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Illustrations and Innovations

The metonymic icons of the carnival

The contemporary theme park has been read as the embodiment of the postmodern site; the use of collage, the juxtaposition of narratives and images without respect for the boundaries of history and geography, is frequently invoked as the abiding feature of postmodernity. For Jameson, ‘Disneyfication’ is ‘another word for postmodernity and its simulacra’ (Jameson 2005: 215).¹ However, the cheerful borrowing and reproduction of ‘inherited’ narratives and cultural images, which Jameson identifies as defining ‘postmodernity (or late capitalism)’, may not be exclusively a postmodern phenomenon. While new technologies and a global culture have certainly broadened the speed and range of a shared cultural iconography, the repeated reproduction of familiar stories and images is not a postmodern or even a modern phenomenon but a process that dates back to the beginnings of the reproduction of visual culture.

Figure 2.1 Mad Hatter's tea party, *Alice in Wonderland*, John Tenniel, 1865

There has long been a borrowing and circulation of defining cultural icons that can be charted from the beginnings of a mass popular culture in the late eighteenth century. There is a logic, a defining historical logic, to the range of stories and images that are to be found in fairgrounds and theme parks across the world. From Brighton Pier and Blackpool Pleasure Beach to Coney Island and Disney World, the same categories dominate the pleasure ground. There is a structural regularity to the tales that signify the carnivalesque and which continue to be used to theme roundabouts, roller coasters, dark rides and whole areas of the theme park. The categories which Disneyland employs to divide the spaces of the park are those of the popular literary genres identifiable from the moment of the mass reproduction of texts and images. At all the Disney parks, the space is organised along the lines of familiar and well-loved sets of stories: Fantasyland is the space of fairy tale, Gothic horror and of chivalric romance; Adventureland of Egyptiana and 'boy's own stories' of empires and treasure islands; Frontierland and Main Street the site of the American Western; and Tomorrowland (or Discoveryland) of science fiction. Each of these genres offers the promise that there are still geographies and cultures to be conquered and that all these can be accessed from the relative safety of Main Street (see Philips 1999). Every theme park since has borrowed this generic ordering; although the textual references may vary and the imagining of Main Street may be different in different contexts, the same organising principles remain.

The stories which are told in the theme park belong to a popular culture, in the sense that they do belong to a folk tradition but they are also creatures of mass culture. To survive into a shared (and global) popular culture they must have successfully made the transition from an oral to a written form, from writing to visual culture and from illustration into moving image. The same stories which have proved a success in one medium will be replicated in another, to the point where they achieve an iconic status in popular culture. The genres which are deployed and redeployed in the theme park have directly traceable narrative and visual histories; they have appeared and reappeared across cultural forms, have circulated and recirculated. They have become a part of the popular cultural memory over a long process, until they can be widely recognised and identified through a set of metonymic icons.

Metonymic icons

The narrative groups which have established themselves as signifiers of the carnivalesque are those which have found their way through popular publishing and across media formats to become a standardised iconography. This iconography has to have been repeatedly reproduced in the mass circulation of stories, in illustration and media image, to become the conventional icons

for a narrative or set of narratives. These are metonyms which come to stand for a text or genre and are iconic both in the sense that they have become cultural icons and in C.S. Peirce's sense that they resemble the illustrated text. A set of fangs, a cloak and dripping blood are thus sufficient to evoke Dracula; a cowboy hat, lasso and gun, the Western; the skull and crossbones, the pirate romance. Often a whole novel can be invoked by an iconic representation of a defining character; the narrative sequence of *Alice in Wonderland* is invoked by the image of a young girl with long fair hair in a blue dress and apron, an icon that is derived both from Tenniel's drawings for the 1865 edition of the novel and from the 1951 Disney film. The relationship of icon to narrative can be still more metonymic and may refer to a single object. The regular fairground ride of a revolving outsized teapot and teacups references the Mad Hatter's tea party, and by extension *Alice in Wonderland*, without any need for a title or character to anchor the allusion to Lewis Carroll's text. These are icons which are widely recognised, whether or not the text itself has been read; they are iconic signs in that they have become the conventional signifiers of that narrative; they are also iconic signs in Peirce's sense of the term in that they signify through some form of resemblance to the signified text.² These signs are the condensation of a long process of illustration and mechanical reproduction in books, cartoons, theatre sets, cinema, television and digital imagery.

There is a firm set of conditions that have to be in place for stories and their associated iconography to become conventionalised into these metonymic icons of popular culture. The tales which have survived in a contemporary visual culture are those stories which were taken up at key moments in the circulation of imagery and which were reproduced across new forms of media as they appeared; what has been profitable in one form will be reproduced in others, until these stories and their associated imagery become conventionalised. Each transition into a new mode of representation is shaped by the previous conventions for the representation of a narrative. There is no straightforward continuity in the persistence of narratives and images but rather a complex set of negotiations, reproductions and plagiarisms in which the most successful popular cultural icons are redeployed in a range of different contexts. As new media emerge from new technological developments, the stories and iconography that had been a proven commercial success in one medium will reappear in the new, inflected by the possibilities and limitations of that medium.

From oral tradition to ballad sheet and chapbook

The tales that are told in the carnival site have no discernible origins, being founded in popular tradition, but can be worked and reworked for different

contexts. They have their roots in an oral culture; magic, fairy tale and the ghost story are founded in gossip and local folk tales. They therefore can have no single version and can have no owner; despite the efforts of folk historians,³ their beginnings are lost in the mists of time. The tales that circulate in carnival sites are all, in the words of a nineteenth-century storyteller, 'twice told tales'. These are stories, which as Hawthorne explains, have no copyright and which can be repeatedly remade to suit each generation:

No epoch of time can claim a copyright in these immortal fables. They seem never to have been made; and certainly, so long as man exists, they can never perish; but, by their indestructibility itself, they are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality. (Hawthorne 1982: 163)

There is a constant trope in the writing up and popularisation of a genre, the claim that each version is closer to an original. Traditional folk stories find their literary authors, such as Madame D'Aulnoy, Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, writers who shift them from an oral into a literary context. Each claims an original source (as in the Grimm Brothers' invention of an authentic oral source, Old Grette), but there can be no original. These tales can be understood as simulacra (Baudrillard 1988); that is, they have no identifiable origins but can be endlessly replicated in any number of different versions. In one of Baudrillard's accounts of simulation, he describes the process as

the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth it is the map that precedes the territory – precession of simulacra – it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. (Baudrillard 1988: 166)

The origins of the Gothic, fairy tale and fantastic fables which structure the hyperreality of the theme park have precisely rotted. It may be possible to approximate a date from the first written version of an oral narrative – but this can only be an inscription of a lost cultural artefact. These stories have a very real purchase on the popular imagination; with few exceptions,⁴ the tales that belong to the carnival are those with no original author. They therefore belong to everyone, can be retold by anyone and can never be entirely owned.

