

**REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIONALITY IN CARL BARKS'  
*LOST IN THE ANDES AND VODOO HOODOO***

Bachelor's Thesis

Joonas Viljakainen

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Languages  
English  
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten kansallisuus ja ei-amerikkalaiset hahmot on esitetty Carl Barksin ankkatarinoissa <i>Lost in the Andes</i> ja <i>Voodoo Hoodoo</i>. Tutkielman perustana toimivat Scott McCloudin ja Juha Herkmanin sarjakuvia käsittelevät teokset sekä kansallisten stereotyyppien tutkimus. Sarjakuvat analysoitiin hyödyntäen McCloudin ja Herkmanin määritelmiä sarjakuvien eri elementeistä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että paikalliset, ei-yhdysvaltalaiset hahmot on kuvattu yksipuolisesti, miesvaltaisesti ja muutamaa piirrettä korostaen kunkin kansallisuuden kohdalla. Esilletulleita seikkoja olivat muunmuassa hahmojen vaatetus, kasvopiirteet, luonne sekä käyttäytyminen. Nämä piirteet toistuivat lähes kaikissa samoihin ryhmiin kuuluneissa hahmoissa, poikkeuksena ne hahmot, joilla oli merkittävämpi osa tarinassa tai vitseissä. Tuloksia tulkittaessa oli kuitenkin syytä ottaa huomioon tarinoiden julkaisuvuosi, sillä molemmat tarinat julkaistiin vuonna 1949, jolloin käsitys kansallisuuksista oli erilainen. Myös kohdeyleisön, nuorten poikien, todettiin vaikuttaneen ei-amerikkalaisten esitystyyliin, sillä tarinoissa esiintyvät hahmot on haluttu jakaa helposti hahmotettaviin ja tunnistettaviin ryhmiin. Tutkimuksessa todettiin, että vaikka ei-yhdysvaltaisten hahmojen representaation oli ensisijaisesti tiettyä kaavaa noudattavaa, ei näiden hahmojen kuvaus ole kuitenkaan suoranaisesti alentavaakaan; ankat eivät osoita ennakkoluuloja kohtaamiaan henkilöitä kohtaan, eivätkä esimerkiksi perspektiivit kuvissa viitanneet siihen, että Barks olisi pyrkinyt kuvaamaan eri alueiden asukkaita eri arvoisina.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen pienen otannan huomioon ottaen yleistysten tekeminen Barksin tuotannon suhteen ei ole mahdollista. Tutkielman tarkoitus olikin ottaa ensiaskel kansallisuuden tutkimiseen sarjakuvissa, sekä rohkaista tulevia tutkijoita jatkamaan työtä.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Carl Barks' remarkable influence on modern comics is difficult to overemphasize, especially in Finland. His stories have been read time and time again for over 70 years, and his works spawned a universe that has enthralled generations. As such, the sheer popularity of his works is reason enough to look into what kind of role models, stereotypes and, perhaps, prejudices may be transferred to the readers. The importance of analyzing the values depicted in the stories is further highlighted by the fact that the target audience of the comics is children. The first and foremost justification for this study is the massive size of the worldwide cartoon industry. This is especially true in Finland, where the weekly publication named after Donald Duck (*Aku Ankka*) is in its own class in popularity, particularly when contrasted with other comics magazines: *Aku Ankka* had a circulation of over 320,000 copies in 2007, earning the title of the most popular weekly publication in the country (Yle uutiset, 2007).

According to Herkman (1998: 10-11), comics attracted academic interest only in the 1980's. One major contributor to the decade-long neglect of the medium is that comics were long branded childish and, all too often, a bad influence on children. However, these negative attitudes have waned in recent decades, as the children of the 50's and 60's, many of whom consumed significant amounts of comics in their youth, have grown up and exhibited more positive attitudes towards comics in their adulthood. In addition, the field of comics has become increasingly diverse: today, comics range from simple-minded children's superhero stories to extremely artistic, even avant-garde representations of complex human emotions. These changes have brought about a respect for comics as a form of art with its own paradigms and tools of representations.

Without proper introduction to the field of comics, it is difficult to understand the refined ways in which comics express emotions, world-views and the progression of the story. Thus, in order to conduct this study, it is necessary to define *comics* and examine some of the key elements of expression and representation that lie at the heart of the genre. First, I will examine some background theory vital for my analysis, looking first at the key elements of comics in general and later at the representation of nationality as well as stereotyping in comics. Scott McCloud (1993) and Juha Herkman (1998) have set the foundation upon which

my method was built. Secondly, I will provide a brief description of the data and formulate my methods of analysis. Third, I will analyse the data and attempt to shed light on how nationality is represented in the data. Last, I will conclude my analysis with a discussion on the results and their potential implications for further studies as well as society and readers.

## **2 WALKING DOWN THE PATH TO COMICS ANALYSIS**

Scott McCloud (1993:7-9) discusses the definition of comics to some length, focusing on with Will Eisner's term *sequential art*. In practice, this means that (usually) images, often drawn in clearly outlined panels, are set one after the other in a sequence. The images usually tell a story of one kind or another in a way that the reader is able to comprehend and interpret, though this is not always the case.

Herkman (1998:26) mentions four basic elements of comics: images, words, effects and panels. These four combine to form an entity that can express the full range of human emotions and experiences. Thus, while comics itself is a monosensory medium, it is capable of creating believable, complete worlds that do not lack any aspect of real life. The following chapter will explain and clarify these aspects of comics, provide an insight into the process of stereotyping and, finally, examine earlier studies whose topics sweep close to that of the present paper.

