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Performing New Cosmoses:

Environmental Matters and Disability Issues in Disney's Animations between 1990–2010

PhD Dissertation

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Abstract/Összefoglaló

Abstract

In my doctoral dissertation, I analyze the subversion of binary systems in Disney animations in the context of the environment and body representations. The observed time-frame (1990-2010) is the period between the Disney Renaissance and the merge of Disney and Pixar Animation Studios (2006), as well as the years after the merge. I point out that the incorporation of technology–the modern magic–in the diegesis of the animations generates the re-interpretation of the macrocosm (environment) and the microcosm (body). The tension between the nature and technology brings about new categories of the environment and of corporeality, which deconstruct the traditional concepts of perfection. With the application of Enikő Bollobás's subject theory (performative constructionism), I observe how these categories come into being in the context of performativity, and whether they are re-playing already existing social scripts (perfor*mance*) or they create new ontologies (perfor*mative*) in the diegesis of the animations. Although the 'compulsory' happy ending, for example, functions as a discursive normative, there are numerous newly-performed, subversive categories within the narration.

The appearance of contemporary, urban-related environmental problems deconstructs the traditional Disney vision of an idyllic and untouched nature, which exists independently of humans. Environmental matters that have received wider media attention from the 1970s on have become so significant that they symptomatically re-appear in mainstream American animations. The most often represented environmental problems are the ones related to consumerist lifestyle, which is in accordance with the theses of environmental philosophy appearing from the 1970s on. In this respect, the environment is envisioned as an instable and constantly changing category, which is created out of the tension between nature and the 'man-made' magic – modern technology. The traditional image of the perfect nature untouched by humans is deconstructed in Disney animations produced between 1990 and 2010, as environmental awareness has become a significant social issue.

The representation of the body has experienced similar changes. Similar to the 'perfect' nature, the concept of the ideal body goes through changes that count subversive in the Disney canon. Disney animations of the observed twenty years

repeatedly experiment with the deconstruction of the norm of the body as young, proportionate and healthy. Mostly due to the power of the representational and narrative traditions as well as the generally conservative attitude of the studio, only the animations produced after 2000 introduce significant changes. First, the European fairy tale adaptations try to challenge the dimensions of the ideal body. In these stories, however, the typically reversible, magic-generated bodily changes (that is, the loss of the ideal body) function as the punishment for moral flaws. Such depictions of the 'deviances' of the ideal body become anachronistic and politically incorrect by the turn of the millennium. Around this time, Disney animations introduce bodily dimensions that are of biological ontology, irreversible and completely independent of the subject's moralities. I discuss the deconstruction of the ideal body by applying contemporary theories of disability studies, which understand disabilities as socially-constructed, discursive entities. The category of the subject with disabilities appears as a performative construction in the social discourse. The animations describe the exclusive practice of the social thought, and they claim the need for change within the social discourse and not within the individuals with disabilities. All the dimensions (young, proportionate and healthy) of the normatively conceptualized ideal body are contested in the animations, which–resisting the traditions of the studio–present the subject-formation of elderly, sick or disproportionate characters.

At the same time, the merge of the biological body and advances of modern technology appears. The extension of the disabled body is understood as a positive aspect of technology. The biological body and the technological advances substituting for or complementing the abilities of the body visualize the tension between nature and technology, on the surface of the body. As a new category, a version of the natural body appears that is unable to detach itself from technology or to function without it: the ontology of the body is not biological any more, but it is not yet completely technological either. In this sense, the unethical use of the 'man-made magic' destroys the environment and over-writes the dimensions of the human body: the body's dependency on technology is conceptualized as a dystopic disability.

Összefoglaló

Doktori disszertációmban a bináris rendszerek szubverzióját vizsgálom a Disney rajzfilmekben a megváltozott környezet és testreprezentációk kontextusában. A vizsgált időkeret a Disney Reneszánsz és a Disney és a Pixar stúdiók egyesülése közti időszak, valamint az egyesülést követő évek (1990-2010). Dolgozatomban rámutatok arra, hogy a modern mágiaként funkcionáló technika beépítése a rajzfilmek diegézisébe a makro- (környezet) és a mikrokozmosz (test) újraértelmezését generálja. A természet és az egyre nagyobb szerepet betöltő technika közti feszültség a környezet és a korporealitás új kategóriáit hozza létre, amik lebontják a tökéletesség tradícionális koncepciót. Elsősorban Bollobás Enikő szubejktumelméletét (performative constructionism) felhasználva, azt vizsgálom, hogy a performativitás értelmében hogyan alakulnak ki ezek az új kategóriák, illetve hogy már létező társadalmi szabályokat játszanak-e újra (perfor*mance*), vagy új ontológiákat teremtenek-e (perfor*mative*) a rajzfilmek diegézisében. Bár a „kötelezőnek" tűnő happy end, például, egy létező diszkurzív normatívának tesz eleget, a narráción belül fellelhetők olyan újszerűen előadott, kiterjesztett kategóriák, amik többnyire szubverzívek.

A kortárs, városiasodással kapcsolatba hozható környezeti problémák megjelenése lebontja azt az idillisztikus, romlatlan és az emberiségtől különálló természet-képet, ami a korai Disney rajzfilmek, illetve a Disney reneszánsz sajátja. A hetvenes évektől széles médiapublicitást nyerő környezeti problémák az ezredforduló környékén már olyannyira megkerülhetetlenek, hogy szimptomatikusan a mainstream amerikai rajzfilmekben is megjelennek. Leginkább a fogyasztói társadalom okozta környezeti problémák épülnek be az animációkba, melyek összhangban állnak a hetvenes évektől megjelenő környezetfilozófiai tézisekkel. Ebben az értelemben a környezet egy instabil, mozgásban lévő, folyamatosan változó kategóriaként jelenik meg, melyet a természet és az emberi „varázslat"–a modern technológia–közti feszültség termel ki. A tökéletesnek és emberi hatásoktól függetlennek ábrazolt makrokozmoszt dekonstruálják a Disney animációk, hiszen a felelősségvállalás a környezetért mára megkerülhetetlen társadalmi ügy lett.

Hasonló változáson megy át az emberi test reprezentációja is. Akárcsak a tökéletesnek vizualizált természet, a test idealizációja is átmegy a Disney kánonon belül szubverzívek számító változásokon. A fiatal, arányos és egészséges test normatíváját a vizsgált húsz év Disney animációi többízben is megkísérlik lebontani. Részben a

tradíció ereje miatt, részben pedig a stúdió konzervatív beállítottsága miatt, lényegi változást majd csak a 2000 után megjelent animációk hoznak. Az ideális test dimenzióival eleinte a európai mesékből táplálkozó rajzfilmek igyekeznek dacolni. Ezekben a történetekben azonban a testi átváltozások (azaz, az ideális test elvesztése) a morális hibákért felrótt büntetés, melyek tipikusan varázslat-ontológiájúak és reverzibilisek. Értelemszerűen, az ideális test koncepciójától való eltérések ilyen jellegű reprezentációja anachronisztikussá és politikailag inkorrekté válik az ezredfordulóra. Ekkortájt jelennek meg az olyan biológiai eredetű testi dimenziók, melyek irreverzibilisek és a szubjektum moralitásától teljesen függetlenek. A tökéletes test kategóriájának lebontását a fogyatékosságtudomány (disability studies) kortárs elméleteinek segítségével vizsgálom, melyek a fogyatékosságot mint egy társadalmilag konstruált, diszkurzív entitást értelmeznek. A fogyatékossággal élő szubjektum kategóriája performativitásként jelenik meg a társadalmi diskurzusban, amit kirekesztő mivolta miatt ezek a rajzfilmek problematikusnak festenek le, és a változást a korlátozó társadalmi gondolkodásmódtól és gyakorlattól várják. A ideális testről alkotott normatív elképzelés (fiatal, arányos, egészséges) minden dimenzióját megkérdőjelezik azok az animációk, amik–a stúdió hagyományától eltérően–idős, beteg vagy aránytalan testű karakterek szubjektumformálás mutatják be. Ezzel egyidejűleg megjelenik a technológiai vívmányokkal összemosódott emberi test koncepciója is. A technológia pozitív hatásaként értelmeződik a fogyatékosként értelmezett emberi test kiegészítése. A biológiai test és a test képességeit helyettesítő vagy kiegésztő technológiai vívmányok az emberi testen vizualizálják a természet és a technológia feszültségét. Új kategóriaként megjelenik a technológiától elszakadni nem képes, anélkül funkcióképtelen természetes emberi test, ami már nem biológiai, de még nem teljesen technológiai ontológiájú. Ebben az értelemben az „emberi varázslat” etikátlan használata nem csak a környezetet pusztítja el, hanem átírja az emberi test dimenzióit is: a test technológiától való függősége disztópikus fogyatékként jelenik meg.

1

Introduction

The twentieth century reinterpreted the nature of story-telling. With the advent of film-making, stories were given moving visuals, and the filmic narrative retained their orality. Soon film studios were established and, with them, their characteristic genres and their repertoire of contracted actors and actresses (Cristian "Cinema" 72). Among them, there was a small, independent animation studio producing mostly short cartoons, all-cartoon series and, later on, feature-length animations: The Walt Disney Company. Through its successfully animated interpretations of European fairy tales, the studio became renowned for its utopian vision of a "clean and orderly world" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 193) and its conservative "civilizing mission" advertising "the essence of American ideology–its populism, Puritanism, elitism, and consumerism" (210–211). By the end of the twentieth century, though, these rigid concepts built upon strict social and cultural binaries had to be re-evaluated if the studio wanted to remain the leader in animated film. Younger, less-influential studios started to challenge the age-old Disney principles by deconstructing binary oppositions and inserting subversive elements into their stories. Consequently, the variety of topics and references to current popular culture built up allegorical stories that had more relevance to current social issues than any Disney feature-length animations this far. The incorporation of subversive elements is carried out through the extension of what I call the multilayered semiotic channel of animations. According to Christian Metz's concept of the five tracks of film–image, dialogue, noise, music and written materials (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 37)–animations can employ certain sets of signs that are decoded differently by audiences of various age groups. The intertextual and popular cultural references are primarily responsible for the entertainment of more mature viewers but–as I am arguing–the multilayered semiotic channel is the framework within which animations can communicate values, topics and ideologies, the target group of which is not primarily the child audience. In other words, the channel enables the smooth incorporation of subversive elements in the otherwise traditionally normative narrative of American mainstream animations. In Chapter 2, I

summarize the history of animation, the Walt Disney Studios and that of Pixar Animation Studios, now a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. I refer to both studios' animations as 'Disney animations;' where I intend to make a distinction between Disney and Pixar animations, I refer to the latter as 'Pixar' or 'Disney-Pixar' animations.

I extensively refer to M. Keith Booker's *Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Message of Children's Film* (2010). Booker provides a critical summary of Disney animations as well as the work of the studio's best-known competitors, in a chronological order. Although I believe that Booker often remains unnecessarily superficial, several of his observations are excellent starting points for further elaboration. I extend his idea on "double coding" (49) into what I coin the 'semiotically multilayered channel.' The history of the Walt Disney Studios–especially details about the beginnings–was provided by Leonard Maltin's *Of Mice and Magic*, whereas to understand the studio's early feature-length animations as retellings of European literary fairy-tales, I refer heavily to Jack Zipes's influential book, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (2006). Beside these studies I repeatedly cite various articles and other concise works to focus on the last two decades (between 1990 and 2010), which period shows significant changes within the narratives of Disney animations. My argument is that Disney's animated films apply a paradigm shift from magic to technology as the creative-performative power in the diegesis of the animations. The role of the mystical power of nature or that of the applied good or bad magic has been partially taken over by the power of technology. The term technology in the academic discourse has been thoroughly discussed for some decades. One of the most significant contributions to the discussion was offered by the philosopher Bernard Stiegler, who re-conceptualized Heidegger's definition of modern technology and observed the term in its strong relation to humanity. In Heidegger's argumentation,

> technics commands (*kubernaô*, the *etymon* of cybernetics) nature. Before, nature commanded technics. Nature is consigned by technics in this sense: nature has become the assistant, the auxiliary; in similar fashion, it is exploited by technics, which has become the master. […] Now, is technics, becoming the master of nature, masters us as a part of nature? (Stiegler, 24, *emphasis in original*)

Stiegler envisions a strong, intertwined relationship of humanity and technology and points out "[the] paradox of contemporary technics in which it reveals itself at one and the same time as human power [*puissance*] and as the power for the self-destruction of humanity" (85,

emphasis in original). Observing the relationship of technology and anthropology, he concludes that technological evolution has more influence on human evolution than vice versa. Many of Stiegler's ideas can be applied to Disney animations which exhibit a growing prevalence of technology in their narratives. The idea of the tension between nature and technology is the pattern that most often recurs, but Stiegler's more daring concepts, for example, that of the power of technology to influence human evolution, turn out to be cornerstones in one of Disney's science fictions, *WALL-E* (as discussed in Chapter 5). Nevertheless, my understanding of technology in this study is less visionary than Stiegler's: I define technology as the development and application of mechanical, electric and informational materializations of scientific achievements of the Western culture. Stiegler's observations, though applicable to animation produced towards the end of the two observed decades, are too visionary for Disney's conservationism that still characterizes several of the studio's animations. I am focusing on technology as a form and manifestation of human intellectual power, which contests the transcendental, mythically constructed power of nature in Disney animations. The tension between nature and technology and the ever-increasing presence of the latter lead to the reinterpretation of the "clean and orderly world" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 193), envisioned by Disney. It results in–among other things–the interrogation of the concepts of the invulnerable nature and of the perfect, idealized body. The re-imagined representations of the macrocosm (environment) and the microcosm (body) itself account for new categories of environment and corporeality.

With the insertion of technology, more and more animations 'move into the city' and the natural environment is understood in an urban framework. Several animations–especially those produced between 1990 and 2000–represent the tension of nature and technology and depict the environment as an outcome of this tension. The new understanding of nature as an entity controlled by human intension and performed through applied forms of technologies characterizes the macrocosm as an entity in which environmental ethical approaches are decisive. Between 2000 and 2010 most animations specify urban environmental phenomena and problems by touching on issues like excessive car usage, landscape formation, the importance of renewable energy sources and so on. Significantly, however, the consumer society's effect on the environment is highlighted, qualifying most animations as anti-consumerist in tone.

These envisioned forms of the environment resist the concept earlier Disney animations harbored about nature. As M. Keith Booker points out, there is a "typical Disney opposition between the natural as good and the unnatural as bad" (65). This binary thinking has been

gradually deconstructed. The invulnerable natural environment is stripped of its magical powers and its pastoral harmony once the ever-increasing influence of technology is introduced in the stories as a performative power creating new forms of environment. Such a tension between nature and technology has been present in discussions about American intellectual history for several decades. Most notably, Leo Marx observed the significance of the intertwined relationship between the pastoral nature and technology in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964). These forms are produced out of resistance to the age-old Disney ideology of an environment which represents a "clean and orderly world" (Zipes, *Fairy Tales*, 193) The newly performed categories of the envisioned environment, therefore, appear as subversive entities, describing environment not as an independent, infinite and readily-formed substance but as one always in the process of being created and re-formed by the tension between nature and technology.

