) having connections to an "inferior" branch of visual art, the caricature, 4) even when intended for adults, they tend to propose a return to childhood. Similarly, their aesthetic value is harder to define since the drawings are narrative more than illustrative, executed on a very small space and meant for reproduction, making it difficult to compare the skills involved in their creation to other art forms.<sup>63</sup> Even Carl Barks only found appreciation as an artist after he began producing and selling duck-themed oil paintings, which are usually considered a more respectable art form.<sup>64</sup>

Those that have read Carl Barks' stories will most likely look at Don Rosa's stories from a different point of view than those that have not. It is also more likely that the younger the reader is, the less knowledge or experience he/she has of the genre. Younger readers might be more familiar with artists that are currently more active in producing new stories, compared to my generation who grew up with Don Rosa's stories. And then there is the generation of Rosa, who cherished Carl Barks. Zack Smith, a writer for the Independent Weekly and a fan of both Barks and Rosa, commented online on a blog post about Rosa's huge effort in writing *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series based in Barks' work. Smith wrote:

---

<sup>61</sup> Herkman 1998, 184.

<sup>62</sup> Groensteen 2009, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Groensteen 2009, 7-9.

<sup>64</sup> Ryall & Tipton 2009.

“In some ways, I feel that Rosa is a stonger [sic] overall creator than Barks. His art is more detailed, and his stories are more intricate, with a heavier emphasis [sic] on plot and emotional complexity. In addition, he draws even more heavily from real-world history, and makes that an integral part of the story. His weakness, I feel, is that he’s sometimes hamstrung by comparisons to Barks, or at least by the pressure of staying true to “his” universe. By that, I mean that the vast majority of his stories have been sequels/homages to Barks’ work, and I think he’s not giving himself enough credit for his own considerable ability [sic] to invent new ideas and characters.”<sup>65</sup>

Smith makes a point that Rosa further emphasizes in his own writings: he has written that although he enjoys doing sequels to Barks’ stories, they are not always homages, since the original stories should be considered perfect as they are and in no need of continuation.<sup>66</sup> Rosa also has a tendency to beat himself up for the mistakes in his stories and untrained style of drawing.

Carl Barks showed a fondness of old times, and many of his stories are located in the past.<sup>67</sup> Many of his stories have been seen as anti-modernist, dwelling on the simpler times and pure environment and culture, like in the stories where a Native American tribe lives in the wild or a village cut off from civilization represents a more desirable way on life.<sup>68</sup> The ducks in Don Rosa’s stories actually remember events that have occurred in Carl Barks’ stories. In the case of other Disney writers this does not happen very often, I can recall only a few occasions when there has been a reference in other artists stories to one of the most popular Barks’ story, Christmas in Bear Mountain (1947), but that’s about it. Writers tend to stick to continuing their own storylines instead of noting what other writers have done with the same characters. But in the case of Don Rosa, the characters in his stories live in a world where their past includes both Rosa’s and Barks’ storylines.

---

<sup>65</sup> Comments section in “A Month of Writing Stars – Don Rosa” by Brian Cronin in Comic Book Resources Archive [www].

<sup>66</sup> Rosa 2001a, 144.

<sup>67</sup> Andrae 2006, 19.

<sup>68</sup> Andrae 2006, 21.

### 2.2.1. Sequels or re-writes?

There are full-length stories by Rosa, which are direct sequels to different Barks stories, all of them following their prequels in different ways. They show how directly Barks' work has affected Rosa, and how Rosa is using Barks' stories as inspiration, but managing to still add his own style, quirks and a little bit of history in the sequels. In "The War of the Wendigo" (1991) Rosa takes Scrooge, Donald and Huey, Dewey and Louie back to the same woods that Scrooge purchased in Barks' story "The Land of the Pigmy Indians" (1957). His editors at Egmont asked for a story which would include a warning about the environmental crisis caused by acid rains in the woods of Central and Northern Europe.<sup>69</sup> "The Land of the Pigmy Indians" starts with Scrooge being completely fed up with pollution in the city and therefore wanting to retrieve to the wild. He almost forgets his worries as he sees all the potential for money-making in the woods, but in the end after meeting the Pigmy Indians that inhabit the woods, Scrooge makes a promise not to destroy the wild with his industries. In "The War of The Wendigo" we see that Scrooge has neglected his promise, although not quite intentionally, and the pollution has started to eat away the nature. "The Land of the Pigmy Indians" is also an interesting story because it was in fact not published in the United States until the year 1999, although it was first published in Europe already in 1991. According to Rosa, this was due to the fact that the story contained characters which could be seen as Native Americans; Disney was too afraid of displaying such representations of any ethnic group, since it is still a sensitive subject in the United States.<sup>70</sup> However, Barks' story featuring exactly the same characters had been published numerous times in the United States since its first appearance in 1957.

In Rosa's comic book universe the historical reality of the ducks includes both stories created by Rosa and Barks. This is exemplified by remarks made by characters in Rosa's stories and Rosa's use of copied panels from Barks' stories. The remarks made by characters can be either very meaningful and clearly referred, or more subtle and less noticeable. A good example of more subtle, but yet quite meaningful remarks can be found in Rosa's story "Super Snooper Strikes Again" (1992). This story is one of my personal favorites, but it was also one of the most confusing stories I

---

<sup>69</sup> Rosa 2001a, 78.

<sup>70</sup> Rosa 2001a, 78.

remember from my childhood. The reason for my confusion was that when I first read this story, it resembled very much another story so very similar to “Super Snooper Strikes Again”. The comic that Rosa’s story resembled was a Carl Barks comic, “Super Snooper”, originally published in 1949. In fact these stories are so similar, that Rosa’s version seemed more like a re-write instead of an original story or even a sequel. Yet according to Rosa, “Super Snooper Strikes Again” is in fact a sequel (as well as an homage to Barks) and not a re-write.<sup>71</sup> Although the basic plot is very similar to Barks’ story, the title and a few significant remarks made by Huey, Dewey and Louie in the story show that is in fact a sequel. The problem was that in some cases reprints and translations in Europe did not include these remarks which revealed the story as a sequel. This led to angry fans of Barks claiming that Rosa had stolen the idea for the story from Barks, when his original goal was to pay homage to his own role model, Barks.<sup>72</sup>

In “Super Snooper Strikes Again” Donald is working as a delivery boy, who comes across a delivery of a potent medicine intended to be given to rats to make them as strong as horses. Donald, eager to make his nephews proud of him, takes a gulp of the isotope, and delivers the bottle half empty. The scientists, who receive the delivery, wonder by themselves how “*That dizzy Prof. Cosmic sent **another** half-empty canister of isotopes!*”<sup>73</sup> referring to Barks’ “Super Snooper”, in which similar events lead to the delivery of a half-empty bottle of isotope to scientists as well. Later on in the end of the story, after Donald has failed to prove to his nephews that he has in fact gained super powers, Donald is left dazed and confused in his bed. The boys are worried since “*He says he can’t remember a thing since last Tuesday!*”<sup>74</sup> to which one of them answers “*Weird! Just like last time!*”<sup>75</sup> This again refers to the story by Barks and the similar events that occurred in his story. From Donald’s nephews’ point of view, “Super Snooper Strikes Again” is one big déjà vu moment after another. This time around they learn a lesson on idolizing superheroes instead of their uncle, and realize that he is a hero even without super powers.

---

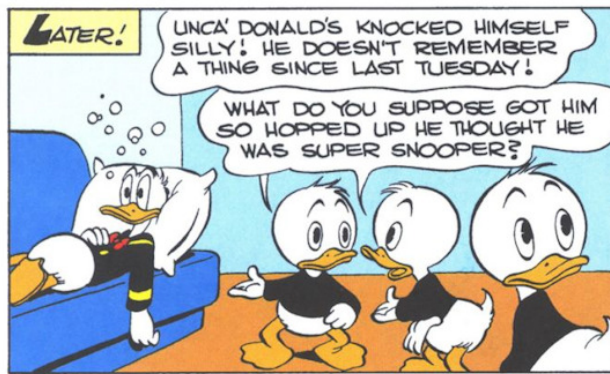
<sup>71</sup> Rosa 2001a, 118.

<sup>72</sup> Rosa 2001a, 118.

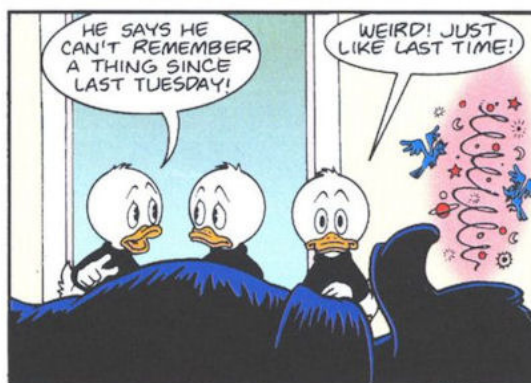
<sup>73</sup> Super Snooper Strikes Again (1992). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Super Snooper Strikes Again (1992). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Super Snooper Strikes Again (1992). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. 2008.



**Image 1: Super Snooper (1949). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. 2008. © Disney**



**Image 2: Super Snooper Strikes Again (1991). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. 2008. © Disney**

These two stories featuring Donald as Super Snooper have been published recently in the United States beneath the same covers in *The Barks/Rosa Collection 2* (2008), and similarly in *Aku Ankka* magazine in Finland also in the same volume, with a preface explaining the relationship between the similar stories written by different artists.<sup>76</sup> In 1992, when Rosa's story was originally published, the connection was not nearly as easy to make, since magazines did not usually publish the names of writers or illustrators, and Rosa was not yet as well-known and popular as today.

### **2.3. The Disney universe**

According to Janet Wasko, Michael Real discussed already in 1973 in his book *Mass-Mediated Culture* what had by then become known as the "Disney universe". Real argued that the Disney message created "an identifiable universe of semantic meaning", along with the fact that the Disney organization used the term Disney universe itself and that it signified the "universality" of Disney's products, which made the term valid to be

<sup>76</sup> *Aku Ankka*, N:o 45, 10.11.2010.

used in research as well.<sup>77</sup> According to Wasko, the Disney Company has created a “*self-contained universe which presents consistently recognizable values through recurring characters and familiar, repetitive themes*”.<sup>78</sup>

Now although Don Rosa has maintained a very unique style of drawing, and his storylines have been commended for being more intricate, unique and complicated than many other comic book artists working for Disney, he has still had except the fact that he also uses those same recurring characters as all other Disney writers, and he has also had to feature those familiar, repetitive themes that come with the Disney universe. The stories that are very familiar in the Disney universe feature for example Donald being successful in a new job or other venture, and then ending up failing in it, mostly because of being too greedy or overconfident about his abilities. Another recurring theme that readers are familiar with is Magica DeSpell’s various attempts at stealing Scrooge’s first dime. Readers expect Magica to fail, but also that her attempt will be executed in a funny and never-before seen way.<sup>79</sup> These stories do not directly relate to this study, since they are what are called “gag stories”, based on the same familiar patterns. But they serve as good examples of how genre affects Don Rosa’s work as well as all the other Disney comic book artists, who are constantly asked by their editors to come up with such stories, because they are almost always a success among the readers. Readers of Disney comics are so attuned to these kinds of stories that it does not really matter whether or not they have read something very similar before. Rosa has mentioned having to come up with these kinds of stories being quite difficult for him, since he would prefer writing longer, more complicated plots which require background research.<sup>80</sup>

An interesting, and very telling example of the restrictions that the Disney universe can bring comes from the University of Oregon in the United States. Their University mascot has since the 1920’s been a duck. In 1947 they adopted a version of Donald Duck as mascot, and received permission from the Disney Company to do so. Since then the mascot has been known as The Duck or the Oregon Fighting Duck. Decades after, the University has had to make new arrangements with Disney

---

<sup>77</sup> Wasko 2001, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Wasko 2001, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ritola 2000, 60-61.

<sup>80</sup> Rosa 2010, 70, 84.

concerning the use of the character, but they have managed to keep it as their mascot since it was Walt Disney himself, who had agreed to its use in the first place. What is interesting about the agreement between the University and Disney is a particular stipulation in the contract, stating that The Duck should be used “in a good manner” and not portrayed in a “negative light”, since people think of Disney as wholesome, family entertainment.<sup>81</sup>

In Disney production conventionalized symbols are for example a saw cutting into a log or using the letter Z as markers for the sound of sleeping. Similar conventions are using a light bulb to implement having an idea, birds flying around a characters head to indicate confusion after being hit in the head or otherwise hurt.<sup>82</sup> Such symbols indicate the emotional state or mindset of a character, and they are part of the ‘grammar’ of comics.<sup>83</sup> The reader who is familiar with such conventional symbols knows how to read (Disney) comics. According to Herkman the confinements of different genres consist of different metaphors and metonyms that define the genre’s relationship to other genres. They also affect the reader’s manner of structuring popular culture and comic books through genre.<sup>84</sup>

Genre is not necessarily something easy to define, since it is more than style and tradition or such similarities among texts. The (cultural) conventions of both the authors/artists and the readers define genre as well.<sup>85</sup> In narrative theory narrative texts can be further defined to narrative genres, such as science fiction, western, comedies etc., to which narrative theory applies to.<sup>86</sup> Narratives follow us through our lives, from fairy tales heard in childhood to reading texts ourselves; they permeate our conception of (popular) culture.<sup>87</sup> Just as Don Rosa’s Disney comics contain stories which can be identified or contain aspects of different genres.<sup>88</sup> In the case of Disney

---

<sup>81</sup> Wasko 2001, 86-88.

<sup>82</sup> Herkman 1998, 46.

<sup>83</sup> Herkman 1998, 21, 68.

<sup>84</sup> Herkman 1998, 92.

<sup>85</sup> Herkman 1998, 186-187.

<sup>86</sup> Berger 1997, 37.

<sup>87</sup> Berger 1997, 9-10.

<sup>88</sup> For example some stories in The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series show many resemblances to westerns, which will be discussed further in chapter three of this thesis. Rosa has also created stories which can be identified as science fiction: in “The Duck Who Fell to Earth” (1991) Donald and Scrooge



the use of animals as frequent characters is one very definitive area of the genre. But in addition to what is included in the genre, also what is excluded from it plays an important part in defining the genre. Anthropomorphic characters have been used in many comics that differ greatly from the Disney genre with stories taking on darker subject matters, such as Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (1986) which tells about the Holocaust through mice and cat characters. The wholesomeness that defines Disney production comes from what is excluded as well as the fun stories.

Because Don Rosa's stories, although very distinctively made in his own style, are in the end Disney stories, they have some very distinct features about them that are familiar to all readers of Disney comics. There are also some things that Rosa has to include, or cannot include due to Disney license and publishing house demands. Johanna Eskelinen has suggested that one of the reasons to why the Finnish Donald Duck magazine *Aku Ankka* became so popular in Finland was "*the good "family" image of the Disney Corporation*". According to Eskelinen "*the Disney comics that *Aku Ankka* consisted of were seen as harmless because the potentially disturbing aspects of reality, such as birth (which turns comic characters into sexual beings) or death had been excluded from the world of Disney products*".<sup>89</sup> According to Janet Wasko classic Disney themes and values include: individualism and optimism; escapism, fantasy, magic and imagination; wholesomeness and innocence; romance and happy endings; and finally good triumphing over evil.<sup>90</sup>

Janet Wasko has also listed classic Disney characteristics, which although mostly based on Disney's animation production, can also be applied to comic books.

---

take off to space to capture satellites. In "The Attack of the Hideous Space-Varmints" (1997) the ducks come across an alien device which takes the entire money bin to outer space where they meet a family of aliens. In the spirit of Jules Verne the ducks even travel to the center of earth in "The Universal Solvent" (1995). On another occasion in "The Incredible Shrinking Tightwad" (1995) a device called "the atom subtractor" makes Scrooge and Donald shrink, ending up in the size of bacteria. Then there are several stories, which can be identified purely as slap-stick humor, such as "A Matter of Some Gravity" (1996) and "Forget it!" (2002) in both of which the entire story is based on the humor which arises from the effect *Magica De Spell's* magic wands have on the physical capabilities of Scrooge and Donald. Adventure stories similar to Indiana Jones films or historical detective stories will be discussed further in chapter four.

<sup>89</sup> Eskelinen 2008 [www].

<sup>90</sup> Wasko 2001, 116-119; Ritola 2000, 62-63.

Such characteristics include: reinventing folk tales, where fairy tale characters go through a process of Disneyfication, which includes Americanization; a narrative style which resembles classic Hollywood cinema style; predictable and reoccurring characters with stereotypical features, and anthropomorphized animal characters, almost always including the hero, the villain, the humorous sidekick, the love interest etc. Special characteristics of such Disney characters include for example the female heroines always being physically attractive, but at the same time asexual, living in a male-dominated world, where there are few complete families: Children without parents or with just one single-parent occur often even though “*the sanctity of the family*” is said to be a dominant theme in Disney features.<sup>91</sup> The same kind of approach to family can be identified in the duck universe as well, where characters such as Donald’s three nephews, or Daisy Duck’s three nieces, or even Mickey Mouse’s two nephews naturally must have parents, but their past is left relatively unknown. Wasko has noted, however, that since apparently Walt Disney himself was never as interested in the comic book production of the Disney company rather than the animation production, the creators of Disney comic books might have not been as influenced by the ‘classic Disney’ approach, which may explain why the comic books show some departure from such characteristics.<sup>92</sup> According to Tom Andrae especially Carl Barks’ works show elements of irony, satire and cynicism as opposite to the Disney ethos.<sup>93</sup> As the successor of Barks, it can be argued that Rosa would include similar qualities to his stories as well.

Issues concerning the family relations of characters have appeared in Don Rosa’s stories surprisingly often. Rosa is well known as being the writer who finally made a detailed family tree of the McDucks including also quite distant relatives. The one person Rosa had to leave masked even in the family tree was the unknown father of Donald’s nephews. Rosa has spoken about writing the story of Donald’s nephews’

---

<sup>91</sup> Barker 1989, 280; Wasko 2001, 112-116.

<sup>92</sup> Wasko 2001, 145. In his bibliographical study on Carl Barks Tom Andrae explains that Barks experienced very little external control over his work, and was one of the few artists who both wrote and draw their work, and had little editorial supervision throughout their career. Although other artists apparently had to submit story scripts to editors, Barks received an autonomic status after establishing his ability as a storyteller. Andrae 2006, 12-13.

<sup>93</sup> Andrae 2006, 17.

parents, Della Duck and the unknown father of Huey, Louie and Dewey. However, the subject is tough to handle, since the story would most likely be an unhappy one. Was Della a single mother who could not care for his own sons, or did he and the father of the boys perhaps have a drinking problem or other social issues that forced them to hand over their sons to be raised by Della's unfortunate brother? These kinds of scenarios do not really fit the world of Disney where duck-faced characters lead lives where happy endings are a must to every story. In fact, Carl Barks himself rejected the idea of a uniform duck universe throughout his career. He did not appreciate the attempts of Rosa to develop full biographies of his characters. According to Tom Andrae Barks even wrote to Rosa about the issue of Huey, Dewey and Louie's mother, saying that it would be best if Rosa avoided any mention of her, since it would not be necessary to explain all mysteries to the public, and because Disney would in any case forbid him of making her "a pimp's wife who got pregnant while working in brothels in Kansas City."<sup>94</sup> Barks felt that the characters, despite being more like people than animals, were still fictional rather than real people, who should not be humanized to such an extent.<sup>95</sup>

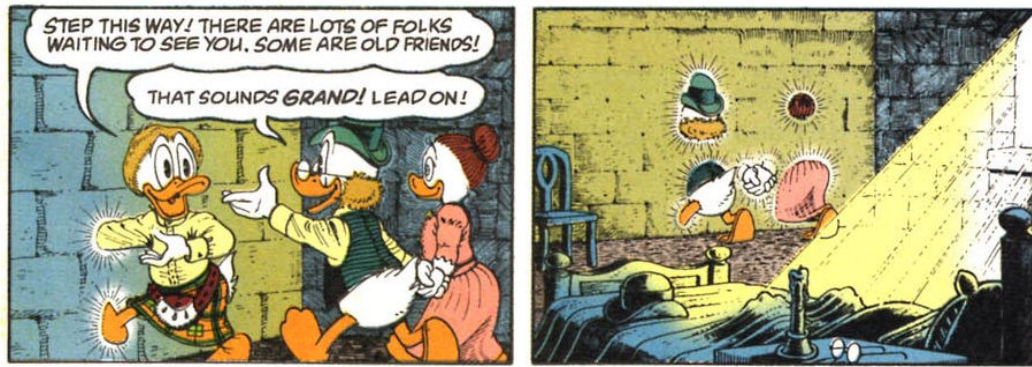
Rosa has also been criticized for showcasing death in his stories. It has been seen by many readers as too serious of a subject. In part 9 of *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series Rosa displays the passing of Scrooge's father. In a previous chapter of *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*, part 8, "The King of the Klondike" (1993), Scrooge receives a letter explaining that his mother has passed away. In "The Billionaire of Dismal Downs" (1993) Scrooge and his two sisters leave the McDuck Castle as their father watches them from a balcony. Beside him is his wife, who had supposedly passed away earlier. The conversation between the two characters indicates the pride of parents who have completed their job as educators and can now move on. In the next panel appears the character of Sir Quackly, an ancestor of the McDuck clan, who then leads Scrooge's parents through the walls of the castle, showing them to be spirits rather than people. The body of Scrooge's father is displayed lying in bed under covers.<sup>96</sup> (See Image 3)

---

<sup>94</sup> Andrae 2006, 107.

<sup>95</sup> Andrae 2006, 107-108.

<sup>96</sup> *The Billionaire of Dismal Downs* (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 293. 1995.



**Image 3: The Billionaire of Dismal Downs. *Uncle Scrooge* 293. 1995. © Disney**

According to Rosa, this was the first time one of the main characters in a Disney story had passed away, but it was something that Rosa new from the start he would have to include in Scrooge’s biography.<sup>97</sup> On another occasion, Rosa’s editors over at Egmont had told him not to use the character of Ludwig Von Drake in his stories, because Von Drake is officially considered deceased in the Disney universe of ducks. Rosa, however, decided that the character was too important to be left out from the story “A Little Something Special” (1997), which celebrates Scrooge McDuck’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday by showing the celebrations that took place in Duckburg on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Scrooge’s arrival in town. The back of Ludwig Von Drake’s head is showing in one single frame of the story.<sup>98</sup>

Rosa has also implied that he might be interested in writing a story on the origin of the most loved mythological character of all time, Santa Claus himself, but unfortunately his editors over at Egmont have not given him authorization to do such a story, since there are so many myths and stories existing on the subject. So Rosa had to write to his fans in Finland, that he could not write a story locating Santa to Finland since he has been taught (like most Americans) that Santa lives on the North Pole!<sup>99</sup> This implies the difficult relationship on mythologies. Not all myths are so called common territory to writers such as Rosa. Whether it was Santa Claus or Jesus Christ, they seem to be some topics that are just too delicate to handle. In fact, one of the few times when Rosa has seemingly added a reference to Christian mythology is when Donald accidentally damages the Holy Grail in the story “A Letter from Home”. Once

<sup>97</sup> Rosa 1997, 198.

<sup>98</sup> Rosa 2005, 33.

<sup>99</sup> Rosa 2001b, Preface.

he realizes the grave mistake he has made, Donald looks up to the ceiling with apologetic eyes and asks for forgiveness, but from whom? It is not specifically mentioned, but naturally the western reader makes the connection to Christian God.

Religious agendas in Disney productions have been analyzed through Disney's feature length animations. Mark L. Pinsky goes as far as referring to the "Disney Gospel", which he claims is the "*consistent set of moral and human values in these movies, largely based on Western, Judeo-Christian faith and principles*"<sup>100</sup>. According to Pinsky, this Gospel "*reflects the personal vision of Walt Disney and the company he shaped in his image and, to a lesser degree, the commercial goals of the studio*"<sup>101</sup>. Furthermore, in this gospel Pinsky sees how "*good is always rewarded; evil is always punished. Faith is an essential element – faith in yourself and, even more, faith in something greater than yourself, some higher power. Optimism and hard work complete the basic canon.*"<sup>102</sup> However, the more widespread opinion among researchers is that Disney production is more secular than religious.

### **2.3.1. The nostalgia of the 1950's in Duckburg, Calisota**

An interesting juxtaposition in the analysis of Disney comics compared to my analysis of Don Rosa's comics comes from the fact that although Rosa is an American, his characters can be considered American since they are Disney characters, and the location of most stories is America, the comics themselves are not very popular in the United States. Disney publishing in the US has undergone major changes during the past few decades, changing from big publishers to smaller, low income publishing houses which struggle to produce quality publications to a smaller and smaller audience. The comic book market in the United States is controlled by mainly superhero related and other fantasy comic books. American Disney comic artists and writers are also few in numbers, and most current writers and illustrators come from Europe. And now even Don Rosa has retired from writing and illustrating due to health problems. So Disney comics are not very popular in the US, but they are extremely popular in the rest of the world, especially in Europe. This results in the fact that Rosa's stories are

---

<sup>100</sup> Pinsky 2004, xi.

<sup>101</sup> Pinsky 2004, xi.

<sup>102</sup> Pinsky 2004, xi-xii.

representations of American style Disney stories, and they represent the American people and their lifestyle to a mostly non-American audience.<sup>103</sup> It can be considered how this “Americanism” displays itself in the actual stories. The subject is touched upon in the latter parts of this thesis, especially when considering the western film style approach in some parts of The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series. Moreover, many European writers and artists have “Europeanized” many of the characters to suit their audiences, even though the characters are American by mandate of the Disney license.

Most Disney stories today, written and illustrated by mostly European artists, can be seen as placed in today’s world and current time. Many stories feature a lot of action concerning modern technology such as computers and the internet, or modern sports such as the Formula 1 competitions which served as key locations in a series of stories by Per Hedman and Flemming Andersen in 2002. Stories are also often written with references to very current events, most often large sports events such as the World Championship games of football or the Eurovision song contest. These kinds of very current and quite frankly very European stories are controversial compared to Rosa’s duck universe. Rosa locates his stories in the same duck universe that Carl Barks’ created. Due to the fact that Barks created most of his most well-known and beloved stories during the 1950’s, many of them resemble the era well. To Rosa time has gradually stopped from going forward in Duckburg, and ended up in an endless loop. Although he considers it as sort of a personal joke of his, he has been very consistent in locating his own duck stories to that same period of time.<sup>104</sup>

It is not only a problem for Rosa but to all Disney writers who utilize the same characters that no matter how much time goes on and the surroundings where they place their stories, their characters do not seem to age.<sup>105</sup> Still to celebrate important anniversaries such as the “birthdays” of characters, i.e. the day the character was first introduced to the public artists are often asked to create special stories to commemorate these anniversaries. Rosa did such a story in honor of Donald’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1994 when he wrote “The Duck Who Never Was” (1994). Since Rosa was faced with the

---

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Ritola 2000, 62.