### **2.1 Basic elements of comics**

As mentioned earlier, the first element of comics is images. While drawing, the comics artist has several choices as to the tools that he or she might wish to use for presenting a given character in a specific manner. One of the more overt and obvious measures is perspective. A normal perspective usually symbolizes equality between reader and character or between characters. A birdseye perspective depicts the situation as seen from above and may be used to give the reader an overall picture of the situation, or to provide variety and change in dialogue. Similarly, the observed character can be depicted from a lower viewpoint, to portray differences in size, status, or power. Another important aspect is the distance from which the drawer chooses to depict the characters and objects, known as *shot types*. Terminology from photography has been widely applied here. Herkman (1998: 28-32) differentiates between extreme close-up, close-up, medium close-up, normal or 'mid' shot, wide shot and extremely

wide shot. For example, a comics artist may wish to illustrate a breathtaking view with an extremely wide shot, then let the viewer see the facial expressions of the characters with a normal or wide shot, and finally draw an extreme close-up of a detail in the distance that attracts the characters' attention. In contrast to perspective, which can be seen as defining the relation of the viewer to the character, shot type is used to draw the viewer's attention to specific detail or to focus on certain aspects of the story.

The level of visual realism affects the experience of the reader. Scott McCloud (1993: 35-39) differentiates between realistic and iconic depictions of characters. A realistically drawn character is reminiscent of an existing person or animal, marked by a high level of detail, while iconic characters, extremely common in comics and cartoons, bear less detailed resemblance to the real-world species or people they are derived from. McCloud goes on to argue that iconic characters are easier to identify with, mostly because simplified images, such as a smiley, can be said to represent a greater number of people than a portrait of, for example, Louis XVI (McCloud, 1993: 35-39). Herkman (1998: 35) uses the term *caricature* to refer to iconic representations. It is perhaps a more suitable term for treating characters in this study in comparison *icon*, which implies that the item under observation is an object rather than a character.

Herkman (1998: 35) asserts that identification with a character is a slightly more complicated process than McCloud contends. Herkman argues that the level of iconicity or realism of a character does not induce identification per se, but that it is the contrast between subject and object, the actor and the acted-upon, that makes the reader sympathize with a character. Alternatively, the reader may recognize a character as belonging to another group or as having little significance to the story. The contrast between iconic or caricatured and realistic or detailed objects and characters is but one, albeit important, way of distinguishing the difference; details pertaining to the story have a significant effect, as well.

The second element of comics is words, which are nearly always present in comics. Even though a comic strip or even a graphic novel can be drawn to tell a story using no words whatsoever, most stories have a title of some kind, and the artist's name is almost always found somewhere in the proximity of the panels. These can and do have an effect on the reader's attitude towards the comic: a familiar name raises different kinds of expectations than a completely obscure one.

Most comics use words in four distinct ways. First is the narrative, which is used to explain or elaborate upon the events of the story or panel. These are often located above the image or in a separate box to distinguish them as separate from dialogue and sound effects. The second way of using words is dialogue, which is often expressed through words located inside a balloon. The balloon and the appearance of the words, as will be explained later, affect the interpretation of the lines and dialogue. The third type of words in comics is sound effects. Words that imitate sounds through the phonemes of human languages such as "tweet" or "bang" are widely utilized in making sense of the sounds of the environment to the reader. These are called onomatopoeic words. Similarly to dialogue (though arguably more explicitly), the shape, style and size of the expressions have a marked influence on their interpretation: small text is often used for silent sounds, while thick, large letters usually indicate loud noises. Sound effects are, in fact, often a combination of text and image: an elegant font or handwriting would likely be used for pleasant sounds, while more crude alphabetical characters would likely indicate annoying sounds. The border between words and images, therefore, is sometimes blurred and unclear. However, great variation exists between artists on this particular point. (Herkman, 1998: 42-44, 50-52).

In addition to the three types of words mentioned above, a fourth type of words exists that can be found in many comics. Quite often, comics include texts in signposts, storefronts, newspapers and so forth. These are called details or detail texts, and they have a role in creating and sustaining an image of a credible and believable world. Often, they are used as a way of conveying vital information to the characters in the story, or they can be used to hide intertextual references or "easter eggs". In some cases, artists use them to tell stories within stories in a metatextual way. (Herkman, 1998: 42-44).

In their work, artists often need to depict more than dialogue and characters. Therefore, it is often necessary to utilize forms of expression that cannot be classified as purely words or images but can combine elements of both classes. Herkman (1998: 44) uses the term "effect" to refer to this third class. Effects are used to represent smells and other non-audible sensory stimuli as well as movement using a wide array of symbols. For example, the way the reader is likely to interpret the line "It is annoying" is dependent on not only the facial expression of the talking character, should there be one depicted, but also on the shape of the bubble (or the lack thereof) that contains the words. As a further example, swearing in comics is often

reduced to images that are symbolic of aggressive behavior, e.g. fists, knives, skulls and so forth. Notes hovering above a piano represent music, and unattractive odors can be illustrated with several wavy lines rising from the source of the smell. The interpretation of these symbols however, depends on their context: For example, wavy lines can also be used to indicate that a body of liquid is hot and steaming. Furthermore, though there are established conventions on the utilization of effects on comics, they experience great variation between cultures, genres, traditions and writers. Thus, it is vital to use great care when interpreting effects, though a good drawer uses them unambiguously. (McCloud, 1993: 127-131).