Many of these stories first circulated in English in the form of ballads and chapbooks, the fictions that the poor could afford. Ballads, printed as sheets, chapbooks and in small volumes, often told their tales in rhyme; these were stories that did not require much literacy and were invariably illustrated. Ballad sheets and the stories and images that they circulated were intrinsically bound up with the carnival and fairground, sold as they were at country fairs and markets (see Altick 1978: 74). These popular tales and their accompanying images were often lurid depictions of shipwreck, gruesome murder and crime, and tales of death and hauntings, stories that would eventually transmute

into the more familiar genres of piracy, romance and Gothic horror. Neuburg describes the contents of the ballad sheet and chapbook, confirming the extent to which the same iconography survived across genres and editions:

Chapbooks may be defined as the paper-covered books offered for sale by pedlars, hawkers and other itinerant merchants known as ‘chapmen’ ... By seventeen hundred, an important part of his stock-in-trade had become a budget of small books, whose varied subjects included devils, angels, scoundrels, heroes, love, hate, fairy tales, religion, fables, shipwreck, executions, prophecies and fortune telling. Illustrated with woodcuts, they cost usually one penny each. ... The woodcuts with which they were illustrated were used over and over again, becoming more and more worn, so that by eighteen hundred the visual quality of chapbooks had declined considerably. (Neuburg 1964: 1)

There is clearly no agreement as to at what point the ballad sheet, usually containing a single story, becomes the more substantial chapbook. Neuburg uses the terms interchangeably; for him the chapbook includes

not only the little books which were hawked through this country and the American Colonies during the Eighteenth Century, but also their survivals and successors in the Nineteenth. This includes street ballads, execution sheets, ‘last dying speeches’ and other fugitive papers which achieved extraordinarily wide circulations before the days of the cheap press; also children’s books of the cheaper kind. (Neuburg 1964: i)

The ‘cheapness’ (and therefore popularity) of these texts has also troubled critics of this form of literature. Andrew Lang, in editing a collection of ballads in 1897, is unclear whether to categorise them as a ‘literary’ or ‘degraded’ popular form – a distinction that remains unresolved:

[S]ome writers have decided ... that our traditional ballads are degraded popular survivals of literary poetry. The plots and situations of some ballads are, indeed, the same as those of some literary medieval romances. Both these plots and situations, in Epic and Romance, are themselves the final literary form of *märchen*, myths and inventions originally *popular*, and still, in certain cases, extant in popular form among races which have not yet evolved, or borrowed, the ampler and more polished and complex *genres* of literature. Thus, when a literary romance and a ballad have the same theme, the ballad may be a popular degradation of the romance; or it may be the original popular shape of it, still surviving in tradition. (Lang 1897: xiv)

The tortuous sentences and arguments here suggest the difficulty of sustaining any distinction between the popular and ‘more polished and complex’ literary forms. Many of the stories and ballads remain extant (in part through the endeavours of Lang and his predecessors) among ‘races’ (including his own). The metonymic icons of popular stories certainly have evolved and borrowed from more complex forms – while many of the poets who developed the literary forms (including Shakespeare) took their stories from popular forms.

Broadside ballads were published anonymously, with rhyming texts and accompanying woodcuts. Chapbook publishers also kept stocks of images which could be used to accompany different stories and so developed a standardised set of images for particular kinds of stories, a stockpile of popular iconography associated with different genres.⁵ Anderson explains:

Like the broadside publishers, those who printed and sold chapbooks ... kept a stock of images to be used and reused ... there were groups of stories – for instance *Jack and the Giants*, *Tom Thumb*, and *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* – each with episodes similar enough to allow publishers to interchange the same set of engraved blocks. (Anderson 1991: 28)

The illustrations were central to their popularity, but because woodcuts were expensive, publishers would buy up job lots of blocks and use them over and over again, with little care for accuracy or source; as Muir puts it, 'publishers often took their blocks where they could find them' (Muir 1967: 14). These images could often appear in wildly inappropriate contexts, 'often mixing historical periods, supplying inappropriate images or late illustrations of incidents in previous instalments' (James and Smith 1998: xvi). The illustrations and stories found in the popular market place had no copyright and could be reused indefinitely. Even with the establishment of copyright as a legal concept at the beginning of the eighteenth century,⁶ unscrupulous publishers continued to plagiarise and reuse illustrations without payment, and so they could circulate in cheap editions for decades. There was a trade in anonymous woodblocks, which changed hands well into the nineteenth century. As Celina Fox has charted (Fox 1988), the lurid and Gothic tales which were (literally) the stock in trade of the ballad sheets and chapbooks would go on to shape the illustrated stories for the later penny dreadfuls and illustrated magazines of the late nineteenth century. It was the longevity of such versions and images of popular stories that would establish a familiar set of icons and conventions for the popular recognition of genres.

The Romantic imagination and popular publishing

The popularisation of stories and images depends on technologies that enable their reproduction and circulation. The Industrial Revolution brought with it new techniques in printing and reprographics which made for a wider recognition and consumption of popular forms and cultural icons. The possibility of relatively cheap and available popular publishing allowed an unprecedented expansion of the circulation of stories, and their illustrations, from ballad sheets into magazines and journals. As Raymond Williams has argued, the modern 'idea of culture' and a distinction between art and industry (Williams 1958) are themselves products of the late eighteenth century.

The historical moment of the Romantic imagination is thus the moment of the commodification of stories. This is the period in which the genres of science fiction⁷ and the Western are developed and in which the folk tale, the chivalric and the Gothic romance begin to be distinguished as literary forms. The industrial production of reading materials takes stories into the realm of mass culture; as Leo Lowenthal has explained:

If one takes the term 'mass' media to mean marketable cultural goods produced for a substantial buying public, the eighteenth century in England is the first period in history where it can be meaningfully applied. During the first few decades of the eighteenth century, the growing industrialization and urbanization of England, together with the cheaper production of paper and improved methods for producing and distributing literary goods, made reading matter less costly and more easily accessible than it had ever been before. (Lowenthal 1961: 52)

The consumption and recognition of these 'cultural goods' was not entirely dependent on literacy, for the iconography from the stockpile images of the chapbooks reappeared as carnival decorations and in the displays of panoramas and dioramas. As Altick has argued, such visual shows reproduced very similar images for the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century popular audience as Romantic poets and painters were creating for the cultivated literati:

[T]he panoramas were an expression in popular art of the spirit which permeated much of literate English life in those decades ... In their necessarily cruder form, panoramas of romantic locales – an Alpine pass, Roman ruins, a Niagara cataract, an Irish lake, a medieval French town, a Levantine city – appealed to the same tastes that were drawn to the poetry of Wordsworth, Scott, Byron and Moore. (Altick 1978: 181)

These displays brought a romantic sensibility and the key iconographies of the romantic landscape to an audience who could not have read the poetry or fiction. Posters for panoramas and dioramas featured large coloured illustrations, and the panorama became a regular feature of theatrical spectacles, again reproducing the landscapes of the picturesque.