<sup>104</sup> Rosa 2009, 74.

<sup>105</sup> For example Huey, Louie and Dewey cannot ever grow old, as they would eventually move out from their uncle’s house and change the entire convention of the family dynamic. Ritola 2000, 61.

dilemma of Donald not really being as old in his duck universe, he implied in the story that Donald being the age of 60 was a mistake his new employer made, and turned the issue into a defining joke in the story.

Rosa has noticeably derailed from his path of staying true to the 1950's surroundings only on few occasions.<sup>106</sup> He was asked to create a story related to the 1994 Winter Olympics in Norway by the editor or Norwegian Egmont. Originally Rosa wanted to stick to his agenda and keep the story located in the 1950's by having Donald attend the Winter Olympics of 1952 which were held in Oslo, Norway. However his editor wished that he would feature actual sights of Lillehammer and the Olympic Torch designed for the 1994 Winter Olympics, so Rosa decided to bend his policy and have Donald attend the 1994 Winter Olympics instead. Only the image on the second to last page featuring the ski-jumping platform at the 1994 Winter Olympics indicates in any way that the story is not located in the 1950's, and since there are no visible year marks it is not very obvious. Later on though, Rosa has said that in his mind this story is imaginary, since Donald would have been 75 years old and therefore too old to enter a ski-jumping competition.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Another story by Rosa, which could be listed as imaginary for the same reasons as "From Duckburg to Lillehammer" (1994) is "The Star-Struck Duck" (1989), a story that cannot really be featured in the full list of Disney stories by Don Rosa, since it is the only Disney story that Rosa never finished. The story was a special commission from Rosa's publisher, Gladstone Comics, and it was supposed to be used to market the new Disney-MGM-studios' amusement park. Rosa created a narrative where Donald and his nephews go around the park and even meet Mickey Mouse. The story was turned down by Disney and never published because Disney claimed it was too commercial. Had the story been published, it would have been located in an amusement park in late 1980's United States, which would be another disruption to the coherency of Rosa's duck universe and its 1950's feel. Rosa 2009, 56.

<sup>107</sup> Rosa 2009, 74.

### **3. The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck – Historical tales, truths, and memories**

#### ***3.1. From westerns to Citizen Kane with the help of heirlooms & button-nosed presidents***

In The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series the past is present in a number of ways. Firstly, the past is represented in the locations of the stories where the scene of events often tells of an important era in American and global history. The same goes for the historical people involved in some of the stories. Their appearance places the events in their respective era, as do narrative techniques such as metonyms displaying for example landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty being built in the background of a splash panel.<sup>108</sup> Secondly, a certain kind of approach towards the past as something which is important and meaningful to any man is represented in the way Scrooge's family heritage follows him throughout his adventures, guiding him, reminding him of what's valuable, and sometimes causing misfortune as well. This family heritage is represented in both artifacts such as heirlooms, ancestral buildings, and more abstract concepts such as birthplace, as well as the care and worry of family members, their teachings, and finally their passing from this world.

In The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck we are seeing Scrooge's past as if it were a film, a continuing narrative following the individual but at the same time depicting the past and historical events and people that have been on the location of the individual's life, struggles and family histories included. The narrative is similar to the popular 1997 film *Forrest Gump*, where important events of 20<sup>th</sup> century American history were represented as side happenings in the life of a not-so-observant man. Influential people, groundbreaking political events and cultural turns take place and are a part of the individual's life, but not the center of it. In the center of the narrative are always the main character and their personal struggle. To relate to and understand the past, history is personalized.<sup>109</sup> It is apparent for example when the sinking of the Titanic is significant to Scrooge because it affected his business, not because of the lives that were lost or the influence the ship's faith had on the psyche of both Europeans and

---

<sup>108</sup> The Raider of the Copper Hill (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 288. 1994; Herkman 1995, 80-81; Berger 1997, 10-11.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Rosenstone 1995, 59; Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 123-146.



Americans in early 20<sup>th</sup> century when trust in progress and technology was so strong.<sup>110</sup> Narrative in comics most often reflects the narrative style of Hollywood cinema, where the viewer does not actively think that they are watching a film, but rather are ‘sucked in’ to the story identifying with it. This ‘invisible’ narrative style is used in comics, but it can also be used against itself for humoristic purposes.<sup>111</sup>

Readers get to experience Scrooge’s past from his days as a young lad in Scotland to the day he first meets his nephew Donald and his young nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie. Throughout the stories Rosa also depicts the transformation of a young boy full of hopes and dreams and a true wish to help his family get out of financial anguish, into quite a bitter old man, who has lost all contacts to his family and ended up alone with his wealth, which no longer gives him the pleasure it once did. In the end of the series we also see the change which the re-acquaintance with family members, especially the younger generation inspires in this old adventurer. Disney comics have been criticized for their absence of work and material production, representing a world where wealth is just lying around without an owner, and can be easily taken into possession.<sup>112</sup> What Rosa has done with his works is firstly shown that the richest man in the duck universe has in fact had to work very hard to gain his fortune, which has accumulated to him over a long period of time instead of magically appearing in one night. Secondly, Rosa’ treasure hunting stories tend to end rather

---

<sup>110</sup> The Empire-Builder from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. 1995.

<sup>111</sup> In some cases a comic book character may in fact acknowledge their presence in a comic, which makes the narrative style of comic books visible to the reader. A character might try and break out of a panel or comment the shape of another characters speech bubble. Herkman 1998, 112. Now although such meta-language rarely occurs in Rosa’s stories, we can find an example in the story “The Last Lord of Eldorado” (1998). In this story Scrooge and Donald have been treasure hunting in the Caribbean by diving into the sea to find sunken ships that once carried treasure. To help them locate the ships they have at their disposal a reproduced image of a map from the 17th century pinpointing even older ships. The ducks had discovered the map in a previous story by Rosa, “Treasure Under Glass” (1991). Since “The Last Lord of Eldorado” used as an essential element the map that the ducks had discovered in another story, Rosa had to summarize the events of the previous adventure to his readers, who might not have read “Treasure Under Glass”. He made Donald recall the events of how they discovered the map in two panels, which does not yet sound all that unusual. However, after these two panels Scrooge tells Donald: “I know all that! What are you, a recap caption in some silly comic book?” The Last Lord of Eldorado. *Uncle Scrooge* 311. 1998.

<sup>112</sup> Barker 1989, 281-282.

disappointingly for Scrooge and the boys, when instead of getting to keep the discovered treasures they often end up losing them to their rightful owners.<sup>113</sup> The stories mentioned in the latter example will be discussed further in chapter four. The stories on how Scrooge first gained his fortune through hard work and many sacrifices will be discussed in the following chapter.

As The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series shows many similarities to historical film, film theory becomes valuable in its analysis, along with narrative theory of both film and comics. In his work on historical film, *Visions of the Past* (1995), Robert Rosenstone discusses how mainstream films construct a historical world. Rosenstone's points on the representations of the past that films make can, in my opinion, be quite easily transferred onto comic books. According to Rosenstone historical films, or in this thesis, comics, tell history as a story, with a beginning, middle, and an end. The tale includes a moral message and often a feeling of uplift. No matter what the subject area is, the message is almost always that things are getting better. Rosenstone continues that historical films also insist on history as the story of individuals and put them in the forefront of historical process, which means that the solution of their personal problems tends to substitute itself for the solution of historical problems. The personal becomes a way of avoiding the often difficult social problems pointed out by the film. Additionally, films emotionalize, personalize and dramatize history, and give us history as triumph, anguish, joy, despair, adventure, suffering and heroism. Historical films offer history as the story of a closed, completed, and simple past. It offers no alternative possibilities to what we see happening on the screen, admits of no doubts, and promotes each historical assertion with the same degree of confidence. They give us a look of the past – with artifacts, buildings, landscapes – that might affect our sense of history, and provide a [false] sense of how common objects appeared when they were in use. This capability of film might be called false historicity. Films also show history as a process and bring together what traditional written history compartmentalizes, i.e. study of politics or social life, showing all aspects as interwoven instead of dividing them into distinct topics and categories.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> See for example “The Crown of the Crusader Kings” (2001), “The Treasury of Croesus” (1995), and “The Treasure of the Ten Avatars” (1996).

<sup>114</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 55-61.

Almost all of these distinguished features can be applied to historical comic books as well as their original target, film. Perhaps the fifth feature of showing actual historical artifacts or buildings and through that creating a false sense of experience can be somewhat criticized in terms of comic books, since even though comic books visualize historical subjects like films do, comic books are rarely meant to look completely realistic. In comic books, even if the basic idea of for example human characters looking as realistic as possible (body is in proportion, facial expressions are realistic), the overall look of a comic is always somewhat artistic and expressive rather than realistic in the sense that historical film aims to look like.<sup>115</sup> Similar to historical films, Rosa has a tendency to include many historical ‘clues’ that set the story in a specific period in the past. Such clues include dates, diegetic and extra-diegetic texts and drawings, showing well-known scenes or settings or faces, i.e. historical people, and indicating the historical period within the dialogue.<sup>116</sup> It can be argued, that in historical comics as in any historical fiction times and places serve mainly as colorful historical backdrops for their fictional protagonists.<sup>117</sup> Sorlin identifies three categories in the relationships films have with their reference period: firstly, the basic role of typifying political and ideological positions of a period, secondly, the noticeable function of and important historical epoch, and finally the superficial significance of the periods which are just habitually quoted. The categorization points out how the past can be either active or obsolete in a society (both the society of the era in which the film was produced and that is depicted in it).<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, Don Rosa does aim for a realistic look in recreating the environments based on true settings, such as in “The Quest for Kalevala” (1999), where he has drawn the historical buildings in central Helsinki from actual photographs, but still keeps to the tradition of drawing all characters as button-nosed animal like versions, whether or not they are based on historical characters. As he draws President Theodore Roosevelt with a black button nose, despite the lack of realistic appearance, readers believe it to be a nice enough representation of the former President of the United States. The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut (2001). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Sorlin 1980, 87.

<sup>117</sup> Witek 1989, 13.

<sup>118</sup> Sorlin 1980, 46.

### 3.1.1. Family heritage as motif

There are some consistent, reoccurring elements in *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* stories, which can be considered motifs that are used in film narratives.<sup>119</sup> The first is the use of memorabilia presented in scrapbooks made by Scrooge's sister, Matilda. Right up until the second last part of the original series each story begins with a splash panel displaying a page of a scrapbook, each time showing elements which allow the reader to get a hint of what is to happen in the story, where the story is located and in which period of Scrooge's life is it located in. The scrapbooks pages hold within them photographs of people, locations and artifacts, as well as maps and glimpses of letters from Scrooge to his family or vice versa.<sup>120</sup> (See Image 4)

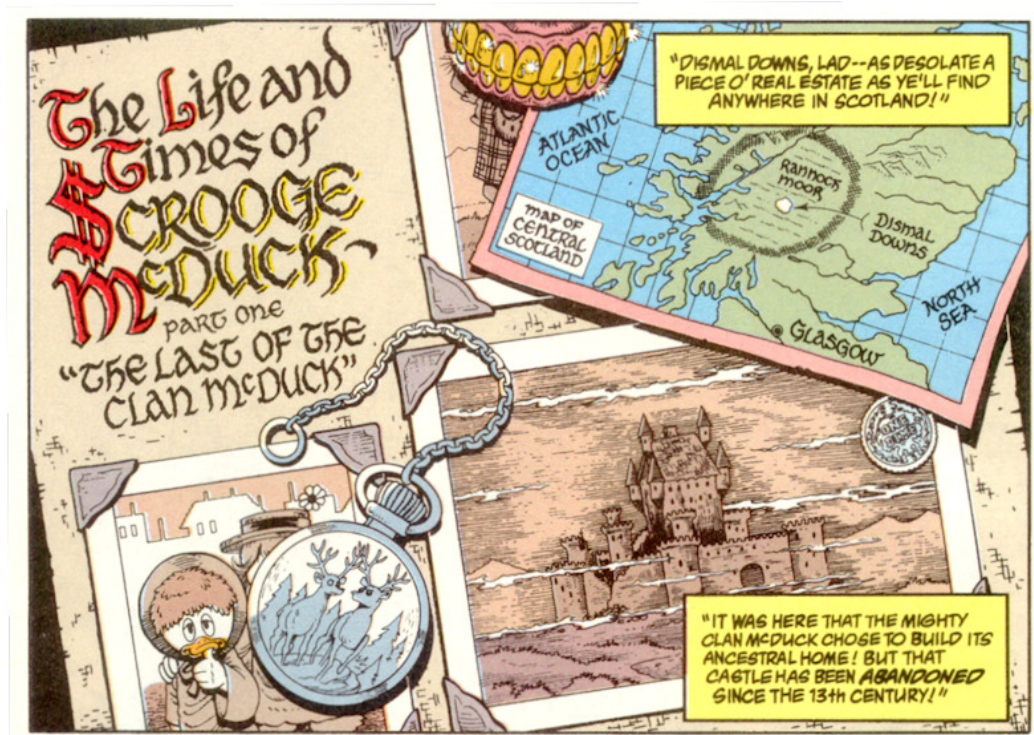
Another particularly noticeable motif is the family heirlooms Scrooge carries with him throughout the first half of the series. In part one, "The Last of the Clan McDuck" (1992) Rosa depicts young Scrooge's decision to gain wealth in order to support his family, and how he acquired a new kind of enthusiasm towards hard work. Scrooge then decides to take his search for a better life abroad, and leaves for the United States, inspired by the first dime he ever earned through hard work, which by coincidence is an American coin. Although the McDuck family is poor, Scrooge learns about the clan's former glory when he visits the old McDuck Castle. The past which the family legacy now presents to him for the first time inspires Scrooge to reinstate the clan to its former glory. Especially since Scrooge is now the last of the Clan McDuck, being that he is the only son in his family and the continuance of the family line is hereby defined patriarchal. Young Scrooge then receives the two remaining valuable artifacts that the clan owns – his great grandfather's gold teeth and his silver watch.

---

<sup>119</sup> When any detail takes on significance through repetition, it is called a motif. Any element in film can develop into a motif, including lines in dialogue, gestures, costumes, locations, props, music, color, and composition. Motifs can for example provide information about characters or reinforce the significance of an idea, or encourage spectators to compare and contrast characters, events, situations etc. Pramaggiore & Wallis 2005, 12.

<sup>120</sup> Rosa uses a lot of narrative techniques such as letters, overhead conversations, phone calls, articles/newspapers, and thoughts. Such information allows both the characters in the stories and the reader to receive information, and it can be vital to both the continuance of the story and understanding it (from the reader's perspective). Cf. Berger 1997, 56; Sorlin 1980, 62-63.

Scrooge, as the representative of the new, virile generation gets a tangible piece of his heritage to take along on his own quest. (See Image 4)



**Image 4: The Last of the Clan McDuck. *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. 2010. © Disney**

These heirlooms follow and guide Scrooge along the series. In the end of part two, “The Master of the Mississippi” (1992), Scrooge still has no more fortune than a few dollars, but as Scrooge puts it, *at least* he still has the family heirlooms he left Scotland with.<sup>121</sup> The valuables remind Scrooge of his legacy and of his own goals. In part three, “The Buckaroo of the Badlands” (1992) the heirlooms help Scrooge defeat the famous historical villains of the James Gang, Jesse James and Frank James. Scrooge outsmarts the crooks with help from his family valuables, the gold teeth of his great grandfather. In part four, “The Raider of the Copper Hill” (1993), Scrooge is forced to

<sup>121</sup> The Master of the Mississippi (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. 2010. Part two of the series places Scrooge in Louisville, Kentucky in the United States, along the great Mississippi river system, where he has come to find his uncle, Angus McDuck. Rosa draws up an image of late 19th century southern life with its gambling, boozing, brawling and boating along the Mississippi. He also introduces Scrooge to new characters, which end up playing a remarkable role in his life (and the duck universe in general), Ratchet Gearloose, father of inventor Gyro Gearloose, and the fathers and grandfather of the Beagle Boys, whom against Scrooge is to fight many battles later on. Both the characters of Gyro Gearloose and the Beagle Boys were invented by Carl Barks. See for example Andrae 2006.

part with one of the heirlooms which have followed and guided him so far. He sells the golden dentures of his great-great-grandfather to be able to purchase mining gear. However, he still decides to keep the silver watch.

Another recurring element, or motif, is the appearance of a mystical character, a ghost in fact. The ghost of Sir Quackly, Scrooge's ancestor guides him in "The Last of the Clan McDuck" without revealing his identity. He returns in part five, "The New Laird of Castle McDuck" (1993), as Scrooge returns to his roots in Scotland because the clan's ancestral castle has been ordered to go on public sale due to nonpayment of taxes. As Scrooge battles a member of the opposing Whiskerville clan and is on the verge of losing the fight, an invisible spirit, i.e. an ancestor lifts his sword, helping Scrooge win the fight. A lightning strike, however, throws him into the castle's trench. Scrooge wakes up in what appears to be heaven, and meets his ancestors who are playing golf in the clouds. Although they debate on whether or not Scrooge's life so far has been a failure or not, and if he is worth giving another chance in life, they end up giving Scrooge the chance of saving himself from the trench and returning to save the clan's fortune and pride from the hands of the Whiskervilles. Scrooge's ancestors seek guidance in the big book of the McDuck Clan, which shows both what *has* happened, but also what *is going to* happen. They decide that it is not yet Scrooge's time to join them, and give him an advantage on how to win his opponent.<sup>122</sup> After awakening from this dream-state, Scrooge does not recall "meeting" his ancestors. Katja Kontturi has argued that the dream-like state Scrooge is in after falling in the trench is sort of a mid-section in between fantasy and reality. It could be seen as a dream, had not one of Scrooge's ancestors been shown previously in the form of a shadow in the castle, making the ancestor real instead of imaginary. Then again, Scrooge comes out of this dream-like experience by falling, which is often what wakes one up from a dream.<sup>123</sup> Whether or not Scrooge truly met his ancestors, or it was a depiction of his imagination, what can be established is that the importance of ancestors and their effect on the current generation's life is emphasized in "The New Laird of Castle McDuck". Ancestral heritage defines and affects Scrooge's life without himself realizing it, but the narration displays it to the reader. Sir Quackly is shown again in part nine, "The

---

<sup>122</sup> Kontturi 2009, 111-112.

<sup>123</sup> Kontturi 2009, 111-113.

Billionaire of Dismal Downs”, where he welcomes Scrooge’s parents to join the clan’s ancestors after their death.

### 3.1.2. Western adventures

Part three, “The Buckaroo of the Badlands”, starts the part of the series which resemble the western more than any other kind of film genre. Parts three, four, six, seven and eight of the series include several of the most common characterizations related to westerns.<sup>124</sup> The railroad and the telegraph are important elements of the narrative on many occasions.<sup>125</sup> There’s a battle between a rancher and rustlers.<sup>126</sup> Even as Scrooge leaves the Wild West, he takes his cowboy attitude and lifestyle with him, continuing the style of narration similar to westerns. His adventure in South Africa is a classic revenge story, and in his time in Australia he gets in contact with a native and a thief, who resembles a common crook from any western.<sup>127</sup>

As Scrooge tries out his wings as a cowboy, Rosa introduces several historical characters into Scrooge’s life, connecting him to American history. The splash panel in the first page of “The Buckaroo of the Badlands” locates Scrooge on the Missouri-California railroad, where Scrooge is faced with his first encounter with famous historical villains of the James Gang, Jesse James and Frank James. Scrooge outsmarts the crooks with help from his family valuables, the gold teeth of his great grandfather. The heirlooms serve a vital purpose in Scrooge’s life once again. However, the story takes a new turn when Scrooge is cast off the train and stumbles upon a group of cowboys and their leader. He takes up a position as cattle herder, and his new employer

---

<sup>124</sup> Berger 1997, 151-152.

<sup>125</sup> See for example *The Buckaroo of the Badlands* (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. 2010; *The Raider of the Copper Hill* (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 288. 1994.

<sup>126</sup> *The Buckaroo of the Badlands* (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. 2010.

<sup>127</sup> Part six, “The Terror of the Transvaal” (1993) places Scrooge in Johannesburg, South Africa, where the diamond and gold mining industry had created a westernized environment similar to the Wild West in the United States. The story displays how Scrooge made a powerful enemy known from Barks’ stories, Flintheart Glomgold. Although the environment of the savannah and the animals Scrooge encounters there place the story in Africa, the historical surroundings shown from Kimberley and Johannesburg are very similar to the imagery Rosa has created of the American western frontier. This is due to the fact that Johannesburg was established soon after the gold rush of 1886. The town was flooded with not only people from the surrounding area but also North Americans and Europeans.

happens to be Scottish-born Murdo McKenzie (1850-1939), manager of the Scots-owned Matador Land and Cattle Company, and personal acquaintance of President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>128</sup> Further on in the story Scrooge gets to meet Roosevelt, although he is not yet president, but a young man still. Scrooge, the fictional character, and Roosevelt, a very significant person in the history of the United States, encourage each other to strive to reach their dreams and work harder, Scrooge to gain his fortune, and Roosevelt returning to politics after a brief try in buckarooing.

It has been suggested that the Western combines history with myth as they recapitulate the ‘myths’ of the American West and obscure history.<sup>129</sup> It has also been argued that this interplay between history and myth is best revealed in self-reflexive Westerns which are about how the West becomes the Wild West.<sup>130</sup> The parts of The Life and times of Scrooge McDuck series which resemble the Western show how the Western frontier transformed as they show how the character of Scrooge transforms along with it. Because they focus on the life of a fictional character and leave the evolution of the society to the background, they obscure history as they heighten the myth of the man, or in this case, duck.

A fundamental part of the Western’s narrative is the encoding of the political and societal development of the United States, whether it exalts the history of the nation directly or indirectly.<sup>131</sup> Contact with the frontier and the conditions and the ways of life which once marked its existence, was and is a means of personal and national renewal and regeneration.<sup>132</sup> It has also been suggested that the mythic narrative of the Western underlines the ideological imperative of progress.<sup>133</sup> Roosevelt’s character becomes another motif in the series, as he plays part in Scrooge’s life by coincidence in three stories in total.<sup>134</sup> Roosevelt represents the progress of the American society, moving from the frontiers into a powerful nation-state, and finally a world power that operates outside its borders in “The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut”

---

<sup>128</sup> Hayter: "MACKENZIE, MURDO," *Handbook of Texas Online* [www].

<sup>129</sup> Baker 2006, 124; Neale 1999, 125-126.

<sup>130</sup> Baker 2006, 124.

<sup>131</sup> Baker 2006, 125.

<sup>132</sup> Neale 1999, 126.

<sup>133</sup> Baker 2006, 125.

<sup>134</sup> Roosevelt appears in part 3, “The Buckaroo of the Badlands”, part 10, “The Invader of Fort Duckburg”, and part 10B, “The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut”.



(2001) where the story is set around the construction of the Panama Canal. Masculinity is seen as a vital construction with regard to the ideological narratives of the Western, as masculinity and the nation-state are mutually reinforcing constructions, and masculine characteristics are bound up with ideas and ideals of American-ness.<sup>135</sup> Roosevelt and Scrooge both construe the ideas of masculinity and of American-ness, as they are (most of the time) unconditionally honest and fair individualists who believe in the values of hard work more than anything else.<sup>136</sup>

The heterogeneity of Westerns means that they are not necessarily confined to displaying the frontier myth, but also for example encounters between the West and modernity, the hardships and dangers faced by women, themes of revenge and prejudice, or the activities of land-grabbing villains.<sup>137</sup> All of these elements can be discovered in the Western stories of Scrooge's life. Even the occasional female gunslinger is seen in part 6B, "The Vigilante of Pizen Bluff" (1996), when Scrooge meets Annie Oakley in Phineas T. Barnum's Buffalo Bill's Wild Wild West show.

The Western parts of the series display what Scrooge experienced before he became wealthy in the Klondike Gold Rush. Therefore they share similarities in the ending of each story. As Scrooge tries out his wings in boating, cattle herding and prospecting, he fails to gather any more money than what is just enough to support himself and his family in Scotland. Although Scrooge is presented with several opportunities in becoming rich, he learns that it cannot be done overnight or by dishonest actions. In "The Raider of the Copper Hill", Scrooge almost gets his hands on the Anaconda Copper Mine due to the fact that on Scrooge's claim lies the source of Anaconda's copper vein. As a judge rules Scrooge the rightful owner of the Anaconda Copper Mine, he also receives an urgent telegram from his family in Scotland. The clan is in a financial crisis, which forces Scrooge to accept Anaconda's offer of 10 000 dollars for his claim.

Part seven, "Dreamtime Duck of the Never-never" (1993), tells of Australian Aborigine culture, i.e. their dream tales, and it also explores the nature of the Australian environment. Scrooge finds that the Aborigines' stories include a dream tale that tells about his own past and future. Although the narration in this story resembles

---

<sup>135</sup> Baker 2006, 126-128.

<sup>136</sup> Rosa 2007, 193.

<sup>137</sup> Neale 1999, 128-129.

the previous western-style stories, it also emphasizes destiny and the constancy of life as something predetermined. Rosa's Scrooge is at the same time "the maker of his own luck", who works hard to achieve his goal, and also a slave to what his life has been destined to become, and has now been shown to him twice.<sup>138</sup> An Aborigine man tells Scrooge that "*dreams are true forever*" and that he should "*never again belittle the quest for the past*".<sup>139</sup> However, ultimately the story teaches that we each interpret our own dreams, and therefore choose where they make take us, as Scrooge gets to see what he believes to be Northern Lights in a reflection of a crystal. The Aborigine man tells him to make his own interpretation of the reflection, and Scrooge decides to head north to seek his goal of becoming rich.

### 3.1.3. From a poor prospector to a wealthy land owner

Part eight, "The King of the Klondike" marks the change that occurred in Scrooge's personality after he finally started to gain prosperity, it is a pivotal turning point in his life.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, the story does not end with the commonly used notion "*The End*", or even with "*To Be Continued*", as comics often end with. This time, the story ends with "*The Beginning*". In "The King of the Klondike" Rosa depicts how Scrooge discovered an untouched territory where he made claim, and after hard work, found the famous Goose Egg Nugget of gold which made him rich. Scrooge's ordeals in the wilderness and in the town of Dawson resemble the western film style mentioned in the previous chapter.