The fourth and final element of comics is panels. Panels limit a sequence of time, long or short, as well as a certain space and perspective. Usually, the borders of panels are clearly defined, and most of the other elements are, as a rule, located within panels, though this is not always the case. McCloud (1993: 96-103) explains that panels can, through the careful deployment of the elements of comics, depict a short or long duration of time, or, as in some cases, give the reader a sense of timelessness. Panels usually take the shape of a rectangle, but as no strict rules exist, the artist has total freedom in presenting their panels: rectangular, shapeless, bordered, borderless, long, short, big or small. (McCloud, 1993: 102).

However, not everything in comics happens inside the panels. The white strips that are often found between single panels in comics are called gutters, while the mental process of linking two or more panels into a coherent sequence or entity is called closure. While gutters are a physical object, closure is a process that takes place entirely in the head of the reader. McCloud (1993: 87-93) argues that gutters and closure contribute a key element of comics, nearly as important as the panels themselves. In fact, closure is so central to reading comics that without it all comics would be insignificant and irrelevant, as the panels, arranged in sequence, would probably be unintelligible, if not for the ability to deduce causalities between succeeding panels.. The stories of comics, while drawn and written into the panels, can be seen to advance through gutters; they allow for immensely long leaps in time as well as for portraying slow-motion movement with fraction-of-a-second frames. In fact, gutters are vital for the progression of the story, and McCloud argues that comics have an immense potential to captivate the reader through demanding active, though perhaps unconscious, participation from the reader. (McCloud, 1993: 87-93).

The relation of image and word affects the reader's experience and perception and must thus



be taken into account when analyzing any comics. Scott McCloud (1993: 153-155) lists seven ways in which comics combine images and words: Word specific, picture specific, duo-specific, additive, parallel, and interdependent combinations as well as montages. When words are used to create a 'soundtrack' and do not contribute significantly to the meaning of the picture, the combination is called picture specific. Word specific combinations, on the other hand, focus more on the text, and the images merely illustrate what is being told in words. Duo-specific panels combine words and images in a way that both relay the same message. In additive combinations, words are used to amplify the image, or vice versa. Parallel combinations let words and images take their own paths, which do not seemingly intersect, while interdependent combinations are used to express ideas or intentions through making words and images supplement each other, each expressing something the other cannot. Finally, montages involve treating words as an inseparable part of an image by, for example, depicting background noise through the word 'noise' instead of other, pictorial representations or speech bubbles.

Finally, as McCloud (1993: 124-130) puts it, all lines have the potential to express emotions. What it means is that, essentially, every character, every symbol and every line can and does shape the reader's experience. Everything that the artist draws – or chooses not to draw – has some purpose, though the implications of each detail are not always intended. Context is key to understanding comics.

## **2.2 Stereotyping and representations of nationality in comics**

Caricatures and stereotypes are ways in which human beings attempt to categorize and make sense of the world around them. Throughout human history, stereotyping has had a marked influence on our thinking, behavior, attitudes and world view. Reasons for the formation of stereotypes vary; stereotyping can be used to strengthen or display power relations, exalt the self and demean the other, or to create a comic effect, though sometimes the comedy might be based on racist ideology. On the other hand, McLeod (2008) argues that stereotyping offers a way for humans to respond to situations quickly, for example, when facing a threat in the wild. Furthermore, stereotyping happens in our everyday lives as a way of forming a comprehensible world-view. Thus, stereotyping is not an entirely negative phenomenon, and can be seen in many ways as necessary for approximating the world and for coping limited human mental capacity. In this way, stereotypes can be a useful method of narrative; there is

little need to elaborate on the characters and their inclinations as the reader can deduce the role of each character from the way they look. However, stereotypes, whether national, ethnic, cultural or of any other type, usually carry connotations of prejudice, which can hinder international and cross-ethnic understanding. It is because of this negative potency that representations of nationality require studying.

Beller (2008: 429) writes that stereotyping is a process of making rough estimates of other nationalities, ethnicities or similar groups of people through a limited number of features in a way that often labels the selected features as prevalent in all members of the community in question. Some stereotypes may have roots in a peculiar feature of the stereotyped culture, though often these claims, while rooted in reality, have been exaggerated; other stereotypes, on the other hand, are straightforwardly false (Beller, 2008: 430). McGarthy et al (2002: 5-7) emphasize that stereotypes are shared beliefs of a group of people, writing that stereotypes do not attract attention unless the recognition they receive is in some way significant (i.e. a number of people profess them). However, even though stereotyping is usually seen as pertaining to group beliefs, it is vital to remember that all groups, and thus the conceptions and beliefs of any group, are shaped by the individuals that the group consists of. Thus, individual ideas affect the overall view that different factions have of others – markedly so with influential individuals, such as artists.

In relation to comics, Achim Hölter writes that "Comics are a visual art --- this makes them a powerful medium for the promulgation of national and racist stereotypes" (Hölter, 2008: 307). The visual nature of comics allows the artist to create overly stereotypical characters, an example of which is can be found in *Tintin in the Congo* by Hergé, where Congolese blacks were depicted as dumb and infantile (see, for example, Hergé, 2002). However, the very fact that comics are an inherently visual media means that the reader will process the appearance of the characters instantly, and little room is left for imagination as to clothing, facial features and other details. This is what makes comics stand out from, say, literature, and also complicates analysis: all characters must have an appearance of one kind or another. A character's appearance is likely to reflect their ethnicity, as is the probable case with their accent and body language, as well – but other details, such as profession, their role in the story and possible personal quirks assigned to them, have an effect on how a give character is drawn and represented. Thus there are no set rules as to what constitutes a case of racist stereotyping, the implication here being that each case must be evaluated individually if any

meaningful results are hoped to be found.