The distinction between popular entertainments and educational purpose is not a clear division for audiences of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Victorian concept of rational recreation depended on a world in which the boundaries between work and leisure are clearly marked, and before the domination of industrialisation, they are not. Altick has described the importance of the exhibition in London for a general public (largely illiterate in the generations before the 1870 Education Act) who had no other means of accessing information about other cultures and countries:

To those who could and did read, exhibitions served as a supplement to books, particularly to illustrate in tangible form some of the most popular kinds of informational literature in various periods, narratives of exploration and

travel ... treatises on pseudo science ... histories ... works describing successive centers of archaeological discovery. To the uneducated, exhibitions served as surrogates for such books, telling as much about those subjects of civilized human interest as they were ever likely to know. (Altick 1978: 1)

For those who could not read, carnival, travelogues, circus, panoramas and fairgrounds were all sites for a conjunction of showmanship and the revelation of new information. And those spectacles were also reproduced in the form of illustrations for the growing popular press.

Technologies and the reading public

New technologies in printing and paper production from the late eighteenth century made the circulation of imagery and stories increasingly available to wider audiences. Anderson has neatly summarised some of the key developments of the early nineteenth century that allowed for the mass production of a popular iconography:

The hallmark of a transformed and expanded popular culture was its increasingly pictorial character ... The introduction into England of mechanized paper-making (1803), the steam-powered press (1814) and multiple-cylinder stereotype printing (1827) permitted the low-cost, high-speed dissemination of the printed word. The same technological advances also made possible the profitable, high-quality mass reproduction of diverse imagery. As a result, illustrations of art, nature, technical processes, famous people, foreign lands and many other subjects for the first time became widely available and affordable. (Anderson 1991: 2)

Illustration was central to the development of this new popular culture and was made possible by a set of political and technological developments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The combination of a growth in literacy, advances in printing and publishing techniques, the gradual repeal of 'taxes on knowledge', all enabled printed matter to be cheaply produced and made widely available.⁸ These factors also shaped the medium most responsible for the mass circulation of stories and iconography: the magazine. Lowenthal has suggested the importance of the magazine form in establishing the genres of popular publishing:

The magazine, as distinct from pamphlets supported by religious or political groups, was the newest and most characteristic medium of the age. In the fifty year period between 1730 and 1780, at least one new magazine a year was presented to the London public, the majority bearing the 'something for everyone' format ... Prototypes of nearly all forms of modern magazines were introduced and for the most part flourished. (Lowenthal 1961: 52)

The major selling point of *The Penny Magazine*, first published in 1832,⁹ was its illustrations; its stated mission was to bring civilisation and culture through 'art'. This meant regular reproductions of 'high' art imagery in wood engravings, largely landscapes which conformed to a Romantic notion of the 'picturesque', conventions now familiar to a wide audience from their recurrent reproduction. *The Illustrated London News* was founded in 1842 and pioneered a new form of journalism, as a paper in which illustrations were the priority. The first issue had sixteen pages and thirty-two engravings; it sold 26,000 copies. By 1863 the circulation was 300,000 (see Hibbert 1976: 13). *The Illustrated London News* offered its readers 'News in Pictures', with illustrated accounts of the great national and international events of the day. The Great Exhibition, the siting of the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde in Paris and the building of the Suez Canal were among the illustrated features, all events and images which would go on to shape popular ideas of modernity, architecture and Egypt.¹⁰ The paper also carried (invariably illustrated) short fiction by some of the key figures in popular literary genres, among them were Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling. While *The Illustrated London News* was initially expensive at 6d, its success was followed by any number of cheaper imitations; *The Graphic*, *The Sketch* and *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* were all titles that followed in its wake.

An American version, *The Illustrated American News*, came out in 1851¹¹ but was not a success. It was the Englishman Frank Leslie who established the illustrated magazine as a cultural phenomenon in America with the publication of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* in 1855. Frank Leslie had begun as a wood engraver in England; his weekly *Illustrated Newspaper* was to become the most popular illustrated journal in America, its success very much reliant on its illustrations. According to Stern,

[The paper] sported just enough text to float the pictures instead of just enough pictures to float the text. Thanks to a clever and ingenious device, Leslie was able to produce his pictures – sometimes mammoth double-page engravings – with unprecedented speed. (Stern 1975: xx)

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper launched a publishing empire of weekly and monthly illustrated magazines for adults and children.¹² These papers supplied pictorial spreads for all the established popular fictional genres and confirmed the imagery and conventions for these popular genres in America. Frank Leslie was a key figure in defining the iconography of the American West, with his commissions of Western landscapes and particularly his use of Remington's heroic images of the cowboy as cover illustrations.¹³ Frank Leslie was also central to a popularisation of Egyptiana and the American Gothic; he was the first publisher of Louisa May Alcott's Gothic tales, her regular contributions always appearing with illustrations.

The Illustrated London News and Frank Leslie were successful enough publishers to commission original illustrations; this was not the case for less financially secure publications. There was an interchange between America and Britain of stories and images with a disregard for copyright or authenticity, a practice that dated from the eighteenth century. As Wagner explains, '[i]n the eighteenth century ... crude woodcuts – often clumsy copies of illustrations of English children's books – were published in America' (Wagner 2000: 14). American authors also took advantage of plots that had proved successful in Britain and borrowed or rewrote works from British writers, who similarly pirated American stories. To save money, American publishers would plagiarise book illustrations from English artists by cutting new blocks, rather than commissioning original illustrations from American artists. These were images that consequently had no copyright and would be reproduced and recycled to accompany popular tales over decades.

Woodblocks and metal plates for engravings could be bought up (or borrowed) by publishers and made to accompany any number of texts. Once the investment in a set of illustrations and engraved blocks had been made, publishers would use them over and over, sometimes commissioning text to fit the illustrations. Much of the historical work on illustrated magazines is found in the compilations of bibliophiles such as Gleeson White and William Linton, both critics who declare their interest in the 'best' of early nineteenth-century illustration. It is, however, the work that they dismiss as 'crude' or 'of not good quality' that would have appeared in the cheapest periodicals – images which would have been recycled more than any others. It is through this process that the metonymic icons of the ballad sheets and chapbooks are recirculated into new techniques of reproduction.

The growth of cheap reading material and illustration did not mean the abandonment of old cultural forms. The same images that had accompanied stories in early popular publishing regularly resurfaced; Anderson terms this iconography 'pictorial survivals':

[T]he expansion of popular culture and pictorial experience between 1832 and 1860 was not only a matter of change – of the new emerging and the old disappearing. Rather, side by side with all the artefacts of a transformed popular culture – weekly newspapers, pictorial advertisements, mass-circulation magazines, and penny dreadfuls – there remained pictorial survivals with their origins in earlier popular cultural experience: for example, chapbook-style reissues of ... traditional favourites ... murder and execution sheets, religious broadsides, and ballad sheets with old stock woodcuts. (Anderson 1991: 175)

The stock images and stories of the ballad sheets and chapbooks clung on with tenacity and continued to circulate in new forms, so confirming the iconographic conventions of popular genres for a new mass market in popular culture.