I find evidence for this practice in numerous animations described in Chapter 3. The re-interpretation of the environment in an urban framework–in my argumentation–has been triggered by three factors. First, the wider media publicity of global environmental problems from the 1970s onwards highlighted the vulnerable aspect of nature, and bringing natural catastrophes and environmental issues into the everyday general discourse. Because of their urgency and constant presence in the media, these issues symptomatically re-appear in Disney animations. The second factor which must be taken into consideration is the active influence of consumer society on the environment. Consumerist practices are not only closely related to an urbanized lifestyle, but through the mass-production and mass-consumption of commodities they are also the social roots of various urban environmental problems and damage. The third factor is the acceptance and dissemination of environmental philosophy and ethics in the academic discourse, which provides a theoretical background to these urgent environmental and social problems. As I discuss later, several of Disney's animations convey ideas on environmental awareness by serving as examples of these theories. However, as pointed out later, the consumerist policy of the Disney Studios is in striking contrast to the environmental messages of the animations. János Tóth's book on environmental philosophy (*Fejezetek a környezetfilozófiából* [Chapters in Environmental Philosophy]) provides a concise summary of the most prevalent tendencies in this academic field. This book was of great help to interpret various philosophical reasoning about the environment, especially about human's responsibility for environmental crises. Julia Corbett's *Communicating Nature* (2006) provided a summary of environmental philosophical trends in a different manner: I apply her "spectrum of environmental ideologies" (29) to discuss the extent to which Disney

animations are engaged in environmental awareness. Corbett elaborates on the meeting points of environment and media as well as environment and consumer society.

I will not discuss animations in their chronological order of production because I have found it more practical to focus on the central environmental topics than on the linearity of the studio's work. Because of the variety of topics, however, I group the animations according to their settings: the first group with rural, the second with urban settings. The first group (Chapter 3.2) illustrates how nature is depicted without the presence of humans (*The Lion King* [1994] and *Dinosaur* [2000]) and with the presence of them but outside an urban framework (*Tarzan* [1999], *Brother Bear* [2003] and *Pocahontas* [1995]). I highlight that even in these animations which are envisioned closer to the natural environment than those coming up in Chapter 3.3, the strict dualism of natural-unnatural has already been questioned by pointing out the importance of ethical behavior towards natural entities.

The second group (Chapter 3.3) focuses on the re-contextualization of the environment: animations with an urbanized setting offer numerous occasions where the environment is depicted as an on-going process fuelled by the tension between nature and technology. I start my argument with the *Toy Story* trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010), with the first part being not only a technological milestone in the history of animations but also the first Disney animation depicting the contemporary American suburbs as a platform of American consumer practices. The trilogy featuring commodities celebrates the performative power of technology, showing it as the ontology of these mass-produced objects. The stories, however, focus more on the role of commodities in a consumer society: by recounting the stories from toys' point of view, consumerist practices and throw-away society are shown and criticized from a new angle. *Monsters, Inc*. (2001) is an allegory on the ethical use of energy sources in times of energy crises. The animation aptly uses visual references to the behavior of various media during an environmental catastrophe as well as during alarming tendencies of environmental decay. The story is based on Garret Hardin's game theory "The Tragedy of the Commons," which the animation applies to the situation of an energy crisis. The proper and ethical use of technology on natural sources can provide a sustainable environment. I discuss *Cars* (2006) and *Bolt* (2008) in one chapter because they both show how the mass-mediated, profit-oriented, capitalist world of the American entertainment industry manipulates and alienates the natural environment. The performative power exercised by the resemblances of NASCAR and Hollywood creates not only the environment but it also denies the protagonists the possibility to take agency on their subject formation. Following the generic patterns of road movies, both animations show how subject categories can be subversively created out of

resistance to the dominant ideology. The filmic narratives analogously show the environment experienced during the road trip as a category outside the domain of the performative power of the envisioned American entertainment industry.

I devote Chapter 4 to the re-interpreted forms of corporeality in the framework of disability studies. Disney animations in the observed twenty years interrogate not only the concept of the perfect, invulnerable environment but also the idea of the perfect, idealized body. Similar to many researchers of Disney animations, Elizabeth Bell highlights the problematic nature of the idealized, perfect body of Disney characters, especially women. According to Bell,

> within the language of Disney animation, the constructed bodies of women are somatic, cinematic and cultural codes that attempt to align audience sympathies and allegiance with the beginning and end of the feminine life cycle, marking the middle as a dangerous, consumptive, and transgressive realm. (109)

Teenage heroines of Disney animations are "thumbnail sketches for kind and beautiful young girls" (109) but most importantly their bodies are "composed of the language and bodies of others" (108). As Leonard Maltin reveals, Snow White's figure was drawn after dancer Marge Champion, and to make her movements seem flawless and perfect, the figure of Snow White had to be re-drawn at least two thousand times. The chief animator of Snow White recalls: "[E]ven when we took a rotoscope drawing, her chin came almost as far down as her bosom would be, so we had to reconstruct the entire body; we did that by making her very short-waisted" (Maltin 56). More than fifty years later, the studio was still striving to create and advertise the ideal body, as pointed out in the *Filmmakers' Audio Commentary* of *Aladdin* (1992): Aladdin's character was based on Tom Cruise (Clements and Musker 0:33:44), and Jasmine's face came from animator Mark Henn's daughter, and her figure was drawn on the basis of a careful study on professional American models (0:53:30). This practice has remained with Disney ever since it started producing feature-length animation. The pursuit of the idealized perfect body that supports the "paradigm of humanity as young and healthy" (Wendell "Towards" 339) has, however, experienced some re-consideration: Disney animations between 1990 and 2010 repeatedly address the issue of disability as a strategy to extend the limits of the perfect body.

The representation of disability has been present in Disney animations from the very beginning of making feature-length animated films but its importance and urgency have changed as the social thought on disability was given new perspectives. Disability studies is a rather new, interdisciplinary academic field several aspects of which are fairly essentialist, focusing on various types of disabilities. I, however, apply theories in my argumentation that consider the disabled body and the identities around this body as social constructs coming about in a performative manner. As Susan Wendell points out, answering the questions "how much ability is basic, like how much ability is normal, seems to depend on how much is necessary to perform the most common tasks of daily living in a particular physical and social environment" (Wendell *Rejected* 16). As this observation shows, when discussing disability, one cannot avoid discussing normalcy.

Normal and normalcy are terms that Western cultures often try to translate into numbers in order to conceptualize them as a given exact. Measurements, tests, statistics, charts and the like seem to have become the litmus paper to define normalcy and, at the same time, defining deviations. For this reason, normalcy has gained a tyrannical, hegemonic position in the Western commonsense (Davis, "Constructing" 6–7). Lennard J. Davis, like many other philosophers working on the field of disability studies, tries to re-conceptualize normalcy, thus deconstructing this hegemony. According to Davis:

> the very term that permeates our contemporary life–the normal–is a configuration that arises in a particular historical moment. It is a part of a notion of progress, of industrialization, and of ideological consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie. […] One of the tasks for a developing consciousness of disability issues is the attempt, then, to reverse the hegemony of the normal and to institute alternative ways of thinking about the abnormal (17).

The normalcy of the body, outside the context of disability, was envisioned as a social discipline by Michel Foucault in 1975. In his influential work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault discusses the body as a political field, governed, controlled, trained and punished by power relations, similar to the functioning of disciplinary mechanisms in the military; "thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (138). Using Jeremy Bentham's concept of the panopticon (a round architectural figure of an envisioned prison with a central tower of surveillance from which every inmate in every cell can be seen at the same time), Foucault describes a disciplinary society. The disciplinary society functions because the subjected bodies internalize the disciplinary

mechanisms conveyed through instruments of ideology and start acting accordingly. In other words,

> he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (202–203)

This is how the concept of an idealized body becomes internalized and accepted as a norm to which all subjects need to strive to conform. The constant reminder on the 'perfect' body through channels of ideology (for example, films, and more precisely animations, in my argumentation) urges subjects to conform as much as they can to this abstract idea. Bodies that cannot conform to this ideological construct because of any impairment or handicap cannot qualify as docile bodies and thus they must be punished. This punishment arrives most often in the form of stigmatization and oppression (Wendell *Rejected* 63). When Davis says that alternative ways of thinking about the abnormal need to be institutionalized (Davis "Constructing" 17), he agrees with Wendell, who claims that "we need understandings of disability and handicap that do not support the paradigm of humanity as young and healthy" (Wendell, *Rejected* 18). As I am arguing towards the end of Chapter 4, Disney animations support Wendell's argument and they extend this paradigm by re-defining the ideal body with the incorporation of disabled and elderly figures in their narratives. The role of disability in narratives and in story-telling is insightfully detailed by David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's *Narrative Prosthesis*. The authors discuss disability with twofold functions. First, it is a stock feature of characterization, lending "a distinctive idiosyncrasy to any character that differentiates the character from the anonymous background of the 'norm'" (47). At the same time, disability functions as a metaphorical device, signifying social and individual collapse by lending "a "tangible" body to textual abstractions" (47–48). The authors coin this dependency of literary narratives upon disability "narrative prosthesis." The narrative process focuses on the restoration of the disturbed equilibrium (Belton 24) by trying to correct the "deviance marked as improper to the social context" (Mitchell and Snyder 53). The intertwined relationship of the social understanding of disability and the schematized narrative structure shows the legitimacy of the concept of "narrative prosthesis."

Disney animations rarely deal directly with disability in its essentialist sense (as physical, mental, or medical limitations). With the significant exceptions of *The Hunchback*

of Notre Dame (1996), *Finding Nemo* (2003), and *Up!* (2009), Disney feature-length animations seemingly leave disability issues on the margins. As allegory for disability, corporeal changes and metamorphosis induced by (bad) magic, however, do occur very often in the observed twenty years of Disney canon. I discuss *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), *Brother Bear* (2003), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) and *Tangled* (2010) also in Chapter 4 and claim that they keep on supporting the paradigm of the perfect, idealized body and imagine corporeal anomalies as a form of punishment, thus depicting a rather politically incorrect picture about marked bodies. This concept is contested by animations that neglect the incorporation of magic, and discuss disability with biological/physical origins. I see two reasons for this: first, breaking away from magic means breaking away from the genre of fairy tales, which tendentiously show corporeal anomalies originating in the supernatural and/or in individual responsibility (Mitchell and Snyder 25–26); second, with the appearance of objects (commodities) as protagonists of the narratives, corporeal changes and damage can be depicted in a way that they function as subtle allegory to human bodily changes. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), the *Toy Story* trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010), *Finding Nemo* (2003), *Cars* (2006) and *Up!* (2009) contest the concept of the perfect, idealized body of the protagonists and/or–in some cases–that of the stock characters. Instead of replaying the young, healthy, proportionate body-ideal, the characters and the policies applied in these animations transgress the limits of this category by presenting the disabled, the elderly and the disproportionate as various forms of the proper body. As opposed to the first group of animations, these films do not envision marked bodies as a form of punishment for immoral behavior of the individual. They understand disability as a social construction: the marked body in itself is not disabling; it is various factors of the social context that makes these bodies disabled. The practice of exempting disabled individuals from alleged moral flaws and placing the 'blame' on improper social attitude is a giant step in Disney animations. Even with this step, however, Disney animations still fail to live up to many expectations articulated in publications in disability studies but the extension of the concept of the proper body in animations is already a significant act that might be followed by more subversive re-interpretations of the body as well.

I have chosen *WALL-E* (2008) as the closing chord of the present study: Disney's most unorthodox animation fittingly summarizes the discussed changes on the macro- and microcosm. Taking place in the distant future, *WALL-E* envisions an excessive technological development that overcomes nature and destroys it completely. The Earth is shown uninhabited, covered in skyscrapers of garbage: the massive accumulation of garbage was

brought about by the excessive consumption of mass-produced commodities, induced by the monopolist company-giant, BnL (standing for Buy N Large). Besides commerce, BnL controlled all aspects of life (politics, banking, media, etc.), thus having the necessary power to maintain and accelerate consumerist practices. The Earth, however, could not sustain such garbage production, and biological vegetation first slowed down, then completely stopped. The story of *WALL-E* starts seven hundred years later, showing mankind living in a giant spaceship, waiting for Earth to recover, so that they could return. I discuss the environmentalist argument of the movie with the help of two influential theories of environmental philosophy: Garrett Hardin's game theory on the tragedy of the commons, which focuses on the gradual exploitation of finite energy sources; and James Lovelock's Gaia Theory about the self-regulating, self-sustaining power of Earth through homeostasis. Although these theories basically negate each other, *WALL-E* applies both to provide a happy ending to the story about an environmental catastrophe.

Besides destroying vegetation on Earth, technology stops human evolution and makes it regress by serving people's needs to such an extent that humans lose their ability to walk. In this sense, *WALL-E* also supports Stiegler's more daring ideas on technology inasmuch as the animation claims that human evolution is overruled by technological evolution. The depiction of human life in the spaceship ruled and controlled by a robot AUTO shows a technocentric social setup, which is based on "the development of technics "for itself," when it is an end onto itself, the automatization of technics by which it is its own law, indeed the law" (Stiegler 92). The constant and overall automatization of all walks of life results in a serious degeneration of the human body: due to the automatized hover-chairs and the technical support in all body movements, humans suffer from disuse atrophy of muscles and bones, making them unable to walk and severely obese. *WALL-E* presents this physical condition as 'normal' in the future, within the offered technological developments, thus suggesting views on disability as a social construction, which change according to the environment and to the social 'agreement.' In Wendell's words:

> Whether a particular physical condition is disabling changes with time and place, depending on such factors as social expectations, the state of technology and its availability to people in that condition, the educational system, architecture, attitudes towards physical appearance, and the pace of life ("Towards" 339).

WALL-E's depiction of the future, in which severe atrophy is understood as the norm because walking and moving are not necessary to perform the regular daily tasks, highlights the relative nature of the definition of 'normal.' Moreover, the movie aptly shows how the social attitude towards corporeal appearance has changed, ideologically standardizing everyone. *WALL-E* incorporates most of the tendencies on changes and re-interpretations of the macro- and microcosm through the tension between nature and technology. Besides the strong environmentalist and anti-consumerist tones, this animation draws attention to the social construction of disability and the role of technology in human evolution. Chapter 5, therefore, is the conclusion of my argument.

I observe the subversive changes in the representation of the macro- and the microcosm in Disney animations from the theoretical standpoint of "performative constructionism," as defined by Enikő Bollobás in her book *They Aren't Until I Call Them* (2010). The author applies her theory on pieces of American literature mostly from the nineteenth and twentieth century; I extend this practice and employ performative constructionism on contemporary American animation. Starting out from the linguistic understanding of performativity (e.g. speech acts), Bollobás summarizes how the concept have been applied in a poststructuralist framework: through language and the constant production of signifiers, speakers discursively construct themselves. Realities and subjectivities are always already discursively performed and as constructions lacking their signified, they refer to nothing, that is, they are catachreses (13). Without a signified, the concept of binary oppositions cannot be accounted for any longer. Thus, once the logical mechanism of the performative creation of subjectivity is accepted, the age-old binarisms of subject/object, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, white/black, original/copy, etc. are ruled out. If acts and subjectivities are discursively created, what we perceive needs to be conceptualized as something in creation, as a section of discourses of power rather than as a signifier weighed down to one essence. From this premise, Bollobás develops her argument on how subjectivities are performatively constructed.