Writers choose certain individuals whom they consider representative of the whole group and thus participate in the process of stereotyping (Rigney, 2008: 416). What is significant here is that to the reader, a "foreign" character in a story has the potential to shape the reader's perception of the character's home culture. This, in turn, makes it possible for the writer to stress features of the culture that they find pleasing, possibly affecting the reader's mind in the process. Ideology can and often does play a significant role here: an artist's personal opinions and views affect the plot, imagery and language of a cartoon, creating a possibility for negative stereotyping to occur. In this sense, representations of foreign (i.e. foreign to the protagonist/s of the story) cultures are an important area of academic research. Nevertheless, relatively little attention has been paid to the topic in the context of comics research, despite the worldwide popularity of Carl Barks, Hergé, Will Eisner and the likes.

However, caricatured characters should not always be interpreted as being offensive, sexist or racist. The context, style and mood of the comic create the backdrop against which caricatures must be evaluated: for example, delineating an African American person as dumb or infantile can be seen to repeat racist stereotypes. But what if were revealed that the character is suffering from a mental illness, or that the artist was African American, or that the intention of the artist was to ridicule stereotypic representations? All of these instances create unique contexts outside of which it is impossible and pointless to attempt any serious analysis.

### **2.3 Previous studies**

Comics research appears to be quite a small yet vibrant area of research in Finland. In recent years, there have been several MA studies that revolve around comics and/or the Duck universe. One such study is *Unca Don and Unca Scrooge's Guide to History* (2011) by Petra Kotro, at the university of Turku. The study examines representations of past in Don Rosa's Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge comics, and her research revealed that Rosa's stories involve a great deal of historical research and background work. Kotro's study sweeps, at times, quite close to the present paper, but representations of nationality are not a major theme in the study.

Katja Kontturi (2009) conducted a study which illuminates the ways in which Duckburg can

be seen as locating somewhere between this world and the imaginary. She focuses on Don Rosa's stories, writing that in the Duck universe, a delicate balance of fantasy and reality-based elements creates a feeling of credibility; and when not, a humorous effect is usually sought after. Essi Varis's (2012) study focuses on how characters build and are built on in graphic novels such as *The Sandman*, *Watchmen* and *Maus: Of Mice and men*, concluding that the interplay between images and words in comics is not a limitation but an opportunity to form characters in ways that are not possible in other printed media. Päivi Anttila (2011) examines the representation of sexuality in the comics of Ralf König in her pro gradu thesis, illuminating the ways in which König, in his work, disassembles heterosexual norms found in Western societies, as well as myths surrounding sexual orientation. The paper reveals that König's works reverse traditional gender roles and present heterosexuality as a complex and quirky phenomenon.

From the number of studies that have taken an interest to comics, it seems the art has attracted significant academic attention. The popularity of the Donald Duck magazine in Finland can be witnessed in the number of studies that examine the Ducks universe. However, studies focusing on nationality in comics seem scarce. The purpose of this study is to begin filling the gap, so that awareness of how non-American and, by extension, non-Western characters are represented in comics might be raised.

### **3 DATA AND METHODS**

The data for this study consists of panels selected from two of Barks' long adventure stories: *Lost in the Andes* and *Voodoo Hoodoo*. In *Lost in the Andes*, Donald Duck and his nephews adventure into the Andes in search of eggs that take the shape of cubes. *Voodoo Hoodoo*, on the other hand, Donald Duck falls victim of a curse that was intended to hit his uncle, Scrooge McDuck. The unfortunate event sends Donald (as well as his nephews, again) on a quest to the Caribbean to find the witch doctor responsible for the malediction, in order to reverse its effects.

Owing to the limited length of this study, the simplest way to analyze the comics was to single out the panels that have the most potential for stereotyping and/or depicting nationality. For example, a panel where the Ducks are seen sailing and singing on the sea is hardly useful for analyzing representations of nationality, though a more thorough analysis could certainly

contain all panels of a story. A panel that contains both Ducks and non-Americans, however, is a much better platform for analysis, as the relations of the characters in the panel can be easily compared. Thus, such panels were the first thing to look for in the stories.

Panels that only depicted 'natives' were more suited for analysis than panels that only contain Ducks. This is because Carl Barks' comics are targeted at a primarily white American audience: American characters are the norm from which all other nationalities deviate in their respective ways. The panels in which only non-American characters are rendered were thus a second source of material, as the near-obvious question on how the characters differ from the American norm can be answered through examining the manner in which they are drawn.

The panels selected from *Lost in the Andes* are all found within the first half of the story: The Ducks are on the way to their destination and have already left Duckburg some pages earlier. On the journey to find square eggs, the Ducks encounter locals who represent a real ethnicity, native South Americans. From the story, native South Americans are the most fruitful group to analyze, since Plain Awfulians, the imaginary people who thrive on square eggs, do not exist outside the comic, and other characters in the story chiefly consist of citizens of the United States of America. In order to sketch the broadest view possible, a panel was chosen from each of the four smaller, separate arches that contain encounters with natives.

In *Voodoo Hoodoo*, on the other hand, the panels can be found in the latter half of the story, when the Ducks have already landed on the African country to which they were destined. On their journey in Africa, they encounter two kinds of black locals: the people who carry their bags, and the feared voodoo tribe. Again, it was decided that both groups should be represented in the analysis for as wide an understanding as possible. Thus, two panels of each group can be found in the following section.