Showmen and storytellers

As the novel develops as the most significant cultural form of the nineteenth century, so folk tales and legends are taken up as elements in fiction and become associated with individual writers. The same names circulate again and again as the writers who popularised key narratives – and who are generally acknowledged as the ‘fathers’ of particular genres.¹⁴ Chivalric romance is associated with Sir Walter Scott, science fiction with Mary Shelley and later Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, fairy tale with Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. But these figures – important though they certainly were – were not alone as purveyors of these genres. They were all working with stories that already had an established oral and written tradition. Scott is reworking tales found in ballad sheets and chapbooks; Verne is writing in the tradition of the *Voyages Fantastiques*; Perrault, Anderson and the Grimms are setting down tales that had long existed in oral culture and which, in Perrault’s case certainly, had already been written by women. These are all figures who are writing at the moment of mass communication and who were happy to share their legacy with the popular market. They owe their status to the fact that their writing emerged at a historical moment when the publication and production of texts (and accompanying imagery) could reach a wide public. As popular tales were taken up by established authors, these stories entered into the realm of the ‘classic’ tale, and were simultaneously confirmed as popular, in the sense of widely recognised and enjoyed narratives.

Each had the ability to shuttle between the worlds of the literary and the popular, and each had an element of showmanship in their work and in their public persona. They were all popularisers, figures who attracted attention both from intellectuals and from popular journalism and who were happy to embrace a mass market. In America, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Louisa May Alcott all belonged to intellectual circles – and so were well aware of literary and aesthetic movements in Europe and America – but they were also journalists who contributed to popular magazines and so reached a wide readership.

There are also figures who were not primarily known as writers but whose exploits took them beyond the specificity of their own field and into popular culture. Giovanni Battista Belzoni was himself a fairground showman, but he was also the significant figure in the development of Egyptology as a discipline; his publicity skills ensured that his discoveries went beyond the academic confines of the British Museum. H.M. Stanley may have presented himself as an intrepid African explorer, but he was a journalist and his expeditions were funded by a newspaper. William Frederick Cody may have been a cowboy hunter, but it is as Buffalo Bill of the Wild West Show that he became famous. Each of these figures is responsible for establishing a mythology and

iconography associated with the genres of Egyptology, exploration and the Western, respectively. They were all showmen who catapulted themselves and their stories into popular memory.

Illustrated fictions

If the late eighteenth century saw the beginnings of the magazine industry and the establishment of some titles that remain familiar, it is the mid-nineteenth century that sees the explosion of stories and imagery, in what Sillars describes as a 'flood tide' of illustrated novels during the 1830s. To be published in an illustrated edition, a novel or set of stories must have already proved a popular success. As Muir explains, 'illustrations were used only after a novel had proved a success ... a large and assured public was looked for before a publisher could entertain the possibility of an illustrated edition' (Muir 1967: 1). These illustrated novels were also published in serial form, often in these same magazines. If illustrated books could be initially expensive, the part publication of books or story collections with illustrations made them accessible to a much wider audience. Those who could not afford a complete volume could buy weekly stories or chapters, issued with illustrations. These editions, most of which had at least one illustration, were widely available from the 1840s, often sold in penny parts. The more sensational cheaply bound single stories became known as 'penny dreadfuls' and advertised their contents with lurid front cover illustrations. The Picture Library of 'Original Complete Novels by Favourite Authors' priced at one penny brought illustrated editions of popular and literary novels into an affordable price range. Each penny edition in the Picture Library featured 'A Handsome Oleography Picture' on the front cover, images which were published with the expectation that readers would collect the series; as the advertising leaflet expressed it, '[t]he Picture Library will enable the public to form a magnificent Scrap-Book of highly finished Pictures' (Evanian Collection, British Library).

The illustrations of prestigious publications were widely imitated and reproduced in such cheaply available editions. Maidment has described the wood engravings which allowed for the reproduction of these images as

both a naturalistic representational medium through which Victorians sought to describe and delineate their increasingly complex and technological world and as a shorthand non-naturalistic visual code built out of long traditions of popular illustration in broadsides, reprinted fiction, pamphlets, and tracts. (Maidment 1996: 15)

The newly available popular fiction was thus making use of long-established forms of iconography and narrative, already widely familiar. This 'shorthand ... visual code' used in new modes of image reproduction made use

of the same metonymic icons as had the previous wood blocks and brought them to a wider public than ever before.

After 1850, new technological developments in printing and in engraving ensured the circulation of this iconography. The developing railway network made for a wider distribution of printed materials and also provided a need for travellers to obtain cheaply available reading materials. The repeal of the British newspaper tax in 1855 allowed newsprint to reach a wider audience, and stamp duty on periodicals was gradually reduced, to be finally abolished in 1861.

Magazine titles were developed to target new consumers, and illustrated fiction was the big attraction, as Sillars puts it:

[T]he new magazines were largely composed of self-contained short stories, each of which had three, four or more illustrations, often in half-tone ... big 'names' were offered to lure readers from the competition, illustration is also an important draw. Colour plates for special numbers and supplements of paintings were designed to appeal to the tastes of each magazine's particular group of readers and the sheer quantity of illustrations was often held up as an additional feature. (Sillars 1995: 73–4)

Serial instalments of fiction, with illustrations, were what made for a best-selling title. Illustrations were crucial to the success of a title, not for the initial sales of single volumes but necessary to advertise the part publication. These serialised books, sold in weekly chapters, needed identifiable images on the cover to market them, images which appeared not only on the parts but also as advertising in booksellers and print shops. As Harvey notes,

It made little difference to the first edition of a three-volume novel whether there were illustrations or not. But with the monthly-part novel the illustrations were not merely desired, they were needed ... The illustrations mattered so much partly because they were a good advertisement. The pictures were displayed in the shop-windows as each new episode appeared. (Harvey 1970: 8)¹⁵

If novels had no illustrations when originally issued, this need not mean that subsequent editions were sold without pictures. Sillars describes the practice of 'grangerising',¹⁶ in which publishers would insert prints of vaguely appropriate subjects into already bound volumes (Sillars 1995: 11). These prints were often of landscapes and therefore not tied to any particular story. Neither printmakers nor publishers were fussy about which prints went with which texts precisely; job lots of prints of picturesque landscapes could serve as illustrations for volumes of fairy tales, chivalric romances or the works of Sir Walter Scott. Seascapes could be used interchangeably for desert island stories, tales of shipwreck and piracy. Once a commission for illustration had been fulfilled, the artist forfeited all further rights to his or her work or any control over where it was reproduced. As Muir describes,

Not only did the payment include the reproduction rights for the work immediately in hand but also the drawings themselves and the right to use them in any other

project that took the publisher's fancy ... drawings that were made to illustrate one set of texts in a periodical could be used to illustrate quite different subjects. (Muir 1967: 21)

The decade of the 1860s in Britain and America has become known as a 'golden age of illustration'. Among those to employ the term is the bibliophile Gleeson White,¹⁷ who, writing in 1897, saw the illustrator as the artist of popular modernity: 'The illustrator is the really popular artist of the period – the natural product of the newer conditions' (White 1970: 10). The 'newer conditions' saw wood engraving, as opposed to woodcuts, become the dominant means of reproducing illustration. The development of the 'stereotype' printing plate in the 1870s allowed for still cheaper reproductions. Illustrated anthologies and gift books, often luxury editions of already published stories and illustrations, became an important element in the publishing industry. The lavishly illustrated gift book was a form that proliferated in the late nineteenth century; as Muir puts it, '[i]n the eighties and nineties the output of every publisher with a general market included a high proportion of illustrated books, and this included ... gift books, children's books and travel and technical works' (Muir 1967: 202). The late nineteenth century was the period in which specific markets were becoming defined and which saw an increasingly distinct category of children's fiction.