The subject's self-construction is only possible within social and cultural discourses. Self-construction, that is, taking the subject position is particularly important for those who were traditionally assigned the position of the object (Bollobás 79–80). In a poststructuralist understanding, culturally imperialized groups–for example, the disabled–can construct their own subjectivites by resisting the power that placed them in the position of the object. Subjectivity construction is only possible through the subject's agency. This is a rather obvious claim in the case of subjects who belong to culturally non-imperialized groups and

their subject position is "intended by power" (83). Their subject-creation comes about in accordance with the ruling ideology but not because of the intention of the subject. In the case of non-dominant groups, however, the issue of agency is not as obvious because these groups have been denied the possibility of taking agency. Bollobás argues that in these cases, subjectivity comes about out of resistance to the dominant ideology, and agency lies exactly in this discursive resistance. This process is unintended by power, and "subjectivity is here intended by the subject taking agency" (83). In this respect, it is always performing a subjectivity. Depending on whether the existing, conventional norms are being replayed, or new texts and processes are being brought about, subjectivity can come about in two forms: as perfor*mance* (with the last syllable italicized) or as perfor*mative* (with the last two syllables italicized) (85). Through language, the speaker is always performatively constructed but whether it is a perfor*mance* of a perfor*mative*, it depends on the agency and intention of the subject.

Bollobás argues that instances of subjectivity perfor*mances* replay existing conventions and norms as they are produced in accordance with the domintant ideology (85). Perfor*mances* are

> instances where expressive citationality is dominant in making subjectivities; these processes appeal to existing conventions, and invoke existing traditions. […T]hey are directly used by hailing ideologies, while at the same time reproduce ruling ideologies to which society has subjected the subject. (85–86)

Several instances of animations observed in the present study are, therefore, perfor*mances* because they act out existing social conventions as well as the age-old Disney tradition and normative of the "clean, orderly world" (Zipes 193) and that of the perfect body. Considering the fact that Disney animations grew out from the tradition of fairy tales and children's literature, which are "obvious vehicles for the ideology that interpellate women and men in order to produce them [… by] offering narratives of domesticity, feminine desirability, passivity and aesthetic objectification" (Bollobás 86), these animations are still heavily loaded with scenarios of perfor*mances*. In the present study, however, I highlight instances related to the macro- and microcosm that are performed out of resistance to existing social patterns and conventions advertised in Disney animations. These are discursive categories created in a perfor*mative* manner. Bollobás describes this practice as follows:

> When subjectivities are being perfor*mative*ly constructed, for example, figurations of new subjectivity will come about which typically involve

> transgressions and extensions of categories. For example, the formerly disempowered will assume agency by resisting normativity and undermining the individualizing-normalizing-hierarchizing effects of power. (88)

I find examples in the following discussion that Disney animations between 1990 and 2010 incorporate instances which are perfor*mative* category constructions. The introduction of technology as the 'man-made magic' is probably the most significant perfor*mative* since it extends and transgresses existing categories of environment and corporeality, bringing about texts of environmental problems and disability issues. In other words, subversive constructions of the macro- and microcosm interrogate the ideologically loaded Disney conventions. The category of the pastoral, invulnerable nature is transgressed by the urbanization of animations, accounting for categor*ies* of nature and environment which are ever-changing, being-constructed, unfixed, unstable instances. The incorporation of environmental matters is possible in these new ontologies. The introduction of technology leads to other perfor*mative*ly created subject categories. Mass-produced commodities whose ontology is technological rather than natural or biological appear as protagonists of the animations (*Toy Story*, 1995), claiming a subjectivity to objects. This subject category is flexible enough to account for changes and damage of the body, thus rupturing the convention of the perfect, ideal body advertised in Disney animations. The traditional marginality of bodies with disability is interrogated once disability is shown as a discursive social construction and not as a pre-existing given. Animations with disabled protagonists, I argue, resist the ideology that previously marginalized these characters and place them in the subject position out of resistance to the conventions of the ideal body-formation.

Taking agency is a significant moment of the process of subject-formation, and a recurrig one in Disney animations with disabled characters. The agency of non-dominant groups in constructing their subjectitivities is a central concept in the celebration of individualism in Disney animations, especially in those discussing disability. Most often, however, these subjectivity constructions are perfor*mances*: characters with marked bodies are active agents in their subject construction but most animations suggest that they should perform according to the ruling ideologies (such as the logical pattern of overcoming and passing among disabled people). Occasional instances, however, allow perfor*mative* subject creation: *Brother Bear* will be a fitting example here.

Perfor*mative* instances are minute and occasional in the discourse of Disney animations because the family entertainment products of the studio are globally distributed, therefore, the general tone of the films remain conservative. My point is that the perfor*mative*ly created

instances and subjectivities appear in a narrative framework that still follows and re-produces the conventions of Disney narratives through perfor*mance*. For this reason, it would be improper to say that Disney animations have gone through significant changes in the last twenty years but I dare say that they have opened up to the interrogation of the "clean and orderly world" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 193) and that of the idealized, perfect body even though the serious nature of these two topics may seem to be in discrepancy with the generally light-hearted nature of American animations. The apparent opposition between form and content is further complicated by the fact that most animations fail to present subversive elements in depth, thus depriving them from their serious nature and urgency. In the upcoming chapters, however, environmental and disability issues tendentiously appear in an agenda-setting fashion: the more often the audience encounters these topics, the more importance they associate with them. This is an immensely practical tool of animations, inasmuch as they can contain serious, socially urgent issues without disturbing the overall light-hearted flow of narration. The repeated appearance ensures that these often 'food-for-thought'-like messages gain a certain weight, thus provide some serious (environmental or social) lessons. The fact that subversive items appear more and more frequently and their roles in the narrative become essential towards 2010 highlights the urgency of these topics.

2

From Mickey Mouse to the Desk Lamp

2.1. Story-telling in the 20th and 21st Centuries: Animation as Medium of Morality

Story-telling has always been present in every society as an act of communicating, sharing and re-interpreting the factual, cultural and moral collective memory of the community. The act of story-telling, however, has gone through significant social and technological changes throughout time redefining the content, purpose, channel, audience and performer. One of the most prevalent genres of story-telling is the folk tale. As Jack Zipes summarizes it (Zipes "Breaking" 22–27), the ritual and communal act of the actual *telling* of folk tales essentially changed with the advent of book printing and with the rise of literacy in the fifteenth century. Oral story-telling, which was meant to function as a communal coming-together, became part of the private sphere rather than the public sphere, where it belonged previously: reading tales became the privilege of the literate and of those with (mostly financial) access to printed books. In other words, the privacy of reading led to socially separate audiences of tales. At the same time, the genre of literary fairy tales appeared in print. These printed tales were rooted in the oral tradition of folk-tales, more precisely in its subgenre of *Zaubermärchen* (or as later coined in French, *contes de fées*), but they were adapted for the narratives of the middle class (Zipes "Breaking" 22-23).

The common goal of literary fairy tales (at the period of French Absolutism, from the sixteenth century to 1789) also changed, yielding to the appearance of subversion:

> The genre of the literary fairy tale was institutionalized as an aesthetic and social means through which questions and issues of the *civilité*, proper behavior and demeanor in all types of situation, were mapped out as narrative strategies for literary socialization, and in many cases, as symbolic gestures of subversion to question the ruling standards of taste and behavior. (Zipes "Breaking" 23)

Moralizing and ideological education has always been present in literary fairy tales both in the normative and subversive application of the genre. The institutionalization of the fairy tale genre purposely written for education and socialization of children functioned as a source of social control, having all the features and working mechanism that Foucault

demonstrated in *Discipline and Punish* (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 86). In his influential book, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (second edition), Zipes shows how literary fairy tales set standards for socializing the young generations and how they gradually opened up to various subversive discourses as well.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the technological advent of filmmaking redefined story-telling once again. First of all, projecting films in the cinema re-introduced story-telling into the public sphere, thus offering a communal platform where the original aims of story-telling could function. With film, stories moved away from the language of the oral tradition and the text of the printed word into the pictures of a visual medium. This technical development led to the essential presence of fairy tales in cinemas, and with the appearance of Walt Disney, fairy tales found their new forms in animations (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 195–196).

The precise definitions of terms like animations, animated films, cartoons or children's films have always been mostly unstable, and researchers tend to use them interchangeably in academic discussions. The common feature of all of them is that they function on the basis of the optical illusion, coined by Joseph Plateau as the "persistence of vision" (Crary 107, qtd. in Cristian "Encounters" 5), which enables the viewers to create a connection between a series of imagines appearing in a fraction of a second. The human brain retains the image which is then followed by another, slightly different image (Lord and Sibley 17). Without this illusion, we would not be able to perceive animations in motion; we would only see separate images changing very fast. To maintain this illusion, images have to appear in a fashion of rapid succession: 24 frames a second. Lord and Sibley, like many other researchers, define animation in relation to live action media, which is brought to life through the use of a live-action camera that captures a scene moving in *real* time. In the case of animations, on the other hand, "nothing exists to be filmed until it is created and put in front of the camera" (18). The different branches of animations can be defined on the basis of what is put in front of the camera; in other words, the "choice of medium for the originals to be photographed" is decisive–these can be drawings, cut-outs, models, puppets or real objects (Blandford et al. 11). Because of the pervasive presence of computer technologies in animation in the last few decades, careful research on animation cannot avoid considering their importance. The presence of computer-based methods broadened the meaning of animation and "altered the economics of animations and made feature-length cartoons highly profitable" (11).

Grasping the essence of animations within the binary opposition of animation and live-action films has proven to be rather problematic with the advance of computer technologies. Maureen Furniss, an acknowledged animation theorist and president of the *Society for*

Animation Studies, envisions the so-called live action–animation continuum, with which she offers a theoretical platform to define animations outside the above-metioned binarism. She gets rid of the dichotomy of animation and live action media, claiming that they are very relative concepts and they often overlap (5). In a postmodern understanding, she imagines a continuum rather than binarism, placing mimesis and abstraction on the two poles. Furniss defines mimesis as the desire to reproduce natural reality; and abstraction as the use of just pure forms–"a suggestion of a concept rather than an attempt to explicate it in real life" (5). A true documentary film is, therefore, closer to the mimesis pole of the continuum; *The Three Caballeros* (1944), a film which combines live-action and animation, is placed somewhere in the middle; the bubbles rhythmically hopping on the laptop screen as a screen saver is on the abstraction pole. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) could be placed between the middle and the abstraction pole, as the characters have a naturalistic look, based on human models but it is nevertheless a drawn film (5). The idea of the continuum, therefore, offers a comfortable spectrum for all films not having been able to be categorized within the binary distinction of animations and live-actions. In a nutshell, animations in Furniss's understanding function rather as tendencies.

Despite the envisioned animation continuum, the applied terminology is often used carelessly. Cartoons and animation" cover different methods of applied techniques; still they are often used interchangeably. David Lopez argues that animation is the main category, within which cartoon–moving images created primarily with the technique of drawing–is the most popular subcategory (39). The first short cartoon (using stop-motion), *The Enchanted Drawing* (1900) by J. Stuart Blackton and his first cartoon film (frame-by-frame animation), *Humorous Phases and Funny Faces* (1906), deal with the very act of drawing as the main theme. Lopez details the technical step as well: the slightly different drawings are "transferred to a cell and painted; a separate background that is drawn and painted on plain paper is provided" (40). These two are photographed later in a frame-by-frame fashion. Lopez does not mention the use of any computer aid, and considers animations as a wider term. In my argumentation I consider the analyzed movies animations rather than cartoons because most of them are not exclusively hand-drawn cartoons but produced with the profound application of computer technology (most often the CGI–computer-generated images–technology) in the production and/or in the post-production phase.

The term "children's film" might also sound tempting to refer to these movies. I would, however, refrain from it, for several reasons. Firstly, according to Lopez, a children's film has to "have children as the focal point of the story" (44) and for this reason, several movies

fall into this category that may rather be aimed at the adult audiences. If a movie is meant for children, it does not necessarily qualify to be a children's film in the sense of including children. The animations discussed here are primarily meant for children but most of them do not have kids in the focus of the story–this is the first reason why I am not applying this term. Secondly, children's films are not limited exclusively to animations. Even though "animation films, fairy stories, realistic films [and] adventure stories are the most successful among children" (44), I only focus here on animations produced by the Walt Disney Company, which is–concerning the global distribution of its films–one of the most influential story-tellers in the twentieth and twenty-first century, the "'Stories R Us' store [… which] provides many of the first narratives children learn about the world" (Ward 1).

I consider all the films discussed here animations exclusively because of the method of production: they are either hand-drawn cartoons, fully computerized animated films or the mixture of the two. In a postmodernist understanding of genres, it would be problematic to claim that Disney animated films between 1990 and 2010 are animations because of their narrative content. There seem to be significant generic differences on the level of narration within the genre of animation: while *Beauty and the Beast,* for example, carries all the generic conventions of a musical, *WALL-E* is clearly composed as a science fiction; still both are considered to be animations. To account for the multiplicity of genres, Rick Altman's syntactic-semantic approach could be useful. Altman develops his approach in the 1980s, when genre analysis of films was profoundly disputed by film theoreticians. According to him, the semantic concern focuses on the narrative content of the films, whereas the syntactic approach discusses how the narrative elements are structured (Stam 127). In this sense, "a film can align semantically with one trend and yet syntactically with another" (128). Zoltán Dragon claims that Altman's approach offers a method of genre analysis that does not focus on the violation of genre boundaries but investigates how the incorporation of various generic elements enriches filmic interpretations (Dragon "Cowboys" 60). This enrichment is particularly relevant to Disney animations that do not follow the traditional trend of animated musicals. From the beginning of feature-length animation production, Disney animations tendentiously employed the visual and narrative conventions of musicals. This practice re-appeared in the so-called Disney Renaissance (Belton 168)–in the 1990s–when the studio strived to resurrect its earlier renown by producing animated musicals (*The Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Hercules*, and so on). With the appearance of Pixar animations, however, the traditional generic bond between the musical and the animation has been reconsidered. These films retained the genre of animation as a form but

changed the iconographic and narrative conventions by inserting elements of various genres. The *Toy Story* trilogy, for example, breaks away both from the musical and the 'compulsory' romance, thus becoming primarily an action-comedy with strong connections to the two sibling genres, western and science fiction (Belton 272-275). *Cars* and *Bolt* are semantically road movies, *WALL-E* is undoubtedly a futuristic science fiction, and *Up!* is an "entry in the adventure film genre" as a "children's version of the *Indiana Jones* films" (Booker 110). Syntactically all these films remain animated comedies as they function as family entertainment. The numerous iconographic and narrative insertions of various genres into these animations seem to have a beneficial effect on the reception side: the plurality of genres addresses different audiences, offering entertainment for those too who do not favor animation or the genre of musical with which animated films were traditionally associated with. Box office results show that Pixar animations ("Box Office…Pixar")–which deal more flexibly with various genres than Disney feature animations–are significantly higher-grossing films than Disney's ("Box Office…Disney"). An objective correlation between generic plurality and (demographic) changes in spectatorship as well as in increasing box office figures is hard to set, though. Still, the introduction of filmic genres and contemporary social and environmental topics which are not typical for children's audiences reveals the intention of the studios to extend the targeted demographic.