In the analysis, observations about the panels were made on the basis of the terms and definitions introduced from McCloud (1993) and Herkman (1998). Images, words, effects and the panels themselves affect the impression and image that conveyed to the reader. The information acquired through analyzing these elements was used to piece an overall image of how nationality is represented in the stories, and conclusions were drawn on the basis of what emerged in the process. Each panel was examined individually, after which the panel were grouped according to the story they originated from. Thereafter, the panels were put in a

chronological order within their respective groups. After each group of panels, some recurring themes were gathered and a brief summary of what had been found was written.

## 4 REVIEWING *LOST IN THE ANDES* AND *VOODOO HOODOO*

This section is dedicated for the analysis of Carl Barks' stories *Lost in the Andes* and *Voodoo Hoodoo*. Here I will examine the depiction of non-American characters through examining carefully chosen panels from both stories.

### 4.1 Lost in the Andes



*Lost in the Andes*, Panel 1. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Panel 1 shows the Ducks on a dangerous-looking bridge with a man who in the story intends to practice flying. In the foreground, three local men are either passing by or following the attempts of the flying man. The Ducks have politely asked the man to move, as the bridge is narrow and two persons cannot safely pass each other on it.

The characters here serve only the purpose of making and telling a joke to the reader. The panel could probably best be described a wide shot with elements of a normal shot in the foreground. The bird-man is the focus of attention here, while the three men in the foreground act as spectators or eyewitnesses, having no lines or opinions of their own; in fact, even their emotions are somewhat hidden as their faces cannot be seen at all. Regular rectangular panel borders mean that the panel's appearance is not of the kind that attracts attention. This is because it is the panel that precedes the "punch line": its purpose is to build up the tension that the following panel will then use for comic effect.

In addition to skin color and clothing, the ethnicity of the four locals is conveyed through

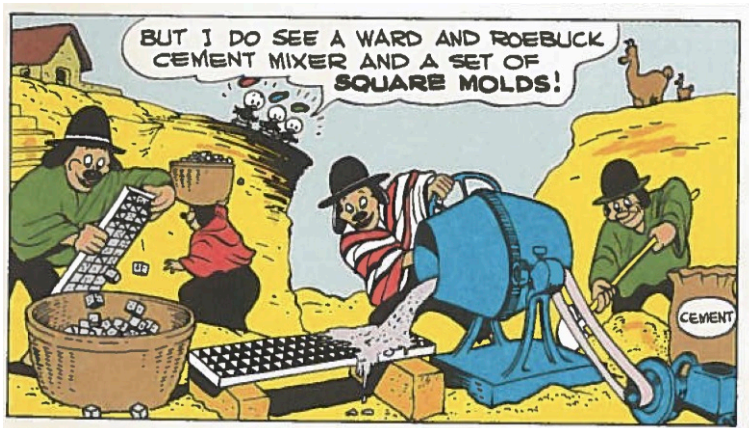
their speech and accent as well as their names, Pablo, Manco and Tupec, which are somewhat stereotypical for Southern American characters.



*Lost in the Andes, Panel 2. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

In panel 2, a local man is presenting a pair of dice to Donald and the nephews. The man, having listened to the Ducks' description of the square eggs, makes out that the item they mean is a die; after all, both are almost square. What results is a misunderstanding.

The local man is a flat character, meaning he does not experience any kind of development during the course of the story. His only purpose is to help in finishing a gag that is based on a misunderstanding and on the nature of the character as a salesman. The native, standing on the left side of the panel, attracts the reader's attention with his height, bright clothes, smirky smile and through the fact that the Ducks are looking at his hand. The panel, in fact, focuses on the man's hand holding the dice, so as to make the dice the center of attention. This is amplified by the use of the dotted line indicating the direction of Donald's gaze, and by the lines around Donald's head that express his surprise at learning that the man had misunderstood him and, perhaps, played a joke on them. The relationship between images and words is duo-specific in that what is seen in the panel and spoken by Donald through text is, essentially, the same thing. The panel contains the joke of the immediate short arch. The smiling llama is an interesting gag-strengthening detail: he understands the joke, possibly because he too is, in a sense, a local.

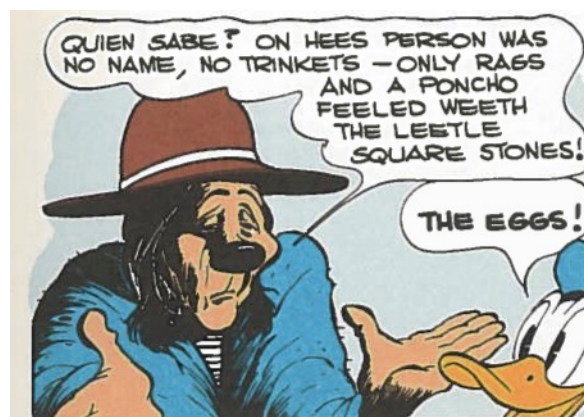


*Lost in the Andes, panel 3. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

In panel 3, the ducklings are looking over a group of locals who have come up with a clever idea: to make squares out cement and sell them to the Ducks as square eggs. As earlier, the characters here make only one appearance and are only drawn for the sake of humor, which in turn is based on the salesmanlike mentality that Barks seems to have bestowed upon most of the locals.