Additionally, Rosa has incorporated some narrative techniques in this story that are worth introducing: in the near end of the story Scrooge is being held captive by his creditor Soapy Slick, in hopes that he will be able to steal Scrooge's bond for his claim. He then taunts Scrooge with the news of his mother's passing, and sets in motion a series of events which are depicted in very different style from the main storyline. The narration switches to an outside narrator explaining events in retrospect being narrated to those that weren't there to witness them. The coloring of the panels is almost black-and-white instead of full colors, resembling an old film or TV

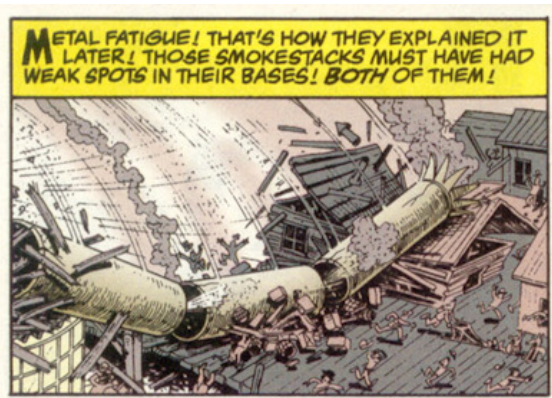
---

<sup>138</sup> Previously in "The Last of the Clan McDuck" by his ancestors, although Scrooge did not recall the events afterwards.

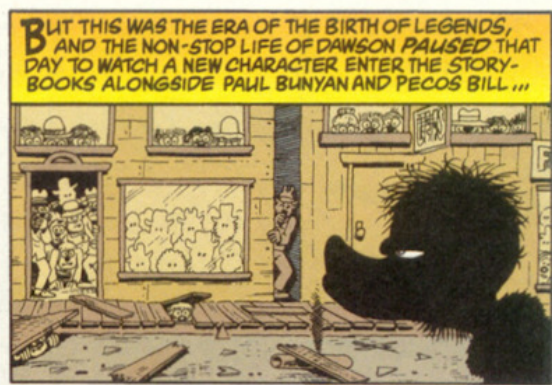
<sup>139</sup> The Dreamtime Duck of the Never Never (1993). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck I*. 2010.

<sup>140</sup> Rosa 1997, 179.

documentary. The perspectives in the panels also hint to the style of documentaries. Scrooge is not shown in any of these panels; his participation in the events is only hinted in the context, and it is implied that Scrooge among other things destroyed an entire steam boat. (See Images 5 and 6) The full colors return gradually as the narration switches back from retrospect to current events, where Scrooge has defeated his opponent. With this approach Rosa wanted to emphasize how this was the time when Scrooge became a legend, and maintains that the sequence was not meant to be taken literally as something that happened, but what legends later on would tell.<sup>141</sup>



**Image 5: The King of the Klondike (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 292. 1995. © Disney**



**Image 6: The King of the Klondike (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 29. 1995. © Disney**

“The King of the Klondike” also introduces Scrooge’s one and only love interest in the duck universe of Rosa (and Barks).<sup>142</sup> One of Barks’ most beloved

<sup>141</sup> This stylistic and narrative technique left some readers puzzled, since they felt that it showed too much similarity to violent super hero comics, to which they did not want to associate Disney comics. Rosa 1997, 180.

<sup>142</sup> Some Disney comic book artists and writers have adopted the character of Brigitta McBride, who was invented by Italian writer Romano Scarpa in the 1960’s. In especially Italian stories Brigitta’s love for

Scrooge stories is “Back to the Klondike” (1953), where he introduced the character of Glittering Goldie and shed first light into Scrooge’s forgotten love life, and also made the character of Scrooge a little more likable than before by showing his compassionate side. In “Back to the Klondike” Scrooge is suffering from a type of amnesia for which he receives medicine in capsules which make him recall his days as a prospector in Klondike. In the story Scrooge recollects many events which Rosa has later re-drawn in his stories. What’s interesting is how Rosa’s stories which feature Glittering Goldie are positioned in the chronology that results in both Barks’ and Rosa’s stories. In “Back to the Klondike” Goldie is a starving, poor woman left in the wilderness to fend for her claim. When Scrooge meets Goldie, it’s for the first time since their departure almost 50 years earlier. In Rosa’s duck universe Goldie appears in two stories, “The Last Sled to Dawson” (1988), and “A Little Something Special”. In “The Last Sled to Dawson” as the ducks decide to go Alaska to retrieve Scrooge’s old sled from the ice, Scrooge shouts out “[W]e’re going back to the Klondike... *again!*”, referring to Barks’ story and pointing out to the readers that the events they are reading about are happening after those depicted by Barks.<sup>143</sup> Once the ducks arrive in Dawson, they find that Goldie has managed to get well back on her feet, and purchased a hotel which she now successfully runs. This could not have happened without the gold she discovered (with Scrooge’s assistance) in Barks’ story. In Rosa’s duck universe Goldie appears again in “A Little Something Special”, the commemorative story written for Scrooge’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, as the one person who can give the world’s richest duck something he wants, a kiss from a loved one from his past.

Part nine, “The Billionaire of Dismal Downs” marks the end of an era in Scrooge’s life as well as part eight did as the end of his poor days. Scrooge now returns to his home land, to Dismal Downs, as a rich man. However, he is faced with the traditional life style he has been away from for so long, and discovers that he has in fact grown to appreciate the future more than the past which in Dismal Downs shows in the people’s fondness of tradition. At the end of the story Scrooge states with a sigh “[--] *these ancient traditions and customs have made me realize how little I belong here anymore! The Scottish highlands are rooted too much in the past, while my life is tied to*

---

Scrooge manifests itself in an almost stalker-like approach, as Scrooge remains aloof and unattached to Brigitta.

<sup>143</sup> Last Sled to Dawson (1988). *Uncle Scrooge* 350. 2006.

*the future! In far-off lands and far-flung endeavors! In progress!*"<sup>144</sup> In the end of "The Billionaire of Dismal Downs", as Scrooge leaves to pursue the future and what it may bring, he literally takes his own generation, i.e. his sisters Matilda and Hortense along with him, leaving his father behind. They are breaking free of the chains that the past might hold. What Scrooge and his sisters do not see, but the readers get to witness, is that Scrooge's father has passed on, making the transition from one generation to another even more tangible.<sup>145</sup>

Parts ten and eleven tell how Scrooge settled in on his estate in Duckburg, began constructing the money bin, and gained more fortune in his business travels across the globe. Alongside these events Rosa depicts for example how Scrooge's sister met Quackmore Duck, Donald's future father.<sup>146</sup> What is most significant about these parts is Scrooge's transformation to an unscrupulous, pitiless businessman who alienates his last remaining family members when he forgets his family heritage. The splash panel in the beginning of part eleven, "The Empire-Builder from Calisota", shows Matilda putting away the scrapbooks she has created of Scrooge's life. Showing what characters are thinking can be done indirectly in a visual media like comics through having them write diaries, letters, journals, or in this case, keeping a scrapbook and then putting it away as a sign of disapproval.<sup>147</sup> It is a metaphor for what can now be expected to be seen in the rest of the story. As Scrooge returns from yet another business trip, his sister Hortense claims that he is "[G]etting richer and richer, and meaner and ornerier!" to which Scrooge responds: "You should realize by now that's the name of the game! The only thing that counts is how the bin filling up!"<sup>148</sup> Scrooge then takes his sisters on one of his business endeavors, this time located in the jungle "in

---

<sup>144</sup> The Billionaire of Dismal Downs (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 293. 1995.

<sup>145</sup> Qv. chapter 2.3.

<sup>146</sup> This revelation caused a sensation especially in Europe after the publishing of the story. In the United States fans had been familiar with the identity of Donald's parents, since Barks had depicted the family relations in his early draft of the ducks' family tree. In Europe, however, due to different translations and publishers of Disney stories, many fans had imagined that Grandma Duck (Elvira) and Scrooge were brother and sister, which according to Barks and Rosa they are not. So some European readers had imagined that Grandma Duck was Donald's mother, as Donald is Scrooge's nephew. Rosa 1997, 218-219.

<sup>147</sup> Berger 1997, 47.

<sup>148</sup> The Empire-Builder from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. 1995.

*a shady part of darkest Africa*".<sup>149</sup> As he tries to win over a native tribe residing in the site of a diamond mine he has his eyes on, Scrooge resorts to low measures to get what he is after. As his sisters witness the change that has occurred in his nature, they decide to leave him, and in a letter urge him to return to them if he changes his ways. Even as Scrooge realizes his sisters' contempt for his actions, new business endeavors capture his mind.

"The Empire-Builder from Calisota" is a different and somewhat difficult story in the series because the time span it covers is extensively longer than that of other parts. In comparison, for example the previous part, "The Billionaire of Dismal Downs", only covers a period of two days, and yet it includes an important sequence in Scrooge's life, the time when he settled in Duckburg.<sup>150</sup> In "The Empire-Builder from Calisota" (1993) attempts to cover a period of 45 years!<sup>151</sup> After the first half of the story, when Hortense and Matilda have left Scrooge because of his ill actions, Scrooge is shown travelling and doing business in numerous places for a long period of time, from exploring the North Pole to meeting Czar Nicholas II in St. Petersburg and being on board the Titanic on its first and last voyage across the Atlantic. Rosa managed to create a thread that follows through the long time span by using a character created by Barks, the zombie named Bombie.<sup>152</sup> The tribe leader Scrooge fooled cursed Scrooge and made Bombie follow him throughout his life. Due to the fact that space and the number of pages are very limited in comics, the long years are compressed to only a few pages and the narration is mostly external, leaving little space for dialogue, resembling a continuous narrative montage.<sup>153</sup> Only in the end of the story, which depicts Scrooge's return to Duckburg after 23 years since he saw his sisters does the narration gradually return to the normal style of Rosa. His family members are welcoming him back, willing to put any disagreements behind them. Scrooge, however, appears to have no interest in his family, as he kicks them out. Hortense confronts him and says: "*Just who do you think you are, Scroogey?! How dare you treat us like this after we haven't seen*

---

<sup>149</sup> The Empire-Builder from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. 1995.

<sup>150</sup> Rosa 1997, 218.

<sup>151</sup> Rosa 1997, 247.

<sup>152</sup> Bombie Zombie appeared in Barks' "Voodoo Hoodoo" (1949). The latter part of the story features more references to Barks' stories than any other part of the Life and Times series. Rosa 1997, 247.

<sup>153</sup> Sorlin 1980, 85.

or heard from you in 23 years?!” to which Scrooge responds “You didn’t gripe when I left home at 13 to **support** the lot of you! If you don’t **like** what a hard life has made of me, you can **get out!**”<sup>154</sup> As he is left alone, Scrooge’s mind wonders to his past once more, as he remembers the good times he once had with his family. But all of this is forgotten once he sees the billboard on his wall, which states that he is now the richest duck in the world. As his family departs the money bin in the last splash panel, Matilda states: “[--] Scrooge McDuck **once** had everything! Now all he has is his **money** and all that money can buy! \*sigh!\*”<sup>155</sup>

The end of “The Empire-Builder from Calisota” anticipates the end of the entire series, as the end note says “*To be concluded...*” instead of the usual “*To be continued...*” line. In the next and final part of the series, “The Richest Duck in the World” (1994), the story is in fact located in the present time of the ducks. The splash panel in the beginning no longer features scrapbook pages of Scrooge’s past, but a detailed representation of what his present life revolves around, i.e. his money.<sup>156</sup> The first page indicates it is Christmas Day, and Scrooge is shown reminiscing his past in Klondike alone in his mansion. On the next page the style of the panels changes, as the narration takes the form of an old newsreel, title “News on the March”, which tells of the legendary “*richest man in the world and first citizen of Duckburg*”.<sup>157</sup> The newsreel’s narration captures Scrooge’s mysterious past from an outsider’s perspective, ending with the notion of Scrooge retiring from the public into a solitary life in his mansion, leaving the money bin abandoned, and society wondering what it holds within.<sup>158</sup> Rosa uses the narrative style of the newsreel to summarize the events that have lead up to this point where Donald and his nephews are in “the present time” of the

---

<sup>154</sup> The Empire-Builder from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. 1995.

<sup>155</sup> The Empire-Builder from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. 1995.

<sup>156</sup> The Richest Duck in the World” Rosa returned in this beginning of the final part to where the series started; in the prologue of The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series he shows Scrooge enjoying himself in the midst of his fortune in the money bin. He also ended the story in the same surroundings. Rosa 1997, 270.

<sup>157</sup> The Richest Duck in the World (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 296. 1995.

<sup>158</sup> The newsreel is a reference to the film Citizen Kane. Rosa sees a similarity between the characters of Charles Foster Kane from the film and Scrooge McDuck, in the sense that they are both extremely wealthy and yet unsatisfied in their life. Donald even discovers Scrooge’s Rosebud (an old sleigh from the film) in an old chest in the story. Rosa 1997, 270-272.

duck universe.<sup>159</sup> The stylistic appearance of the panels still place the time in the past, the 1950's. The reel's narration also suggests a feel of representing something forgone, something that has happened in the past and is left meaningless in its bygone state.

As the newsreel ends, Donald, Huey, Dewey and Louie enter into the picture. They are on their way to meet Scrooge, who has invited them over to his mansion. The story is set on the day after Donald and his nephews returned from Bear Mountain, but right before they joined Scrooge for Christmas Day dinner in Barks' story "Christmas on Bear Mountain" (1947).<sup>160</sup> Because Barks' story did not show what exactly happened in between the ducks return from Bear Mountain and their get-together, Rosa was able to locate the series of events in his final story of Scrooge's life in between those events. In the story Scrooge meets Donald and the boys for the first time, and in an attempt to show them what his life has really been all about (because Donald and the boys know only what they've learned from newsreels and legends), he takes them to the money bin. However, his old opponents, the Beagle Boys (or rather a new generation of them) twist the plot into a rescue mission as the crooks try to steal Scrooge's money. As Donald belittles Scrooge's experience and his capability to have fought such crooks now or ever, Scrooge is rejuvenated and torn out his misery. (See Images 7 and 8)

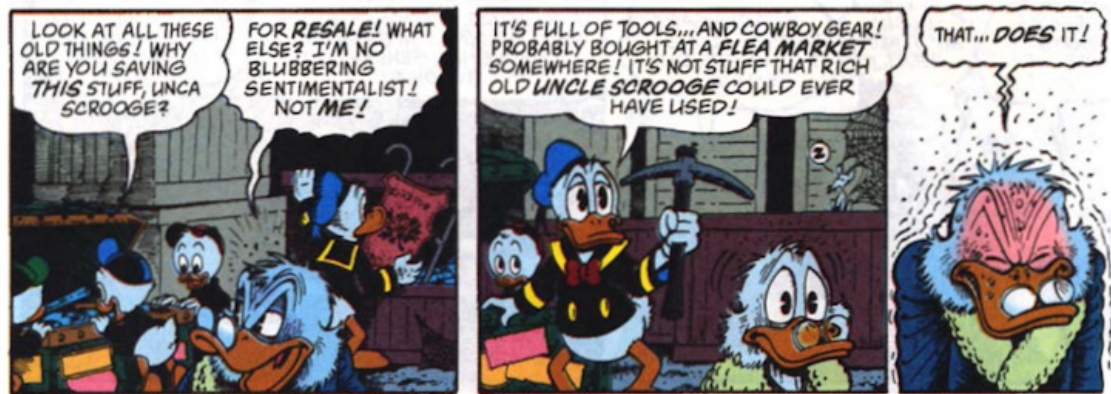


Image 7: The Richest Duck in the World (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 296. 1996. © Disney

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Berger 1997, 50-51, 111-121.

<sup>160</sup> "Christmas on Bear Mountain" was the first story featuring the character of Scrooge McDuck. In the story Scrooge made Donald and his nephews spend the night at a mountain cabin, hoping to see if his nephew showed courage and character. The story ends in a joyful Christmas Day celebration with Scrooge, Donald and the boys.



With the help of Huey, Dewey and Louie Scrooge overcomes his foes yet again, and shows them a glimpse of what he used to be, and whom the readers now he is to become again.



Image 8: *The Richest Duck in the World* (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 296. 1996. © Disney

So Rosa has depicted the life story of Scrooge McDuck, teaching a lesson in the importance of hard work and persistence, integrity and staying true to yourself, and most importantly, the value of family and your past. The value of the past is emphasized above all in the very last panel of the original “Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series”, which shows Scrooge lying on his money, remembering important events in his past (See Appendix). For greater emphasis in the very top right corner of the panel Donald is wondering how “[A]ll he [Scrooge] has to show for his life is a vault filled with cold, *meaningless metal!*” to which his nephews respond “*We dunno, Unca Donald... You might be wrong!*”. And as the entire panel is filled with Scrooge’s memories, referring that the money bin is filled with them as well as the actual money, the story end an external narrator responding to the boys’ remark “*And, as usual, he was!*”.<sup>161</sup>

### 3.2. *The invention of history*

According to Rosenstone there are different ways to use invention in historical films, of which some can be seen as more acceptable even when they are messing with historical fact. These are *alteration*, *compression*, *invention* and *metaphor*.<sup>162</sup> These tools can also be seen at use in some of Don Rosa’s comics. In some cases he has even mentioned

<sup>161</sup> *The Richest Duck in the World* (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 296. 1995.

<sup>162</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 72-75.

such invention in his written introductions to his stories, and explained his own justifications to such changes. The ways of using true invention in historical film according to Rosenstone are as follows:

*Alteration.* According to Rosenstone, in some cases alteration can be justified if it serves a purpose in for example bringing an experience manifested in the story into line with the a larger experience, i.e. conceptualizing the showcased events into a larger spectrum on things.<sup>163</sup>

*Compression.* For purposes of displaying a larger variety of characteristics involved in the actual historical events, the filmmaker or comic book artist can use a selected group of characters which might have not been together in the actual events. They can also compress the time span of historical events for narrative purposes, which can be seen very often in visual media such as comic books or films.<sup>164</sup> A traditional written book can, so to speak, go on infinitely, and many great pieces of literature are quite a handful in page numbers (and in weighing more than a brick!). The medium of film or comic book is much more restrained and conventional, where a film is most likely two to three hours long and a comic book story (especially one published in Disney magazines) is even in its longest form no more than 30 some pages.

*Invention.* To exemplify a point of view or to make an important point stand out the filmmaker or comic book artist can invent an event that might have very well happened in real life, and incorporate it into the actual historical events depicted in their work. This is the invention of truth. However, the filmmaker or comic book writer might fall in the trap of false invention as well, where the entire historical reality is falsified and distorted by adding false invention.<sup>165</sup>

*Metaphor.* Metaphors are used in literature, films and every other medium to add depth and meaning to the story, topic, or character at hand by using an invented image to stand for or sum up events too complex, difficult or lengthy to depict.<sup>166</sup> Metaphors and metonyms are found in all kinds of narratives. Although metaphors are mostly seen as literary devices, they are also pervasive in everyday life, since our

---

<sup>163</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 73-74.

<sup>164</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 73.

<sup>165</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 73.

<sup>166</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 75; Rosenstone 2000, 7.

conceptual system is metaphoric by nature.<sup>167</sup> When it comes to comic books it is possible to consider the visual or textual elements in a comic as separate metaphors, or to consider the metaphoric nature of an entire story.<sup>168</sup> In comic books the most common metaphors are according to Herkman the conventional, even mundane metaphors that both maintain and renew cultural values and categorizations.<sup>169</sup> They occur in both the textual and visual elements of a comic. Metaphors are also created in the reader's interpretation. It is a matter of the reader's ability to discover the metaphors intended by the author and/or artist behind the comic. The reader may even interpret metaphor where it was not intended, in order to make sense of their own interpretation.<sup>170</sup>

These tools of true invention can be found in the historical stories of Don Rosa where the events are located in the past, and the narration is similar to a historical film. In the following chapter I will take a closer look at one of the companion stories to The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series, and consider whether the historical elements found in the story can be identified as either true or false invention. For example, in "The King of the Klondike", analyzed in the previous chapter, Rosa had altered the historical reality of the surroundings the story was located in. He purposely changed the original Klondike route to include Skagway, because he felt that it was such an important part of the legends from the period. He also altered the nature of the surroundings by making Dawson City to be the wild, murderous, law-bending western style city, when in fact it was Skagway that held such a reputation.<sup>171</sup> (See Image 9)

---

<sup>167</sup> Berger 1997, 11.

<sup>168</sup> Herkman 1998, 81-89.

<sup>169</sup> Herkman 1998, 82.

<sup>170</sup> Herkman 1998, 84.

<sup>171</sup> Rosa 1997, 180.

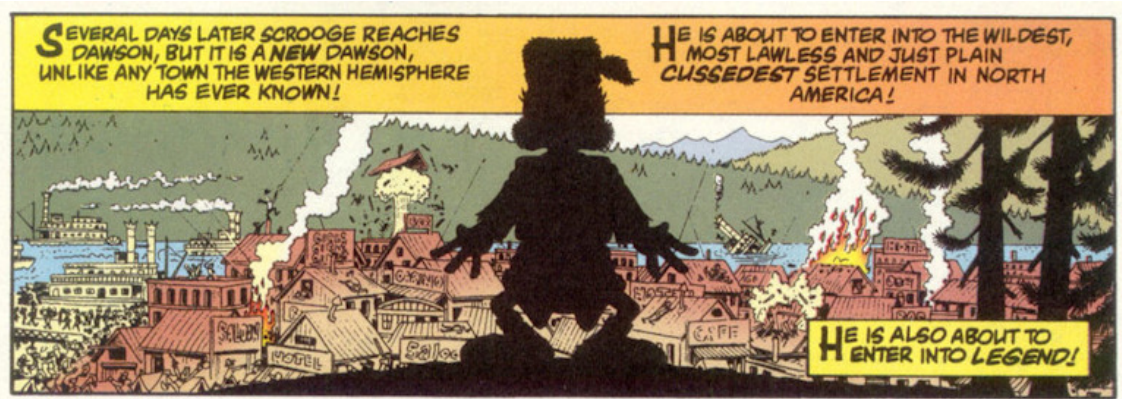


Image 9: The King of the Klondike (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 292. 1995. © Disney

In the case of Don Rosa we do have additional information and discourse to include in our reading of the historical rendering he presents. Since his stories became as popular as they now are, Rosa has been asked by publishers to write prefaces to each of his stories which were printed in hard back publications. In these prefaces Rosa explains in detail the amount of work he has put into his own background research, many (if not all) of the historical facts he has used, the historical people he has portrayed etc. These commentaries are the footnotes that are missing from the actual story. Rosenstone has said that like the book, the historical film cannot exist in state of historical innocence and ignore the findings and arguments of what we already know from other sources.<sup>172</sup> The same goes for the comic book: even though it is mostly a medium meant for entertainment purposes, if one incorporates history in to it, it is bound by and interpreted by the knowledge of the past that we already possess.<sup>173</sup>

### 3.2.1. Alteration and compression in “The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark”

To establish in more detail how the Disney stories by Rosa which are located in the past resemble the historical film, and use similar narrative techniques, I have attempted at a closer reading of a particular story which suits the purpose. Chapter 3B in *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*, “The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark” (1998), shows numerous examples of how Rosa has compressed and altered historical facts in order to create a more adventurous and attractive narrative, but also to incorporate history for its

<sup>172</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 72.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Berger 1997, 11-12.

many educational purposes into one story, although it has resulted in a somewhat distorted chronology of historical events.

The story begins in current times, as Scrooge tells his nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie about the time he spent on the world's most famous clipper, the Cutty Sark. There are therefore two different temporal levels in which the entire story is set in. The surrounding story set in the present and the main story set in the past. But the events set in the past are in fact a descriptive tale told by the main character himself. This means that Scrooge might be elaborating some events, leaving certain aspects unmentioned, either by accident or intentionally, and simply remembering some happenings or characters incorrectly, since our minds tend to make tricks on us from time to time. This can be considered as a sort of absolution for many of those inventions made to the historical facts that the story is based on. The original stories in The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series were written in chronological order, as depictions of Scrooge's past as it was. The companion stories to series however usually start out with Scrooge in the present recollecting his past and sharing his tales with Donald and his nephews. All of the stories however share the same historical point of view where the main happenings take place in the past. However, due to the surrounding story of Scrooge telling the stories of his past in the present times, multiple time layers in the narrative are created.

In the surrounding story Huey, Dewey and Louie are rampaging through Scrooge's beloved chest of memorabilia and discovering that Scrooge had, according to a newspaper clip, been on board the famous clipper Cutty Sark. The newspaper clipping lets the reader know that the year was 1883 and it was the month of July. If we check the history of the actual Cutty Sark, we learn that Captain F. Moore had just recently been appointed to be in charge of the clipper, and that it had started the ship's most successful years in working life yet. Under Captain Moore's command in 1883-1885 the Cutty Sark worked in Australian wool trade. But it was in fact in July of 1883 that the clipper reportedly left Gravesend, United Kingdom, bound for Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia, arriving in October 1883. After loading 4289 bales of wool and 12 casks of tallow, the clipper departed Newcastle in December 1883 and arrived back in London in March 1884.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> Cutty Sark: The world's last tea clipper - 1883-1895: The Australian Wool Years [www].

Scrooge tells his nephews that he had boarded the ship in Australia in order to travel through the Sunda Strait, which is the strait between the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra.<sup>175</sup> He was taking two longhorn bulls to Java to offer to the sultan of Djokja for bull racing. From the date in the scrap book seen in the beginning of the story, we can establish that this would have happened around July 1883. In actuality, by that time the ship was only on its way to Australia to retrieve its cargo of Australian wools, which are seen being pulled from below the decks of the Cutty Sark later on in the story. Rosa saw an opportunity to place Scrooge on board the most famous clipper in the world, since it had voyaged to Australia, which was close enough to Batavia, although this meant bending the timelines of certain events.<sup>176</sup>

In addition to having the Cutty Sark leave Australia months before it even arrived there in real life, Rosa compressed the historical time of events featured in the comic by having Scrooge and the rest of the characters experience with their own eyes and ears the massive volcanic eruption of Krakatoa. The eruption of Krakatoa is one of the most massive volcanic eruptions known to man. According to Ian Thornton there were no onsite witnesses to the actual event, and most of the details of the eruption have been clarified later on by scientists.<sup>177</sup> It is generally believed that no plant or animals survived the cataclysm leaving the Krakatoa islands barren.<sup>178</sup> The volcano had started to awaken in May 1883, creating series of earthquakes and explosions up till June. After a period of intermission the volcanic activity started again in August 1883 with ash eruptions and explosions. The final phase began on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August starting with major explosions, tsunamis and heavy falls of ash and pumice. The next day, the 27<sup>th</sup>, the explosions grew in size and sound, leading to the loudest one, which was heard over 4 000 kilometers away from the actual scene of eruption. Massive pyroclastic flows and tsunamis followed, leaving the official death toll to over 36 000 deceased, and estimated 40 000 in total disappeared.<sup>179</sup>

In “The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark” Scrooge and the crew of the clipper experience some of the explosions that occurred prior to the actual eruption

---

<sup>175</sup> Thornton 1996, xii-xiii.

<sup>176</sup> Rosa 2007, 47.

<sup>177</sup> Thornton 1996, 4.

<sup>178</sup> Thornton 1996, 5.