2.2. The Walt Disney Studios

The relevant literature coins Walt Disney in various ways: the artist, the technological visionary, the workaholic (Maltin 30), the despot (64), the conservative moralizer (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 202) the secret informer of the FBI (Giroux 47), the founder of the best-known animation studio in the world. All these aspects of his personality made it possible for him to establish and develop what is now the most influential studio of American animation: The Walt Disney Studios. Disney was not the first to produce animations–in fact, he started his career as a commercial artist more than a decade after the first animated cartoon in 1906 (J. Stuart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*)–but he was the one who technologically and narratively expanded the genre. Disney's eagerness led to the application of the latest technological developments, *Steamboat Willie* (1928) became the first animation with synchronized sound (Maltin 34–35), and *Fantasia* (1940) applied the first stereo sound system. In the early 1930s, Disney had experimented with color production (*Flowers and Trees* [1932] and the *Silly Symphonies* series [1929-39]), which turned out to be such a

success that in 1932, Disney "signed a deal with Technicolor based on three-year exclusivity in the animation field" (Maltin 39). Disney's fascination with the latest technology was not the only key to his success. After several short animations which brought enormous popularity to the studio, Disney realized that the characters and the storylines should be further developed and detailed. To this end, he created a story department and introduced the application of a storyboard: "this was the first time that a sequence of drawings was used to plot out a film *in its entirety*" (38, *emphasis in original*). With the storyboard, everyone in the studio could effectively contribute to the upcoming animations. Disney organized his employees into departments responsible for various steps of animating (37).With the access to the latest technology (in 1937, Disney invested in a multiplane camera responsible for the feeling of depth and dimension [51]), the organized departmental structure of the studio and the successfully written stories, the studio armed itself to launch the most daring project in the history of animations up to then: an animated feature film. Disney recruited talented and creative animators and organized night classes and seminars for them to discover and analyze the dynamics of bodily movement (43) and to acquire animating techniques to convincingly create the personalities of the characters (46–47). In 1933, Disney decided on animating a well-known fairy tale: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). The venture turned out to be both an immense financial success (despite the similarly immense production costs) and, being the first feature-length animation, a milestone in the history of film-making. Having been produced for four years, *Snow White* presented the most careful and detailed characterization and a finely composed storyline which was colored by comical and musical interludes (53–57). By constantly and strictly supervising the various working phases, Disney guaranteed that nothing would hinder the flow of the story and only the most accurately drawn sequences would be incorporated: "As he viewed preliminary footage in the "sweatbox" (the studio's colloquial term for screening room), he dismissed a lot of capable work as being good enough for shorts but not good enough for *Snow White*" (55).

Disney was similarly meticulous with the storyline and applied significant changes on the fairy tale: "he cast a spell over this German tale and transformed it into something peculiarly American" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 203). In Zipes's understanding, Disney's *Snow White* is a sexist narrative about women's lives in a male discourse and about their domestication (204). Moreover, the animation incorporates elements of "perseverance, hard work, dedication, loyalty and justice–key features of the Protestant Ethic, which forms the basis of the so-called American civilizing process" (205). Zipes refers to these ideologies employed in Disney animations as tools for Disney's "civilizing mission" (199). Indeed, the

film does entertain the idea of the social necessity of "obedience, conformism and orderliness" (Booker 4). These arguments reappear in Disney's second feature-length film, *Pinocchio* (1940), about which Nicholas Sammond writes that it most openly conveys ideas to children about "middle-class virtues of deferred gratification, self-denial, thrift, and perseverance, naturalized as the experience of the most average American" (qtd. in Booker 12). Even though the upcoming feature-length animations–*Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941) and *Bambi* (1942)–apply similar virtues and they do show the stylistic versatility of the studio–*Fantasia* and *Dumbo* being rather avant-garde (Booker 14)–financial troubles, a heated strike (1941) in the company because of the radical imbalance between work load and payment, and the outbreak of the Second World War urged the studio to put aside producing and experimenting with feature-length animations.

By that time, Disney's ideological influence on its audience was unquestionable, this being the reason that during WWII "the [American] government enlisted [Disney's] all-out support for the production of war-time films" (Maltin 64). These educational war films addressed different audiences: troops were taught "how to identify enemy aircraft or how to strip and reassemble a gun;" war bonds were advertised in films to the home front; and the American housewives were introduced to the war through propaganda films (Leslie 212). Technically simpler and less ornamented though these films were, Disney's war-propaganda animations–such as *Victory Through Air Power* (1943), *Out of the Frying Pan into the Firing Line* (1942) and the Oscar-winning war-time short, *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1942)–proved the ideological and propagandistic power of animation. The semiotics of these animations was strikingly different from Disney's earlier shorts and feature-length animations. Vivid and brash images, maps, graphs and dissolves created a clear symbolism able to convey the necessarily unambiguous messages (214). As Esther Leslie points out, the caricature of fairy tales of German origin proved to be another tool to highlight the anti-Nazi attitude of war-time Disney animation:

> The fairy tale–its Germanic associations productively enlisted–was used too. In *Education for Death* (1943), an exposé of the Nazi indoctrination of youth, Germania (a caricature of Goering) appears as an obese Sleeping Beauty. A knight in shining armour rescues her. It is Hitler–in the same shiny tin guise as he adopts in Hubert Lanzinger's glorifying portrait *Hitler–Der Bannerträger* (*Hitler - The Standard Bearer*)–and he can barely lift his enchantress. (212)

During and after the war-time, the studio mainly produced short animations in which audiences lost interest by the 1950s; for this reason, the studio returned to feature-length

animations. *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) became the 'Disneyfied' versions of well-known European fairy tales; whereas, *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and *Peter Pan* (1952) "seem to celebrate the individual imagination only ultimately to advise individuals to accept the status quo" (Booker 23). The advertised social conformism and the conservative civilizing mission of Disney films remained a central idea in the relatively few feature-length animations his studio produced in the middle of the twentieth century. According to Jack Zipes, Disney's constant "pursuit of the perfect, clean and orderly world" through the civilizing process broadcast through his animations "caused many of the liberating aspects of the fairy tale to be tamed and to turn in against themselves" (*Fairy Tales* 193). This conformist ideology, suggesting the imperatives of "don't take the risks, don't be curious, know your place in the order of things, and don't wander far away from home" (202), is what Tibor Hirsch calls the "from outside to inside" (5) dramaturgical practice. Tales with this dramaturgy encourage submission and humbleness and centers around a character that refuses to act according to the dominant social ideology, learns a moral lesson, changes his behavior and is finally accepted by the society. The Disney canon offers numerous examples to such dramaturgy by introducing characters whose perfor*mance* subject-formation is the ultimate virtue.

Hirsch, however, proves that there has been a shift in this concept lately inasmuch as one of the many is chosen to become different ("from inside to outside"): "you are chosen, you are the one who seems like all the others; still, you have been chosen" (5). Hirsch symbolizes this to-be-chosen-ness with the cultural topos of the pointing finger (as Uncle Sam's, for example). The perfor*mative* act of claiming or choosing someone to be different from the others celebrates the motif of difference as the greatest virtue. Conformism, blindly following the dominant social ideology and remaining silent sound outdated in a postmodern society. The perfor*mative* construction of the subject becomes encouraged and celebrated. This practice, however, was unimaginable in animations produced under Disney's supervision. With his death in 1966, the studio lost its visionary leader, and the culturally and social turbulent years of the 1960s and 1970s also contributed to the studio's 'identity crisis,' leaving it in a desperate search for something new with which it could restore the reputation of Disney animations (Booker 38). The wasteland in the production of animated films that followed Disney's death and covered the upcoming more than two decades, ended with what Booker coins the "Disney Renaissance" (37). With *The Little Mermaid* (1989), the studio reached back to the good, old fairy tales and tried to resurrect the success the company made from them fifty years before. The last decade of the century did not bring much change in the

conformist attitude of the Walt Disney Studios' animations, but the repeated featuring of postcolonial issues started showing a loosening in the rigid world order Disney envisioned (Borthaiser "'A Whole…'"). With the appearance of feature-length animations produced by Pixar Animation Studios (an earlier competition, now a subsidiary of Disney) and distributed by Walt Disney Pictures, the age-old Disney mission of a clean, orderly world (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 193) through conformism had to be re-evaluated. Disney animations gradually opened up to the "from inside to outside" practice, acknowledging and celebrating difference, creating new discursive ontologies and openly incorporating subversive elements. In comparison with other American animation studios (including Pixar Animation Studios), however, the Walt Disney Studios keeps producing rather conservative animations but the last two decades have shown significant changes in Disney animations.

Employing subversive elements in animations which are primarily meant for children needs the creative application of what I call the multilayered semiotic channel. Most of Disney's animations function as visual fairy tales, carrying heavy morals and lessons on accepted behavior. Feature-length Disney animations, therefore, are often considered to be entertaining only for the child audience. The studio itself realized this obstacle as early as in the 1930s: during the preparations for the production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), many doubted the success of a feature-length cartoon, claiming that most adults would not be interested (Maltin 53). To overcome this problem, a cohesive script with musical interludes was written and extraneous scenes that could have hindered the flow of the story were omitted, on the one hand (53). On the other hand, Disney's venture was a technological marvel, attracting adults as well. Fifty years later, during the Disney Renaissance, these aspects did not prove sufficient. The constantly developing filmic technologies, computer graphics and realistic visual tools, such as the 3D (adding the dimension of depth to the otherwise two-dimensional visuals) and later IMAX (Image Maximum, large size images with high resolution) technologies were at hand, but significant changes had to be made in the diegesis and in the applied semiotics to attract adult audiences. According to György Endre Szőnyi, films are the semiotically most complex form of *Gesamtkunst*, where textual and visual codes are organically and inseparably intertwined (20). Smaller, independent American animation studios realized the need for extending the targeted demographic and started to extend the semiotic channel of animated films, thus yielding to the incorporation of textual and visual codes comprehensible primarily to adult audiences. According to Booker, who calls this practice "double-coding," animations with cultural allusions and sly jokes are "(mercifully) designed to offer a certain amount of

entertainment to the adults who spend so much time watching the movies with kids" (Booker 49–50). I extend Booker's "double-coding" because I believe this practice is carried out on various levels of signification, not only on two. Moreover, I am of the opinion that the extension of the semiotic channel offers more possibilities than just being merciful to parents. First, by producing films that truly entertain various age-groups of audiences, the turnout at the cinemas is significantly higher, thus increasing the overall predictable financial success of the animations. Second, through addressing different audiences, morals and ideologies of various natures can be conveyed through the cinematic language. Based on Christian Metz's concept, Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis define the cinematic language as "a set of messages whose matter of expression consists of five tracks or channels: moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, and writing. Thus cinema is a language in the sense that it is a techno-sensorial unity graspable in perceptual experience" (37). In other words, image, dialogue, noise, music and written materials–the five tracks–and cinema's audiovisual nature "authorize an infinitely richer *combinatoire* of syntactic and semantic possibilities" (Stam 12, *emphasis in original*). The multilayered semiotic channel employs these tracks to communicate different ideas to different age-groups at the very same time: elements of subversion, for example, can be incorporated in a way so that it would be decodable only for those possessing the necessary intellectual or cultural. In *Toy Story*, for example, Mr. Potatohead's psychoanalytic diagnosis of Woody's jealousy of the technologically more equipped Buzz Lightyear is "laser envy" (Lasseter 0:18:16), which refers to Freud's concept of the penis envy. This reading is unattainable for children but comprehensible for adults who know what penis envy is. When Lightning McQueen in *Cars* (2006) asks: "Hey, do I spy a little pinstriping tattoo back there?" (Lasseter and Ranft 0:53:41), a close-up shows the trunk of the female-characterized Porsche Carrera, Sally, making the romantic/sexual overtone of the scene obvious. In this case, the dialogue track well as the image track articulate the subversive cultural phenomenon of the lower back tattoo, creating this reference unambiguous for more age-groups than the example before.

With the creative and sophisticated usage of the tracks, animations can provide different sets of signs, making up various allegories for expected social behavior. As I discuss it later, *Monsters, Inc*. (2001), for example, makes excellent use of the multilayered semiotic channel: the movie tells a story to children about why one should be brave and not be afraid of monsters, but at the same time, the story functions as an allegory for expected environmentally conscious behavior in times of energy crisis. This reading is mostly coded in

the image track, repeatedly showing visual references to items of collective knowledge accessible primarily to adults (for example, the manipulated trefoil symbol or the reference to the US Environmental Protection Agency).

In a nutshell, the multilayered semiotic channel enables the (hidden) incorporation of certain values and ideas that has not been present in the normative, classic Disney story-telling. As Booker points out, with the application of this practice, animations have become more entertaining for adults (Booker 49), but its real essence lies in its function to harbor new topics and ideologies. The multilayered semiotic channel of the analyzed animations makes the subtle or open presence of environmental and corporeal issues possible. Animations produced by the Walt Disney Studios started the extension of the semiotic channel considerably later than its–not so influential–competitors. DreamWorks's *Shrek* (2001) is often quoted to have become a cult movie because it makes perfect use of the multilayered semiotic channel by entertaining children and adults as well (Booker 49) and making "obvious reference[s] to the Disney Corporation and ideological world to critique and question it" (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 211). Focusing on the two productive decades of the Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios, I observe how they apply the semiotic channel to convey new ideas and subversive cultural items. Needless to say, Pixar, being a younger studio, which started producing feature-length animations out of resistance to the tradition created by Disney animations, makes more use of the multilayered semiotic channel and is bold enough to touch on the issue of subversion.