The panel is slightly wider than the ones on the same page, mostly to accommodate all the locals and to provide a broad view of what is going on. It could also be seen to highlight the ducklings' point of view: while they stand looking down from a higher position, they have a broader view of the surroundings. The focus is on the locals doing the cement work, while the Ducks stand in the background only to point out that they have made an observation. Just as in the earlier panel, the relationship between word and image could best be described as duo-specific, owing to the fact that the boys state in words what is happening, from their point of view, below.

The locals are, again, wearing traditional clothing. There is variation as to the coloring of their ponchos, but their facial features repeat the same pattern.



*Lost in the Andes, panel 4. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*



Panel 4 is a close-up of a Spanish-speaking descendant of native South Americans who lives somewhere in the Andes. As a character, his purpose is to further the story by giving the Ducks vital advice on the mystery surrounding the square eggs. The focus of the panel is the man telling his story, as indicated by the eye-level perspective and the fact that only part of Donald's head is visible. The panel is very static: there are no effects, no movement is depicted. Though the panel is rectangular in shape, its borders are clearly defined only at the bottom and the bottom right corner; the rest of the panel gets its shape from the speech bubbles on the right and top of the panel, while the left side of the panel is left somewhat open and without clear borders at all. The sense of motionlessness brought about by the aforementioned factors highlights the Ducks' passiveness and receptive behavior in the situation, as well as underlines the importance of the information in the panel as opposed to other panels.

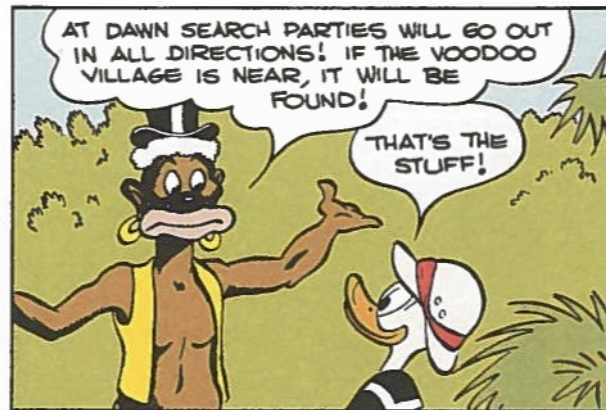
The old man is drawn in much higher detail than, for example, Donald in the same panel. The shading on his face creates a dramatic effect and contrasts steeply with the simplistic manner in which Donald is drawn. The man's speech is Spanish-influenced, as is witnessed by the remark "Quien sabe?" ("Who knows?") and the fact that the short i-vowels are replaced with long ee-vowels ("feeled" for "filled", "leetle" for "little").

Donald, in the panel, is not a vital part, but instead he serves as a helper to the reader. The relation between actor and acted-upon are clear, as Donald merely responds to the man's story. The perspective is likely influenced by the fact that the man tells his story along several panels. The drawer may have wanted to provide alteration to the perspectives to attain and retain the reader's interest in the story; in addition, the close-up contrasts with the wider shots in a way that stresses highlights the panel as a turning point in the story and emphasizes the importance of the said piece of information.

To sum up *Lost in the Andes*, all the locals speak English with a Spanish accent, which ignores the influence of possible native languages, and sums the area as one that is primarily Spanish-speaking. Uneducated locals still speak English, though this is a compromise that is necessary in order to let the story progress without insurmountable difficulties. The locals seen in the panels are primarily men, who all wear similar clothing and bear similar facial features, skin color, and accent. The local characters are mostly flat characters drawn for advancing smaller arches in the story and completing gags. They seem to be obsessed with

selling things to the Ducks, going to great lengths in executing their plots. Only one local gives them information relevant to their quest, and that same character can be said to be the only one of the locals whose personal history is featured in the story.

#### 4.2 Voodoo Hoodoo



*Voodoo Hoodoo, panel 5. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

In panel 5 a local guide, in charge of leading the expedition to the voodoo tribe, is giving Donald the plans as to how they intend to locate the voodoo tribe. His clothes differ from those of the carriers, which makes him stand out from the rest of the group. The top hat further underscores his position, as it is a symbol for wealth and prestige; for example, Scrooge McDuck wears one.

The guide is the focus of this panel, standing on the left significantly taller than Donald, who is placed on the right side of the panel. Donald is a receiver, since all he does is comment on the guide's words. Donald's open smile and satisfied comment would indicate that he has no prejudices towards the guide, and that Donald seems open to the guide's suggestions and plans. The panel is, in truth, quite similar to panel 4: to the left there is a native giving information to Donald who, standing on the right, receives the information and signals his understanding of what is being said.



*Voodoo Hoodoo, panel 6. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

The men in panel 6 were hired to carry the Ducks' belongings. They are running away, afraid to death, after the voodoo tribe they were looking for makes a demonstration of their presence and hostility towards the expedition. The natives here are drawn and depicted as knowing of the potential lethality associated with encounters with the voodoo tribe. The line "We is discovered!" reveals that the men are either non-native English speakers or use a local variety of English. Further, the men all wear the same kind of clothes, and cannot be told apart since they lack individual facial features.