Children's fiction

The market for penny editions of fiction was generally assumed to be adult until the middle of the nineteenth century, when a market of illustrated fiction for children emerged. According to Carpenter, this market was bifurcated according to gender:

It was in the 1850s that the moral tale began to give way to fiction of a different kind. This newly emergent juvenile fiction no longer appealed to *all* children, but to boys and girls as separate groups: girls were offered stories about decorous heroines in domestic crises; boys could now read exciting accounts of the exploits of bold young heroes in far off places. (Carpenter 1984: 11)

The genres of adventure and pirate romance (with few exceptions) were directed at boys, and fairy tale became the form most associated with femininity, a gendered division which still pertains in the theme park, where the fairy tale sites are clearly coded as feminine. These moral tales developed as Christian alternatives to the penny dreadful and their perceived dangers for young minds. An 1868 parliamentary question had directly attributed juvenile criminality to 'the spread of cheap publications and theatrical representations of an exciting and immoral character'¹⁸ (quoted in James and Smith 1998: xviii).

The adventures in 'far off places' in this new fiction for young Britons were intimately bound up with a celebration of Empire; this is the literature that establishes the genre that Joseph Bristow identifies in *Empire Boys*¹⁹ and which continues to shape the idea of adventure in the carnival site. Cheap weekly periodicals for boys made their imperial allegiances clear, with titles such as *Boys of England* and *Sons of Britannia*. Imperial heroes could insert themselves into any popular genre, and their exploits could take them to Africa, Egypt or the American West; they could engage in pirate battles and scientific experiments. The *Boy's Own Paper*, founded by the Religious Tract Society in 1879, was another Christian intervention; it became the title that dominated the market and came to embody the spirit of imperial adventure.²⁰ Alfred Harmsworth attempted to capitalise on this success by launching his own series of respectable 'juvenile fiction', priced at a halfpenny, and ensured commercial success by recycling many of the same lurid stories and images that had proved themselves so popular in the penny dreadful.

The boy's own 'illustrated weeklies' were just as much a cultural phenomenon in late nineteenth-century American popular culture. An American *Boy's Own Paper* appeared in the same year as the British version. In that year, 1879, an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* outlined the phenomenon of 'Story-Paper Literature' (all the titles cited, however, are for boys) and indicates the range of popular genres to be found in these titles:

Boy's Journal, Boys of New York, Boys of America, Boys of the World, Young Men of New York, Young Men of America ... The heroes are boys, and there are few departments of unusual existence in which they are not seen figuring to brilliant advantage. They are shown amply competent as the Boy Detective, the Boy Spy, the Boy Trapper, the Boy Buccaneer, the Boy Guide, the Boy Captain, the Boy Robinson Crusoe. (W.H. Bishop, quoted in Nash Smith 1967: 409)

By the 1880s, the illustrated adventure tale had become a conventionalised product in Britain and America, a 'piece of manufactured goods' in Carpenter's term (Carpenter 1984: 12). The introduction of linotype in 1891, which enabled mechanical typesetting, brought in a new kind of magazine, the illustrated monthly addressed to a family audience. The most successful titles were those linked to publishers of 'respectable' fiction, and so the magazine became a means of promoting in-house texts and authors. *The Strand Magazine*, first published in 1891, 'with a picture on every page', came out of George Newnes' publishing house; *The Windsor* (1895) was attached to Ward, Lock and Co.; and *Pearson's Magazine* (1897) to A.C. Pearson publishers. All these companies were known for their children's fiction and for producing popular editions of 'classic' texts.

These magazines and books confirmed a set of key stories and imagery for children's fiction and illustration; these same narratives and genres can be seen as reproduced in more 'literary' Edwardian fiction for children. Edith Nesbit's children's books, first serialised in *The Strand Magazine*, demonstrate a

capacious knowledge (and assume a familiarity on the part of the contemporary young reader) with the genres of popular fiction. The children of *Five Children and It* (1902) and *The Phoenix and the Carpet* (1904) demonstrate a thorough familiarity with adventure and fairy tale, chivalric romance and Egyptology. The dreams expressed to the Psammead in *Five Children and It* are framed by illustrated popular novels and by magazine imagery; the children wish to be as ‘beautiful as the day’ as in a fairy tale and want to live in a castle ‘like the pictures Robert had so often admired in the historical romances’ (Nesbit 1902: 102).

Nesbit herself contributed Gothic tales, fairy stories, ballads and legends to magazines and later compiled them into illustrated volumes. With Andrew Lang she can be seen as a part of the late nineteenth-century movement for a literary reconfiguration of folklore which simultaneously made for its popularisation.

As Sillars has pointed out, an understanding of the significance of visual elements in the circulation and reproduction of stories challenges any neat division between high art and popular culture, and between academic disciplinary boundaries:

[T]he illustration of works of fact and fiction, the involvement of artists as illustrators in works of both ‘high’ and ‘popular’ art and the interweaving of elements of what we would now call comic-strip art with prints making serious satiric points all reveal that the new dual discourse sprawled right across a number of genres and contexts, so that the separation into categories fundamental to much traditional literary and art historical study is quite impossible when dealing with illustrated texts. (Sillars 1995: 10)

The dual discourse of stories and their associated iconographies inevitably ‘sprawled’ across other media. The iconography established in newsprint and in illustrated books would find a wider circulation in theatre sets and costumes, in toys and in children’s games.

Stage sets and toy theatres

The theatre is key in establishing the iconography for the sets and characters of popular genres. If early publishers were not overly concerned with the ownership of tales or illustrations, theatrical producers were similarly cavalier with scripts and designs for stage sets. Theatre producers would directly plagiarise from successful artists and illustrators, making use of any tale or iconography that had proven popular success. The figure of Harlequin²¹ is an embodiment of the cheerful plagiarism of text and iconography that has long been a mark of popular theatre and pantomime. Harlequin is a promiscuous character who could (just as Mickey Mouse would later) insert himself into any number of stories – and associate with whatever character or narrative was currently fashionable, whether this be King Arthur, Mother Goose or Frankenstein.