2.3. Pixar Animation Studios

The history of Pixar Animation Studios goes back to the computer graphic division of Lucasfilm Ltd. (the film production company established George Lucas in 1971 ["Pixar History–Introduction"]). The division–Industrial Light and Magic (ILM)–was responsible for the special effects in the *Star Wars* films, presenting the latest developments of technology (Booker 77). In 1984, the division employed John Lasseter, who had been previously working at Walt Disney Studios. Two year later, however, George Lucas sold the division due to financial problems to Steve Jobs, who re-named it "Pixar" and appointed Ed Catmull chief technical officer (Catmull was vice president of ILM). Pixar started with the production of animated TV commercials (which supported its financial independence) and short films (which were rather pieces of art). In the same year–1986–Pixar released its first short film: *Luxo Jr.* features two desk lamps, one bigger and one smaller, playing with a ball. Right at

the outset, the studio–with this short animation–introduces a unique combination of innovative computer-generated images and deep, personified characterization of inanimate objects. *Luxo Jr*. became such an important milestone and symbol of the studio that the character of the desk lamp re-appears in the logo of the studio before every Pixar production. After several successful short films, "Pixar and Walt Disney Studios team[ed] up to develop, produce and distribute up to three feature-length animated films" ("Pixar History–Introduction"), the first of which was to be *Toy Story*. In 2006, the two studios drew their relationship tighter: in an all-stock transaction The Walt Disney Company purchased Pixar for US$ 7.4 billion (de Wit and Meyer 21). By 2006, Pixar produced seven computer-generated blockbusters, with whose success Disney could not keep up. In fear of Pixar being purchased by someone else, Disney was forced to pay a high price (stocks as well as personnel agreements) for it (La Monica). Through the deal, Pixar Chairman and CEO, Steve Jobs, was appointed board member of Disney, while Ed Catmull (Pixar's president) and John Lasseter (top creative executive) took over Disney's animation studios (de Wit and Meyer 21). The acquisition of Pixar, however, did not mean its merge into Disney: Jobs and Disney CEO, Robert Iger, agreed upon Pixar being managed independently (Holson) and leaving the company's name and location untouched ("Agreement"). With Pixar remaining independent and Jobs, Catmull and Lasseter gaining influential positions, Disney animations started to incorporate thematic, characterizational and generic tendencies typical to Pixar animations. Pixar's *mise-en-scène* was consciously developed against Disney's from the studio's very first feature-length animation, *Toy Story*.

The release of *Toy Story* in 1995 was not only a milestone in the history of Pixar Animation Studios but also in the history of American animations. The dream of Ed Catmull was to make the first completely computer-animated feature film (Capodagli Ch. 4, location 349, par. 2); an ambition and venture very similar to Walt Disney's to produce the first animated feature film, which was to become *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 (Maltin 53). According to M. Keith Booker, "*Toy Story* is a revolutionary film, historically comparable, in many ways, to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in the way it introduced an entirely new form to feature film" (78). Besides the application of the sophisticated CGI technology in a completely computer-animated feature film, the directors and the storyboard employed several unorthodox approaches in *Toy Story*, most of which they keep applying in their feature-length films produced thereafter.

In the short documentary *Toy Story Filmmakers' Reflect* (2005), John Lasseter (director), Andrew Stanton (screenplay), Pete Docter (supervising animator) and Joe Ranft

(story supervisor) reflect on the production of *Toy Story*. When the concept of two rivaling toys came up, they decided against making yet another fairy tale:

> We sat around and said: We don't want nine songs, […] we don't want a boring main character. No songs, no "I want", no villain. […] You know, all this stuff's become synonymous with animation in the popular culture. An animation? Oh, it must be a musical and it must be a fairy tale. For me [Stanton], that was the biggest motivator: through all the hard times, I just wanted to *prove that theory wrong*. […] You can truly entertain audiences, adults as well as kids. (Butler 0:00:56–0:01:38, *emphasis mine*)

There is, however, more to that. The postmodern generation of animators, story-writers and directors at Pixar changed the whole *mise-en-scène* so characteristic to Disney animations. The aesthetics of classical Disney animation is redefined by the exclusive application of CG imagery, the lively pop cultural and filmic intertextuality, the generic plurality and by the introduction of object-characters. Most importantly, Pixar animations avoid using magic. Instead, the introduction of technology as the source of contemporary modern magic becomes prevalent. Technology is the catalyst for placing the stories in urban settings (often resembling American suburbs and cities) rather than in an environment close to nature, typical to Disney animations. Pixar movies lead the audience into a scenery which is reminiscent of the living conditions of Americans and Europeans, thus offering better possibilities for contextualization for the audience. In such a context, references to extradiegetic, popular cultural elements fit smoothly, serving as an essential tool to engage the audience. At the same time, these references also enable their movies to have a multilayered semiotic channel: Pixar films are produced in a way that they address and appeal to various age-groups of audiences. Intertextual references, the application of well-known pop songs instead of original scores, the plurality of film genres within the same animation are just some of the many approaches with which movies are made appealing to various age groups. Pixar animations, in this sense, redefine the Disney aesthetics.

The exclusive application of the latest computer-graphic advances, in itself, celebrates technology over the 'natural,' hand-made animating techniques. Pixar breaks away from the aesthetics of classical animating, mostly established and spread through the global distribution of Disney animations. The innovative technology enables the introduction of feature-film-like action, and the shots, rhythms and editing techniques typical to them (Gyárfás). Needless to say, this visual potential leads to the animated representation of various genres normally associated with feature films and not with animations. Pixar is

perfor*mative* in the sense that no animations of the studio follow the genre of musical, which is the genre traditionally associated with classical Disney animations.

The urbanized landscape and the presence of technology open the animations up to new interpretations of contemporary environmental issues. Disney (here: non-Pixar) animations have always adored natural sceneries, connoting ideas of home, shelter, childhood and happiness. Few Disney animations take place among urban settings, and if so, they show little resemblance to contemporary American cities or households. Pixar animations, on the other hand, tend to place their stories in urbanized settings, more precisely in sceneries which resemble the American suburbs, American metropolises or capital cities of Western cultures. Besides forming subtle critique on various environmental problems in the city, Pixar animations repeatedly address the negative impact of consumerist practices and that of throw-away culture.

Probably the most significant change brought about by the introduction of technology is a new dimension of characterization: focusing inanimate objects instead of on human and animal characters allows Pixar animations to create new subject categories in which objects are endowed with agency. The studio's policy of applying mass-produced (and often mass-mediated) commodities as characters is such an endless source of inspiration that six out of their so-far twelve feature-length animations star objects: *Toy Story* (1995), *Toy Story 2* (1999), *Cars* (2006), *WALL-E* (2008), *Toy Story 3* (2010), *Cars 2* (2011) are all centered around objects from our everyday lives. Exactly because of this play with an object-becoming-subject, many Pixar animations have a narrative that focuses on the poststructuralist understanding of the unfixed, ever-changing subject. The narration swivels around the process of subject formation, making the character of the villain unnecessary. The typical binarism of good/evil originating from fairy tales and channeled through Disney animations is ruled out once subjects are envisioned as processes and not as fixed categories. Moreover, Pixar seems to interrogate essential binarisms. *Toy Story 3* (2010), for example, successfully deconstructs the masculine man vs. feminine woman dichotomy, by characterizing Barbie and Ken, the vinyl encapsulations of expected rigid gender roles in a heterosexual relationship, in a strikingly subversive manner: Ken is a metrosexual 'softie' having excessively obsessed with clothes, whereas Barbie is sly, intelligent and a cold-heart cross-examiner, putting aside her emotions to make Ken confess about his gang's plan.

According to Bollobás (44), "as self-renewing performative acts, not only do [manifestos] reproduce the originary performative, but also that initial gesture of declaring a position that goes against the accepted or the mainstream." Despite having no written

manifesto, Pixar Animation Studios continually reproduces this position, inasmuch as Pixar films keep being made out of resistance to Disney clichés, formal as well as contextual. All the aspects listed above are evidence to prove how the studio proclaims difference against mainstream Disney ideals of animation-making: thus, Pixar's "manifesto" is actually the animations themselves, in which the performative language used for self-definition is the animated visuals and the Pixar *mise-en-scène*. Pixar's self-definition out of resistance to the mainstream Disney animations was a performative act in 1995. Pixar's soaring and Disney's only moderate successes before the turn of the century, however, accelerated the end of the Disney Renaissance. By the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, Disney (i.e., non-Pixar) animations started to employ concepts and practices typical to Pixar mostly because of the studio's constant success and due to the fact that the leading figures of Pixar (Jobs, Catmull and Lasseter) has been give active positions in the Walt Disney Company after 2006. In other words, what was subversive in 1995 has become accepted, expected and rather normative in Disney animations as well.

3

The Animation Macrocosm: The Environmental Turn

Ever since Snow White (1937) found shelter in the forest among the animals, Disney feels just as comfortable in nature as the young lady running scared away from the Queen. Nature is Bambi's home (1942), Peter Pan's Neverland (1953), Aurora's hideaway (*Sleeping Beauty*, 1959) and Robin Hood's headquarters (1973): nature has many forms in Disney animations. Most often it is the mere natural habitat that serves as settings: the forest, the jungle, the sea or the Savannah, for example. However, nature does not have to be the place of origin of the characters: danger, fear and conflicts often chase the protagonists out of the castles, away from the cities or far from the monotonous every-days–to nature. Nature has proven to be a home, a shelter, a place of love, family and friends: Disney has taught us to associate positive ideas with nature.

In this chapter, the role and representation of nature is of primary importance. I presume a message on environmental awareness and on ethical behavior towards nature in most Disney films related to the environment–within some limitations. As previously stated, the scope of my research is the Disney animated feature film corpus produced between 1990 and 2010. Within these twenty years, a moderate but clearly detectable lesson has been taught on environmental awareness and environmental ethics. I suppose that this phenomenon is intertwined with the practical tendency to set animations in the scene of an American metropolis or its suburbia. This urbanizing process–first appearing in the mid-1990s–yields way to numerous environmental issues related to city lifestyle. Topics like water pollution, nuclear energy, cars and the highway system, have not been addressed before in Disney animations. This fact does not mean, however, that animations in rural settings, where man-made technology is not present, would have no environmental message. These animations harbor ideas about the inherent values of non-humans, the relationship of the hunter and the prey and also about evolutionary theories on natural selection.

The "environmental turn" brought about by the urbanization of animations and by the introduction of technology as a modern alternative for magic gains its legitimacy from various sources. I focus on three of them in this chapter: First, due to wider media publicity starting from the 1970s (Yin 71; Friedman 187), global environmental problems (Bhopal,

Exxon Valdez, Chernobyl, environment pollution scandals after the fall of the Iron Curtain, and many more.) cannot be kept secret anymore. Environmental problems and teachings on environmental awareness appear symptomatically in Disney animations. Second, urbanization is tightly related to our contemporary consumerist practices. When referring to this lifestyle, animations touch on the environmental relevance, that is, what effect consumerist society has on the environment. Third, environmental philosophy *and ethics* as branch of philosophy have been present in the academic discourse since the 1970s (Jamieson xv). Incorporating environmental issues in animations is a long-awaited practical reaction of the Disney studio to the acceptance of already existing theories.

I would like to underline the fact that messages on environmental awareness are not the central moral teachings of these animations by far. The main themes and morals harbored in Disney animations are often claimed to be tied to mainstream conservative American values (Bell, Haas und Sells; Booker; Ward), most often walking along the lines of acceptable and deviant behavior and virtue and vice. Environmental topics –especially those related to urbanized lifestyle–are hardly ever discussed extensively in Disney animations: they are often referred to with just one or two scenes. The visualization of these matters helps the viewers understand the message although they are still too rare to place environmental issues in the center. Nevertheless, they are present in these animations and their occurrences are slowly growing in number and in depth. I presume three reasons for this hesitation to represent environmental issues more openly. First, Disney animations generally open up very slowly to new, non-conservative, non-individualistic ideas. They "generally reinforce […] the mainstream values of American capitalism" (Booker xii). Environmentalism often challenges these values. Therefore environmental issues are only partially and fragmentarily entertained. Second, environmental problems typically do not have a happy ending–at least not in this generation. It is extremely rare for any Hollywood animation studio to alter the compulsory happy ending in order to highlight the moral message (a notable example is *Pocahontas* [1995], which does not make it possible for John Smith and Pocahontas to fulfill their love story because the postcolonial lesson is in the focal point). Third, Disney is the number one animation studio in the United States, and–as mentioned before (Chapter 2.2)–has always echoed the mainstream American political ideas. Most proposed solution to environmental problems go against American political and economic interests; therefore much propaganda made for environmental awareness would probably cause discrepancy between the message in the animations and the actual American political practice.

The moderate discussion of environmental issues in animations is in accordance with the theoretical tendencies of enlightened anthropocentrism, a branch of environmental ethics. Enlightened anthropologists insist on the primary or central position of human beings' needs, but they attribute a moral duty towards the environment as well. In other words, there is no need for a non-anthropocentric (i.e., ecocentric) environmental theory, as long as our pragmatic deeds are done in agreement with our environmental moral duty (Brennan und Lo). Following the spectrum of environmental ideologies envisioned by Corbett (see Chapter 3.1), I place most Disney animations around the conservationist-preservationist stage, keeping in mind that occasionally they entertain ideas of ethics and value-driven ideologies.

In the following subchapters, I focus on the various tendencies of communicating environmental messages in the media, the cultural, social and environmental footprint of the consumerist society, and the presence of environmental ethics and philosophy in the academic discourse. I presume that the symptomatic mapping of environmental issues in Disney animations is tightly connected to these three topics.

3.1. Triggers of the Environmental Turn

Several sources form our environmental attitudes. Corbett categorizes them into three groups (24–25): (1) the historical and cultural context of our lives; (2) the individual contribution (direct experience, often with the guidance of significant adults); and (3) the sentimental attachment that gives a sense and meaning to a place for us. For example, we often experience a disturbing feeling when we hear about the reconstruction of the district of our home town and we even feel a strong emotion of loss if something happens to "my mountains", "my river" or to "my tree". Being emotionally connected to our environment, however, is often limited to those natural entities that we used to "own" in our childhood. Still, other sources broaden this perspective, among which popular culture is one of the most influential.

Meister and Japp in the introduction to their collection *Enviropop: Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture*, draw a picture of a typical day of a middle-class American family: no part of the day goes by without the family members being exposed to environmental issues (3). *The Weather Channel* informs them about the local forecast and about a hurricane approaching the South; the morning news provides a 30 second clip on global warming and a report on local environmentalists. At school, the children take part in a recycling project; the geography assignment is completed with photos from old *National*

Geographic magazines. Advertising and programming on TV present the environment as a backdrop for human activity. Meister and Japp claim that for non-experts, "knowledge and understandings of the environment are constructed and maintained via a constant stream of language and images derived from popular culture" (3). As the examples show, mediated news reports, literature and entertainment are strong forces in the shaping of environmental understandings. This permeation of environmental issues in wider media outlets pushes the envelope far enough so that they begin to appear symptomatically in Disney animations. In order to explore this argument, I focus now on the power of media attention to construct our understandings of the environment.