<sup>179</sup> Thornton 1996, 9-14.

when they hear the rumble and see the breaker waves that seem to come out of nowhere. The Sultan of Solo, and his assistant steal the bulls from Scrooge and leave him stranded in the Indonesian jungle. Scrooge manages to get to a mountain top only to find his friend, Ratchet Gearloose on top of the volcano doing experiments in using volcanic energy as fuel source for his own design of an early car. The pair returns to the harbor and convince Captain Moore to go on a chase to get back Scrooge's bulls from the evil Sultan of Solo. The Captain agrees since it might help boost the reputation of his clipper. As they chase the Sultan's ship another breaker wave occurs escorted by rumbling noises. As the Sultan's ship seems to be getting away, yet another natural phenomena occurs. Scrooge and his companion witness the eruption of Krakatoa and along it a pyroclastic flow and finally a massive tsunami wave, which helps the Cutty Sark to reach the evil Sultan's ship and Scrooge to retrieve his bulls.

When reading such a format as a comic book, time sometimes seems to pass quite quickly in a story. So is the case with this story as well. Because of the medium Rosa has had to compress and even alter the chronology of events featured in the story, and it seems as though the events that took months in history go by in a matter of hours, or at most, a few days. But since very few mentions are made of the time passing, it could also be argued that since riding on clippers was always quite time-taking, as the transportation is controlled by winds, it did actually take Scrooge and his companion several days to reach the Sultan's ship, but those insignificant days of mundane travelling are just not featured in this comic. Therefore, when the eruption of Krakatoa finally occurs on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August (which is stated in the comic as well), it might very well have been a few months passing since the story began in July 1883. According to Herkman in comics time can be examined in three different levels, which are the story level, narration, and finally the act of reading. The story itself is composed of different events that last a certain period of time and are interconnected within a longer time span. But in order for the time span to be visible, it must be carried out by means of narration, such as explanatory texts or other hints such as lines which point out the elapse of time. Long sections with emphasis on detailed images rather than text may take even longer to read since they require more focus on deciphering the story. In the end the reader ultimately constructs the temporal relations in a comic story.<sup>180</sup> In this

---

<sup>180</sup> Herkman 1998, 125-126.

story all the elements, i.e. the eruption of Krakatoa and the Cutty Sark's voyage to Australia and back are real and based in historical events, but their timing has been minutely altered in order to incorporate them in this quite educative story fused with fictional characters and their fictional events. The alterations, however, are so small that they can be considered true invention, which does not tamper with the most important historical elements, just changes their order a bit. Sorlin, however, reminds us that in order to detect how some sequences are made more credible, more historical than others, the elements which are suppressed and not shown are equally important as those that are shown, which is why narrative time is important to be considered.<sup>181</sup> It also applies to the story at hand, since it can be questioned if compressing the narrative in time in "The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark" makes it more credible or less credible historically.

Rosa's use of historical characters in "The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark" resembles their use in historical film. The characters based on historical people are Captain Moore of the Cutty Sark, and the two sultans which Scrooge encounters in Batavia, The Sultan of Djokja and the Sultan of Solo. According to Rosa, the two sultans characters are based on the information Rosa gathered from contemporary travelogues of the time.<sup>182</sup> These characters represent a strange, mystical culture, which shows especially when the two sultans both use interpreters for speaking their words, since they use sign language for communicating, and how they use slaves/servants as chairs. Mostly these characters are utilized for comic relief, since their strange customs are of course a new experience to Scrooge who comes from western culture. (See Image 10)

---

<sup>181</sup> Sorlin 1980, 58.

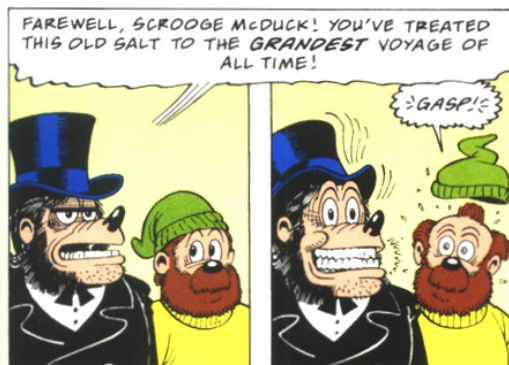
<sup>182</sup> Rosa 2007, 48.





**Image 10: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. 2006. © Disney**

Captain Moore's character is used for metaphorical purposes in the story. The captain is depicted as a very solemn personality, one that is not easily shaken by whatever obstacles he may encounter. Rosa has mentioned creating the character from actual photographs and descriptions of the captain's character, although he also mentioned thinking about the character of Captain Ahab from the film *Moby dick*, played by Gregory Peck, and using Peck as inspiration.<sup>183</sup> Throughout the story the captain's face is set in stone, no expression visible on it, even when he says out loud that he is so excited he could swoon! It is only after the big finale of the story, when Scrooge has regained his bulls and thanks the captain for his services, that there is change in the captain's posture. He bids farewell to young Scrooge, and thanks him for "the grandest voyage of all time", as his grim face turns into a smile:



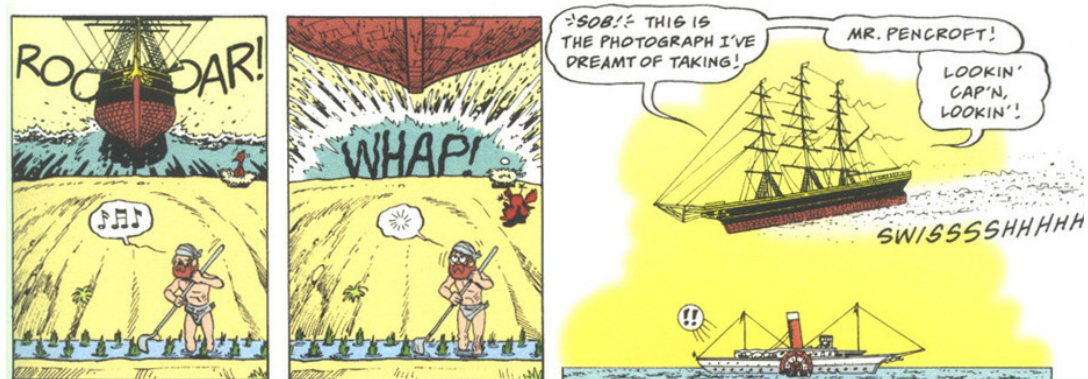
**Image 11: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. 2006. © Disney**

The change in the captain emphasizes the meaningful nature of Scrooge's character, whose influence in Don Rosa's stories to so many historical characters, for

<sup>183</sup> Rosa 2007, 48.

example President Theodore Roosevelt, is undeniable, just as Scrooge's influence in the life of Don Rosa is undeniable. It can also be considered a reference to the life of Captain Moore, who came to head position of the Cutty Sark after serving on the Blackadder, and was only in charge of the famous clipper from 1883-1885. Although quite short, the time Captain Moore ran the ship was considered the most successful of its working days up until that period.

Captain Moore's character is also linked to the funny motif of the Captain's search for his missing camera. In the beginning of the story Captain Moore sends one of his crewmen to search for his new camera, which would of course been a rare luxury in the late 1800's. As the story continues and Captain Moore encounters happenings that become stranger and stranger by the minute, his camera is nowhere to be found and a smashing shot after shot slips from his hands. The search for the camera is depicted every time something remarkable happens in the story, and it specifically relates to those events that are closer to fantasy than reality, i.e. those events that can only occur in a comic book, even when it is based on historical facts. And such events do occur multiple times in the story:



**Image 12: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. 2006. © Disney**

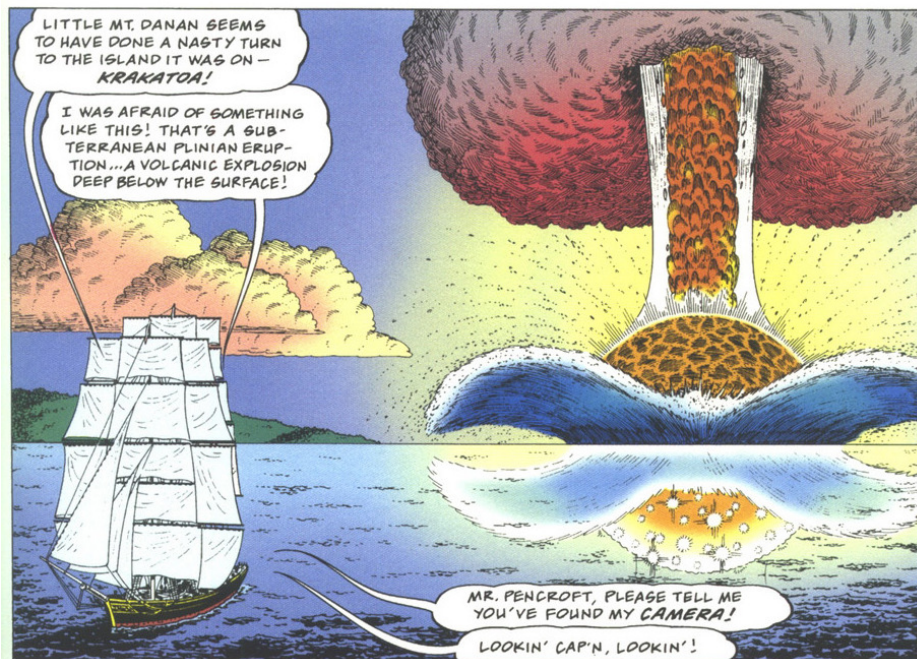
Incorporating fiction and fact brings about the question of whether film, comic book or any other media can never depict the past exactly as it was. Rosenstone has noted that a film can never be an exact copy, or the literal truth, of what took place in the past. "Literalism" is impossible to achieve, because we can never be sure of what exactly happened.<sup>184</sup> In fact, Rosenstone goes as far as saying "*On the screen, history*

<sup>184</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 69-70.

*must be fictional in order to be true!*<sup>185</sup> He also continues that “[f]ilm, with its need for a specific image, cannot make general statements about revolution or progress. Instead, film must summarize, synthesize, generalize, symbolize – in images.”<sup>186</sup>

Now although all previously mentioned elements of alteration can be seen as true invention, and therefore more acceptable alterations to historical facts, there are also elements in “The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark” that can be considered false invention. These alterations occur when Rosa depicts the eruption of Krakatoa. The actual eruption Krakatoa in 1883 was a natural disaster, that took the lives of nearly 40 000 people. Even the flora and fauna of the region could not survive the disaster and its aftermath. This, however, does not show in “The Cowboy Captain of Cutty Sark”. Whilst Rosa makes an effort to showcase the magnificent force of the eruption, and the natural phenomena that followed the explosion, they do not create any remarkable physical damage to any of the characters, or the environment, displayed in the story.

The biggest explosion of the eruption is made out to resemble the mushroom clouds familiar to older readers from the history of World War II and the devastating imagery recorded of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

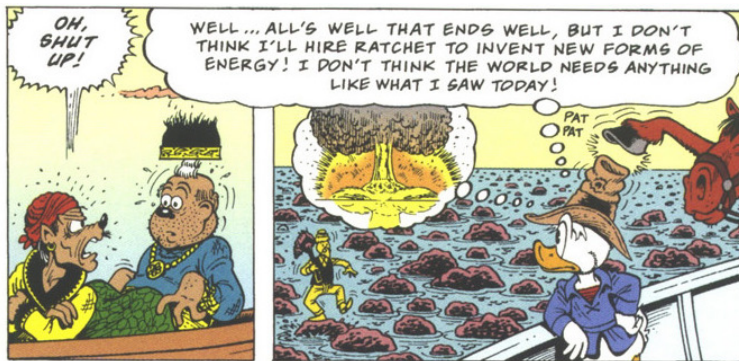


**Image 13: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. 2006. © Disney**

<sup>185</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 70.

<sup>186</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 71.

As the story reaches its end, Scrooge is depicted reminiscing about the explosion he witnessed, thinking that the world does not need anything as powerful as what he saw that day. (See Image 14) This clear reference to the WWII is unmistakable to older readers, but with no explanation it will mean nothing to younger readers, who have not yet been familiarized with the subject. It shows how the comic books of Don Rosa are created for a very wide audience, although he does have to struggle with the framework the Disney genre demands.<sup>187</sup>



**Image 14: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. 2006. © Disney**

The demands of the Disney genre showcase themselves with the way Rosa has decided to deal with the destructive nature of the eruption of Krakatoa. Rosa has included the most important natural phenomena that occurred immediately after the eruption, the noise of the explosion heard in distant parts of the world, the tsunami and the pyroclastic flow followed by showers of debris. However, their destructive nature is greatly understated. Scrooge and his companion survive the eruption through applying the following precautions: they shield their ears from the noise of the explosion by stuffing the Australian wool that the Cutty Sark was carrying in their ears; they shield themselves from the pyroclastic flow by pouring water on a sail cloth and hiding under the wet sail; they clear the tsunami by cutting away the sails of the ship in order to reach maximum speed and being able to ride the tsunami wave instead of being hit by it.

<sup>187</sup> In the popular Asterix comic books by Albert Uderzo and René Goscinny, the authors have used the controversy between the historical surroundings of the comics and using contemporary imagery such as a symbol nuclear explosion to indicate that a character is swearing. In Asterix the controversy is a humoristic element. In “The Cowboy Captain of Cutty Sark” the reference to nuclear explosion in historical surroundings is not made for humoristic purposes, but as both warning and in hindsight, inserting an anachronistic remark to display the cruel nature of current times. Herkman 1998, 47.

Rosa has admitted that it would not have been possible for the Cutty Sark to be able to ride the tsunami, but would have been blown to pieces by the impact, but that he chose to take artistic liberties in this part of the story just for the sake of excitement.<sup>188</sup> As in historical film, incidents may have to be invented to keep the story moving, to maintain intensity, to create a dramatic structure and to allow the history to fit within the constraints of the medium, whether it is film with limited time or a comic with limited page numbers.<sup>189</sup> However, riding the tsunami was not the only impossible happening in the story, since the pyroclastic flow's impact could also not have been survived in the way Scrooge and his companion sheltered from it. The gravity of the pyroclastic flow is also diminished in the story when we see that the Sultan of Solo and his crew survived the flow with minor damage, burning their clothes and maybe some hair, but still surviving without taking any precautions. With these events Rosa's alterations of the true elements of the eruption are somewhat false since they do not represent the true severity of the situation. In this case the alterations can be considered false invention instead of the more subtle true invention. But what is history if not invention? In the end it can be argued that there is an underlying convention of invention in all history as it tends to showcase individuals, social and political movements, decades, and nations in linear stories that have a beginning, middle, and an end, and are moral in their implication; fiction, invention and creation all mark attempts to describe the past and make it meaningful.<sup>190</sup>

### ***3.3. The past as memories***

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the companion stories to The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series Scrooge can often be seen recollecting his past in current times. One of the most curious characteristics of Don Rosa's stories is the way he uses storytelling and his characters' own memories as basis for his storylines. It is not merely one or two stories but a large portion of all his longer stories that start with Scrooge McDuck telling a tale from his youth time's adventures to his nephew's nephews. In some cases, such as the story of how Donald's nephews joined the Junior Woodchucks,

---

<sup>188</sup> Rosa 2007, 48.

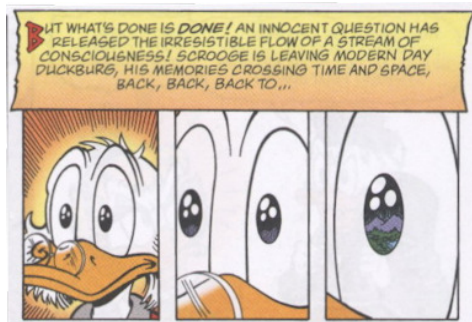
<sup>189</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 6.

<sup>190</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 6.

Donald is seen remembering a time when his nephews had just arrived in his custody and behaved rather differently than what we are used to seeing.

In these stories we can establish that Scrooge is the narrator of the story. It is not always easy to define the narrator in comic books, and therefore it is often easier and more useful to discuss the narration rather than the narrator.<sup>191</sup> Even in the stories which start by displaying Scrooge preparing to or telling a story to for example Huey, Dewey and Louie, there might still appear to be an outsider narrator in some parts of the story. In most cases the narrator exists in the comic in many different levels. From film theory we can establish that there are diegetic and non-diegetic elements in a film, meaning the elements that exist in the implied world of the story, in the diegesis, and those that occur outside of that world and are extra-diegetic.<sup>192</sup> Narrative elements such as texts that implicate a time or a location are often extra-diegetic. The narrator in a film, however, can be part of the diegesis and be one of the characters, or be a non-diegetic, unidentified voice. In comic books in general and also in Rosa's stories, a non-diegetic narrator is often used when the scene changes drastically, i.e. the location is different or time passes between scenes.

The narration in "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" (2006) is somewhat peculiar in comparison to most of the other parts in *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series. In it Scrooge is not telling a tale of his past to others, but instead he is experiencing a very private memory, one that is not meant for others to see or hear, and in fact in the story is left unknown to all others than Scrooge and of course us, the readers. Scrooge is shown falling into a daydreaming state:



**Image 15: The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. 2006. © Disney**

<sup>191</sup> Herkman 1998, 135-136.

<sup>192</sup> Pramaggiore; Wallis 2005, 34-35.

“The Prisoner of White Agony Creek” is a story where we can concretely see the past through the memories of Scrooge McDuck. In the beginning of the story Donald’s nephews are recollecting Scrooge’s time in Klondike (as it was originally written by Carl Barks) according to what they have been previously told by Scrooge. They discuss how Scrooge met Saloon starlet Glittering Goldie, who tried to steal his prized fortune, the goose egg nugget of gold. To punish Goldie for her bad behavior and to teach her a lesson, Scrooge took Goldie to his claim in White Agony Valley and made her mine gold for a month. These vivid recollections lead Scrooge in to an almost trance-like state of his own very vivid memories, as Rosa sends his reader directly into the mind of Scrooge. Scrooge recollects how he took Goldie to his claim where he taught her to mine and how to survive in the outdoor. In especially longer comic book stories, as opposed to short strips, there are often different variations of temporal order, such as ‘flashbacks’ or ‘flash-forwards’. Flashback looks at the past either through character recollection or just by explaining events happening in the past through narration.<sup>193</sup>

The stories that tell of Scrooge’s past (and are therefore located directly in the past) usually follow the point of view of the main character, which is considered usual for historical film as well. It is of course also possible to follow the point of view of several characters, or even look at the events from the point of view of the narrator, for example when looking at historical events which did not involve any of the main characters.<sup>194</sup> The fact that in “The Prisoner of White Agony Creek” the events that happening in the past are actually happening in Scrooge’s mind, would suggest that the story were told from the point of view of Scrooge. However, some events are followed from the point of view of other characters. This poses a dilemma to Don Rosa as well: if he is depicting Scrooge’s memories, can he incorporate in the story anything that Scrooge has not actually experienced or seen with his own eyes? For narrative purposes Rosa resulted in depicting events that Scrooge had not witnessed by using a non-diegetic narrator stating “-- *and now we see a scene unknown to Scrooge at the time, but*

---

<sup>193</sup> Flash-forwards show in advance what can be expected to happen in the future, or in later on in the story. Herkman 1998, 121; Pramaggiore, Wallis 2005, 37.

<sup>194</sup> Sorlin 1980, 53.

*which his memory now fits in place...*<sup>195</sup> indicating that Scrooge would have heard of these events later on and in his mind connected them to his own experiences.

Some parts of the story are the showed from the point of view of three famous historical characters, Marshall Wyatt Earp, Sheriff Bat Masterson and Judge Hangin' Roy Bean. Scrooge's old nemesis, Soapy slick, tells the three men how Scrooge kidnapped Goldie, who the three partners were incidentally planning on hiring as a star performer in their new saloon. Soapy slick convinces the three men to go rescue Goldie, which would get them to make headlines in newspapers. According to Rosa the three men had more or less retired from their careers in law enforcement by the time of spring 1897, which is where the story is located in. Wyatt Earp did own a saloon in Alaska, near Dawson in the end of 1890's. Earp was also a close friend of Bat Masterson, who had co-operated in arranging boxing fights in Mexico.<sup>196</sup> So since there was already a true connection established between these historical characters, making them pair up to open a saloon in Dawson City would not be that long of a stretch, or that big of an alteration. Rosa also included two famous characters from Westerns, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid Rosa. These two did not have any true contacts that would make them easier to place into a story located in Alaska, but this contradiction is what makes them more interesting characters for this particular story. In this case Cassidy and Kid are running from the law and have ended up in the cold north, a place where they feel, well, *out of place*. The two robbers run into Masterson, Earp and Bean, who inform them of their mission, and hire the two robbers to take them to Scrooge's claim. Cassidy and Kid of course have fooled the others into thinking their natives in Dawson and know their way around the outskirts. The combination of the two southern outlaws and three southern sheriffs taking on the cold and icy northern nature makes for great comedic effect, which of course is the main reason these characters have been chosen for this story. By using these characters Rosa is including historical elements to the story and locating it in the mythical past of both the Wild West and Klondike, but he is also compressing historical facts, making small alterations to fit the elements in the story.<sup>197</sup>

---

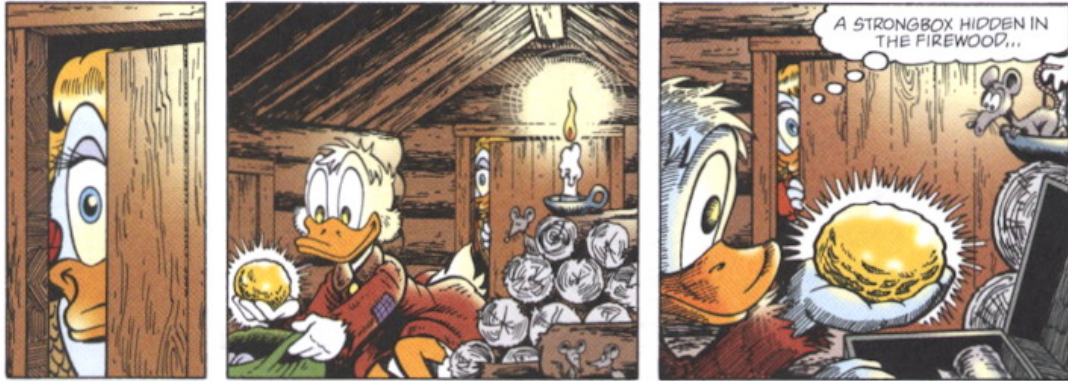
<sup>195</sup> The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. 2006.

<sup>196</sup> Rosa 2007, 109.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Rosenstone 1995, 74; Baker 2006, 124-125.



Some events are also shown from the perspective of another character, Goldie. She is for example shown spying on Scrooge in his cabin, seeing him taking the goose egg nugget from the strongbox hidden in the firewood. Scrooge however does not notice Goldie seeing him, but the events are still shown to the reader:



**Image 16:** *The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2. 2006. © Disney*

During another scene Scrooge is passed out from a blow to the head, but readers see Goldie conversing with Earp and his companion. Earp, Bean and Masterson accompanied by Cassidy and Kid start their quest to save Goldie from Scrooge's hands, as Cassidy and Kid go on to mischievously steal the goose egg nugget, ending up taking Goldie along as hostage. As Scrooge has defeated Earp, Masterson and Bean the men realize who Cassidy and Kid actually were, and Scrooge goes after them in order to save both Goldie and his gold. Although Scrooge has now managed to overcome his advisories and save both his fortune and Goldie, Earp, Masterson and Bean surprise him once more and he gets knocked out, both because of a strong hit in the head, and because of a smack on the lips from Goldie. Goldie, being "rescued" by the living legends, now has the strongbox with Scrooge's fortune, but she finds something unexpected inside the container. It is a lock of golden hair - Goldie's hair to be exact. As she realizes Scrooge did in fact hold dear feelings for her, she returns to the cabin, where (after a slight quarrel) Scrooge and Goldie make up. On the next day, however, Scrooge asks her to leave, since the claim would be a too dangerous place for a lady. They end up separating in unfriendly terms.

In the end of the story Scrooge is finally woken up from his daydreaming state, as Donald and his nephews continue debating over what is Scrooge's most valuable possession. When reading "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" we are

indeed seeing Scrooge's past as he *remembers* it, but on the other hand as he *imagines* the related events occurring instead of what actually happened. In fact, in "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" we can establish that the story of Scrooge's time spent on the claim with Goldie is really a meta-story<sup>198</sup>, since it is only occurring in Scrooge's mind, and Donald and his nephews are not told what Scrooge is recalling. Time does not pass in the surrounding story as it appears to pass in the story told through Scrooge's memories.

"The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" is full of gaps that the readers must fill in through their own interpretation. The story deals with a subject that is sensitive in the Disney genre, sexuality and feelings of affection.<sup>199</sup> Therefore it is impossible for Don Rosa to explicitly show what he would like the story to include. Authors often speak to their readers in indirect ways, through their choices of words, and in the case of comics, expressions and actions of characters, telling them what they should think about certain characters or events.<sup>200</sup> They can insinuate and hint the reader with the narration into the direction they have originally though the story goes, but they cannot guarantee that each reader makes the same interpretation from the narration. In this case we can almost certainly establish that a young child would not make the same interpretation of the story than an adult. The public is always heterogenic, composed of different readers, i.e. subjects, who perceive themselves as cultural and social individuals.<sup>201</sup> In comics readers are in key position in the interpretation of the story, since they have to fill in the gaps in the story left by the nature of the medium. The transitions from panel to another or from a scene to another demand that readers interpret themselves what occurs in between each transition. It results in different interpretations of the same story, i.e. there is no uniform story in a comic.<sup>202</sup>

It can be questioned how the three ways in which Scrooge's past is depicted in the Life and Times series, and basically in all of Rosa's stories which even

---

<sup>198</sup> A meta-story can be either an independent storyline happening in for example a separate narration in the detailed texts in a comic, or a storyline which appears in between the "proper" story, such as in the case of "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek". Herkman 1998, 139.

<sup>199</sup> Qv. Chapter 2.3.

<sup>200</sup> Berger 1997, 44, 104.

<sup>201</sup> Herkman 1998, 161.

<sup>202</sup> Berger 1997, 12; Herkman 1998, 115-116.

mention Scrooge's past, affect the narration. Firstly, we have the stories directly located and occurring in the past, depicted literally as they were. Secondly, we have the stories where Scrooge is telling tales of his past to others. And thirdly, there are the few stories where Scrooge is remembering his past only sharing his memories with the reader and no one else. The difference between the second and third "ways of remembrance" being that when one tells a tale directed to an audience instead of just themselves, they have a tendency to edit. In this case we can assume that Scrooge would also edit his storytelling when speaking about his past to his very young nephews. This also shows in the way Rosa chose to tell of Scrooge's time with Goldie, i.e. his love life, to only the reader instead of telling the story to Huey, Dewey and Louie. Such a story would not be suitable to such young ears, so Scrooge too keeps it to himself.