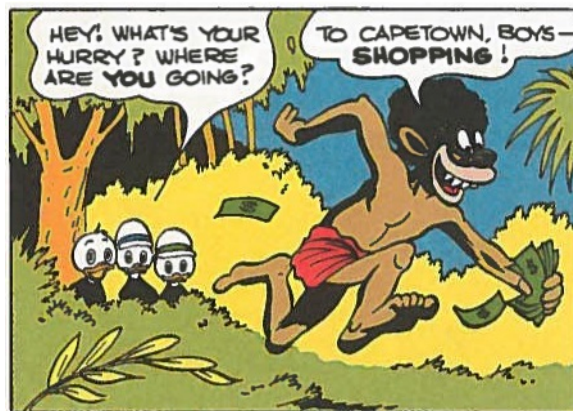


*Voodoo Hoodoo, panel 7. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

In panel 7 Foola Zoola, the story's main antagonist, welcomes the Ducks to his lair, mistakenly taking Donald to be Scrooge McDuck, Foola Zoola's old enemy. His clothing and appearance reflect his position as the leader of his tribe. He has white hair, which makes him stand out from the other members of his tribe, who have black hair. His snakelike arm decorations underline his position as a significant character, as does the red eye on a stick he

holds in his hands. The stick and the snake decorations are exotic and mystical symbols, which combine to accentuate his status as both the tribe leader and a voodoo witch doctor.

As in most other panels chosen for review, the native in this image, Foola Zoola, is located to the left, while the Ducks stand to the right. Foola Zoola's position is elevated, a sign of his power and position in the tribe. His higher position also works to strengthen the impression that he is in charge of the situation, while the Ducks seem subservient and subordinate. Other factors working towards this end are the Duck's facial impressions (fear and demoralization), the numerous sweat beads running down from their faces and Donald's posture, both surprised and evasive. Foola Zoola's confident yet malicious smile and the drool seen falling under his chin underline his excitement, as well as his belief that he would soon have his revenge on the person who drove his tribe away from their homeland.



*Voodoo Hoodoo, panel 8. © Disney Enterprises, Inc.*

In panel 8, a strong irony is present: the man, depicted as a member of a savage tribe, understands the value of money, as well as the concept of shopping. This is a very West-centered view, considering the age in which the story takes place: in the 1940' and 1950's, consumerism was a growing phenomenon in the West, but Africa lagged behind in this process. To depict a member of a savage African tribe in this way is an example of West-centered thinking.

The black locals have two distinct looks that divide them into separate groups. The first group is the carriers, who all wear the same type of white robes, with the exception of their leader. The second group is the voodoo tribe, whose members wear a loincloth that leaves their upper bodies uncovered. All of the black locals are drawn with thick, pink lips and earrings. The

African characters are depicted through two opposing roles: the servant, peaceful in his nature, yet superstitious and fearful; and the savage, bloodthirsty and fanatical yet susceptible to bribery, as is exemplified by both Foola Zoola, who almost lets the Ducks go in exchange for a sizeable sum, and his henchmen, as seen in panel 8.

The voodoo tribe is depicted as a band of bloodthirsty savages, loyal to their master and inherently evil. Another feature of the tribe is that they are susceptible to bribery: Both Foola Zoola and one of his tribe members are willing to make settlements for money. Foola Zoola's name is a sign too: 'Foola' is reminiscent of the word fooler, referring to someone who tricks and deceives people, while Zoola could refer to zoo, underlining the voodoo tribe's savagery and animal-like qualities.

The plot in *Voodoo Hoodoo* has more complexity than a brief look at four panels can reveal. The starting point for the story is Scrooge McDuck's wrongful acquisition of the Voodoo tribe's holy homeland. In response to this, Foola Zoola sends Bombie the Zombie to deliver his curse to Scrooge. Donald is an innocent bystander who happens to be caught in the middle of the conflict. Though the voodoo tribe is depicted as a savage and superstitious gang of violent hoodlums, the reason for their rage is Scrooge McDuck. This is, however, used only as a pretext to the story; more serious contemplations on the exploitation of uneducated natives by European and American businessmen, for example, has been left out, likely because the target audience for the story was young boys interested in action and adventure.

All the places, with the exception of Capetown, are imaginary and have names such as Scroogeville, Mumbo Jumbo River and Whambo Jambo. The two latter names reflect Beller's (2008) statement that stereotypes reduce people to a small number of characteristics; even though Beller only speaks of human beings, his assertion can, by extension, be applied to the language aspect. Mumbo Jumbo and Whambo Jambo are words that mockfully imitate the languages of Africans, and are, essentially, language reduced to a handful of voices. This is perhaps the crudest expression of stereotypes in the stories, considering that mumbo jumbo is a derogative term for incomprehensible language.

An interesting feature of both stories is the absence of women. Female characters who are member of the local communities have no lines in either story; though there are local women in *Lost in the Andes!*, the voodoo tribe and the Ducks' carriers *Voodoo Hoodoo* are all men. In

the beginning of *Voodoo Hoodoo*, American high-class women are drawn having a discussion. They are, however, portrayed in quite a negative fashion. The scarcity of female characters in all groups likely reflects the target audience and their anticipated interests.

What is more, neither story explicitly states the ethnicity/nationality of the locals. In *Lost in the Andes!*, the Ducks land in Peru, and the assumption is made that all of the locals are Peruvians. However, their ethnic groups is never named in any way, leaving their background ambiguous. In *Voodoo Hoodoo*, not even a country is named, but the Ducks only talk about Africa. The omission of clear, unambiguous names for communities has two consequences: on the one hand, no single tribe, people or ethnicity is subjected to the caricatures presented in the stories, while on the other hand, all the people within the specified geographical area (Peru, Africa) who bear resemblance to the characters in the stories suffer the ramifications of the stereotypes. To the reader, the locals are Peruvians and Africans, not, for example, Incas or Zulus.

## **5 REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIONALITY**

After looking at the panels in section 4, some conclusions can be drawn as to the image of different ethnicities that emerges from the stories.