Corbett provides a short history of environmental issues being presented in the media (220). Media started devoting considerable attention to the environment first only in the 1970s. Since then, environmental issues have never been evenly present in the American media, which has depended on public interest and events, and economic conditions. Corbett points out the interesting fact that in 1989 (the year of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill), the total news coverage of environmental issues on the three major TV networks reached almost 800 minutes; this coverage dropped to 195 minutes by 1998. There was a single "come-back" in the first quarter of 2001 but after that, media attention was diverted by the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Sharon Friedman (to whom Corbett refers in her summary) discusses the thematic and quality changes in environmental journalism in her essay. She claims that in the beginning (that is, the 1970s and 80s) a compelling story was some kind of an environmental catastrophe or tragedy that stirred up the readers. In the third decade of environmental journalism (1990s), however, attention turned to more complex, "neither visible, nor tangible" (Yin 71) issues that needed in-depth research and investigation, such as "particulate air pollution, climate change, endocrine disruption, [...] land management, sustainability, new technologies such as hybrid cars, overfishing, invasive species, energy efficiency, farm practices and suburban sprawl " (Friedman 191–192). Even though Friedman seems to appreciate these changes, she points out that environmental journalism still fails to focus on the root causes, such as consumption patterns, demographic and population trends and land use patterns (193).

Concerning the manner in which environmental news and messages reach their audience, Friedman observes a disturbing (but definitely not so uncommon) journalistic tendency: with the appearance of longer, in-depth investigative environmental stories, journalists experience a pressure to find sufficient space for their stories in various forms of

media. Competing for news holes (given space for articles in newspapers and coverage in news, always depending on the demand for, importance and urgency of other articles to be published), however, is not the only constraint on news production. Robert Cox lists five constraints that journalists have to take into consideration if they want their (environment-related) articles to be published: (1) gatekeeping; (2) newsworthiness; (3) norms of objectivity and balance; (4) media political economy; (5) media frames (158-9).

Gatekeeping is a typical practice in newsrooms: certain individuals (mostly editors and media managers) decide whether given stories should or should not be covered. This decision depends on the interests of the newspaper or television network, on the news value of the story (see details below) and on conventional news format, but it highly depends on the reporters' background knowledge and training as well. In environmental journalism, this is an influential factor because the rising awareness of the public in these issues calls for increased technical accuracy, which most reporters do not possess (159–160).

The newsworthiness of a story refers to its effectiveness on the readers or viewers. According to Yopp and McAdams's study, there are a number of criteria that define the value of news, for example, its prominence, timeliness, proximity, impact, magnitude, conflict, oddity and emotional impact (Cox 160). In Anderson's understanding, environmental journalism features stories which are event-centered, characterized by strong visual elements and closely tied into a 24-hour daily circle (Cox 161). These criteria are not difficult to meet when it comes to covering an environmental catastrophe, in which, technically, all these pre-requisites can be addressed. In the case of unobtrusive, complex environmental issues (for example, air pollution, climate change, etc.), however, journalists have to put effort in applying most of these technical tools to provide their story with newsworthiness–this practice can lead to unnecessary over-dramatization.

Norms of objectivity and balance are most probably the oldest factor of all. Objectivity refers to the expectation of an unbiased reporting, which tends to be particularly difficult in environmental journalism. A story on deforestation is biased right at the outset, when this story has been chosen and not others. Moreover, its framing and the chosen sources interviewed go against the idea of unbiased reporting (Cox 165–166). Balancing different views is a practice when issues are controversial or the reporter does not possess sufficient expertise to judge conflicting claims. Balancing is carried out by quoting both sides or multiple sources. In environmental journalism, however, it has been observed that balancing often leads to rather biased coverage. When scientific findings are discussed, balancing them

with skepticism tend to bring about more uncertainty: a form of informational bias (166–167).

Media political economy refers to the practice when the owners of newspapers or television networks influence the content of the articles, programs and coverage out of economic interests (159). These interests may not be outspoken, but they can put a pressure on media managers and editors when it comes to opting for or against a given topic "in ways that ensure a favorable political climate for business concerns" (159). This type of ideological influence is not unfamiliar in the film industry, as mentioned in Chapter 2.2 I consider this point worth mentioning because I presume a "low profile" in Disney animations concerning certain environmental problems and issues. Disney, being the most influential American animation studio, advertises ideas that do not hurt the business interests of the American government, or ideas the discussion of which would not create discrepancy with the American political and economic trends. The environmental pollution and destruction caused by oil spills (for example, the Exxon Valdez catastrophe near the coast of Alaska in 1989, or the recent BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010) have not been mentioned, neither verbally nor visually, in Disney animations. One of the supposedly many reasons for it is that the American economy seriously depends on the oil business and all its proceeds–an interest that could be hurt by an oppositional cultural campaign (Borthaiser 81).

Framing is a method to make a story more easily interpretable for the reader and viewers by using different semantic elements (headlines, quotes, leads, visual representations, and narrative structures). All these elements make up a coherent whole that help people relate the new information to familiar ideas. Different frames can lead to different understandings and interpretations, as "framing is the subjective act of selecting and ordering objective facts" (Corbett 236). Frames, therefore, focus on specific values and underline given facts, thus influencing the opinion of the audience.

The fight for news holes, gatekeeping, newsworthiness, the norms of objectivity and balance, media political economy and media frames bring about a stylistic change in articles, as journalists tend to over-dramatize issues to make sure that their stories would appear in the newspaper or in the news (Friedman 176). This tone extends to non-news entertainment: Iván Győrffy says that cable channels such as "*National Geographic*, *Spektrum* [Hungarian cable channel broadcasting documentaries partly about natural science] and *Discovery* always show the world in the state of the last judgment" and what is presented is nothing else but "extreme eco-horror" (13, *translation mine*). It is understandable that such effective over-dramatizations have seeped through to Hollywood and appeared in animated and non-

animated films as well. Content and tone, however, are not the only tools responsible for creating a sense of eco-horror.

Many theoreticians working in the field of media and environmental studies agree that agenda-setting is most effective in presenting environmental issues in the news. Agenda-setting is a theory in media studies that suggests that media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about (Cohen 13). In other words, the more often people meet an issue in the news, the more importance, urgency or primacy people attribute to this topic (Corbett 218). Robert Cox finds evidence to the fact that agenda-setting is particularly effective in communicating unobtrusive issues (Ader 300), meaning that media can enhance "the public's perceptions of risk and danger from environmental sources" (Cox 175).

Tendentiously, environmental issues from our 21st century, urban lifestyle appear in Disney animations with just minor comments and in relatively terse length. These issues seem to be present just to give some food for thought, to emphasize their unquestionable presence in the social discourse and to make the audience–consciously or unconsciously–aware of them. In this sense, they seem to function as agenda-setting. Even though I agree with Meister and Japp when they say that most often nature and environment in popular culture are highly utilitarian constructs, highlighting the use value of nature and thus teaching us the practice of consuming nature, my research on Disney feature films just partly shares this view. As outlined above, the analyzed Disney films are divided into two groups: films taking place in rural settings; and films taking place in technology-defined, urban settings. The former harbors environmental ideas and attitudes that bear resemblance to Meister and Japp's point-of-view of nature as a utilitarian construct in popular culture. The second group, i.e., the films in urban settings, tangentially deals with environmental issues brought about by urban lifestyle and the constant development of technology, such as water pollution, chemicals, nuclear energy, renewable energy sources, cars and the highway system, the negative impact of consumerist society on nature, etc. These topics are presented in an agenda-setting fashion: the more often an issue is repeated (mostly visually, seldom verbally), the more probable it is that the audience considers it important. I believe that global environmental problems, having been given wider media publicity (most often with the technical tool of agenda-setting), symptomatically re-appear in Disney animations in an agenda-setting manner that reminds the audience of the importance of these themes. The constant media presence and the manner in which they report environmental problems are depicted in *Monster, Inc*. (2001) in depth. *Cars* (2006), *Bolt* (2008) and *WALL-E* (2008), point out the influential and often manipulative role of media.

The economical and environmental aspects and consequences of contemporary social practices are most often described in the framework of consumerism. In my argumentation, this is the second "pillar" that has brought about a change in the discussion of the environment in Disney animations. Consumerism goes beyond the economic term of consumption, which refers to the individual act of exchanging goods and/or services between the producer and the consumer: "consumption in economics is a simple, individual, readily quantified process of satisfying well-defined needs" (Goodwin 1). Consumerism grows out from practices of consumption but additionally, it refers to the prevailing identity-seeking and identity-constructing desires of consumers realized in the ever more frequent act of purchasing goods and services. In Raymond Benton's understanding, "consumerism is the acceptance of consumption as the way to self-development, self-realization, and self-fulfillment" (qtd. in Goodwin 3). To propel the cycle of consumption, marketing strategies aim at making consumers discontent with the product that they have already purchased, thus appealing "to the individual's fears of being "less than" without the product" (Corbett 97). This idea is nothing new: in 1899, Thorstein Veblen described the practice of conspicuous consumption: "Since the consumption of these more excellent goods is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific; and conversely, the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit" (45). In other words, by purchasing commodities, we additionally purchase the belief that by possessing these items, we re-enforce or improve our social position. The identity-forming power of purchasing goods and services, therefore, is a key trigger for the continuous and vehement flow of consumption, which is the basis of our consumer society. Consuming has become such an influential practice in our lives that, according to Thomas Hine, we started to live in a "buyosphere:"

> We come into the buyosphere with a mixture of attitudes and emotions. We are serious and lighthearted, sensitive and greedy, thrifty and competitive. The buyosphere is not a civic space, but it is our chief arena for expression, the place where we learn most about who we are, both as people and as individuals. (qtd. in Corbett 93)

The philosophical reasoning for this immense consumption is best explained by Slavoj Žižek's concept of repressive desublimation. Žižek claims that the relationship between the three parts of the human psyche, as Freud imagined them, has gone through a significant change. In the traditional understanding, the Id contains all our urgent desires, fears and wishes; the Superego dictates the rules of conformation to the social law; and the Ego

balances between the social law and the rushes of the Id. According to Žižek, however, in post-liberal societies the social ideological commandment has lately stopped telling what one should or should not do. Therefore, the Ego loses its function as a mediator, once the Id and the Superego have the same goal. The single, fundamental message, the new social commandment is: "Enjoy yourself!" (16). In other words, it is in the ideology that you can have fun, better to say, the one and only law is to satisfy your desires as soon as you can. To name this short-circuiting of the psyche, Žižek coins the paradoxical term "repressive de-sublimation." In a consumer society, the commandment "Enjoy Yourself!" could be translated as "Consume!" The immediate satisfaction of the powerful rush of desire to buy and the constant need to re-assure one's social position by purchasing goods, therefore, result in a society of affluence, in which we buy (unnecessary) commodities in unnecessarily great amounts, and then we throw them away. The general tendency to produce goods with "dynamic obsolescence" (products do not last long and they are less durable) also propels continuous consumption (Corbett 97). Understandably, this practice of preposterous consumerism has an enormous effect on the environment. With the accompanying waste-production, water and air pollution and obtrusive landscape management, consumerist practices are often considered to be one of the major root causes of today's environmental crisis.

Consumerism can be deduced from the social, intellectual and economic changes which came about in industrial societies. Tóth argues that fast population growth and the massive appearance of science, technology and industry (signifying the advance of modernity) led to the industrial revolution in the 18th century that also meant a significant intellectual turn concerning the relationship of man and nature ("Social" 150). In agricultural-farming communities, before the appearance of industrial societies, nature and man were in balance. Man was not defenseless against the powers of nature, but he did not rule and exploit it either, as became typical in industrial societies. The land and the animals were natural entities in the proprietorship of the man, but nature was considered to be a fellow worker of the farmer, both being a creation of God (149–150). In industrial societies, however, nature is forced into an inferior position, serving and being exploited by man. The philosophical reasoning, mostly originating from Locke and Descartes, places man above nature, thus supporting his right to rule and (ab)use it. Nature becomes detached from man, it "is always mediated by some kind of machine" and it is deprived of its sacred and intrinsic value (151–152). This mentality is pervasive in the 20th as well as in the 21st century even though

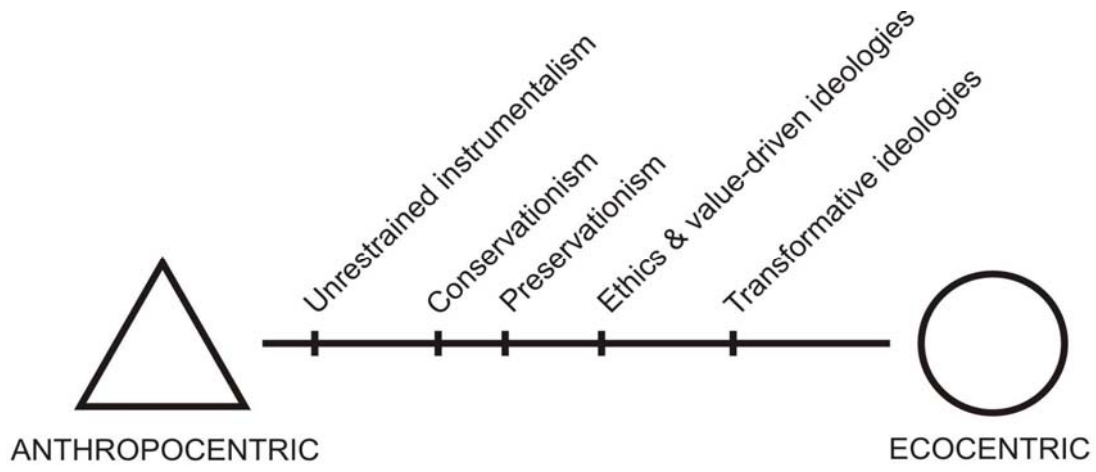
environmental movements and organizations have made people aware of current environmental issues.

Consumerist tendencies started to appear decisively in Disney animations from *Toy Story* (1995) on. The urban settings offer a suitable framework to build contemporary practices of consumerism in the animations. The animations, however, tend to draw a disapproving picture about these practices and support the idea of keeping goods instead of throwing them away. The representation of the collateral environmental problems is not as prevalent as that of consumerist practices but they are significantly growing in number and in depth. *Cars* (2006) depicts mega-corporations and banks in a rather negative manner and underlines the importance of small retailers. Intrusive landscape management and the US interstate system are also looked upon disapprovingly. *WALL-E* (2008), for example, envisions the environmental destruction of the Earth due to excessive consumerism and waste-production.

Besides the wider media publicity of global environmental problems and the role of consumerist society on the natural environment, trends of academic environmental philosophy appear in Disney animations. Academic courses in environmental philosophy have been offered since the 1970s in North America, Great-Britain and Australia (Jamieson xv). The increased interest in environmental issues, thus, emerged in the press and in university lecture rooms at the same time. The place of environmental philosophy within philosophy and various educational fields is often debated. As Tóth points out, environmental philosophy is an interdisciplinary field, bordering natural sciences, social sciences and humanities; therefore, environmental philosophy tries to offer a relatively new, holistic and synthetic approach to current environmental questions, issues and problems. Some of the most central questions environmental philosophy focuses on are: the relationship of environment and society; the role of morality in this relationship; the nature of the environmental crisis and the role of the ideology of modernism in it, etc. Tóth claims that no matter how debated its legitimacy and importance is, environmental philosophy is indispensible because it can provide answers to all the questions mentioned above in its totality, whereas other sciences are much too specialized and split up into many different disciplines (*Fejezetek* 7–13).