Theatrical plagiarism was inevitable given the British history of attempted controls on theatre productions. The 1737 Licensing Act allowed only the Theatres Royal to stage play texts; until 1843, the London theatres of Covent Garden and Drury Lane could claim a monopoly on spoken drama, as Royal Patent Theatres. Their patents meant that they were granted by royal decree 'the sole and only right' of performing 'legitimate' versions of play texts. This required that other theatres rely on comedy and pantomime, productions that were built on visual spectacle rather than a script. There were also a number of ways of circumventing copyright; as Broadbent describes it,

[The patents were] infringed in many ways. The means adopted was the employment of Pantomime ... These were entirely carried on by action, and when the actor could not express something that had to be explained, like the names of characters, a scroll, with the necessary details inscribed thereon, was unrolled in full view of the audience. (Broadbent 1901: 217)

With the spectacle and dumb show of pantomime, the precise character of scripts and setting could be evaded – while still clearly referencing 'legitimate' plays and productions. This intertextuality saw versions of original play texts mingling with other stories to produce the still very live form of 'Pantoland', in Angela Carter's description:

The infinite intercouplings of possible texts which occur all the time in the promiscuity of Pantoland, one story effortlessly segues into another story, so that Mother Goose twins up with Jack and the Beanstalk. (Carter 1993: 103)

The use of visual spectacle introduced yet more elements; theatrical extravaganzas and pantomimes at non-licensed venues required fairies, water spectacles and exotic locales. Pantomime is in its very nature and history a plagiarising form that draws upon historical and contemporary popular successes and presents them back as traditional popular culture. As a pantomime historian explains, 'Pantomime scripts have always been mobile. They are openly re-produced in different cities, or privately borrowed and cut to measure' (Clinton-Baddeley 1963: 36).

If the stories and characters of the pantomime were mobile, so were the sets and costumes. Popular theatre productions required spectacle, and the sets and costumes could derive from a wild mélange of exotic styles. As Lambert and Marx note, 'scenic design ... was luxuriating in a riot of medieval, oriental and even nautical splendour, uninhibited by historical accuracy' (Lambert and Marx 1951: 110). This confusion of genres was compounded by the redeployment of sets for different productions. In the interests of keeping costs down, theatre producers (just like publishers) would unapologetically reuse sets and costumes from one context in another. The 'oriental' could be used for a range of fairy tales and their transformation scenes but also for dramas of adventure. The baronial halls required for the

numerous dramatic versions of Scott's romances could stand in for the castles and cottages required for fairy tale. The patterns of recycling are clear from the toy theatre versions which attached the same sets to a number of different playscripts. Toy theatre sets popularised and plagiarised contemporary stage productions and so 'incidentally created a visual record of the contemporary stage' (Fawdry 1980: 7).

Those who did not attend the theatre would be exposed to the sets and costumes of successful London West End productions through prints of celebrity actors and through toy theatre sets. The first identified theatre sheets were published and registered in 1811, with characters for the pantomime *Mother Goose*. The theatrical publisher William West sold souvenirs of current productions, which became the basis for his production of 'juvenile dramas', miniature versions of the sets and costumes of successful theatrical events. By 1815, West was making 10,000 copies of a single print. Other publishers, among them Hodgson, Green, Lloyds, Redington and Webb, followed with their own versions of juvenile drama, priced at 'a penny plain and twopence coloured'. From 1851 Pollock's produced copper plates of 'play books', containing play script, characters and scenery. Skelt's 'Theatrical Warehouse' produced their own cheaper versions at a 'halfpenny plain and penny coloured'; their catalogue boasted a wide range of iconography derived from circus and patriotic spectacle as well as pantomime and theatre:

LIKEWISE A GREAT VARIETY Of Favourite Horse and Foot Portraits, Fours and Sixes, Combats, Seraphs, Novelties, Soldiers, Stage Fronts, Drop Scenes, Orchestras, Set and Four Pieces, Top Drops, Large Scenes, Pantomime Tricks and Characters, Fairies, &c., which may be had either Plain or Coloured.

And a Great Variety of other things which are too numerous to mention.
(Back cover to *Skelt's Juvenile Drama* 1854)

Speaight's bibliography of toy theatre titles in Britain and America indicates the extent to which the genres of the toy theatre replicate the successes of popular fiction and are themselves replicated in the *mise en scène* of theme park attractions (Speaight 1999). Few new titles were added after 1860, but the successful plays were reissued throughout the century, and some continue to be published today.²²

These versions of popular plays could be accessed by many who would never have attended a London theatre production or have afforded more expensive illustrated books. Like the theatrical producers, the publishers of toy theatres were less concerned with accuracy than with the cost of production and were indiscriminate about the geographical and historical precision of their iconography. Backdrops became interchangeable for different plays; plates used for Shakespearean dramas could be recycled for fairy tale *mise en scène* or become the background for Arthurian sagas. Sets of characters were issued as fours or sixteen per sheet, to be used for different productions.

The stock sets and characters as described by Speaight are still familiar from contemporary pantomime and have also shaped the landscapes of the theme park: 'costumes were Gothick, Bohemian, or Oriental; so was the scenery, there was the cottage scene and the palace scene, both interior and exterior, the landscape, the sea calm and the sea angry, the forest, the cave' (Speaight 1946: 67).

Toy theatre publishers regularly inherited, bought and pirated plates from other publishers, so that Skelt and Pollock (the longest surviving publishers) were circulating very similar versions of stage sets and characters and covering the same productions.

Publishers of toy theatres often were also publishers of children's books – although the dramas produced for toy theatres were not intended for children but based on contemporary theatre productions. There was a direct link between the expansion of popular publishing, the theatre and toy theatres. Theatre sets and characters and celebrity portraits were reproduced in illustrated weeklies to accompany theatrical news. Cheap popular papers were advertised with the promise of free gifts of toy theatre books; often the illustrators were the same for both the periodical and the toy theatre sheets. As James and Smith have demonstrated, the illustrations for popular stories were themselves already shaped by theatrical sets:

[I]llustrations are frequently dramatic and recall the rather stilted confrontations of the cheap contemporary theatrical prints. This is hardly surprising, since the same artists were employed on both bloods and cheap series of plays ... the early bloods were influenced in style and subject matter by the contemporary theatre, which continued to interact with popular literature throughout the nineteenth century. (James and Smith 1998: xvi–xvii)

Robert Louis Stevenson and Hans Christian Andersen were two key figures in the popularisation of adventure, romance and folk tale; both had played with toy theatres as children, and Andersen, especially, was fascinated by the theatre. In an 1884 essay Stevenson remembers the power of the toy theatre:

Every sheet we fingered was another lightning glance into obscure, delicious story; it was like wallowing in the raw stuff of story-books ... I ... acquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances; and took from these rude cuts an enduring and transforming pleasure. Reader – and yourself? (Stevenson 1884: 228)

Comic books and pulp fiction

The 'raw stuff of story books' would come to generations of children after the late nineteenth century not through the images of toy theatres or book illustrations but through comic books. The comic book emerged out of the

penny dreadful and boy's own papers – as it became technically easier to reproduce images cheaply, so illustrations came to dominate over the text in popular periodicals. Comic book publishers were as casual about copyright as the penny dreadful editors had been, and the same material was shared and plagiarised across the Atlantic.