The lesson in "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" relates to that very private memory of Scrooge's. In the very first panel of "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" we see Scrooge nostalgically looking at a piece of paper. By his side there is his old safe deposit box containing the goose egg nugget and a scroll of paper sealed with a red stamp. He is leaning on to the chest which holds his most beloved memorabilia. Donald's nephews tell us that Scrooge comes up with an excuse to get Donald to dig up the chest every once in a while when he's feeling nostalgic.<sup>203</sup> We learn that Scrooge's most beloved piece of memorabilia is the lock of hair from Goldie instead of a piece of gold or any other treasure. Disney comics utilizing the character of Scrooge have been criticized for their themes of extreme wealth and their views on western economy.<sup>204</sup> These themes occur in Rosa's stories as well, but he has also taken a different approach when it comes to Scrooge's wealth. In "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek" Rosa argues that Scrooge's most beloved possession is not his money, or even his very first coin, but something with little financial value. Rosa has started to dig deeper into Scrooge's mind and it appears Scrooge does care for more than just his wealth, although he persistently claims otherwise. Rosa has gone further with the characterization of

---

<sup>203</sup> The chest first appeared in Rosa's "His Majesty McDuck" (1989) where it held the goose egg sized nugget of gold, old iron gloves from the Castle McDuck etc. Rosa 2001b, 110.

<sup>204</sup> See for example Belk 1987, 33-35. Belk concluded that Barks' Scrooge stories represented a two-sided view on wealth, on the other hand emphasizing hard and honest work but also in contrast emphasizing the meaning of money just for the sake of having it and implementing a condescending and contemptuous attitude towards those less fortunate.

Scrooge McDuck than Carl Barks ever intended. It is accomplished by what the character of Scrooge reveals (voluntarily or involuntarily) of himself in the stories, and results in our awareness of the character's motivation in his actions, deepening the reader's relationship to the character.<sup>205</sup>

### **3.3.1. Experiencing the past in the dream world in "The Dream of a Lifetime"**

In addition to the ways of looking at the past in The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series mentioned earlier, there is one more story which presents another approach to memories as representations of the past. In 2002 Rosa finished a story very much related to the Life and Times series, but not technically part of it.<sup>206</sup> It was "The Dream of a Lifetime" (2002), a quite unusual story, based on an idea a fan had sent to Rosa.<sup>207</sup> In the story Scrooge's nephew Donald, and along him the readers of the story, are allowed through yet another amazing invention by Gyro Gearloose, to look into Scrooge's dreams, which of course are re-enactments of his memories. In other words, Donald, who has in many previous stories not been able to understand the meaning of memories to his elderly uncle, is now experiencing firsthand what his uncle's life was all about, and along him the readers get to share the experience.

The plot of the story is quite experimental. The Beagle Boys have stolen an invention made by Gyro Gearloose. The invention allows one to enter into another person's dream without the dreamer noticing. The Beagle Boys make their way into the money bin where Scrooge sleeps tightly after an exhausting day of work. The Beagle Boys are certain that Scrooge will be dreaming about his money, and they intend to fish out the details of the combination to the money bin's vault from Scrooge's dream self. Once the Beagle Boys have entered Scrooge's dream, Donald, his nephews, and Gyro Gearloose reach the money bin in attempt to stop the Beagle Boys. Gyro explains the danger of entering someone's dream: if the dreamer wakes up whilst someone is still in their mind, they'll be trapped in there forever. To make matters worse, Donald and his

---

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Berger 1997, 53-54.

<sup>206</sup> "The Dream of a Lifetime" has, however, been included in the publication of the companion stories to The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series, and as such is considered an addition to the original series.

<sup>207</sup> Rosa 2007, 222.

nephews are unable to wake the Beagle Boys up since their minds are elsewhere. The only way to solve the situation is to send Donald in the dream as well. Once in the dream Donald realizes that the way to wake up from the dream is to be cast out of it. When the Scrooge in the dream leaves the scene of action, his dream disappears, and those who are cast off the edge of the dream wake up:

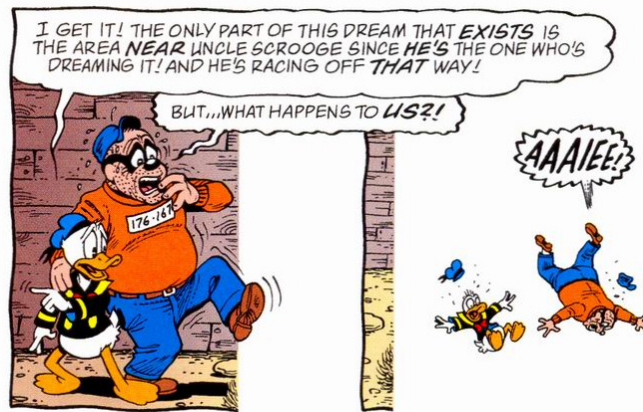


Image 17: The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). *Uncle Scrooge* 329. 2004. © Disney

As Donald and the Beagle Boys go through Scrooge's dreams, they realize that Scrooge is not dreaming about his fortune, but about his past instead. He is going through the adventures he experienced whilst gathering his fortune as a young lad. The Beagle Boys are baffled by the situation, and are convinced that Scrooge is having nightmares instead of dreams. They, along with Donald, get to see small fractions of those stories that are already familiar to readers who have read *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series. The dreams change whenever Scrooge's mind wanders off to different directions, taking the characters from the Wild West to Australia. Donald and his nephews along with Gyro also realize that they can influence Scrooge's dreaming from outside the dream by giving proper stimulus, like the sound of a steam boat whistle to take them on the steam boat Scrooge's uncle worked on. From the steam boat they end up on the Titanic, from which the dream turns into a train ride through the United States, and then to Scrooge's childhood days in Scotland. Donald even gets to meet his own mother as a young child in the dream, and feels that he is blessed with a rare change of a lifetime.

Katja Kontturi has analyzed "The Dream of a Lifetime" from the perspective of fantasy literature theory. Kontturi results in stating that although the events of "The Dream of a Lifetime" take place in a dream, the story itself is not a dream fantasy. According to Kontturi the events of the story were not a dream; they

actually happened and were real events, although they just happened to happen partly inside a dream. The events of the dream were influenced by aspects from both outside the dream world and inside it, i.e. the character of Scrooge in the dream acknowledging dreaming. And even though Scrooge, once woken up, would consider the events only a dream, Donald, his nephews, Gyro and the Beagle Boys would all know that they did in fact occur in real life.<sup>208</sup> This further exemplifies how we can also argue that Donald gets to experience Scrooge's past, even though it happens in a dream.

The adventure ends in Scrooge being led to dream about the days he spent in Klondike, for in those days he was at his strongest, virile condition. The legendary Scrooge from those days seems to be the only one who can beat the Beagle Boys in their attempt to force the combination out of Scrooge's mind. And indeed, the "King of Klondike", as Donald shouts out, takes care of the last of the Beagle Boys, who ended up changing the events in this final dream. Scrooge is now facing his long lost love, Goldie, in a situation he never got to experience in real life. Donald leaves the dream as well, and Scrooge is left to dream on, although we never get to see how the dream actually ended. One can only imagine. Scrooge is left alone with Goldie in a situation he has never experienced. In this dream the Beagle Boys and Donald changed history for Scrooge, and once Scrooge has been left to dream alone, we see him clearly enjoying himself since he seems to smile widely even in his sleep. Donald tells his nephews and Gyro: "*This brain-invasion messed up lots of Uncle Scrooge's dreams, but it changed the course of one **particular** dream -- the one he's having **right now!***"<sup>209</sup> Scrooge's life-long dream has come true, as dreams often function as wish fulfillment.<sup>210</sup> (See Image 18)

Rocco Versaci suggests that the nature of comics as medium requires such an active participation on the part of the reader that when the reader fills in the details of the empty space between panels (such as in "The Prisoner of White Agony Creek"), or in the case of "Dream of a Lifetime", the ending of the story which is left to the reader's imagination, that the reader, as well as the characters, experience a closure which fosters

---

<sup>208</sup> Kontturi 2009, 123.

<sup>209</sup> The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). *Uncle Scrooge* 329. 2004.

<sup>210</sup> Berger 1997, 72.

an intimacy between the creator of the comic and the reader (and the characters in the comic).<sup>211</sup>



Image 18: The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). *Uncle Scrooge* 329. 2004. © Disney

In the companion stories to *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series Donald's character often shows lack of interest towards Scrooge's past when Scrooge tells tales of his youth to his eager nephews, Huey, Louie and Dewey.<sup>212</sup> It is not until "The Dream of a Lifetime" that Donald finally realizes the nature of the wild life his uncle has lived and learns to appreciate what his uncle has been through and what has made him the way he is. In this story Donald, and through his experience, the reader is finally taught the lesson that has been coming for a while: not to underestimate the hard work that someone might have put in gathering their fortune, and more importantly, not to underestimate the value of life experience they have gathered in their lifetime. Rosenstone has argued that history as experiment does not make the same claim on us as does the realist film, but rather than opening a window onto a different way directly onto the past, it opens a window onto a different way of *thinking* about the past.<sup>213</sup> In this story it is Donald who comes to contact with a new way of thinking about the past. According to Rosenstone the aim with an experimental approach is not to tell everything, but to point to past events, or to converse about history, or to show why history should be meaningful to people in the present.<sup>214</sup> Comic books are by nature all

<sup>211</sup> Versaci 2001, 63.

<sup>212</sup> See for example the beginning of "The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut", where Donald tries to stop his nephews from encouraging them to get Scrooge to tell them yet another story about his past. *The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut* (2001). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* 2.2006.

<sup>213</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 63.

<sup>214</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 63.

about fantasy and fiction, about the impossible becoming possible and true like their sister media cartoons. Because they are not tied by the demands of realism, they can, like the experimental film, “*bypass the demands for veracity, evidence, and argument – and go on to explore new and original ways of thinking about the past*”.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> Rosenstone 1995, 64.



## 4. Treasure hunting and adventures: Indiana Jones meets the Junior Woodchucks

### 4.1. *The action-adventure genre in historical fiction*

Jerome DeGroot categorizes comics and graphic novels, along with historical novels and plays, as imagined histories. They are a part of the same genre as historical film or television, i.e. the ‘historical’ as cultural genre.<sup>216</sup> Similarly as Salmi with his modes of historical culture, DeGroot characterizes the past as something that can be narrative, nostalgic, or even something to be worn, experienced or eaten. It can also be a game, fantasy, lifestyle choice, and part of the cultural economy and something which confers cultural capital, something to win or to desire, a means of embodying difference and a way of reflecting on contemporary life. It is engaged with on a personal, group and family level; it can be experienced in a range of ways at the same time. The historical ‘genres’ demonstrate the complexity of approaches to history.<sup>217</sup>

Entertainment of any kind is often linked with two defining features: escapism and wish-fulfillment, both related to the idea of utopia.<sup>218</sup> They offer utopian solutions to problematic conflict or shortcomings of society, such as intensity, excitement and drama as opposed to the desolation and mundaneness of everyday life.<sup>219</sup> Popular culture texts in general are read for escapism, to experience adventure, to be humored, but also to gain insights that are a help in life. People read them for entertainment purposes and amusement, and end up receiving something more along the way, since all texts teach their readers things.<sup>220</sup> That is also the case with Rosa’s adventure stories, which on the surface are escapist and entertaining, but can also teach mythology and history.

---

<sup>216</sup> DeGroot 2009, 181-232.

<sup>217</sup> Salmi 2001, 137; DeGroot 2009, 249.

<sup>218</sup> Dyer 2002, 25.

<sup>219</sup> Dyer 2002, 33. On the other hand, Dyer’s utopian solutions also include wellbeing as opposed to scarcity and energy as opposed to exhaustion from work load and the pressures of (urban) life. These elements can all be identified from Disney comics featuring Donald and Scrooge, where Donald is often the one experiencing the conflicts and inadequacies of life whilst Scrooge is the one who gets to experience the utopian life style with his riches and continuing energy to obtain more of them.

<sup>220</sup> Berger 1997, 133.

When looking at Rosa's Disney stories that are located in the present time of the ducks, instead their past as in the stories covered in the previous chapter, it is easy to note that many stories show similarity to the so called action-adventure genre defined in film theory. Action-adventure films are often set in a romantic past or in an inhospitable place in the present, in addition to which the plots in adventure films of all kinds are often episodic, allowing the inclusion of different locations and incidentally introduced characters, and moments of spectacle, generally involving fights, explosions, or other types of violence.<sup>221</sup> Although violence might at first hand seem to be a feature that would not suit the homely Disney universe, it is often an essential part of the comedy in comics, where a character's injury is more often funny instead of tragic. In fact, tongue-in-cheek humor and tongue-in-cheek knowingness are common in action-adventure films. The exotic locations and the 'flamboyant actions of the characters' in the adventure film also afford numerous opportunities for filmic spectacle.<sup>222</sup> Identifications of sub-types within the genre can also be made, including for example the pirate film, the empire adventure film, and the fortune hunter adventure film, of which the latter is most relatable to Scrooge's fortune hunting adventures.<sup>223</sup>

The ideology of adventure in its modern sense, i.e. its association with the active seeking out of adventurous or dangerous events, can be dated as far back as the medieval knights' galloping, developing further in merchant-travels and pirating during the early modern period, and with the spreading of empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore it links closely to ideologies of imperialism and colonialism, as well as ideals of masculinity, which are apparent in for example jungle films, lost world adventure films, and in films about European empires and European imperial heroes as well as in westerns and war films.<sup>224</sup> It can be argued, that many adventurers are also imperialists, who justify exploration and colonialism in the belief that they spread the benefits of their civilization to supposedly unenlightened lands.<sup>225</sup> Even Scrooge is displaying such imperialistic characteristics in Rosa's "Escape From Forbidden Valley" (1999), where he brings comic books and hula-hoops as gifts and currency for a tribe living in the

---

<sup>221</sup> Neale 1999, 49.

<sup>222</sup> Neale 1999, 49-50.

<sup>223</sup> Neale 1999, 53.

<sup>224</sup> Neale 1999, 51-52.

<sup>225</sup> Neale 1999, 53.

Amazon's jungles. Rosa does show his disapproval of such imperialist behavior in the words and actions of Huey, Dewey and Louie, who scorn Scrooge for his condescending behavior towards the tribe members.

As the action-adventure genre may include imperialistic attitudes towards foreign cultures, they often include stereotypical representations of the cultures and the people representing them. Stereotypes are ideas people share about what various groups or categories of people are like, and they are generally negative, though they can also be positive or mixed. Stereotyping is part of our everyday thinking, although dangerous and uncritical.<sup>226</sup> They can be used to infer ideas about certain characters involvement in the plot.<sup>227</sup> Metaphors in comics may also create, maintain or renew cultural conventions such as stereotypes. For example in western comic books the hero of the story is often displayed as 'white' whereas the villain is a 'foreigner', i.e. somehow displayed as darker as the hero, since in western cultures the metaphorical combination of evil and blackness/darkness is so rooted in our thinking.<sup>228</sup> The appearance of characters can infer a great deal of information, leading the reader to make assumptions of the character's nature and involvement in the story.<sup>229</sup> Rosa has a tendency to draw similar features to many of the villains in different stories. For example in "The Treasure of the Ten Avatars" (1996) the villain of the story is an Indian Maharadja, who is drawn with similar features as the evil Sultan's spokesperson in "The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark". Rosa's evil characters tend to have long, dog-like facial features with a moustache or a beard, as well as being either dark-haired or of a darker skin tone. (See Images 19 and 20)

---

<sup>226</sup> Berger 1997, 54.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Berger 1997, 55-56.

<sup>228</sup> Herkman 1998, 85.

<sup>229</sup> Berger 1997, 46, 104.



**Image 19: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998).** *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. 2006. © Disney



**Image 20: The Treasure of the Ten Avatars (1996).** *Uncle Scrooge Adventures 51*. 1997. © Disney

It can be argued that there are two characteristic variations in the basic narrative structure of action-adventures. One focuses on the lone hero, the explorer who searches for the golden idol, the great hunter who leads the expedition. The other is the ‘survival’ form, most apparent in war or disaster films, which focuses on a hero interacting with a group, for example the sergeant of a patrol, the person who leads a group of castaways out of danger and back to civilization.<sup>230</sup> In Rosa’s adventure stories it is most often Scrooge, who leads his small group in either the hunt, or the escape from trouble. Scrooge is missing in action or appearing only in the surrounding storyline as financier in only a few of the adventure stories, such as the “The Crocodile Collector” (1988), the “Lost Charts of Columbus” (1995), or “The Once and Future Duck”. Furthermore, in the cases of sequels to Barks’ stories such as “The Return to Plain Awful” (1989) or “Escape from Forbidden Valley” where Scrooge did not appear in the original Barks stories, Rosa has included Scrooge in the sequel, mainly in order to have

<sup>230</sup> Neale 1999, 49.

a reason to return the ducks to the same locations they have already been to in Barks' stories, but also probably because Scrooge's character functions as such a good leader in adventures.<sup>231</sup> In adventure stories which do not feature Scrooge, but the Donald and Huey, Dewey and Louie are left to seek the treasures themselves, it is often left to the boys as Junior Woodchucks to lead the group, whereas Donald's role as the less educated character is to follow and ask questions which provide reason to explain and include historical facts, and naturally to provide humoristic remarks and actions.<sup>232</sup> Although Donald is not the leader Scrooge is, ultimately in times of trouble he steps up and takes care of his nephews when they are in danger.<sup>233</sup>

Two of Rosa's adventure stories focus on Donald, completely leaving out Scrooge and only briefly featuring the Junior Woodchucks. In these stories Rosa has mixed the action-adventure genre with another genre that is also associated with spectacle – the musical. In "The Three Caballeros Ride Again" (2000) and "The Magnificent Seven (minus 4) Caballeros" (2005) Rosa based the plot on the old musical animation film *The Three Caballeros* from 1945, which featured Donald with two companions, José Carioca, and Panchito Pistoles. To refer to the origin of the characters Rosa even transferred a musical scene from the animation onto the first story, and included a panel with singing in the end of the second one as well. The two stories are definitely action-adventures, as the three main characters seek for lost treasures in foreign locations in both stories. The first is located in Mexico, the home of Panchito, and the sequel is located in Brazil, the home country of José. In comparison to the characteristics of the hero or leader in action-adventure, where Donald's character is often the unlucky one who is taken advantage of for example by Scrooge, the three caballeros are presented as equals among their group, where Donald has friends who value his input.<sup>234</sup> Additionally, in comparison to what has been stated earlier in this thesis about the historical reality of the characters in Rosa's duck universe and how it

---

<sup>231</sup> For example in "Escape from Forbidden Valley" Rosa combined information from two other Barks stories, and had the ducks return to the Amazon to purchase nutmegs for Scrooge's favorite tea [from Barks' "A Spicy Tale" (1962)], after which they discover that Donald and the boys have actually been to the location before, in Barks' "Forbidden Valley" (1957). Rosa 2010, 6.

<sup>232</sup> See for example "The Crocodile Collector" (1988) or "The Lost Charts of Columbus" (1995).

<sup>233</sup> See for example "W.H.A.D.A.L.O.T.T.A.J.A.R.G.O.N" (1997) or "The Once and Future Duck" (1996).

<sup>234</sup> Rosa 2009, 6.

contains both Rosa's and Barks' stories (but little of anything else), in these stories Donald and his companions reminisce about their past adventures and for example Senoritas who have never been referred to or included in Barks' or Rosa's stories. The Three Caballeros expand the historical reality of Rosa's duck universe in a never before seen way.

As many of the adventure stories of Rosa are fantasy or science fiction, dealing with mystical creatures such as dinosaurs, or expanding the notion of 'exotic locations' as far as outer-space, they may not seem as relevant to this study as the stories which are directly located in the past. What the following chapters will try to unfold is how history and heritage are represented in the adventure stories of Rosa, specifically targeting some of the stories which deal with treasure hunting based on historical fact, legend, or mythology. From these stories I will try to identify the ways in which Rosa legitimizes his representation of history, the ways in which history or mythology comes to life in his stories, and finally how his own research might affect the outcome.

#### ***4.2. Knowledge is power - legitimating historical 'facts' in the narration***

In many of his stories Rosa uses "academic characters" such as museum professionals or professors to tell about the history of the topic of the story. For example, in "The Treasury of Croesus" Scrooge, Donald and his nephews go to Duckburg museum to see an exhibition about Croesus to find out more about the life of this ancient persona. The exhibition itself is shown to have been loaned from the collections of the Istanbul Museum of Antiquities. When the ducks enter the museum, they are quickly acquainted with Professor Owotta Pigayam. The professor tells the ducks about the temple of Artemis, which Croesus had built in Ephesus, and which is considered as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Professor Pigayam is an interesting character, since his development in the story is quite contradictory. The character is first introduced as a nice professor, but readers soon learn that he has something up his sleeve. Readers are shown, without the ducks realizing it in the story, that the professor seems to be interested in finding the treasure of Croesus as well, and he is shown following the ducks and trying to even sabotage their efforts. By this point readers assume that the

professor is perhaps an evil treasure hunter or grave robber. However, that assumption turns out to be false, when the professor tries to stop Scrooge from exploding the assumed burial mound of Croesus. The professor is in fact Secretary of the Department of Antiquities of the Turkish Government trying to prevent a foreign excavator from stealing the heritage that belongs to the country. The character traits are turned, and it is Scrooge who ends up looking and acting like a grave robber. Donald, Huey, Dewey, Louie and the professor with the help of an army all try to stop Scrooge, but fail, when Scrooge in his greed and the feeling that what he finds is legally his, blows up the burial mound. They find a large stone temple that resembles Scrooge's money bin, and inside it the treasure of Croesus. Now, since this is a Disney story, and Don Rosa's Scrooge is not a bad person, even though he might sometimes be greedy and not very understanding, he is no robber. Scrooge and the professor agree that Scrooge gets one piece of the treasure, which ends up being the first coin Croesus ever made, and the Turkish Government gets to keep their heritage.

The lesson of "The Treasury of Croesus" is clear: national cultural heritage should be left to those it truly belongs to. Even Indiana Jones always took the artifacts he discovered in his adventures to the University where he was employed, and then onto appropriate museums. Although it did mean that he took the artifacts away from their respective country. Also Carl Barks indicated the same policy for treasure hunters in "The Fabulous Philosopher's stone" (1955), where Scrooge, Donald and Huey, Dewey and Louie find the treasures of King Midas. When Donald expresses their wishes to take home their loot, the young duck boys shout out as one: "*Put those jewels back, Unca Donald! They belong to the Cretan **government!** Not us!*"<sup>235</sup> Although in the next few panels even one the boys bends his opinion when Scrooge decides to make a claim for the Philosopher's Stone in fear that it would also otherwise belong to the Cretan Government, and on the boys says to him: "*Okay! Okay! That will make it **legal!***".<sup>236</sup> In fact, in most of Rosa's and Barks' stories Scrooge does not really get to keep the treasures he discovers, or he gets to keep just a small portion of them. In Barks' "The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone" Scrooge is left empty handed when he has to give up even the Philosopher's Stone to the International Money Council, since using the stone to make gold would affect the value of gold too much. Although Scrooge is

---

<sup>235</sup> The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone (1955). *Uncle Scrooge* 253. 1991.

<sup>236</sup> The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone (1955). *Uncle Scrooge* 253. 1991.

always initially upset about losing the findings, he usually manages to see the silver lining in the events, most of the time with some assistance from Donald and the boys.<sup>237</sup>

In “The Treasury of Croesus” Professor Pigayam, the academic source of information is overcome by the one source that holds its position as the greatest encyclopedia of all time, the guidebook of the Junior Woodchucks. As Professor Pigayam comes to the end of his short lecture on the history of Croesus, he has to admit that no man can any longer read the language of the ancient Lydians. The professor is awed when the three nephews of Donald take out their trusted guidebook and start to translate the ancient text found in one of the remaining pieces of the columns of the temple of Artemis:



Image 21: The Treasury of Croesus (1995). *Uncle Scrooge* 372. 2007. © Disney

In a large number of Rosa’s stories The Junior Woodchucks appear as advocates for encyclopedia information and common knowledge. They are the official spoke persons of education and infinite desire to know even more about our culture, history and science. The Junior Woodchucks have their guidebook, which tends to be subject of recurring awe when it comes to gathering information about anything. Katja Kontturi has argued that the guidebook can be seen as a ‘magical artifact’ often depicted

<sup>237</sup> See for example “The Treasure of the Ten Avatars” (1996), where the treasures end up in the hands of the poor population who dwell on Scrooge’s land. Scrooge then decides that it is a good thing since it will help develop the area’s infrastructure. In “The Last Lord of the Eldorado” the treasures go to the hands of the local government, but Scrooge finds satisfaction when his opponent and rival in the treasure hunt, Flintheart Glomgold, fails to obtain the treasures too. In “The Dutchman’s Secret” the gold the ducks discover actually belongs to the descendants of the native Indians of the area, but after the initial shock Scrooge is happy with receiving a finder’s fee for the gold, and having the bad guy of the story get what he deserves.



in children’s literature. One aspect which further exemplifies the guidebook’s magical qualities is how whenever the boys open the guidebook to seek information in it, it is always opened *in the middle*, where the correct information is also always found.<sup>238</sup> It is also only meant for the eyes of Woodchucks, and for no-one else to see, making it ever more mystical.<sup>239</sup>

Rosa has created a full-length story on the mystical past of the Junior Woodchuck’s guidebook. In “Guardians of the Lost Library” scrooge and Huey, Dewey and Louie embark upon a quest to discover where the infinite amount of information in the guidebook actually originates from. In the “Guardians of the Lost Library” Rosa even goes as far as to say (through the beaks of Donald’s nephews) that “*If it’s not in the Woodchuck guidebook, it **didn’t** happen!*” further raising the guidebook’s status.<sup>240</sup> The boys trust in the guidebook, however, is not an invention of Rosa, but of Carl Barks. In for example “The Fabulous Philosopher’s Stone” Huey, Dewey and Louie act exactly like in the “Guardians of the Lost Library”:

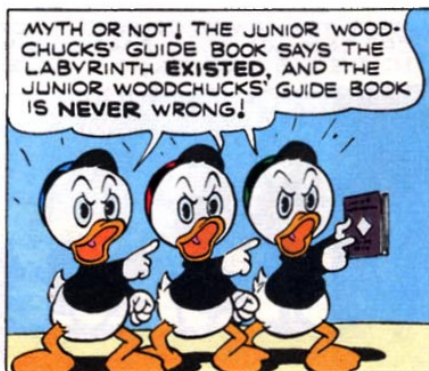


Image 22: The Fabulous Philosopher’s Stone (1955). *Uncle Scrooge* 253. 1991. © Disney

In the “Guardians of the Lost Library” similarly to “The Treasury of Croesus”, another academic character, the head librarian of the current library of Alexandria, Hassan Benfedyet, claims that the ancient library of Alexandria was destroyed by Arab invaders in 640 A.D. However, he is shocked when the young Woodchucks check their guidebook and cannot find such information. Instead the boys discover information about the ancient library that Benfedyet had never heard before. The story starts to resemble a detective story in the style of novelists of (historical)

<sup>238</sup> Kontturi 2009, 36.