Approaches within environmental philosophy range from anthropocentric to ecocentric. Anthropocentric ideologies place humans and human needs and interests above all other creatures. In other words, humans are on the top of the hierarchy, and other living and non-living natural creatures exist only to support human welfare. Only human beings have

intrinsic values; everything else has only a use-value (instrumental value). Ecocentric ideologies, on the other hand, consider humans part of an ecological network, in which no single part can have more value than any other parts, and no parts can have more importance than the whole. Both living and nonliving elements are assigned intrinsic value: that is, people, animals, plants, living and nonliving beings are important and valuable because they *are* and not because of what they are worth. Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, however, are not binary oppositions. There are several steps of variation between the two, establishing a spectrum. The spectrum of environmental ideologies has been thoroughly discussed by Corbett (26–56), who imagines five intermediate stages between the poles of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism:



According to Corbett, unrestrained instrumentalism is an ideology that is built upon the idea that human beings stand above all other living and non-living creatures. Humans have an unlimited and immediate claim on nature and on its resources to fulfill their needs and desires. This idea forms the basis of the "typical American beliefs and practices regarding oil and gas (despite the increasing impacts from global warming) […] and the typical land use practices" (30–31). From a philosophical perspective, René Descartes's theories on mechanism and dualism can be put in this ideological category. Tóth introduces his chapter on Descartes by claiming that his dualistic, mechanical universe depreciated and instrumentalized nature. By separating the world into two substances (*res extensa* and *res cogito*), Descartes lifts the rational human beings out from among other natural living and nonliving entities. At the same time, he assigns mechanical attributes to all other non-human entities, making them recognizable and calculable; therefore, these entities stay under the rational dominion of human beings (23–27). Humans' rule over nature is what Tóth calls "the

fulfillment of the Descartes-project" (88). Ground-breaking though they may have been at their time, Descartes's philosophy and the mechanical concept on nature have been criticized by numerous environmental philosophers as the derailment of the relationship between humans and the natural environment.

Conservationism, the next step in the spectrum, remains human-centered inasmuch as it has the humans' use of nature as its focal point. Unlike unrestrained instrumentalism, however, conservationism advertises limits and restraints on the use of resources so as to make it possible for future generations to fulfill their needs and desires. Conservationism is therefore a "wise" ideology, aiming at fulfilling Bentham and Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle". It is

> the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quality and quantity (Mill 41).

This utilitarian idea of the Greatest Happiness Principle is translated in environmental philosophy as maximizing the utilitarian (use) value of resources through maximizing their human use: that is, we conserve resources not only for our needs but for those of the future generations as well. Corbett collects some everyday environmental conservation methods that are based on this idea: protecting topsoil through contour plowing and other practices; lowering the thermostat as wise energy use; using mass transit to conserve air quality; practices related to recycling and sustainable development, and so forth. Corbett also points out the fact that these ideas and the related deeds do not aim at changing individual and institutional lifestyle at all; what is more, they support its continuation: these are only minor actions to sustain future resources for future consumption (Corbett 32–33).

Preservationism shares a lot of similarities with conservationism inasmuch as both support the conservation of resources for present and future human use. Preservationism, however, does not focus on the instrumental value of resources but on values related to scientific-ecological, aesthetic and religious terms. These values stay in-between the pure instrumental values and the so-called inherent values, the respect of which leads towards the ecocentric end of the scale of environmental ideologies. The scientific-ecological values of the environment are simply the facts that it functions as a storehouse of data, gene pools and undiscovered medicines, and that the environment as one whole ecosystem has the ability to produce game and nongame animals and to regulate climate (35–37). This power of the

ecosystem (especially that of regulating climate) is in the focal point of James Lovelock's Gaia theory. Lovelock postulates that the Earth functions as a self-regulating whole ("she" is called Gaia) that always creates and maintains the circumstances necessary through homeostasis. The living and non-living elements of the biosphere, the atmosphere, the cryosphere, the lithosphere and the hydrosphere are always in an interaction with each other. Hence, it can regulate the climate and keep it on an optimal level. No matter what deteriorating effects may reach Gaia, she will always repel the attack, even if it means the complete loss of numerous species. Therefore, humans' deeds do not threaten Gaia's life but that of mammals and humans. For this reason, environmental protection and the protection of biodiversity actually serve the protection of general human interests (Tóth 102–107). Lovelock's Gaia is named after the Greek goddess and thus the theory can be related to the scientific-ecological values of the environment as well as to the religious values (see more on the Gaia theory in Chapter 5).

Preservationism also respects the religious value of the wilderness, as it is often referred to as a sacred, holy place that can serve as a venue for encountering the holy. The aesthetic value of nature is associated with the concept of it as a place of wonder, awe and beauty, and in other aspects, a place of escape, solitude and renewal (Corbett 35–36). These aspects of nature are often entertained in Disney animations, as they often present the natural environment as a place of security, of escape or of a transcendental encounter (a fitting example is *Pocahontas* (1995), in which Grandmother Willow represents the spiritual and transcendental role of nature).

Unrestrained instrumentalism, conservationism and preservationism are–to weakening degrees–anthropocentric ideologies. Ethics and value-driven ideologies and transformative ideologies are, however, rather ecocentric thoughts, which go beyond resources' use value (i.e., how profitable they are to humans in fulfilling their needs and interests). The basic concept of these ideologies is that all living (and non-living) natural creatures possess an inherent, intrinsic value, which does not depend on whether an entity is beneficial, useless or harmful to humans. Anthropocentric ideas cannot account for why torturing animals is a bad deed if it has no negative consequences to people. Ethics and value-driven ideologies and transformative ideologies, on the other hand, focus on the inherent values of entities, and thus they can discuss issues like this from a different platform. If all nonhuman entities are endowed with inherent values, similarly to human beings, all creatures are valued enough to make humans have moral duties towards them (37). Here I am able to provide only a general sketch of these ideologies; for more in-depth discussions, see (Corbett 37–55). For numerous

reasons, Disney animations do not entertain ideas that are too far-fetched from conservatism (see Chapter 2). For this reason, only some ideas of ethics and value-driven ideologies are touched upon in a vague fashion, and many theories and ideologies that do not belong to the mainstream (American) practice are not mentioned or built into these animations.

Ethics and value-driven ideologies consist of well-known but differing theories and ideas. Granting inherent value to all entities of nature is a common ground of all. These ideas discard the instrumental value of natural living and non-living beings, claiming that all of them are valuable not because of what they are worth but because they simply exist. Endowed with inherent values (just like humans in anthropocentric ideologies), "these entities have a right to exist" (Corbett 37) and humans have moral duties towards them. The difference between various ethics and value-driven ideologies arises from the fact that theoreticians often exclude certain groups of entities or assign more or less value to given groups. Tom Regan, for example, claims that mammals deserve our moral consideration, whereas Peter Singer's preferred group is the vertebrates, as they can feel pain and happiness (following Bentham and Mill's utilitarian concept on pleasure and pain). Kenneth Goodpastor, Paul Taylor and Albert Schweitzer support the idea that life itself is the prerequisite for inherent values; therefore, all the living creatures should be beneficiaries of human moral duties (Tóth 162). Holistic theories–yet again with different emphasis and reasoning–focus on supra-individual levels: on species, on ecosystems, on the biosphere, etc. These ideas, however, are apparently too far-fetched for Disney animations as they are only occasionally mentioned in *Pocahontas* (1995) and in *Brother Bear* (2003), for example.

Corbett claims that "most Americans' ideologies lie on [the anthropocentric] end of the spectrum" (27). I support this opinion in that respect that most environmental ideologies appearing in Disney animations are rather anthropocentric. My argumentation, however, is that there has been a weak swing towards ecocentrism in the last 10-20 years. At present (2011), the environmental ideologies represented in Disney animations appear on the spectrum around conservationism and preservationism, with occasional signs of tendencies towards ethics and value-driven ideologies.

3.2. Rural Visions: *The Lion King* (1994), *Dinosaur* (2000), *Tarzan* (1999), *Brother Bear* (2003) and *Pocahontas* (1995)

This subchapter introduces five Disney animations that take place in non- or less-urban settings. As Disney animations often employ animal-characters endowed with human

characteristics, one has to analyze the virtual environmental matters in these films with some reserve. Lessons on the food chain and on natural selection are found in *The Lion King* (1994) and *Dinosaur* (2000). Both films refer to these phenomena in numerous cases as a basic law of wilderness, although their main storylines prove the exact opposite. The compulsory happy-ending and the fact that animals are generally characterized with human traits often make it troublesome to represent these concepts in their totality. Even though the fight between animals is recursively represented, the actual bloody scenes are hardly ever shown on screen or they are avoided with a sudden flush of unnatural morals arising in one of the animal-characters. The two films focus rather on an ethical attitude towards nature, which is an indirect, multi-layered criticism of our mostly anthropocentric views on nature.

The question of hunter and prey is re-evaluated once humans enter the scene. I have chosen *Tarzan* (1999) and *Brother Bear* (2003) because the former presents animal-hunting from the point-of-view of acquisitiveness, while the latter shows the many-sided nature of hunting and killing animals (for food, in self-defense, out of revenge). Set in an Inuit community, *Brother Bear* relies on the holistic relationship between man and nature but anchors its argument against the unethical deed of killing animals out of spite. Although the animation has its potential to dare further in ethics and value-driven ideologies or even to transformative ideologies, it stops at discussing the moral nature of hunting.

Though I will explore property and land ethics more thoroughly in my chapter, discussing *Pocahontas* (1995), some discussion of the issues is valuable here. In his *Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold introduced theories on the difference between instrumental and inherent values assigned to natural entities. Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, first published in 1949, is a non-fictional selection of sketches about Leopold's experiences as a hunter and later on as an environmentalist. The book was rediscovered in the 1960s, and it served as one of the core readings of conservationists and environmentalists (Jávor). Leopold writes extensively about hunting and its destructive role in the relationship of humans and nature.

Aldo Leopold was working for the Forest Service in the 1920s when he got the assignment to set up a policy on killing off all wolves in the Unites States. This governmental mission aimed at providing more deer for sport- and hobby hunters by exterminating their greatest natural predators: wolves. Leopold agreed to the project, believing at that time that humans have the moral right to change nature for the sake of their well-being and entertainment (Tóth 126). Leopold's "conversion" came about on one of these hunting days:

> My own conviction on this score dates from the day I saw a wolf die. […] In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. […] When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks. We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes–something known only to her and to the mountains. (Leopold 129–130)

This inaccessible knowledge, this deeper meaning owned by the wolf and the mountains made Leopold think that there was something spiritual in nature, binding all living and non-living natural creatures together. The metaphor of the mountain stands for this "deeper meaning" in nature: "Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf" (129). Leopold's romantic-sentimental description of nature shares a lot with the Native American concept of nature, depicted in *Pocahontas* (1995) and in *Brother Bear* (2003). The Leopoldian concept is evidently extended to humans as well, as they are also part of this giant system.

Leopold claims that the world of nature and that of humans cannot be separated because human deeds do have an effect on nature. He imagines wilderness as a complete ecosystem of living and non-living entities, and he assigns inherent values to it. As there are no separate human and natural worlds, humans should integrate into nature, accept its rules and harmonize their needs with the possibilities of the land. Leopold discusses the concept of the Land Pyramid boosted by a fountain of energy, which has been disturbed by the destructive activities of humans. In the Land Pyramid, species with similar eating habits (what they eat) share the same layer: for example, humans are on the same intermediate level with bears, raccoons and squirrels because they all are omnivorous. The Pyramid starts out from the soil and "[e]ach successive layer depends on those below it for food and often for other services, and each in turn furnishes food and services to those above" (Leopold 215). The lines of dependency in the pyramid have changed in the course of time: for example, the soil-oak-deer-Indian chain has been converted to the soil-corn-cow-farmer chain. Because elements of one chain can be elements of other chains at the same time, the structure of the Pyramid is fairly complex. That is the reason co-operation and competition among the diverse parts are essential. This delicate mechanism has been disturbed with the invention of tools that make humans able to "make changes of unprecedented violence, rapidity, and scope" (217). The energy circuits are disturbed on several levels due to various human activities. The composition of the world's fauna has been heavily influenced by the fact that humans killed off larger predators, thus making food chains shorter. Wild species have been moved to new

habitats after they were replaced with domesticated species indigenous to other parts of the world. The fertility of the soil, which is the root of the energy-flow, has been depleted due to the excessive erosion, overdrafts on the soil and the domestication of numerous species. Water pollution and the regulation of water flow have direct effects on the flora and fauna. As early as in 1949, Leopold pointed out the dangers of transportation: "plants or animals grown in one region are now consumed and returned to the soil in another" (217).

Soil and land and their exploitation are therefore central to Leopold's theory. They are, however, also tightly bound to human interests and legal regulations. Land as property, and often as a source of income is at the mercy of the owner's economic and financial interest. Dealing with property is not a question of morality, and it entails "privileges but not obligations" (Leopold 203). Leopold discusses the possibility of re-interpreting the notion of property in relation to land but soon realizes that proprietorship is something that an anthropocentric society cannot do without. Moreover, "most members of the land community [that] have no economic value [are…] threatened, and if we happen to love [them], we invent subterfuges to give [them] economic importance" (210). In other words, economically valuable entities are more protected than those that are economically weak. Even though privately owned lands are often exploited and highly formed by the owner, they still receive more care than those belonging to no one.

Leopold concludes that the concept of proprietorship cannot and–in the long run–should not be taken away or reconsidered, as it is still a better framework for land use (even with all its negative aspects) than land use in an open-access fashion. For this reason, land ethic–a voluntary act of conservation of lands–could be the only possible way to find a balance and to "assign more obligation to the private landowner" (213).

I consider Leopold's observations and ideas indispensable in discussing Disney animations because the phenomena of hunting (*Tarzan*, *Brother Bear*), the Land Pyramid (*The Lion King*, *Dinosaur*) and proprietorship (*Pocahontas*) are recurring topics in these films. Moreover, Leopold's theories have been fairly influential in American intellectual history (similarly to those of Henry David Thoreau or Ralph Waldo Emerson), therefore it is legitimate to apply his ideas in the further discussions.

The attachment to the wild in Disney animations has been present from the very beginning of the studio. The pastoral depiction of the natural environment as ideal place for human beings, where peace and shelter is offered, was first portrayed in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The pastoral mode, in David S. Whitley's argumentation, is one of the key tools of drawing attention to current environmental issues:

> The representation of an ideal form of human relationships within nature, far from being simply nostalgic, may become an oblique way of making a stand against the prevailing order of things, a mode of resistance. Pastoral, in a contemporary context, may direct our collective imaginations towards what is in danger of being lost, but which also forms part of our full humanity. (10)

The pastoral mode of articulating views on nature has, however, gone through some significant changes. The point I want to emphasize here is that with the advent of Disney Renaissance (the studio's return to feature-length fairy tales adaptations around 1990), the representation of nature has started to incorporate elements of scientific reasoning, thus showing the dangers as well as the imbalanced aspects of nature. *The Lion King* (1994) and *Dinosaur* (2000), which both omit the presence of man, offer a depiction of nature with underlying patterns of the food chain and rules of evolution, which are perfor*mative* elements in the depiction of nature appearing in Disney animations. These natural dynamics trigger the flow of the stories and account for a certain amount of excitement, but their presence in an overwhelmingly anthropomorphic animal world is rather superficial.