Initially, comic books drew on comic strips from newspapers and magazines; *Comic Cuts* was first published in the United Kingdom in 1890 and had its first colour issue in 1896. As the Depression hit, the 'Funnies' no longer seemed appropriate and comic book publishers turned to already familiar genres. Savage describes the titles of the comic strips from 1929:

[In] January ... 1929, the adventures of 'Tarzan' and 'Buck Rogers' first appeared on the newspaper comic pages, heralding the advent of what would become known as the 'adventure strip'. Following 'Tarzan' in the 1930s were 'Dick Tracy', 'Jungle Jim', 'The Phantom', 'Terry and the Pirates' and dozens of others ... They served to transport readers elsewhere – to a jungle, a desert, the Far East, a distant planet or some other atypical environment where heroes struggle against tall odds. (Savage 1990: 4–5)

The genres listed here are very familiar from the boy's own papers of the nineteenth century and also from the theme park; the 'atypical environments' of the jungle, the desert, the Far East and outer space are all mapped onto the Adventurelands and Discoverylands of the theme park.

Ten years after the advent of Tarzan, George Orwell, writing on the British popular press, identifies these same genres among the 'favourite' subjects for 'boy's weeklies': the Western, science fiction, jungle adventure, exploration and chivalric romance:

Examination of a large number of these papers shows that, putting aside school stories, the favourite subjects are Wild West, Frozen North, Foreign Legion, crime (always from the detective's angle), the Great War (Air Force or Secret Service, not the infantry), the Tarzan motif in varying forms, professional football, tropical exploration, historical romance (Robin Hood, Cavaliers and Roundheads, etc.) and scientific invention. (Orwell 1961a: 106)

Orwell demonstrates that the narratives of heroism and Empire of the late nineteenth century remain firmly in place in the twentieth century. In his description, the front covers of contemporary boy's magazines are clearly recycling images from boy's own annuals of the late nineteenth century (with added technology); the iconography would again be recycled in the film series *Indiana Jones*.

The most successful genre for the comic book in the mid-twentieth century was Gothic horror, with tales that were in a direct line from the ghosts and gore of the penny dreadful. *Eerie Comics* appeared in America in 1947, *Tales from the Crypt* in 1950, followed by *The Haunt of Fear* and *The Vault of Horror*, all published with lurid colour covers which reproduced versions of the sepulchres

and scaffolds of the chapbook woodcut for the twentieth century. In Britain, *The Eagle*, first published in 1950, was a response to the perceived corrupting influence of American comic book imports. Like the *Boy's Own Paper*, it offered a Christian variant of the comic books it set out to challenge and took over their form. Advertised as a 'strip cartoon weekly' *The Eagle* was founded by the Rev. Marcus Morris 'as a way of embodying religious and moral principles' and, at its peak, had a circulation of over a million copies. In another repeat of the nineteenth-century Christian concern about effects of the penny dreadful on young minds, American psychiatrist Frederic Wertham published *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954, which associated the gory tales of the comic book with juvenile delinquency.²³ The ensuing public concern led to a call for the regulation of comic book culture and the establishment of the self-censoring publishers' organisation, the Comic Codes Authority, and brought sensational titles such as *Tales from the Crypt* to an end.

Comic book producers responded to the moral outrage and curtailment of their most popular titles with a line of respectable 'Classic Tales'. The 'Classics Illustrated' series had been published in America from 1941, with early titles including *Ivanhoe* and *The Last of the Mohicans*. Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper were not the only familiar names to receive the classic comic treatment. Among the authors illustrated in the series are all those writers who had been sure-fire successes for the cheap editions and boy's own papers of the nineteenth century: Jules Verne, Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard and H. G. Wells. Included are all the names that typified the genres of historical romance, the Western, science fiction, Gothic, adventure and pirate romance, all now safely and cheaply out of copyright. In 1953 the 'Classic Illustrated Junior' series launched a series of fairy tales and legends, familiar from the nineteenth-century compilations by folklorists such as Andrew Lang. *Robinson Crusoe*, *Frankenstein*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and *The Virginian* are all titles that are regularly referenced in the landscape of the theme park, and all were illustrated as comic strips for 'Classic Tales'.

As comic books went respectable and educational, cheaply available paperback books, sold with striking colour covers, could take over their banished titles and lurid images. Penguin Books began publishing in Britain from 1935²⁴ and, in 1939, the first ten titles were published by American paperback company Pocket Books.²⁵ Paperback publishers favoured genre fiction as a proven successful format and produced cover images that clearly identified the category of a text. As new companies emerged and competed for readers, different publishers distinguished themselves by specialising in particular fields: Ace was particularly associated with the Western and science fiction, Bantam with adventure and fantasy. Competition led to more and more striking covers, and a newly confirmed iconography for the generic Western, science fiction and adventure title.

Richard Hoggart was among many British critics who bewailed the vulgarity of imported American pulp fiction as a 'reading matter which is almost entirely sensational and fantasy producing' (Hoggart 1957: 191). They were nonetheless very successful on both sides of the Atlantic, perhaps inevitably, given that the publishers were reproducing tried-and-tested formulae. The genres of pulp fiction were much the same as Orwell had identified as the staples of the 'boy's weeklies': detective, gangster, Western, Gothic horror and science fiction stories.

Moving images

Early film was bound up with carnival attractions, particularly in America. Nickelodeon slot machines and kinetoscopes were fairground attractions and displays at World's Fairs from their first invention, and circus and carnival acts provided movies with popular material. Coney Island was itself an early subject for film-makers and fitted the requirement for spectacle, entertainment and topicality; 'Shooting the Chutes' was an Edison film of 1896,²⁶ documenting the attraction that had appeared a year earlier and which had appeared in news illustrations for contemporary magazines. In France, showman and film-maker Georges Méliès had begun his career as an illusionist and magician; his stage shows were full of literary references and his tricks introduced with elaborate back stories. His film work was regularly pirated by American producers, especially by Edison, despite the fact that Méliès had set up an American office in New York in 1903. Méliès used film in his stage shows, and as film developed, early cinemas in Europe and America would show vaudeville acts and 'moving pictures' in the same show.