<sup>239</sup> Kontturi 2009, 37.

<sup>240</sup> Guardians of the Lost Library (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 383. 2008.

fiction. The approach is also similar to action-adventure films such as the Indiana Jones films.<sup>241</sup> The basic plot continues as the ducks discover one clue after another which lead them closer to discovering what actually happened to the contents of the ancient library. One clue after another turns out to be either untrue or otherwise useless, like when the ducks discover the tomb of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and her spouse, Alexander, but find that the papyrus writings have during the centuries turned to dust. But after each misfortune there appears another clue, reawakening the chances of finding the treasure. The plot attempts to make history more interesting through provoking the reader's curiosity. Donald is the counterpart for Scrooge's and the boys' enthusiasm. Throughout the story he is more interested in his television programs than what Scrooge and the boys have discovered so far. Donald's behavior further underlines the lesson of the story by making his character seem "dumbed-down" and phlegmatic because of watching TV, which has degraded his interest in books. Donald's character brings comic effect in the story, and the approach is similar to how Rosa uses Donald in many other stories.<sup>242</sup>

After following one historical lead after another, the ducks' quest leads them back home where the story started, in Duckburg. It turns out that what was left of the legacy of the Library of Alexandria, had been buried in the place of the old Fort Duckburg, where now stood Scrooge's money bin. The ducks discover a vast library in a hidden chamber under attached to the old fort's secret escape tunnel. However, the secrets of the lost library are not revealed, as it turns out that rats have eaten away the vellum pages during the 400 years the books have been hidden in the chamber. The ducks then find a chest with an inscription that says it holds one book with all of the information from the library combined in it. The chest, however, is empty. Huey, Dewey and Louie quickly discover that the symbol of the guardians of the Library of Alexandria resembles a well-known symbol in the duck universe – the symbol of the Junior Woodchucks, meaning that it is in fact the Junior Woodchuck guidebook, which

---

<sup>241</sup> See for example *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989).

<sup>242</sup> See for example "The Treasure of the Ten Avatars" (1996) where Donald's lack of previous knowledge on Indian culture allows his nephews to explain a lot of educating elements to Donald and to the reader, and coincidentally leads to many funny events such as when Donald falls into to an ancient sewer.

holds in it all the knowledge from the Library of Alexandria (although in a very compressed form). This also means that Scrooge will not be able to profit from the discovery, since the guidebook is meant for the Junior Woodchucks' eyes only.

The guidebook has the quality and the right to correct wrong assumptions made by historians and other experts of the past. At first hand it seems that in the duck universe history is debatable. However, it is the guidebook which presents history as given facts, i.e. the truth which does not need to be questioned. It presents the past as if it were something that does need to be studied or analyzed, and leaves no room for interpretation. Rosa was commissioned to write "Guardians of the Lost Library" to celebrate the national year of literature in Norway, and to create a story which would promote reading. Rosa then created the story around the Library of Alexandria, which allowed him to feature the history of books from papyrus scrolls to parchments, all the way to Gutenberg's print machine, and concurrently displaying how historical texts have survived and recorded information to this date.<sup>243</sup> In this sense, despite possible alterations and compressions to history, the story is all in all quite educative.

However, there are a number of fantastical elements in the story that lessen its credibility in presenting historical facts. For example the ducks end up finding the actual burial ground of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and her spouse, Alexander, by simply digging a few meters under a soccer field in Alexandria. The tomb is also in what you could call mint condition, without any rubble or debris that might have accumulated in it during the past two thousand years. Such happenings provoke our common sense, since it would be very unlikely that such a tomb would have gone unnoticed when the soccer field (and anything that has ever been built on the same grounds) had been under construction. No matter how well Rosa has done his research and based the plot on historical facts, when the needed information comes from a magical source and ancient tombs can be discovered by accident, these fantastical elements twist the representations of history into fantasy.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>243</sup> Rosa 2001a, 8.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. the invention of history from Rosenstone 1998 and 2000 [www].

### ***4.3. Mythological menagerie –European heritage and mythology in imaginary fantasies***

#### **4.3.1. Mythology comes to life in “The Quest for Kalevala”**

Mythology comes to life in a new way in the story “The Quest for Kalevala” (1999). The story is based on the Finnish national epic, Kalevala, and it is of course especially important to all Finns as it is a homage to the nation’s cultural heritage. What further makes the story interesting is how its meaning might differ from one reader to another, because of the importance of the literature it is based on. Parts of the Kalevala are part of the national curriculum in the Finnish education system, so it is safe to say it at least should be familiar to all Finns. But how does the interpretation of the story change when one is not already acquainted with Finnish heritage? Furthermore, how does Rosa compress epic literature in a single story and create a credible narration from which the reader asserts that the story is based on Finnish heritage instead of being a complete figment of Rosa’s imagination? Due to the demands of publishing houses Rosa only has a limited number of pages to each story, of which he simply cannot spend most of in explaining Finnish folklore to its core.

The story begins as Scrooge is reminded of a peculiar encounter with Finnish folklorist Elias Lönnrot in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. Through (un)fortunate mishap young Scrooge is left with a piece of Lönnrot’s original notes for his epic folklore collection, Kalevala. Huey, Louey and Dewey find a mention of Lönnrot in their trusty Woodchuck’s guidebook, which states:

“Elias Lönnrot traveled rural Finland in the mid-1800s, compiling **runic poetry** sung by the folksinger-harpists. He eventually combined the ancient Finnish myth-songs into a **single epic poem**, and published the final edition of it in 1849, under the title the Kalevala, which means ‘land of heroes’. One of the central themes of the Kalevala was the fight over something called ‘the **Sampo**’ – a magical grinding mill that produced **eternal prosperity**. The first side produced **grain**, the second side produced **salt** and – the third side produced an unending flow of **gold coins!**”<sup>245</sup>

This is the first introduction to Kalevala that the readers get, and it also brings us to why the Kalevala is a suitable subject for a Disney story in the first place: it is of course because of the gold, which immediately catches Scrooge’s attention. And although his nephews emphasize that it is merely *a myth*, Scrooge reminds us that he has had a lot of

---

<sup>245</sup> The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004.

luck with such myths and legends in his past, for example with the Philosopher's Stone or King Solomon's mines. This shows us that it is just as likely that the Kalevala would also be more than just myth, and that the treasures mentioned in the epic could very well still be lying around somewhere just waiting to be found. And so the ducks are lead upon yet another treasure hunt.

Once the ducks have arrived in Finland, they meet the director of the Finnish Literature Society. He is asked to tell about “*what this ‘Kalevala’ is all about*” as Donald phrases it.<sup>246</sup> The director answers that to summarize the entire epic would be difficult, to which Donald comments that he should just “*stick to the Sampo thing!*”<sup>247</sup> The story of the Sampo is in fact only a small portion of the whole epic, and although it is one of the most known stories in the epic, the Kalevala holds within itself for example the legends of the creation of earth according to pre-Christian mythology. However, Rosa has to choose what is important from the perspective of both the narrative of the story, and his readers. For those readers which have no previous information on the subject, and they are the majority in the case of Kalevala, he needs to lay out the cardinal characters and events related to the story of the Sampo. The director of the Literature Society tells the ducks about the myth, and starts out with the most important notion: “*The hero of the myth is Väinämöinen, and immortal, all-knowing wizard! And the villain is the sorceress of the north, Louhi!*”<sup>248</sup> The director then explains how the blacksmith Ilmarinen created the Sampo, which Louhi locks inside a mountain, forcing Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen to go on a mission to retrieve the Sampo from Louhi. In four rows of panels Rosa reinterprets the elements from the Kalevala that are essential for understanding the rest of the story. The imagery is differentiated in the narration with runic engraved frames:

---

<sup>246</sup> The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004.

<sup>247</sup> The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004.

<sup>248</sup> The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004.

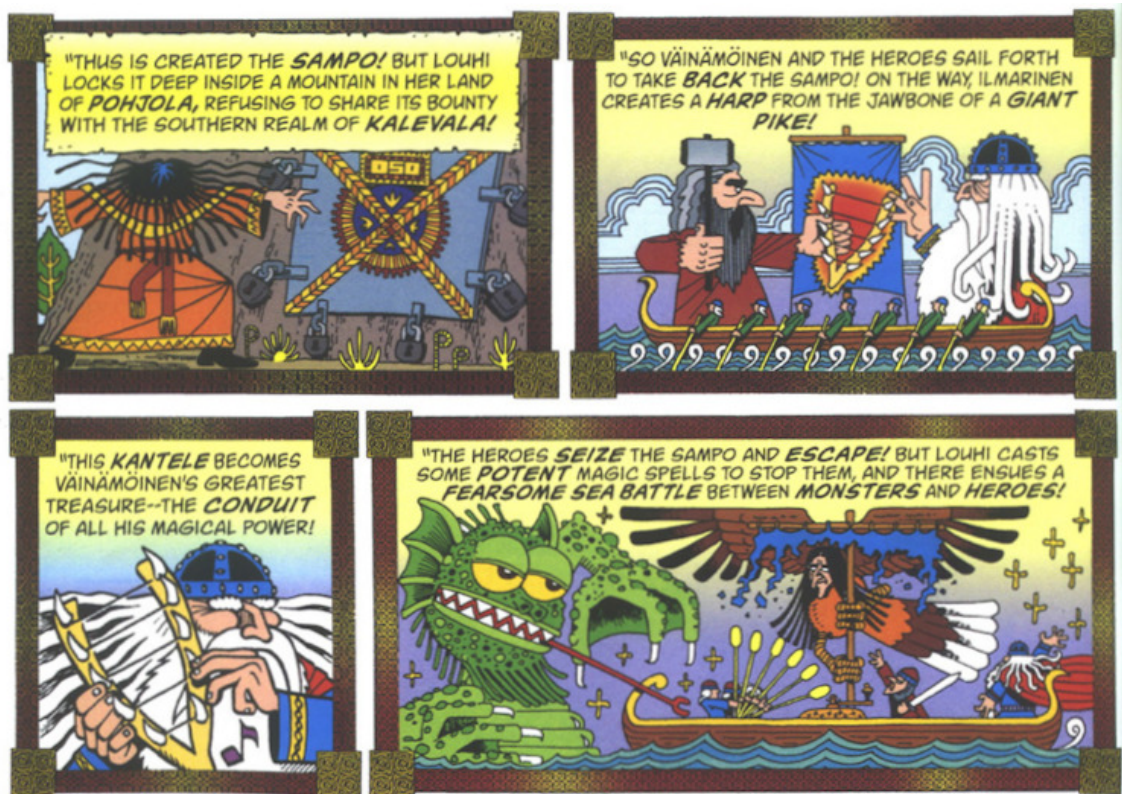


Image 23: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004. © Disney

Through what the Junior Woodchucks' guidebook and the director of the Literature Society have now explained, Rosa has compressed the mythology suitable to be used in a comic book.<sup>249</sup> In most of the stories that feature elements from history or mythology, Rosa uses similar kinds of narrative techniques to introduce the information that is required to understand the plot. In this case, the different visual style of the describing of the mythology further outlines its mythic qualities.

After introducing the basic premises that allow for the rest of the plot to be understandable to any reader, the adventure begins. The ducks travel to a distant part of Finnish archipelago and eventually end up in what can be described as a parallel universe. They meet a character whose features are unconventional in the duck universe, as they are clearly human instead of animal-like. The mythological characters in "The Quest for Kalevala" are drawn with human figures instead of the dog ears and button noses that historical characters get when they are transcribed into a Disney story. The visual appearance of characters is often a crucial part of narration in comics.<sup>250</sup> The

<sup>249</sup> Cf. Rosenstone 1995, 74.

<sup>250</sup> Herkman 1998, 126-128.

appearance of characters can infer a great deal of information, leading the reader to make assumptions of the character's nature and involvement in the story.<sup>251</sup> The appearance of Väinämöinen and Louhi stands out to the reader because of the conventional character display which readers of Disney comics are familiar with. In this case the unconventional appearance of certain characters is a crucial part of narration and creates new meaning to the story.<sup>252</sup> In this parallel universe the ducks enter into a lighthouse, which turns out to be sort of an astral portal into a world where mystical things can happen, at least if you believe in them. The need of faith as catalyst for things to come to life shows when Donald is asked by the spirit of Väinämöinen (through Scrooge) to scrape through the ocean floor with a rake in order to find his missing Kantele (a magic harp). Donald takes the rake to the sea, but cannot find the Kantele because of his lack of faith in the entire events he is faced with. It is only when he is faced with having to go to his nephews' rescue when they are being captured by Magica DeSpell does the Kantele appear from the ocean when Donald accepts that the events are more than fantasy and his nephews are really in trouble.

Rosa mixes the myth with the fantasy universe of the ducks, which is then mixed with the realistic appearance of Finland. In other words, the mythology is historical, the ducks are fantasy, and the surroundings and series of events are both real(istic) and fantastic. Kontturi has identified three worlds (or parallel universes) in "The Quest for Kalevala", the primary i.e. the real world of Finland, and the two secondary i.e. fantasy worlds of Kalevala and Tuonela, the underworld, where the ducks also travel as they seek the missing piece of the Sampo. In comparison to Kontturi's categorization, the worlds of the story could also be identified according to both their fantastical and historical elements: the duck universe in itself can be considered a fantasy world<sup>253</sup>, and the mythical world of the Kalevala where the ducks travel inside their own universe is another fantasy element. But at the same time both of these

---

<sup>251</sup> Berger 1997, 46, 104. In the Disney comics of Rosa the main characters' appearance is always the same, and the appearance of 'visiting' characters differs. In the case of characters based on historical people or other historical elements such as mythology, the main way of turning the characters to be suitable for Disney is to draw them with dog ears and button noses. However, Rosa has a tendency to draw historical characters otherwise as accurately as possible.

<sup>252</sup> Herkman 1998, 127.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Kontturi 2009, 25-29.

fantasy worlds are mixed with the realistic surroundings of Finland. In the interplay of these worlds appear two layers of representation of history: firstly, the realistic representation of Finland, and secondly, the reinterpretation of the mythological Kalevala. Rosa's conventional style of drawing very accurate descriptions of surroundings based on the real world makes it easier for the reader to think (or to accept) that some parts of the story are truly based on real places and mythology, even when the reader is not at all familiar with the basic premises of the story.

In "The Quest for Kalevala" Rosa has used quite a lot of culturally significant imagery as model for his own representations. Rosa is reinterpreting the famous works of Finnish painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who during the 19<sup>th</sup> century created some of the most well-known imagery displaying the happenings in Kalevala. The paintings of Gallen-Kallela are part of Finnish cultural heritage and history by themselves in addition to being representations of the Kalevala. By reinterpreting Gallen-Kallela's works Rosa is adding another layer of representation of the past and intertextuality.<sup>254</sup> The reinterpretations of Gallen-Kallela's works might not mean much to a reader, who is not familiar with their inspiration, but they add new meaning to those who have been familiarized with the imagery. Rosa creates a comparison between the mythological characters of Kalevala and some familiar characters from the duck universe, Magica DeSpell and Gyro Gearloose. They are compared to being the sorcerer Louhi and blacksmith Ilmarinen of Duckburg. Comparison between images 24 and 25 show Scrooge representing Väinämöinen and Magica as Louhi from Gallen-Kallela's painting of "The Defence of the Sampo (1896). Images 26 and 27 display a more subtle interpretation of another painting by Gallen-Kallela, where Gyro and the boys are forging the Sampo just as Gallen-Kallela depicted the forging in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the comparisons of the familiar characters from the duck universe to the unconventional and new characters from a foreign mythology Rosa is making the mythology more comprehensible to the reader that is previously exposed with the conventions of the duck universe.

---

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Kontturi 2009, 87.





Image 24: Akseli Gallen-Kallela: The Defence of the Sampo (1896).

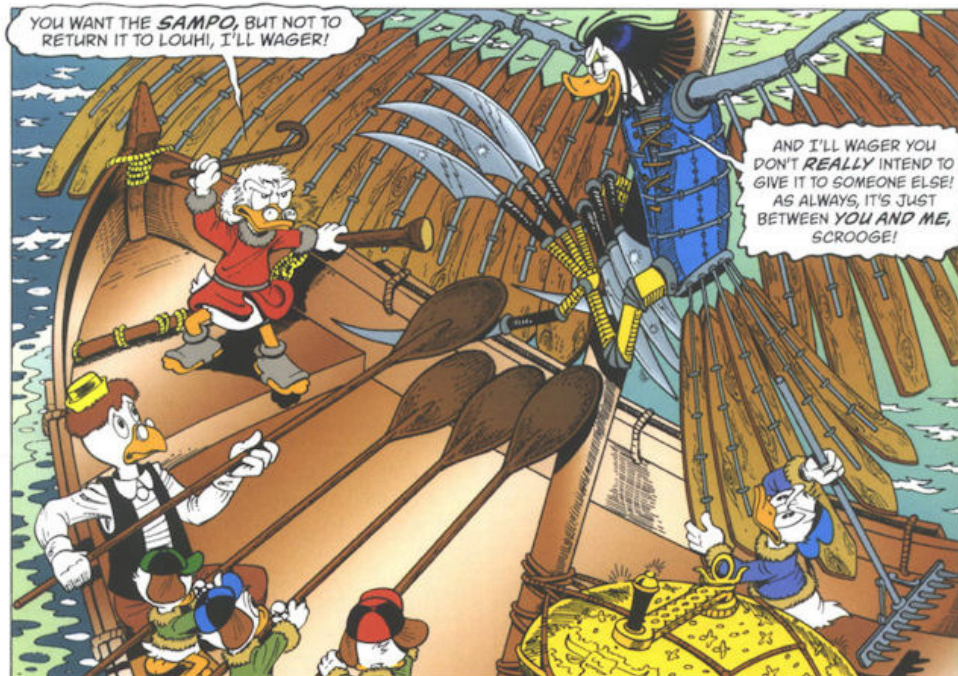


Image 25: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004. © Disney



**Image 26: Akseli Gallen-Kallela: The forging of the Sampo. 1893.**



**Image 27: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004. © Disney**

Creating imagery for mythological characters is a demanding task even with reference points such as the paintings of Gallen-Kallela. Coincidentally, with his rendition of one the mythical elements in the story Rosa referred to his own previous production. For inspiration with the characterization of Iku-Turso, the mythical monster Louhi summons from the sea, Rosa used the appearance of J. Fred Frog, a monster puppet that appeared in several Captain Kentucky stories. The monster has rarely been illustrated in any art form. Finnish graphic and painter Hugo Simberg, who studied under Gallen-Kallela did one painting where Väinämöinen tackles the monster, and

depicted it with webbed feet and scales, similarly as Rosa did, although Rosa's monster is many times larger:

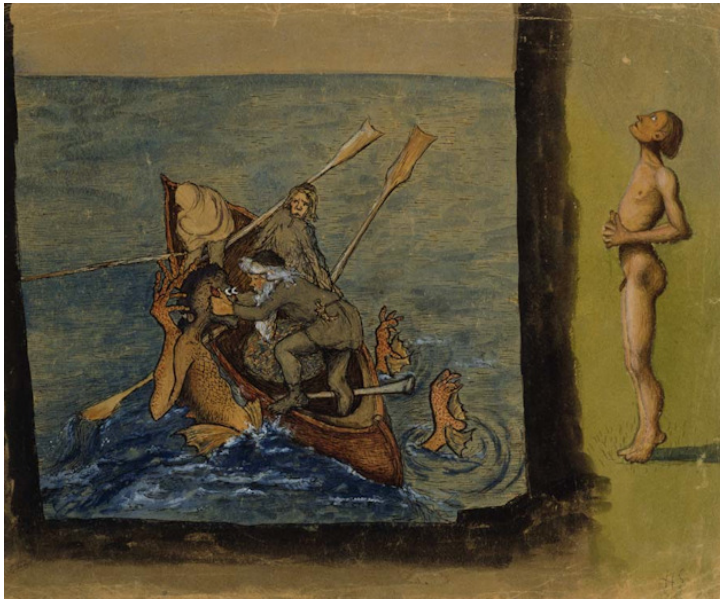


Image 28: Hugo Simberg: Väinämöinen ja Ikiturso (1897). Antti Kuivalainen, Central Art Archives, Finnish National Gallery.

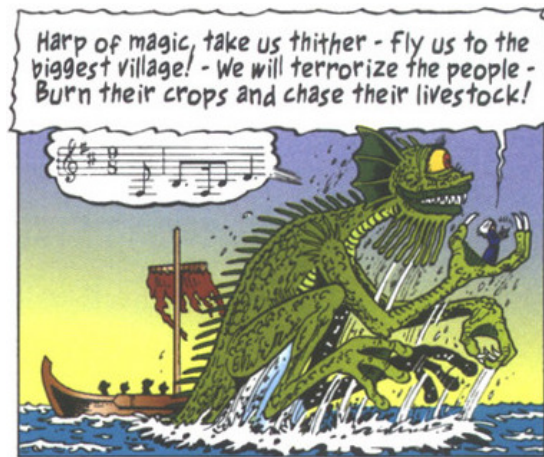


Image 29: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004. © Disney

In a splash panel where Iku-Turso is hovering above the Senate Square in Helsinki, a random character says to Donald: “*Man! That’s the second biggest frog I have ever seen!*” indicating that he had perhaps witnessed the havoc J. Fred Frog caused in Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>255</sup> It could be argued that this reference breaks Rosa’s carefully constructed illusion of the historical world of the 1950’s where the ducks live in, since his Captain Kentucky stories were written and therefore placed in the 1970’s. However,

<sup>255</sup> The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge* 334. 2004.

the reference will most likely be missed by most readers as Rosa's previous works are not as well-known.

Reinterpreting and imagining was not an easy task for Rosa, as the mythology is part of Finland's national heritage it is highly valued and there could have been a risk of alienating the audience by either making the depictions too complicated, or on the other hand too simplified or comical which would belittle their cultural value. For example Rosa was told not to draw the Sampo at all, since the device was too mythical to be depicted concretely.<sup>256</sup> The narrative techniques that Rosa uses in this particular story, however, create an atmosphere for the entire story where each event and element can be at the same time construed as being mythical and real, and therefore credible. For example, the speech of all mythological characters is based on the same poetic style used in the Kalevala. Whenever music is displayed the notes are actual clips from either *Finlandia* by Finnish composer Jean Sibelius or from Wagner's opera *The Valkyrie*, instead of being random notes which usually depict any music in comics.<sup>257</sup> And finally, Rosa indicates that the fantasy world of the Kalevala does exist in reality, as he hints that the old man the duck encounter in the beginning and end of the story who represents the rural, close to nature side of Finnish culture and society, is in fact Väinämöinen.<sup>258</sup>

#### 4.3.2. Travelling into the past in "The Once and Future Duck"

Sir Thomas Malory described him in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as '*rex quondam rexque futurus*', the *once and future king*.<sup>259</sup> The first few mentions of a great leader named Arthur are from early 9<sup>th</sup> century, in *Historia Britonum* or the *History of Britons*, and *Annales Cambriae* or the *Welsh Annals* by monk Nennius.<sup>260</sup> He is of course the legendary King Arthur, the most well-known, beloved, and valiant of the English kings, but also one whose entire existence is still up for debate among scholars. And he is the inspiration for the title and topic of Don Rosa's story "The Once and Future Duck". The

---

<sup>256</sup> Rosa 1999, 6.

<sup>257</sup> Rosa 1999, 6.

<sup>258</sup> Kontturi 2009, 91.

<sup>259</sup> Castleden 2000, 4.

<sup>260</sup> Roberts 2001, 20.

story offers a certain kind of representation of the famous legend of King Arthur, which is already one of the most discussed legends of western culture.

In “The Once and Future Duck” Rosa somewhat derails from his usual demand for historical accuracy and sends the ducks off into a completely new realm, travelling in time into the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>261</sup> In this story time travel is achieved through a device by none other than Gyro Gearloose. Huey, Dewey and Louie encounter their uncle, Donald working as guinea pig for Gyro Gearloose’s latest invention, a “*miniature, personal time-travel helmet*” which could be used for “*short time hops around the house*”.<sup>262</sup> The boys quickly establish that Gyro and Donald have not thought their experiments out very well, and explain that time travel testing should be done in a place which has been clear of for example trees and other permanent obstructions in order to avoid the time traveller materializing inside any objects. They pull out their woodchuck guidebook and find that the only place which would offer such secure locations would be Stonehenge, which has remained the same for at least 5 000 years, which is the farthest Gyro’s invention could ever take them. One of the boys shows out the guidebook and states: “*It’s an ancient circle of stone built in **England** over **50 centuries ago!** It’s **probably** a solar observatory designed to mark the passing of the seasons!*”<sup>263</sup> Since the history of Stonehenge is still a debated subject, and scientists are not in unison about its past uses, Rosa uses the woodchuck guidebook as a source of one view on the history of Stonehenge. Donald and his nephews trust the guidebook enough to leave and finish their time travel tests in Stonehenge, although one could easily state an opposing argument to one of the boys’ conclusion how “[s]urely no tree or structure would have been inside the circle in all that time!”<sup>264</sup>. Although researchers are not unanimous on it, it has been established that around Stonehenge there are signs of wooden constructions, and of course some of the stone pillars and constructions have fallen down during the years.<sup>265</sup> However, Rosa had his reasons to

---

<sup>261</sup> Compared to “The Quest for Kalevala” analyzed in the previous chapter, where the mythological realm of Kalevala existed side by side to reality, here the ducks actually travel *into* the past, experiencing it as it was instead of what the myths or legends tell.

<sup>262</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997.

<sup>263</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997.

<sup>264</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997.

<sup>265</sup> Hill 2008, 10-15.

situate this story in the surroundings of the world's most famous, and mysterious stone construction.