Firstly, nearly all of the non-American characters in the panels (and, indeed, throughout the stories) are men. Female characters have no lines, nor are they visible in any way in *Voodoo Hoodoo*. One possible explanation for this is target audience: young boys can be seen to better identify with male characters, as well as accept them as active characters in the story. Another possible reason is that in 1949, the year of first publication for both stories, traditional gender roles were still prevalent. Cultures were thus seen as more male-dominated, and the stereotypical local would be a man. Alternatively, it could be seen as underlining the relative social progress made in America and Europe at the time, and emphasizing the perceived backwards mentality in so-called peripheral areas.

A second point to be made is that the depiction of locals is, simply put, one-sided. Local characters had discerning features only when they were somehow necessary for furthering the story or otherwise possessed some significance; outside of this, the locals were always drawn indistinguishable from other members of the same group. This applied to not only the

appearance of the characters but also to their behavior the carriers: in *Voodoo Hoodoo* the carriers were all submissive, superstitious and easily frightened; the members of the voodoo tribe were malicious and fierce; and in *Lost in the Andes*, nearly all of the characters that the Ducks met were trying to sell merchandise. This relates to Beller's (2008) claim that stereotypes reduce a group of people to a handful of features. However, the characters that had the vital bit of significance were not depicted as stupid or in an otherwise downplaying manner: in fact, many of the locals had interesting traits of personality and ideas and opinions of their own.

One recurring feature in the panels is that the locals were commonly located on the left side of the panel. To be exact, panels 2, 4, 5 and 7 followed this model. Conversely, the Ducks, or at least one of them, stood on the right. A reason for this is that the natural order of placing characters in a given panel is that of who speaks first: the left side is (in the West) the first place the reader lays their eyes upon, while events and comments located on the right are usually perceived as taking place after the events of the left side. This underlines the roles of the Ducks and the locals: firstly, the locals and the Ducks are rarely, if ever, grouped together on the same side of the panel, which is emblematic of the divide between nations and ethnicities. Secondly, the relation between speaker and listener becomes clear: the Ducks listen to the locals, who give their advice. Power relations, however, are generally not displayed through the layout of the panels or perspective; though Foola Zoola sits higher than the Ducks stand, most panels in both stories are drawn from a perspective somewhere between the eye level of Donald and the local character in the panel since most characters are significantly taller than the Ducks. As Herkman (1998) writes, it is a way of signifying equality.

The facial impressions of the Ducks imply one important aspect in the stories: The Ducks trust the locals, engaging openly in conversation with them. On most occasions, the Ducks smile at the locals, which signifies trust, acceptance and satisfaction with how things are. The Ducks give no signs of prejudice toward the people they meet, openly greeting them and doing their best to maintain good relations with them. The moments when the protagonists come under threat (such as in *Voodoo Hoodoo*) or are ridiculed, which happens several occasions in *Lost in the Andes!* are, of course, exceptions to this rule. However, even these mishaps are not enough to make the Ducks think in stereotypes that label the whole race, nation or people.

## 6 CONCLUSION

What was evident from the start was that some level of stereotyping would be present, as is the case with any work of art. While it can be argued that locals were, in the selected stories, presented somewhat inflexibly and in a rather simplistic manner, to call Barks' depiction of nationality and ethnicity prejudiced or, worse, racist, is an unnecessarily harsh judgment. It is likely that Barks' motivation, in addition to making the stories easier to follow for children, was to provoke the reader's interest in other cultures, as well as stimulate their imagination. Humor was obviously an important motive, though occasionally it led, especially in *Voodoo Hoodoo*, to rather crude representations of locals. Mumbo Jumbo and Whambo Jambo as representations of African languages is, as was said earlier, a harsh way of stigmatizing them as unintelligible gibberish.

In the world of today, questions and depictions of nationality and ethnicity cannot be ignored or neglected as easily as was possible in the 1940's and 1950's. Even so, works created in the past should be seen in their own context. Seeing that the target audience, young children, can hardly be said to possess the ability to identify the possible issues associated with stereotyping in comics, it is up to adults and parents to make sure the children understand that the reality of comics usually offers only a narrow peek into the world of complexity. In this regard, Carl Barks is hardly the worst offender; his comics can, most of the time, be said to depict members of non-American communities in a neutral, albeit simplified, manner. It is likely that this is one of the reasons his comics are so popular even in the globalized, slightly more egalitarian world of today.

This study is by no means conclusive; rather, it is intended to arouse interest, provoke criticism of the use of ethnic stereotypes and provide a rudimentary peek into the ways comics illustrate different people. The length of the study did not allow for as deep or extensive an analysis as might have been hoped for. For example, a broader view of how nationality and ethnicity in Barks' works in general could be achieved by including a greater number of stories in the analysis. On the other hand, a more solid picture of the comics in this study could be attained through examining a larger number of panels and elements found in them. Alternatively, parallels between Barks and other comics artists of the same time period could be drawn by putting them side by side and comparing them analytically.



On the other hand, reviewing any more than two stories within the BA thesis limitations would likely produce extremely vague results and disallow detailed analysis. Additionally, another approach might have yielded different results; for example, focusing on story elements while providing panels to support the claims could have allowed for a more well-defined method and definite analysis. Nevertheless, the method used here was sufficient and enabled the study to reach its aims. The present paper is neither a deep glance at a single story nor an overview on Barks' works. In this context, it is a mid-fielder, providing something from both ends. It presents a balanced view on a complex topic and in the best-case scenario will encourage aspiring comics researchers to take their first step.

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