The 'movies' regularly drew on music hall and burlesque for their subject matter, as in the 1903 comedy *Rube and Mandy at Coney Island*, featuring two vaudeville performers. Film historian John L. Fell explains that American film producers and directors went to already established forms of popular spectacle to find material for the new medium:

Delegated to find subjects for the 50 foot loops that ran through the Edison Company's peep-show kinetoscopes, W.K.L. Dickson turned to New York music halls, burlesque, travelling shows, and vaudeville to supply bits of self-contained performance. (Fell 1987: 39)

As film developed into the production of drama, cinema drew on the already proven successes of popular fictions and plays and reproduced their familiar settings. The castles and baronial halls of Sir Walter Scott and fairy tale, the picturesque landscapes of the Gothic and exoticised palaces familiar from theatre backdrops (and toy theatre reproductions) were (often literally)

borrowed for early cinema sets. McNamara has explained that cinema directors would rent, buy or borrow sets from traditional theatre stock, some of which dated from the eighteenth century:

[T]he theater became a central reference point – probably *the* central reference point for the construction and painting of many sets for the early story film. Such conventionalized utility scenery was found everywhere. A travelling tent show in the first years of the twentieth century often carried only four basic sets, called: *front room, back room, timber and town*. ... Much of this sort of stock scenery was purchased from commercial scene painters' catalogues. (McNamara 1987: 53)²⁷

These four standard sets fit all the requirements of burlesque and traditional pantomime – domestic interior (back room), a sylvan setting (timber), a street scene (town) and a 'fancy' set (front room) – and the same backdrops were reproduced for cinema. These sets had already been conventionalised by theatre prints and toy theatre sets, having come to signify both a vague location and a genre from a limited iconography. Early film sets were literally stock, in that they were from a stock of set designs; the film companies of the twentieth century, just like the theatre producers of the nineteenth century, were happy to use them for any number of different productions. A baronial hall could thus be used for *Sleeping Beauty*, *Frankenstein* and for *Ivanhoe*, a desert landscape for a Western or an oriental drama. The landscape of the theme park works with all the elements of these same sets. It could be argued that the settings for Disneyland reproduce the same four environments: Main Street, as street scene; Adventureland as woodland; Fantasyland, cottage exteriors and interiors; the fairy tale castle, a version of the pantomime palace.

Disneyland television

Television was central to the success of the Disneyland park in Los Angeles and represented a new synergy between broadcasting and the pleasure park. The building of the park was funded with financial backing from ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation), who invested and guaranteed loans for a stake in the park and a series of twenty initial programmes. The 'Disneyland' show was first broadcast by ABC in 1954, before the opening of Disneyland itself. The theme park was planned as a synergy with the television show to promote the programmes and films, and in turn, the television show would promote the theme park. Disneyland was originally planned in four separate 'lands' – Frontierland, Fantasyland, Adventureland and Tomorrowland – each of which corresponded to the format for Disneyland television shows – the Western, fantasy, adventure and science fiction.

According to Telotte, 'Disney's importance in the circulation of images and narratives on television cannot be underestimated' (Telotte 2004: 1). Telotte

points to the longevity and significance of the Disney television show for American audiences:

Over the course of twenty-nine years it [Disney] continuously occupied prime-time viewing slots for each of the major networks, offered audiences family-style programming oriented around a few basic popular themes, and won numerous Emmy and Peabody awards. It was, very simply, a fixture of American television and of family viewing habits during the pioneering decade of the 1950s and for many decades after ... the Disneyland series was indeed where the action was and a model for the institutionalization of that junction of entertainment and marketing that has become such a recognizable element of the contemporary media experience. (Telotte 2004: x)

These ‘few basic popular themes’ are very familiar. The ‘Disneyland show’ saw the first screen outing of Davy Crockett and the Frontierland Western, and ‘The World of Tomorrow’ show was based on science fiction. The Disneyland show and the park drew on all the genres and stories that had been cemented in popular publishing and reconfigured their iconographies for television and the theme park.

One of the segments of the Disneyland show was the Mickey Mouse Club, which featured a vaudevillean troupe of Mouseketeers. Mickey Mouse was familiar from short films as a character who from his earliest manifestations could insert himself into whatever story he chose. Mickey Mouse is a twentieth-century Harlequin who can traverse across narratives and genres; as Walt Disney expressed it in a 1935 memorandum,

[W]e could incorporate Mickey or Minnie or the Duck into the fantastic settings ... Mickey and Minnie might take a ride on a magic carpet and arrive in a weird land or forest, meet little elves of the forest, or be captured by an old witch or giants and ogres. They could eat some fruit that makes them grow very tall or small ... Might get into a land of shadows. (Disney quoted in Allan 1999: 32)

Here Disney is invoking a range of familiar stories and genres: ‘Aladdin’, the fairy tales ‘The Babes in the Wood’ and ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’, *Alice in Wonderland*, fantasy and the Gothic. The Main Street Parade held twice a day in every Disney park continues to present Mickey and Minnie Mouse heading a series of floats with characters from fairy tale, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Jungle Book* and other stories familiar from Disney animations.

The Disney version

Disney, as Allan has demonstrated, had intellectual and artistic aspirations (see Allan 1999) – but he was also a showman who could recognise popular forms and an entrepreneur who knew from his early career how to protect

and copyright his own versions. Disney, as man and as corporation, has been regularly accused of the crime of 'Disneyfication', a charge made most eloquently in Ariel Dorfman's diatribe against Donald Duck (Dorfman 1975). Richard Ingram offers a less sophisticated (but nonetheless, regularly encountered) version of this argument in a newspaper article:

Of all powerful forces that have helped shape our down-market so-called culture, Disney has surely been the most harmful ... What Disney has done has been to take, or when necessary buy, the world's most famous stories and turn them all into the same slick, soulless, sentimental tripe. (Ingrams 2001: 30)

The Walt Disney Corporation, as a multimedia company with interests in cinema, television²⁸ and entertainment, is one of the few companies involved in theme parks and the leisure industry that has the economic power to buy 'the world's most famous stories' outright. Disney is largely responsible for the authored texts which have entered into the world of carnival; authored stories from the late nineteenth century remain in copyright, and it is Disney that currently owns the rights to *Peter Pan*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Sword in the Stone* – and to Mickey Mouse. These characters can only be reproduced illegally, and regularly are. Disney may have copyrighted Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, but their images will continue to appear in graffiti and on carousels from Moscow to Madrid. No single company or individual can hold the copyright on folk tale, and fairies and legendary figures cannot be owned. Copyright law can only be upheld on a version of words and images that can be understood as designed, and then it can only apply to that particular version of words or images. Disney may be able to copyright their own scenarios and visuals of a folk narrative, but they cannot finally be owned; familiar fairy tales such as Snow White or 'Cinderella' are genuinely popular in the sense that they belong to everyone. Disney may have been the most successful, but he is only one among a long line of showmen, from Sir Walter Scott to Buffalo Bill, who made play with and claimed for his own the genres of popular culture.

The genres of chivalric romance, fairy tale, the Western, science fiction, treasure islands and desert and jungle adventures have come to signify the carnivalesque in themselves; they are present and expected at any pleasure ground. These are the stories that have shaped the landscape of every theme park and which continue to have a powerful hold on the popular imagination. These genres have become cemented into a set of signifiers which have emerged from the illustrative conventions adapted for every new technique of reproduction and every new medium; with each technological innovation, the same stories and (literally) stock images are reproduced again. The iconographies have been established through magazine and book illustration, through theatre sets and toy theatres, as stock imagery which went on to shape early film and comics

Figure 2.2 Giant teacup ride, Lambeth Show, 1995

and become the markers of cinematic and publishing genres. With publishing conglomerates, and leisure corporations such as Disney, these images are now familiar conventions within a global media. The metonymic icons of the theme park have survived from chapbooks into comic books to become embedded as the signs of carnival attractions.