As Donald, his nephews, and Gyro Gearloose arrive at Stonehenge, a local guide tells them that the region is the same where King Arthur lived. The guide goes all out in painting a vivid mental image of the legend, as he tells the ducks how “*King Arthur and his gallant knights of the round table once galloped on magnificent steeds over **this very countryside**, performing **legendary deeds of valor!**”* In the next panel, the guide continues: “*Camelot is said to have stood on Cadbury Hill, just west of here! From there, the king of all Britons launched his quest for the **Holy Grail!***”<sup>266</sup> In these few lines Rosa has now summarized the legend of King Arthur to his readers, following the most famous version created by Thomas Malory in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

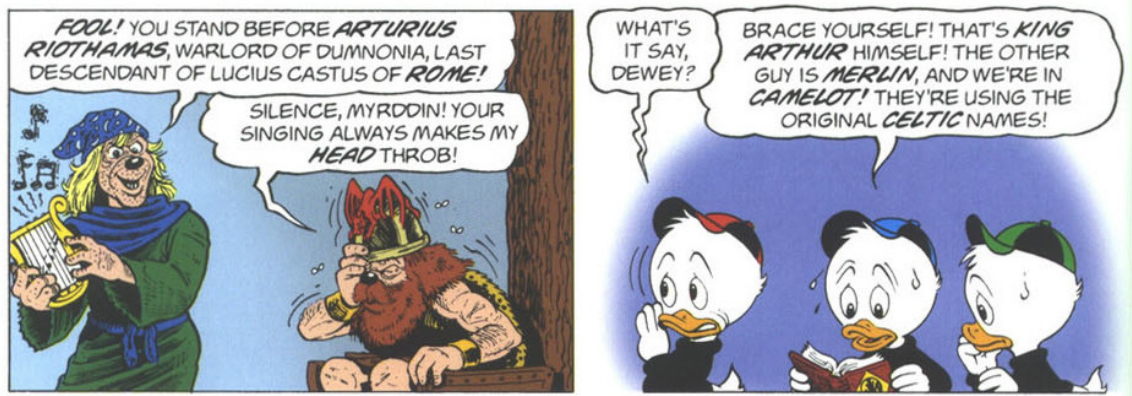
“The Once and Future Duck” is a re-write story of an older underground comic book that Rosa wrote and drew in the 1970’s. Chronicle Five: Knighttime was a part of the Pertwillaby Papers series of comic strips (that later developed onto longer stories in comic book form) Rosa created for the University of Kentucky newspaper.<sup>267</sup> In this story Lance Pertwillaby, the main character of the series, travels to Stonehenge along with other frequently featured characters to try time travel for the same reasons that the ducks do in the Disney version. Now even though the narratives of the stories are quite similar, there are a few differences that are meaningful to this study. In the underground version the characters manage to travel in time to the Middle Ages without realizing it, and drive up to a magnificent castle, which they think to be non-other than Disneyland! However, they soon find out that they are in fact in the castle of King Arthur, Warlord of the Britons. He is accompanied by a wizard named Merlin, as the legends of King Arthur tell. Merlin even has magic powers.<sup>268</sup> (See Image 30)

---

<sup>266</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997.

<sup>267</sup> Rosa 2001c, preface.

<sup>268</sup> Rosa 2001c, 171-177.



**Image 30: The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997. © Disney**

In these two versions of what is basically the same story, although with different characters and a somewhat different ending, Rosa has created two very different representations of history.<sup>269</sup> In “The Once and Future Duck” as the ducks and Gyro Gearloose have travelled in time without realizing it, they drive onto a wooden fortress which they take as a Woodchuck camp site. The fortress turns out to be King Arthur’s lair, but it is a very different kind of abode for a king than the one represented in *Knighttime*. *Knighttime* featured the legendary version of King Arthur’s tale from the renaissance age onwards, which displayed Arthur through the eyes of those who lived in the actual “knight times”. “The Once and Future Duck” shows Arthur as a poorer man’s version of a local tribal king, who dressed in fur and leather instead of shiny armor and lived in a castle made of wood instead of marble. Current research suggests that the real-life Arthur was closer to the second of Rosa’s renditions. It is mostly agreed that Arthur lived around 500 A.D., when great castle building had not yet begun in Europe. He also most likely did fight against the Saxons, which are mentioned in Rosa’s stories as well, and historians do know that the Saxons did invade Briton during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>270</sup> Some researchers suggest that Arthur would have been of Roman descent,

<sup>269</sup> Chronicle Five: *Knighttime* of the *Pertwillaby Papers* series was actually never finished. In the latter part of the story the Black Knight appears, and turns out to be Merlin dressed in an armor covered with *Omnisolve*, which had been created in previous parts of the *Pertwillaby papers*. Although *Knighttime* never got to its ending, Rosa used *Omnisolve* and the character of the Black Knight (although not Merlin) in his Disney stories “The Universal Solvent”, “The Black Knight” (1998), and “The Black Knight Glorps Again” (2004).

<sup>270</sup> Roberts 2001, 22.

and one of the last of the Roman leaders in Briton, but Rosa's renditions do not show Roman qualities.

Researchers are still uncertain of whether or not King Arthur was a Christian or more inclined to traditional pagan religion.<sup>271</sup> A mention in the Welsh Annals dated to the year AD 516 tells how Arthur carried the cross of Jesus Christ on his shoulders for three days and nights in the Battle of Badon, leading the Britons to victory.<sup>272</sup> However, sources from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century describing the Britain of that time suggest that Christianity would not have yet fully entered the land, and pagan rituals in for example burials were more common.<sup>273</sup> This would suggest that linking Arthur to Christianity might have been invention of later writers.

As mentioned before, the subject of religion is usually non-existent in Disney comics. In "The Once and Future Duck" there are some elements referring that Arthur was already influenced with Christianity, although he is presented as the "*last descendant of Lucius Castus of Rome*"<sup>274</sup>, and later on the story shouts out "*Flee! Like bats out of Hades!*"<sup>275</sup> when Donald strikes Arthur and his knights with the astral power of the sun collector in Gyro's device, referring again to the Roman heritage Arthur had. Neither do the historical characters in the Disney version shout out "*Jee-sus Chrrrist!*" like they do in the underground version when they are shocked by the visitors from the future.<sup>276</sup> But still, in "The Once and Future Duck" as Arthur and Merlin see the solar power collector in Gyro's time machine, they see it as "[A]n enchanted *cup* filled with the power of *God!*"<sup>277</sup> To them it is a holy grail, although it would seem that Rosa has knowingly removed the reference to the Holy Grail meaning the cup of Jesus Christ, and presents it as just a chalice that Arthur desired for its seemingly godly powers. Arthur shouts out: "*Attack! Half my kingdom to he who captures that Holy Grail!*"<sup>278</sup> which would indicate that he has not heard of *any* holy grail before, since otherwise he would have shouted the others to capture *the* holy grail. As Katja Kontturi has noted, in

<sup>271</sup> See for example Castleden 2000.

<sup>272</sup> Castleden 2000, 19.

<sup>273</sup> Castleden 2000, 8-11.

<sup>274</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. 1997.

<sup>275</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997.

<sup>276</sup> Rosa 2001c, 179-180.

<sup>277</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997.

<sup>278</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997.



this story the ducks manage to change history through their time travel by leading Arthur to start his quest for the Holy Grail.<sup>279</sup> (See Image 31)

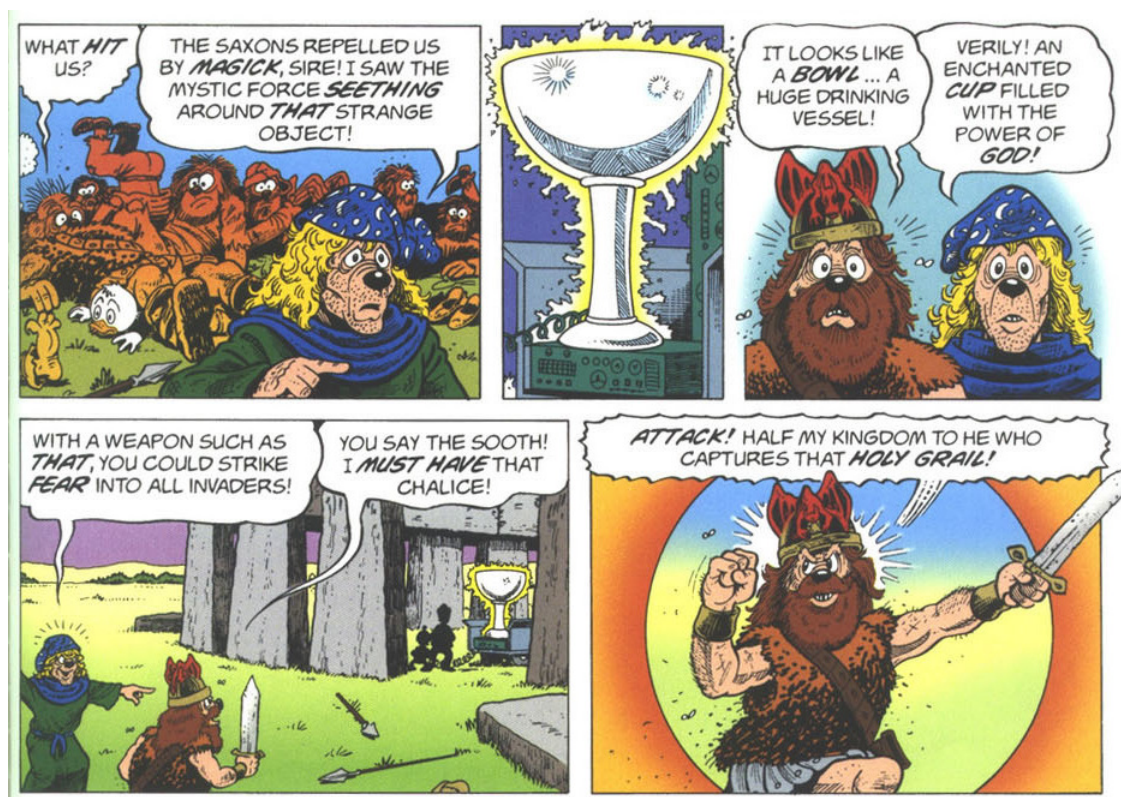


Image 31: *The Once and Future Duck* (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997. © Disney

What is interesting about “The Once and Future Duck” is that even though Rosa’s representation of King Arthur and his companion, and the rural landscape of 6<sup>th</sup> century Britain derive from recent research and it is therefore quite accurate, it also seems to ridicule its subject. Some of it comes from the nature of the medium, since a comic book by nature demands comic relief, which in here results from the way the legend turns out not to be quite what was expected. However, Rosa has decided to go even further and in a way dismantle the legend; his Arthur bears little resemblance to the leader who has, even according to researchers, fought the Saxons and won. Rosa’s Arthur fears that Donald and his companion will spread news of their weakness to invaders, as their enemies have attacked before because they did not fear Arthur’s meager troops.<sup>280</sup> Arthur and his troops are also presented as quite a cowardly bunch of soldiers, not very willing to attack since the only one with a sword is Arthur himself.

<sup>279</sup> Kontturi 2009, 63.

<sup>280</sup> *The Once and Future Duck* (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997.

Arthur is also shown as almost desperately power-hungry, in both the second part and in the third part of the story, as Donald attempts to rescue his captive nephews by using the astral powers and Arthur tries to gain his powers. (See Image 32)



**Image 32: The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. 1997. © Disney**

Rosa has concluded from Barks' stories that the one witch featured in Disney comic books, Magica De Spell, does not actually hold any magical powers. According to Rosa her powers come from small spells, magic wands purchased from others and such tools.<sup>281</sup> In "The Once and Future Duck" the legendary wizard Merlin turns out not to be an actual wizard with magical powers, but a measly troubadour, who in the end of the story, starts working on the legend of King Arthur and decides to add some spice to the story by making himself sound like a real wizard.<sup>282</sup> Although in "The Once and Future Duck" the tool used to travel into the past was a technological invention by Gyro Gearloose, Rosa has once used a magical tool to help a certain witch travel into the past. In "Of Ducks, Dimes and Destinies" (1995) Magica De Spell uses a special time candle purchased from a necromancer to send her into the past for one hour. She gives the candle clues to where she wishes to go, and it sends her off to Dismal Downs during the time Scrooge McDuck was just a young boy. Magica's plan is to snatch Scrooge's first dime from him when he is too young to defend himself. After a peculiar series of events Magica ends up snatching the famous dime before Scrooge has even touched it. As she prepares to return to the present, she realizes where she has gone wrong, and has to place the dime in Scrooge's hand in order for it to have ever become his first dime. As a surrounding story to the events occurring in the past, we see Scrooge

<sup>281</sup> "Why does Magica DeSpell want Scrooge's Dime?" [www].

<sup>282</sup> The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 3 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 609. 1997.

telling the story of how he received his first dime from his own perspective, never knowing who it was that actually gave it to him.

The story of Magica's time travel presents an interesting paradox in the sense that readers who were familiar with the history of Scrooge's first dime always thought that it was the ditch digger who was Scrooge's first shoe cleaning customer. Now it appears that it would have been Magica De Spell all along. Or did she manage to somehow change the past and replace the digger's important role in Scrooge's life just by some magic? That is the essential question of time travel, and left somewhat unanswered in this story as well. Katja Kontturi sees the events happening in the past in "Of Ducks, Dimes and Destinies" as different than those in "The Once and Future Duck", since according to her unlike the ducks who travelled to Arthur's time, Magica realizes that she cannot in fact change the events that have already happened, for she would have changed her own future life as well, whereas the ducks in Arthur's time managed to influence history without actively trying to.<sup>283</sup> According to Rosa Magica's visit to the past happened in a parallel reality, created by the candle to exist beside the time line of the actual past, and once the candle had burned out and Magica was forced to return to the present, the alternative future her meddling with the past might have created vanished to thin air along with the candle.<sup>284</sup> Magica's experience gives a lesson on the importance of the past, and its permanent but valuable nature.

#### ***4.4. The possibilities and pitfalls of historical fiction***

In the academia, although it is debated, we can say that there is mostly consensus about the historians possibility for total objectiveness and their influence on history writing, resulting in the argument that there actually is no such thing as 'historic fact', at least in the sense that history writing could ever explicitly tell the truth and nothing but the truth. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards there has been a growing demand for scientific approach to history, where historians must use justifiable methods and practice constant criticism towards both their sources and their own approach.<sup>285</sup> History (writing) is always changing according to new research, interpretation, and cultural premises. Sometimes Rosa's take on history can seem somewhat clouded with

---

<sup>283</sup> Kontturi 2009, 67.

<sup>284</sup> Rosa 2007, 21.

<sup>285</sup> Sivula 2004, 172-173.

his belief in ‘historical facts’ as the truth, when they are presented in history books. He shows little interest in interpretations, although he makes them himself in his own representations. Sorlin states that for many people who are not interested in historical research, history is no more than an attempt to establish some ‘facts’ and to locate them in a setting.<sup>286</sup> There has been concern about the historical integrity of writers’ of historical children’s fiction since they commonly feature characters that are created to conform to current role models and do not express the concerns of their time but of our time. They do not reflect the historical conditions or behavior of the era the stories are located in. In Joshua Brown’s opinion the result is “*not simply muddled history [--] it is an illusory image of the past that supports a delusory concept of the present.*”<sup>287</sup>

It has been argued that fiction does not assert statements according to certain empirical state of affairs, but it defines its own empirical world. Furthermore, fiction can present certain issues without making a claim on whether or not they are true or untrue, and leave the decision making to the reader.<sup>288</sup> Hannu Salmi has criticized such an approach, since in his opinion historical fiction is capable of making assertions when the creator stands behind those assertions.<sup>289</sup> Fictional/imaginary history wants to display what was unique about the past, what was lost, what has maintained until present times or what was universal. Fiction presents the past at the same time as something familiar and as something new and unknown by adding its own elements. At the same time the audience must be able to identify to characters in order for the fictional past to be believable and plausible.<sup>290</sup> According to Rosenstone we think of the difference between fiction and history being that although both tell stories, the latter is a true story.<sup>291</sup> But how do you define that truth? On the printed page a description of a battle or a revolution is not a literal rendering of that series of events. In our writing of the past, some sort of fiction or convention is always involved.<sup>292</sup>

---

<sup>286</sup> Sorlin 1980, 143.

<sup>287</sup> Brown 1986, 76.

<sup>288</sup> Salmi 2004, 152.

<sup>289</sup> Salmi 2004, 152.

<sup>290</sup> Salmi 2004, 162.

<sup>291</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 7.

<sup>292</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 7.

Sorlin's approach to historical film is somewhat different from Rosenstone's, as he studies films that are historical in two ways: firstly, they depict historical events or people, but more importantly, Sorlin considers the films as representations of the period the films were made in, not the period which they depict. According to Sorlin, the present is always implicated in historical film.<sup>293</sup> Therefore Sorlin finds that historiography can be applied to such historical films, as the term is used to refer to the work of historians or any other people base on (historical) documents and their society's historical tradition.<sup>294</sup> In Sorlin's opinion historical film can never reproduce the past accurately, and to wonder about the possible mistakes made in such a film is an irrelevant question. All historical films are fictional.<sup>295</sup> Films cannot provide a realistic depiction of the past, since they translate aspects of the past by choosing a few people, placing them in a particular setting, and making them act out a reconstruction of the social relations of groups in the present by using the pretext of the past.<sup>296</sup>

When combining the works of both Don Rosa and Carl Barks, one can see that Scrooge, Donald and Huey, Dewey and Louie have travelled to countless locations, searched for and discovered treasure that has been thought to have been lost forever, only existing in legends. Even Don Rosa has had to ask himself how the topic of treasure hunting could possibly be kept interesting after years and years of explorations. What he has done is making the sought treasure bigger and bigger, ever more difficult to find. In his series the ducks have discovered ancient Incan gold, the Lost City of Gold, El Dorado, and from one perspective the greatest treasure of all time, the legacy of ancient times in the form of the Library of Alexandria. After all of these stories, what was left to cover was according to Rosa the greatest, historically most significant treasure ever, the lost riches of the Knights Templar.<sup>297</sup> After doing research on the Knights Templar and their alleged wealth, Rosa felt that searching for Christian relics such as the Holy Grail or the Ark of the Covenant would not be appropriate topics for a more secular Disney comic. Additionally, those artifacts had already been discovered by

---

<sup>293</sup> Sorlin 1980, 143.

<sup>294</sup> Sorlin 1980, 17.

<sup>295</sup> Sorlin 1980, 21.

<sup>296</sup> Sorlin 1980, 79-80.

<sup>297</sup> Rosa 2010, 114.

non-other than Indiana Jones, who according to Rosa is Scrooge McDuck's number one copy cat.<sup>298</sup> So he chose to have the ducks search for "the crown of the crusader kings", which suited the story well, since Scrooge had lost another similar crown in "Return to Xanadu" (1991), which made the crown of the crusaders sure to light up Scrooge's interest, which then resulted in the story "The Crown of the Crusader Kings". "A Letter from Home" is one of Rosa's longest, and intricate tales combining several historical references to a storyline dealing with the McDuck family's history and family relations. The story not only reinvents the legends of the Knights Templar by combining them to the history of the McDuck family, but it deepens the reader's knowledge about the internal struggles within the characters' family relations, which could be considered unusual for a Disney story. The way in which the history of the Templars is wound together with the fantasy world of the ducks makes the historical settings appear more credible to the reader.

In "The Crown of the Crusader Kings" Scrooge, Donald, and Huey, Dewey and Louie start a search for the lost crown of the crusaders, when one of the boys, after earning a Woodchuck merit badge in medieval history, tells Scrooge that the crown was given to Christopher Columbus to be taken to Asia to Genghis Khan in Cathay. Scrooge then recalls a moment from his own past when he met a Finnish map collector who had in his possession maps of Australia used by explorers. The collector was Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, a historical character included in the story by Rosa since the story was commissioned to be included in a Finnish compilation publication of Rosa's stories.<sup>299</sup> In the story Scrooge mentions that he met Nordenskiöld in Chicago, where the World's Fair was being held and the Columbian Exhibition celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America, indicating that the year was 1892, even though it is not explicitly mentioned. What Scrooge remembers is Nordenskiöld telling him about his new book on American cartography, which he completed based on Columbus' own logbook! In 1892 young Scrooge was not interested in old cartography studies, and therefore dismissed Nordenskiöld's tales of losing the logbook in his voyage through the north-east passage in 1878. Believing that the logbook of Columbus might still be where Nordenskiöld left it, i.e. in the Koluychin Bay in Siberia. After fighting off polar bears and the Brutopian army, the ducks finally get to examine the

---

<sup>298</sup> Rosa 2001b, 6.

<sup>299</sup> Rosa 2001b, 5.

logbook. It tells them that when Columbus reached shore in Haiti and established the first European settlement there, La Navidad, a *Templar* would have hidden the crown in the same place. The mention of a Templar sets Scrooge off to tell of the crusader knights to Huey, Dewey and Louie. Scrooge's enthusiasm on the subject is explained with the Templars' interest in monetary issues and their loan and deposit system. The ducks ultimately discover the crown in Haiti, but in the end Scrooge does not get to keep the treasure, as it is determined to belong to the Haitian government. Scrooge, however, gets to keep the chest which held the crown, which in the end pleases him maybe more than finding the actual crown. It turns out that in the chest is a cloth that features the Scottish tartan of the McDuck Clan, indicating that there were perhaps Templars in the clan, and providing room for an intriguing sequel.

In "A Letter from Home" Scrooge returns to the McDuck castle in Scotland to find out if the old castle in fact holds Templar treasure in its grounds. Coincidentally, he also meets his sister Matilda in the castle, and has to deal with the dysfunctional state his relationship to his remaining family members was left years before. In the end of the story Scrooge discovers both the Templar treasure, hidden beneath the castle in a vault, and also his father's appreciation and admiration he held for his son. Rosa managed to weave together a piece of European history with the personal, but yet fictional history of the McDuck family, and give closure to Scrooge, the character whose history he has recreated and followed throughout his career.

In his writings about both "The Crown of The Crusader Kings" and "A Letter from Home" Rosa is adamant that each and every historical reference is authentic and result of his thorough research.<sup>300</sup> He does admit adding fictional elements to characters and events based on history, like in the case of having Scrooge meet Nordenskiöld and that he would have had in his possession the lost logbook of Columbus, and that a Templar would have taken the crown to the Caribbean on Columbus' ship.<sup>301</sup> However, we can see that Rosa's research was in fact not quite as thorough as he would have wished. "The Crown of the Crusader Kings" is connected to an old Barks story, since Rosa discovered that the appearance of the character Monsieur Mattressface from the International Money Council created by Barks in his story "The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone" (1955) resembled those of the Knights Templar and their

---

<sup>300</sup> Rosa 2001b, 6; Rosa 2010, 114.

<sup>301</sup> Rosa 2001b, 6.

alleged side branch, the Order of Sion.<sup>302</sup> Rosa decided to use Barks' character in his story, but adding a twist and another character. In Rosa's duck universe the International Money Council is in fact a cover-up organization of the Order of Sion.

Rosa has later had to admit to having fallen for the scam of Pierre Plantard (1920-2000), the author of the "Dossiers Secrets", a collection of documents featuring false pedigrees of the Merovingian dynasty, and a list of the Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion, a fictional priory allegedly protected the secret of the Holy Grail. Plantard admitted his scam in early 1990's and retired from publicity. Although now proven false, the Priory of Sion continued to live on in fiction, and was raised into the public eye again with the release and success of Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). Although Rosa insists that his research is thorough, this is one occasion where he too fell for the same antics that even some academics had fallen. Plantard's hoax was well thought out since he even managed to plant his forged documents to the National Library of France.<sup>303</sup>

Alan Moore, who has been said to have reinvented the (historical) graphic novel with his works *The Watchmen* and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, has gone as far as to insert academic footnotes in his graphic novel *From Hell* to support the main story told in the sequential art.<sup>304</sup> Rosa's introductions could be conceived as similar 'footnotes' to his stories, although they could not be considered academic. Rosa has acknowledged his mistake in a written introduction to "A Letter from Home" where he mentions that the Priory of Sion was recently revealed as an elaborate hoax by some 'brainiacs', even though it had been mentioned in some history books.<sup>305</sup> It can be read as a bit of an understatement, since Rosa wrote his comment in 2010 and the hoax had originally been revealed already in the 1980's. It would seem that Rosa probably had someone point out to him the nature of the Priory of Sion after he had finished "A Letter from Home", and since Rosa prides himself in his thoroughness in his research, he might have experienced a little bump in his workman's pride. So he dismisses his own incorrect interpretations by understating the meaning of Plantard's scam, which has in actuality been described as being one of the top document forging hoaxes in history.

---

<sup>302</sup> Rosa 2001b, 5.

<sup>303</sup> See for example Richardson 2000 [www], Introvigne 2005 [www].

<sup>304</sup> DeGroot 2009, 225.

<sup>305</sup> Rosa 2010, 114.



The appearance of the Holy Grail in the end of “A Letter from Home” is interesting in many ways. It is a clear reference to Christianity, a subject which, as mentioned earlier, is usually well left out of the secular world of Disney comics. It is also somewhat controversy in comparison to “The Once and Future Duck”, where Rosa clearly implied that the legend of the Holy Grail and King Arthur’s chase for it was born out of the ducks’ travel in time to the Middle Ages, indicating that the Holy Grail that Arthur chased had nothing to do with Christian heritage. In “A Letter from Home” the Holy Grail appears to be a golden cup with jewels encrusted in it, a valuable piece of the treasure the ducks have discovered. A similar object to what for example historical films have often represented it to be. Considering that Rosa had in his own research come across the Priory of Sion, and therefore most likely the “truth” imposed by it about the Holy Grail being the blood line of Jesus Christ, it is curious to note that he did *not* include this part of the Priory of Sion in his story.<sup>306</sup> Obviously it is due to the delicate and controversial nature of the whole question of whether or not Jesus Christ was married and produced offspring, which again would have no place in a Disney story. Rosa mixes (false) historical information found in his research with the popular version of the legend of the Holy Grail.

Historical fiction has been seen as too popular by nature, which results in distorted truths and emphasizing escapism and nostalgia. Hannu Salmi, however, has argued that popular history often deals with the past through an everyday perspective of the fears and worries of individuals, and is therefore needed in addition to more traditional takes on history, because they depict more vividly the individual’s relationship to the past.<sup>307</sup> Roy Rozensweig, however, has noted the need to consider whether or not narrative history with its focus on the individual is able to offer (any)

---

<sup>306</sup> *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982) implied that Jesus had been married to Maria Magdalene, and produced offspring, creating a blood line which was later referred to as the Holy Grail, originating from the words “sang real”, meaning the true blood. According to the book this bloodline then became what the Priory of Sion tried to protect, when the Church in comparison tried to slander the true nature of Maria Magdalene. The information in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* was of course based on Plantard’s forged documents, and has later on been confirmed as implausible. There are no implications in the Bible or other documents that Jesus had been romantically or otherwise involved with Maria Magdalene or anyone else. On the other hand, there are also no documents proving that he was not married, so the question still remains open for debate and study.

<sup>307</sup> Salmi 2004, 165.

critique on [the American] society, when narrative history often conceals the political bias of its author.<sup>308</sup> According to Joseph Witek the stylistic choices in comic books are also ideological ones as in other historical storytelling as well.<sup>309</sup> In Salmi's opinion history writing and historical fiction should not be considered counterparts, for they present a different kind of discourse entirely: both include the mechanisms that actualize the past in the present, but serve entirely different cultural purposes.<sup>310</sup> According to Rosenstone, to label a film as history or the filmmaker as historian, the film must *vision*, *contest*, and *revision* history. To vision is to give us the experience of the past. To contest it is to provide interpretations that run against traditional wisdom, or generally accepted views. To revision history is to show us the past in new and unexpected ways, to utilize an aesthetic that violates the traditional realistic ways of telling the past, or that does not follow a normal dramatic structure, or that mixes genres and modes.<sup>311</sup> A comic book certainly has the potential to do all of the above. It can be argued that through his comics Rosa also visions history as he lets his readers experience the past through Scrooge's life story. In some cases such as in "The Once and Future Duck" Rosa also contests history by creating a representation which is not in unison with the general idea of the past. The medium of the comic book in general as well as Rosa's representations of the past in for example The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series mix genres, narrative structure and create new ways of telling of the past for example through metaphor, which could conclude that Rosa also revisions history in his stories.

However, it was not my intention in this thesis to declare Don Rosa a historian more than it was to declare his stories history writing. Even though Rosenstone would in some cases call a film maker a historian, he too notes that any historical film, like any work of written, graphic, or oral history, enters a body of preexisting knowledge and debate, where in order to be considered "historical" they must engage the issues, ideas, data, and arguments of that field of knowledge.<sup>312</sup> Any work of history must be evaluated in light of the knowledge of the past that we possess

---

<sup>308</sup> Rosenzweig 1986, 48.

<sup>309</sup> Witek 1989, 44.

<sup>310</sup> Salmi 2004, 166.

<sup>311</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 9-10.

<sup>312</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 8.

and situate itself within the ongoing debate over the meaning of the past.”<sup>313</sup> In his work DeGroot quotes trained historian Philippa Gregory, who has written multiple historical novels, such as *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001), and expressed her concern in combining history and fiction. Gregory has asked: “*Is not the imposition of the order of a story on historical facts the making of a lie? Am I not picking out of the enormous range of facts of that year the very few that I can thread together to tell, even to prove, the story that I want to write? ... it is a prejudiced, biased view – just like any other history book.*”<sup>314</sup> On that note it would seem more useful to conclude that Rosa’s stories, just like any other historical fiction, will be more understandable and valuable as what they are, entertainment flavored with history, encouraging their audience to both enjoy, and occasionally learn from their experience with the stories.

---

<sup>313</sup> Rosenstone 2000, 8.

<sup>314</sup> DeGroot 2009, 219.

## 6. To be concluded...

Just as the second to last part of *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*, “The Empire-builder from Calisota” anticipated the end of the series which had finally compiled the intriguing history of one of the most beloved characters of Disney comics, so must this thesis *be concluded*...I have established that the duck universe in Don Rosa’s stories is affected by several outsider actors. Rosa’s own past as both comic book enthusiast and underground comic book artist shows in the style and content of his duck stories, as his style of illustrating resembles underground comics and his numerous references to his own previous works create an intertextual web that links to much more than just other Disney comics. The different publishers Rosa has worked for have had an influence in the contents and narratives of the stories as they have commissioned stories with certain topics, or when his editors have turned down an initial script and forced Rosa to rewrite the narrative of a story completely. Above all, the Disney universe and its generic conventions and restrictions affect what can or cannot be shown in Rosa’s comics, and what is expected of them.

An important basis for analysis has in this thesis been that comics show unique similarity to film as a medium, from sharing the basic elements of frame and sequence to narrative techniques, motifs, and similar approach to temporality due to the restrictions posed by both media. I have made comparisons between Rosa’s stories and generic conventions of film genres such as the Western and action-adventure films. Through these comparisons I have attempted to identify the generic ways of representing the past in such films, and which could then be found in Rosa’s stories. *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck* series is all in all a story of progress which is common in Westerns, as the series displays concurrently the progress of the American society and the personal growth of the protagonist, Scrooge McDuck. As the historical film, the stories that Rosa has located in the past tend to invent historical elements, and compress them as well as the time span in which they occur to fit in to the compounds of the respective medium of comic book. This may result in a twisted representation of the past, but it is common in historical film, where the historical settings are often just a colorful backdrop for what the fictional and historical characters experience in the story.

As for the historical reality existing in the duck universe, Rosa has made a great effort in creating a coherent history for the McDuck Clan and other characters

included in his stories, following the information presented in the classic duck stories of Carl Barks. In addition to creating or developing the family lines, Rosa's stories can be placed in chronological order, where the ducks remember and refer to events that have occurred in previous stories by both Rosa and Barks. The historical reality of the ducks consists of both their stories. Rosa has also gone further in developing the character of Scrooge McDuck, specifically his relationship to his own past and his family heritage. The meaning of family and one's memories are emphasized in Rosa's stories, as they are shown to be a very important part of what made Scrooge the man he is. As Scrooge is an old man, although very resilient and energetic, in the current time of the duck universe he is often shown dwelling on his past and dreaming of it in different ways. Other characters, especially younger ones such as Donald may never fully comprehend the meaning of the past for Scrooge.

History comes to life in many of Rosa's stories that are not directly located in the past as are The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series. In stories that are located in the present time of the ducks, mythology has come to life as the ducks have either travelled to a parallel universe such as the mythical world of the Kalevala, or even travelled back in time with the help of a time machine to meet none other than the legendary King Arthur and his knights. Rosa's renditions of mythical or legendary characters both contest and reimagine previous, conventional representations of them. Mythological worlds are intertwined with the fantasy world of the ducks and the real world, as mythical creatures come to life, or when the ducks' time travel coincidentally is what actually generates and gives birth to a legend.

The layers of representation of the past and its meanings in Rosa's stories are numerous and overlapping. Historical elements appear as backdrops, as active elements such as historical characters, or as something to be pursued, whether the object of desire is material or immaterial, such as ultimate knowledge. The pursuit of fortune connects the stories to yet another film genre, the action-adventure film, where stereotypical representations of cultures are common and can even have imperialist connotations. Such representations appear in the comics of Rosa, but on the other hand they are mainly derived from the works of Carl Barks, who lived and wrote his stories in a different era completely.

The question that remains to be answered is whether or not Rosa's Disney comics can be considered 'History', or are they 'just' historical fiction? In this thesis

this question shall remain unanswered, since in the end it seems irrelevant; the Disney comics of Don Rosa are above all entertainment, although they can be very educational as such. They combine the fictional and fantastic worlds of comic books, mythology, and fantasy literature with elements from the historical reality we live in. Historical fiction in this case is definitely not a demeaning term, but one that should be embraced for all the fine qualities the comics have, and the way they are able to vision, and even to revision, history to their readers.

To some fans of Rosa and Disney comics in general my analysis and conclusions may seem as if I were either stating the obvious, or in some cases even misinterpreting what others might have read from the texts. Had I had the chance to interview Don Rosa personally, it would surely have deepened my analysis and given more insight to his own views. Should this topic be considered further, it would be complementary to deepen the analysis with Rosa's own intentions. This kind of study is, in the end, always a matter of personal interpretations, no matter how well one bases their opinions and conclusions according to previous research or a particular method of analysis. The internet is full of fan-maintained sites that list and analyze for example the references to Barks stories, or for example the funny details such as the tiny pictures of Mickey Mouse hidden in some of Rosa's stories, and even sites that pinpoint the historical references in Rosa's stories. With my approach, I have tried to take it one step further, and consider the broader perspective of how the past is represented in Rosa's stories. Not just whether or not a 'historic fact' presented as such in a story actually happened, but how and why it is featured in the story and what kind of a view on the past it creates.

When I first thought of the idea of doing my thesis on the Disney comics of Don Rosa, I thought to myself it was a wonderful idea, since the primary sources of the study would be so *easy* to define: Rosa had produced 86 duck stories by the year 2006, and it had by 2008 become apparent that he would most likely never again create a full story due to problems with his sight. So naturally my initial plan was to study *all* of his stories, since I already knew that Rosa located his stories in the 1950's, which would make all of them relevant to a study on historical culture. How naïve of me, one might say. Once my working process started, and I dug in deeper into the topic at hand, it became more and more apparent that I would never be able to analyze all of Rosa's stories within the limitations of this thesis. At first I chose to exclude from my study the

very short, one to five pages long gag stories. Then it was off with even the longer gag stories, given that they did not include obvious 'historical' elements. But even after this rough elimination, I was still left with the entire Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series and its companion, and all those numerous stories which were located in the present time of the duck universe, but which included wonderful historical elements such as mythologies and European heritage. It was still too much, and by the end I was forced to come to terms with my own limitations and the limitations of this thesis, and I chose to do deeper analysis of fewer stories and hoped that it would result in more quality research.

Having said that, this also means that there is still a lot of ground to be covered within this topic, either for myself or others interested in the subject. Studies on comic books and even more specifically on Don Rosa's work are rising in academic study at least in Finland, and hopefully around the rest of the world. There is currently at least one doctoral dissertation in the works in Finland concerning Don Rosa's Disney comics from the point of view of fantasy literature studies. The representations of history in Rosa's works could also be considered from a more pedagogical point of view. It could be considered how these kinds of comic books act as teaching materials or whether or not they have any kind of teaching potential. A study focusing more on the reader could therefore be of relevance, such as has been done by Marja Ritola in regards to intertextuality and the reader in Rosa's stories. So it can also be stated, that the topic at hand is *to be continued*... After all, even Rosa decided to continue to explore Scrooge's past after finishing the original Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck series, creating some of the most memorable stories of his career.

## Bibliography

### *Primary Sources*

#### **Original stories by Carl Barks:**

Super Snooper (1949). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. Gemstone. 2008.

The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone (1955). *Uncle Scrooge 253*. Walt Disney Publications. 1991.

Land of the Pigmy Indians (1957). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 1*. Gemstone. 2007.

#### **Original stories by Don Rosa:**

Last Sled to Dawson (1988). *Uncle Scrooge 350*. Gemstone. 2006.

The Crocodile Collector (1988). *Walt Disney's Vacation Parade 4*. Gemstone. 2007.

His Majesty, McDuck (1989). *Uncle Scrooge 331*. Gemstone. 2004.

The Return to Plain Awful (1989). *Uncle Scrooge 362*. Gemstone. 2007.

The Duck Who Fell to Earth (1991). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. Gemstone. 2008.

Treasure under Glass (1991). *Uncle Scrooge 263*. Walt Disney Publications. 1992.

War of the Wendigo (1991). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 1*. Gemstone. 2007.

Return to Xanadu (1991). *Uncle Scrooge 261*. Walt Disney Publications. 1991.

The Buckaroo of the Badlands (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.

Super Snooper Strikes Again (1992). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 2*. Gemstone. 2008.

The Last of the Clan McDuck (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.

The Master of the Mississippi (1992). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.

The New Laird of Castle McDuck (1993). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.



- The Raider of the Copper Hill (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 288. Gladstone. 1994.
- The Terror of the Transvaal (1993). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.
- The Dreamtime Duck of the Never Never (1993). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1*. Boom Kids. 2010.
- The King of the Klondike (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 292. Gladstone. 1995.
- The Guardians of the Lost Library (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 383. Gemstone. 2008.
- The Billionaire of Dismal Downs (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 293. Gladstone. 1995.
- The Empire-BUILDER from Calisota (1993). *Uncle Scrooge* 295. Gladstone. 1995.
- The Invader of Fort Duckburg (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 294. Gladstone. 1995.
- The Richest Duck in the World (1994). *Uncle Scrooge* 296. Gladstone. 1995.
- The Duck Who Never Was (1994). *Donald Duck* 286. Gladstone. 1994.
- From Duckburg to Lillehammer (1994). *Donald Duck* 283. Gladstone. 1994.
- Of Ducks, Dimes and Destinies (1995). *Uncle Scrooge* 297. Gladstone. 1996.
- The Incredible Shrinking Tightwad (1995). *Uncle Scrooge* 359. Gemstone. 2006.
- The Lost Charts of Columbus (1995). *The Barks / Rosa Collection 3*. Gemstone. 2008.
- The Treasury of Croesus (1995). *Uncle Scrooge* 372. Gladstone. 2007.
- The Universal Solvent (1995). *Uncle Scrooge* 401. Boom Kids. 2011.
- A Matter Of Some Gravity (1996). *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 610. Gladstone. 1997.
- The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 607. Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 608. Part 3 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 609. Gladstone. 1997.
- The Treasure of the Ten Avatars (1996). *Uncle Scrooge Adventures* 51. Gladstone. 1997.
- The Vigilante of Pizen Bluff (1996). *Uncle Scrooge* 306. Gladstone. 1997.

A Little Something Special (1997). *The Adventurous Uncle Scrooge McDuck 2*. Gladstone. 1998.

Attack of the Hideous Space-Varmints (1997). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 614*. Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 615*. Part 3 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 616*. Gladstone. 1997.

W.H.A.D.A.L.O.T.T.A.J.A.R.G.O.N. (1997). *Uncle Scrooge 309*. Gladstone. 1998.

The Black Knight (1998). *Uncle Scrooge 314*. Gladstone. 1998.

The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. Gemstone. 2006.

The Last Lord of Eldorado. *Uncle Scrooge 311*. Gladstone. 1998.

Escape From Forbidden Valley (1999). *Uncle Scrooge 347*. Gemstone. 2005.

The Dutchman's Secret (1999). *Uncle Scrooge 319*. Gemstone. 2003.

The Quest for Kalevala (1999). *Uncle Scrooge 334*. Gemstone 2004.

The Three Caballeros Ride Again (2000). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 635*. Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 636*. Part 3 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 637*. Gemstone. 2003.

The Sharpie of the Culebra Cut (2001). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. Gemstone 2006.

The Crown of the Crusader Kings (2001). *Uncle Scrooge 339*. Gemstone 2005.

Forget It! (2002). *Uncle Scrooge 328*. Gemstone. 2004.

The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). *Uncle Scrooge 329*. Gemstone 2004.

A Letter From Home (2004). *Uncle Scrooge 342*. Gemstone. 2005.

The Black Knight Glorps Again! (2004). *Uncle Scrooge 354*. Gemstone. 2006.

The Magnificent Seven (minus 4) Caballeros (2005). Part 1 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 663*. Part 2 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories 664*. Gemstone 2005.

The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2*. Gemstone. 2006.

### **Compilation publications by Don Rosa:**

Rosa, Don: *Roope Ankan elämä ja teot*. Original title: *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Perälä, Riku; Toppari, Elina. Helsinki Media Company Oy. Germany, 1997.

Rosa, Don: *Sammon salaisuus ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Perälä, Riku; Toppari, Elina. Helsinki Media Sarjakuvat. Portugal, 1999.

Rosa, Don (2001a): *Kadonneen kirjaston vartijat ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Perälä, Riku. Helsinki Media Oy, Keuruu. (1995) 2001, 2. edition.

Rosa, Don (2001b): *Temppeleherrojen kätetty kruunu ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Perälä, Riku; Toppari, Elina. Helsinki Media. Porvoo, 2001.

Rosa, Don (2001c): *The Don Rosa Archives I The Pertwillaby Papers*. Gazette Bok. Oslo, 2001.

Rosa, Don (2001d): *The Don Rosa Archives II The Adventures of Captain Kentucky*. Gazette Bok. Oslo, 2001.

Rosa, Don: *Musta Ritari ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Perälä, Riku; Toppari, Elina. Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy. Hämeenlinna, 2005.

Rosa, Don: *Roope Ankan elämä ja teot 2 Kaikki lisäseikkailut*. Original title: *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck – Companion*. Edited by Heiskanen, Jukka; Kastari, Anna; Perälä, Riku; Toppari, Elina; Äärilä, Mika. Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy. Porvoo, 2007.

Rosa, Don: *Kolmen caballeron paluu ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Ahonen, Kirsi; Kastari, Anna; Lehtonen, Lilli; Perälä, Riku; Äärilä, Mika. Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy. Italy, 2009.

Rosa, Don: *Pako kielletystä laaksosta ja muita Don Rosan parhaita*. Edited by Kastari, Anna; Perälä, Riku; Äärilä, Mika. Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy. Germany, 2010.

## **Research Literature**

Andrae, Tom: *Carl Barks and the Disney comic book: unmasking the myth of modernity*. University Press of Mississippi. 2006.

Baker, Brian: *Masculinity in Fiction and Film: Representing Men in Popular Genres, 1945-2000*. Continuum International Publishing. 2006.

Barker, Martin: *Comics: ideology, power, and the critics*. Manchester University Press. 1989.

Belk, Russell W.: Material Values in the Comics: A Content Analysis of Comic Books Featuring Themes of Wealth. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 26-42. The University of Chicago Press. 1987.

Berger, Arthur Asa: *Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday Life*. Sage Publications, 1997.

Brown, Joshua: Into the Minds of Babes: Children's Books and the Past. *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public. Critical Perspectives on the Past*. Edited by Porter Benson, Susan; Brier, Stephen; Rosenzweig, Roy. Temple University Press. Philadelphia 1986.

Castleden, Rodney: *King Arthur The truth behind the legend*. Routledge. London, 2000.

Chandler, Daniel. Intertextuality. *Semiotics for beginners*. 1994.

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html> (accessed 28.2.2011)

*Cutty Sark: The world's last tea clipper - 1883-1895: The Australian Wool Years*

<http://www.cuttysark.org.uk/index.cfm?fa=contentGeneric.fdvmyqknhxemnmvz&pageId=213> (accessed 7.12.2010).

De Groot, Jerome: *Consuming history: historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. Routledge 2009.

Dyer, Richard: *Älä katso! Seksuaalisuus ja rotu viihteeseen kuvastossa*. Osuuskunta Vastapaino. Jyväskylä 2002.

Eronen, Matti: *Carl Barks' Surviving Comic Book Art*. Matti Eronen 1994.

Eskelinen, Johanna: *Donald Duck Comics as a Finnish Institution*. University of Tampere, 2008.

<http://www.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/CULT/je-ankka.html> (accessed 20.1.2011)

Gabilliet, Jean-Paul: *Of comics and men: a cultural history of American comic books*. University Press of Mississippi. 2010. Translated by Beaty, Bart; Nguyen, Nick. Original publication *Des Comics et des hommes: Histoire culturelle des comic books aux États-Unis*. Editions du temps 2005.

Groensteen, Thierry: Why are comics still in search of cultural legitimization? *A comics studies reader*. Edited by Heer, Jeet; Worcester, Kent. The University Press of Mississippi. 2009.

Hayter, Delmar: MACKENZIE, MURDO. *Handbook of Texas Online*.

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmabf> (accessed 22.1.2011)

Herkman, Juha: *Sarjakuvan kieli ja mieli*. Vastapaino 1998.

Hill, Rosemary: *Stonehenge*. Profile Books. 2008.

Inge, M. Thomas: *Comics as Culture*. University Press of Mississippi. 1990.

Introvigne, Massimo: *Beyond The Da Vinci Code: History and Myth of the Priory of Sion*. CESNUR 2005 International Conference, June 2-5, 2005, Palermo, Sicily.

[http://www.cesnur.org/2005/pa\\_introvigne.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/2005/pa_introvigne.htm) (accessed 15.3.2011)

Kontturi, Katja: *Ankkalinna - portti kahden ulottuvuuden välillä: fantastisten maailmojen ilmeneminen Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuvissa*. Pro Gradu. University of Jyväskylä, 2009.

Kunzle, David: Dispossession by Ducks: The Imperialist Treasure Hunt in Southeast Asia. *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2, *Depictions of the Dispossessed*, pp. 159-166. College Art Association. 1990.

Neale, Steve: *Genre and Hollywood*. Routledge. 1999.

Pramaggiore, Maria; Wallis, Tom: *Film: a critical introduction*. Laurence King Publishing Ltd. 2005.

Pinsky, Mark: *The Gospel according to Disney: faith, trust, and pixie dust*. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, Kentucky 2004.

Richardson, Robert: *The Priory of Sion Hoax*. 2000. Originally published in *Gnosis* No. 51, Spring 1999, pp. 49-55.

[http://www.alpheus.org/html/articles/esoteric\\_history/richardson1\\_print.html](http://www.alpheus.org/html/articles/esoteric_history/richardson1_print.html) (accessed 15.3.2011)

Ritola, Marja: *Ankkojen aika: Intertekstuaalisuus ja lukija Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuvissa*. Pro Gradu. University of Tampere. 2000.

Roberts, Jeremy: *King Arthur*. Lerner Publications Company. 2001.

Rosenstone, Robert: *Visions of the Past The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1995.

Rosenstone, Robert: Oliver Stone as Historian. Originally published in *Oliver Stone's USA*, edited by Toblin, Robert. University of Kansas 2000.

[http://www.culturahistorica.es/rosenstone/oliver\\_stone\\_as\\_historian.pdf](http://www.culturahistorica.es/rosenstone/oliver_stone_as_historian.pdf) (accessed 28.2.2011)

Rosenzweig, Roy: Marketing the Past American Heritage and Popular History in the United States. *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public. Critical Perspectives on the Past*. Edited by Porter Benson, Susan; Brier, Stephen; Rosenzweig, Roy. Temple University Press. Philadelphia 1986.

Rosenzweig, Roy, and David Thelen (1998). *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ryall, Chris; Tipton, Scott: *Comic Books 101: The History, Methods, and Madness*. Impact Books, 2009.

Saarto, Kai: *Tähteyden ongelma ja sarjakuvantekijä Don Rosa tekijänä ja fanina*. University of Turku. 2006.

Salmi, Hannu: Menneisyyskokemuksesta hyödykkeisiin – historiakulttuurin muodot. *Jokapäiväinen historia*. Edited by Kalela, Jorma & Lindroos, Ilari. Tietolipas 177, SKS: Helsinki, 2001.

Salmi, Hannu: Historiallinen fiktio ja historiantkirjoitus. *Historioita ja historiallisia keskusteluja*. Edited by Louekari, Sami; Sivula, Anna. Historia Mirabilis 2. Turku 2004.

Sánchez Marcos, Fernando: Historical Culture. *Culturahistorica*. 2009.

[http://www.culturahistorica.es/sanchez\\_marcos/historical%20\\_culture.pdf](http://www.culturahistorica.es/sanchez_marcos/historical%20_culture.pdf) (accessed 28.2.2011)

Sivula, Anna: Uudet kysymykset, vanha muoto. *Historioita ja historiallisia keskusteluja*. Edited by Louekari, Sami; Sivula, Anna. Historia Mirabilis 2. Turku 2004.

Sorlin, Pierre: *The Film in History Restaging the Past*. Basil Blackwell Publisher. Oxford 1980.

Thornton, Ian W. B.: *Krakatau: the destruction and reassembly of an island ecosystem*. Harvard University Press. 1996.

Versaci, Rocco: How Comic Books Can Change the Way Our Students See Literature: One Teacher's Perspective. *The English Journal* Vol. 91, No. 2 (Nov., 2001), pp. 61-67.

Wasko, Janet: *Understanding Disney*. Polity Press. Cambridge, 2001.

Witek, Joseph: *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar*. University Press of Mississippi. 1989.

### **Other sources**

Aku Ankka N:o 45, 10.11.2010. Sanoma Magazines Finland Oy. Vilppula 2010.

"A Month of Writing Stars – Don Rosa". *Comic Book Resources Archive*.

<http://goodcomics.comicbookresources.com/2009/01/28/a-month-of-writing-stars-don-rosa/> (accessed 23.2.2011)

Beru's Disney Comics Fan Page. Don Rosa Stories.

[http://disneycomics.free.fr/index\\_rosa\\_date.php](http://disneycomics.free.fr/index_rosa_date.php) (accessed 17.3.2011).

*The D.U.C.K.man*. <http://duckman.pettho.com> (accessed 28.2.2011)

"Why does Magica DeSpell want Scrooge's Dime?" Edited by Rintanen, Jesse. *The Don Rosa Gallery* in *The Duckmaster - A Don Rosa Fansite*.

[http://www.perunamaa.net/donrosa/articles\\_magica.shtml](http://www.perunamaa.net/donrosa/articles_magica.shtml) (accessed 1.3.2011)

## List of Images

Image 1: Super Snooper (1949). <i>The Barks / Rosa Collection 2</i> . 2008. © Disney.....	25
Image 2: Super Snooper Strikes Again (1991). <i>The Barks / Rosa Collection 2</i> . 2008. © Disney .....	25
Image 3: The Billionaire of Dismal Downs. <i>Uncle Scrooge 293</i> . 1995. © Disney.....	31
Image 4: The Last of the Clan McDuck. <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 1</i> . 2010. © Disney.....	40
Image 5: The King of the Klondike (1993). <i>Uncle Scrooge 292</i> . 1995. © Disney .....	46
Image 6: The King of the Klondike (1993). <i>Uncle Scrooge 29</i> . 1995. © Disney.....	46
Image 7: The Richest Duck in the World (1994). <i>Uncle Scrooge 296</i> . 1996. © Disney .....	51
Image 8: The Richest Duck in the World (1994). <i>Uncle Scrooge 296</i> . 1996. © Disney .....	52
Image 9: The King of the Klondike (1993). <i>Uncle Scrooge 292</i> . 1995. © Disney .....	55
Image 10: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> . 2006. © Disney.....	60
Image 11: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> . 2006. © Disney.....	60
Image 12: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> . 2006. © Disney.....	61
Image 13: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> . 2006. © Disney.....	62
Image 14: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> . 2006. © Disney.....	63
Image 15: The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2</i> . 2006. © Disney .....	65
Image 16: The Prisoner of White Agony Creek (2006). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck 2</i> . 2006. © Disney .....	68
Image 17: The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). <i>Uncle Scrooge 329</i> . 2004. © Disney .....	72
Image 18: The Dream of a Lifetime (2002). <i>Uncle Scrooge 329</i> . 2004. © Disney.....	74



Image 19: The Cowboy Captain of the Cutty Sark (1998). <i>The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck</i> 2. 2006. © Disney .....	79
Image 20: The Treasure of the Ten Avatars (1996). <i>Uncle Scrooge Adventures</i> 51. 1997. © Disney .....	79
Image 21: The Treasury of Croesus (1995). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 372. 2007. © Disney.....	83
Image 22: The Fabulous Philosopher's Stone (1955). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 253. 1991. © Disney .....	84
Image 23: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 334. 2004. © Disney.....	89
Image 24: Akseli Gallen-Kallela: The Defence of the Sampo (1896).....	92
Image 25: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 334. 2004. © Disney.....	92
Image 26: Akseli Gallen-Kallela: The forging of the Sampo. 1893.....	93
Image 27: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 334. 2004. © Disney.....	93
Image 28: Hugo simberg: Väinämöinen ja Ikiturso (1897). Antti Kuivalainen, Central Art Archives, Finnish National Gallery.....	94
Image 29: The Quest for Kalevala (1999). <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> 334. 2004. © Disney.....	94
Image 30: The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 1 <i>Walt Disney's Comics and Stories</i> 607. 1997. © Disney.....	98
Image 31: The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 <i>Walt Disney's Comics and Stories</i> 608. 1997. © Disney.....	100
Image 32: The Once and Future Duck (1996). Part 2 <i>Walt Disney's Comics and Stories</i> 608. 1997. © Disney.....	101