The Lion King leads the audience to the African Savannah, where animals live under a strict hierarchical system, in a semi-political, semi-natural visualization of the animal kingdom. The animal social system is presented in a similar manner as Aldo Leopold's Land Pyramid. Being the largest predators, lions are at the apex of the pyramid, qualifying them to be the ruler of the animal kingdom. The stability of this allegorical political system lies in the stability of the natural system of the Land Pyramid. As Simba's father, Mufasa, explains it to his son: "Everything you see exists together in a delicate balance. As king you need to understand that balance, and respect all the creatures from the crawling ant to the leaping antelope" (Allers and Minkoff 0:07:42–48). In other words, keeping the natural balance means preserving the lions' political position. With the example of the grass-antelope-lion-grass food chain, he also describes how the animals "are all connected in the great circle of life" (0:08:00–03). The motif of animals eating each other is a newly incorporated idea in Disney animations (a perfor*mative* instance), which otherwise have the tradition of drawing an idyllic, safe and peaceful picture of nature. *The Lion King*, however, tries to connect this new motif with positive connotations, repeatedly highlighting the fact that as long as the ecological balance, the food chains and the "circle of life" are not disturbed, all the shown violence is acceptable.

With the assassination of Mufasa, and the persecution of Simba, Mufasa's brother Scar starts a new and bitter reign. The new political system is just as corrupted as the natural system under Scar's rule: Scar "let the hyenas take over the Pride Lands. […] Everything is destroyed, there's no food, there's no water" (0:49:58–0:50:02). The once blossoming land is now characterized as dark and infertile, struck by an environmental catastrophe. As David S. Whitley points out,

> [t]he film's framing image of "the circle of life," within which all creatures form an independent whole that ensures continuity through the circle of life and death, is ruptured when a single species–the hyena–acquires dominance. As in *Dinosaur*, the environmental catastrophe that results from this ecological imbalance is configured in forms that connect with apocalyptic contemporary visions of the precarious fate of the earth. (128).

The hyenas' coming into power is an act against nature–the delicate balance that Mufasa praised so much is broken. The natural environment is destroyed, living conditions are worsening, and the earth is decaying. The example of the hyenas shows, as Whitley mentions, a parallel with contemporary environmental matters: the hyenas' destruction of the Pride Lands can be seen as a metaphor for humans' destruction of the earth. Environmental philosophical argumentations often refer back to Spinoza, who envisioned nature as a substance "which is in itself, and is conceived through itself" (1) indivisible and infinite. The modifications of the substance, the so-called modes, are not independent, they are only parts of the whole. Spinoza supposes that mankind is not beyond nature (as Descartes argued):

> The power of man, in so far as it is explained through his own actual essence, is a part of the infinite power of God or Nature, in other words, of the essence thereof. […] If it were possible, that man should undergo no changes save such as can be understood solely through the nature of man, it would follow that he would not be able to die, but would always necessarily exist. (100)

It logically follows, then, that man cannot be superior to nature: he cannot rule it, as the part cannot rule the whole. Environmental philosophers often use this inverse "part vs. whole" argument to highlight the incorrect attitude of mankind towards nature as one of the intellectual roots of contemporary environmental crises. In *The Lion King*, the unnatural superiority of one species (the hyena) to the rest of nature is, therefore, allegoric to mankind's idea of ruling over nature. David Whitley points out that the film fails to explain why the predation by hyenas destabilizes the environment more violently than that by the lions

(Whitley 128). The logic of Aldo Leopold's Land Pyramid could be once again helpful: the stability of this natural system is guaranteed only by the co-operation and competition of the parts, but if one part gains exceedingly great power, the system becomes imbalanced and the food chains become shorter–as in the case of mankind (Leopold 125-–27). Therefore, the rule of the hyenas is depicted apocalyptic because they endanger the Land Pyramid, whereas the reign of lions, as the largest predators, is natural according to the logic of the Pyramid.

Nevertheless, the representation of nature in *The Lion King* most often functions to codify narrative changes: the sun is shining at the beginning of a new era; a bolt of lightning strikes at Pride Rock during the fight between Simba and Scar, adding more excitement to the scene; rain purifies the land from the rule of the hyenas. Direct references to the food chain and the positions of various animals within it are often given a humorous tone ("[Simba,] what's eating you?" "Nothing, he is at the top of the food chain!" [0:35:00]). Scenes of hunting are recurring but hardly ever completed: the moment of catch is either not shown or it is interrupted by another character or a sudden flush of unnatural morality. The film relies on this rather artificial ethic of animals, which makes the recurring lessons on the food chain inconsistent: the famished Nala, for example, does not eat Pumbaa only because he is Simba's friend. The represented concept of the food chain is perfor*mative*, introducing the rules of nature and leading the audience into the exotic wilderness; yet it is overruled and wrapped around by humane feelings, empathy and strong morals, which are perfor*mances* in the Disney canon.

The representation of nature in *The Lion King* is, therefore, rather irrational: on the one hand, nature is depicted as a system with strict and cruel rules of hierarchy; on the other hand, these rules are overridden by some unnatural ethics and morals that are not at all typical to animals. Natural phenomena are inserted mostly because of their connotative roles. Nevertheless, the decay of the environment caused by the imbalance of the natural system (the hyena's reign) could be understood as an allegory to contemporary environmental anomalies.

Dinosaur (2000) is an interpretation of the Biblical Exodus in the prehistoric context of an environmental catastrophe which presumably caused the extinction of dinosaurs. Among the many different scientific hypotheses *Dinosaur* applies the most spectacular one; such is the fashion: contemporary journalism prefers reporting about visible and sudden environmental catastrophes to gradual environmental decay. In the film, an asteroid impact completely destroys the idyllically depicted island, and those who survive are forced to look for another habitat. A herd of prehistoric animals carelessly selected from different periods

and origin (Booker 67) starts proceeding to a promised land, to the so-called "Nesting Ground." The animation mostly tells the story of this forced march within which the rules of Darwinian natural selection are contested by morals and ethics.

As opposed to *The Lion King*, *Dinosaur* shows scenes of hunting, killing and other tools of natural selection are presented through strong visuals. The prehistoric world with its brutal natural laws is characterized as an endless gladiator fight in which the prey hardly has any chance against the predators. After the asteroid impact, the land turns into a wasteland, with no food or water. The marching herd is in the double trap of dehydration and of predators. For this reason, the leader of the herd, Kron, sets a great pace, ignoring those who cannot keep up: even if they lose half of the herd, "then [they] save the half that deserves to live" (Zondag and Leighton 0:47:40). Kron represents the cruelly depicted laws of Darwinian natural selection: "You don't survive if you are not strong enough" (0:42:20).

Aladar, the protagonist of the story, does not want to leave anyone behind, and continually encourages the older and weaker members of the herd. The young dinosaur, taken in and raised by a lemur family, has empathy towards those who are excluded from the herd by Kron's cruel ideology (one deserves to live if one is strong enough). Aladar's support is perfor*mative* in the sense that it contradicts Kron's rules, which form the dominant power in the herd; seen in the context of the Disney canon, however, Aladar's helping the elderly and the young is a very strong perfor*mance*. The practice of inserting perfor*matives* in the context of perfor*mances* in a recurring pattern in the animations discussed in this study.

Aladar's morals fight against the teleological instinct of survival, and as such are not understood in the herd: "An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence" (Leopold 202). Kron despises and rejects Aladar's deeds and leaves him and the older dinosaurs behind, who alone find the way to the Nesting Ground. Aladar, however, leaves the Ground to search for Kron and the others, who are trapped in a dead-end street under the threat of a predator. The scene is a symbolic clash of Aladar's altruistic morals and Kron's individual survival instincts, and the herd decides to follow Aladar, thus reaching the Nesting Ground safe and sound. The rather unscientific end of the film suggests that '… and the dinosaurs lived happily ever after'–a message that is certainly false but supports the importance of morals and altruism, which is a recurring Disney theme.

Even though natural selection and morals are conceptualized as binary oppositions in the film, standing for evil and good, respectively, environmental philosophy considers the survival of individuals and species intertwined with ethical behavior. As the characters of *Dinosaur* are anthropomorphically characterized, the appearance of morals and ethical

behavior can be understood in the framework of human evolution. Even though morals are the limitations of individual survival tendencies, Darwin himself claims that natural selection induced and strengthened moral feelings and attitudes: in the beginning, individual self-interests were dominant but with the course of evolution, consciousness and moral attachment has arisen and got expanded first to the family, to the tribe and later on to the whole society (Tóth 174–5). In 1893, Thomas Henry Huxley claimed that the cosmic process of evolution, which is "the struggle for existence [tending] to eliminate those less fitted to adapt themselves to the circumstances of their existence" should be re-interpreted in the human society not as a cosmic process but as an ethical process, "the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best" (88). Philosophers of environmental ethics have been thoroughly discussing what could or should belong to the moral consideration of humans, in other words to what living and/or non-living natural entities should be inherent values assigned: the deeper the categories are extended, the more ecocentric the approach becomes.

Dinosaur, however, does not go this far. It is the story of rising morals in a context where nature is depicted as dangerous, brutal and perilous. The envisioned survival of dinosaurs due to moral behavior suggests that practicing an ethical attitude towards others and eclipsing the self are key tools for survival. Moreover, the final scene of the film shows the Nesting Ground untouched after the environmental catastrophe, and is depicted as a reward for the dinosaurs who reach it only because they were more 'ethically fit' and not physically fit. In other words, not only do ethical behavior and an ethical attitude bring about social harmony, but nature could regain its balance if morals gained ground. *The Lion King* and *Dinosaur* do not feature human characters; therefore, there are no *direct* references to mankind's relation to the environment. However, because the characters are excessively anthropomorphized, the films can and do touch on various contemporary environmental issues in an indirect, allegorical manner.

Tarzan (1999) and *Brother Bear* (2003) are two animations that take place in the wild but with the presence of humans. The relationship of hunter and prey is therefore represented on another level, which highlights the importance of ethical human approaches to nature in a more direct manner. From the beginning of Disney animated feature films, a rather blatant dualism can be observed concerning the representation of nature. Booker argues that there is a "typical Disney opposition between the natural as good and the unnatural as bad" (65): the forest and the animals help Snow White, but the castle means mortal danger; the forest is a

peaceful place until the hunter shoots Bambi's mother, and so on. Following Booker's observation, I would define the "unnatural" in the observed animations as man-made creations, potentially with technical or–later on technological–ontology. The introduction of human reason manifested in technical or technological tools challenges the often magically characterized, transcendental power of nature. The role of people in nature is interpreted in these animations on the basis of their ethical behavior, which is measured by how much they can control their advantage over nature. I do not support Booker's strict dichotomy of natural as good vs. unnatural as bad. Disney animations of the last twenty years start deconstructing this binarism by creating categories that do not fit into this dichotomy. *Tarzan* (1999) and *Brother Bear* (2003) exemplify how these new categories come into being once human dominance over nature is manifested within ethical limitations.

Tarzan (1999), the story of the ape-man, takes place in Africa, but contrary to *The Lion King*, this time with the active presence of man. The opening scene of *Tarzan* conveys a rather straight-forward, non-Cartesian environmental message, namely that humans *are* part of nature and not superior to it. After surviving a shipwreck, an English family finds shelter on the coasts of Africa, builds a shanty on a tree and decorates it with whatever cultural artifact they could save: books, a framed photo, a clock and a rifle (Buck and Lima: 0:03:40–50). This opening scene, however, is created through two diegetic elements: one with the English family, the other with a gorilla family. The extra-diegetic music ("Two worlds, one family") verbalizes what is sufficiently told through the visual montage of the two series. The opening scene is constructed through the parallel syntagma (Metz 175–176) of the two series, in which the motif of animals and humans are shown in a parallel fashion to emphasize their identical nature. After a jaguar brutally kills both the English couple and the offspring of the gorilla parents, Kala, the female gorilla, raises the orphaned human baby, Tarzan, who as an ape-man takes an in-between position in the gorilla family (as well as in taxonomy). Booker claims that the dichotomy of natural as good and unnatural as bad is flexibly interpreted through Tarzan's double role as biologically being a human but practically being an ape (Booker 65). Even though Tarzan is a visible in-betweener, his position does not contest the natural-unnatural dichotomy. With the appearance of other humans in this part of Africa, however, this binarism cannot be defensible any more.

The first rifle shot heard in the jungle signifies the arrival of humans to "a paradise untouched by man" (0:01:17). Tarzan scouts them and realizes that "there [are] creatures who [look] like him" (0:44:41). The new-comers are Archimedes Porter and his daughter Jane, who are enthusiast scientists studying gorillas, and Clayton, a money-grubbing poacher.

Clayton has been contracted to the expedition to protect the scientists, but his secret plan is to explore the gorillas' whereabouts, capture them and sell them in England for a fortune. Clayton is ready to shoot anything and is hardly ever shown without his rifle. The constant presence of the weapon symbolizes the bad, the unnatural: the rifle stands for that kind of human technology that enables humans to subjugate and exploit nature. Clayton's word choice–he calls gorillas 'beasts' and Tarzan a 'savage'–also shows his unethical attitude.

Clayton re-affirms Booker's binarism, but Mr. Porter and Jane's scientific interest in gorillas and in the jungle does provide a positive alternative for the unnatural. The researcher's camp is fully equipped with all the technological advances typical to the nineteenth century's England: a grandfather-clock, a gramophone, a typewriter, a chemical laboratory, a telescope, a model of our solar system, a *laterna magica*, a zoetrope, and so on. Such a detailed description of the camp and the application of most of these objects in teaching Tarzan about the advance of the Western scientific culture suggest the superiority of reason. The scenes in the research camp celebrate the human reason and all its scientific accomplishments, most significantly, the mechanical understanding of nature and the cultural practices that are the privilege of subjects with reason. The concept of the rational subject that is able to understand nature and thus has departed from it, is a Cartesian idea.

The mechanical understanding of nature and the insistence on logical reasoning became prevalent first in the 16th and 17th centuries. The new paradigm denied Renaissance ideas, such as the unity of the macro- and microcosmos, and it contested the organic understanding of nature as well. The mechanical concept of the world was best represented by the groundbreaking physical observations of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton and Descartes. The conception of the world as fully understandable through physical, mathematical and logical rules led to the separation of matter and reason, which has remained a prevalent idea up to now. The separation also meant a change in value: the cognizable (natural) entities were devalued and assigned instrumental values, whereas subjects with reason became the only possessors of inherent values (Tóth 22–23). Environmental philosophical tendencies conflict with the mechanical understanding of the world, Cartesian philosophy and modernity, identifying them as the philosophical and intellectual roots of environmental problems.

The Cartesian dualism between the two substances of the world, *res extensa* (the mechanically describable entities) and *res cogito* (entities with reason), describes humans as superior: since they possess both substances, logically their value is inherent, originating from themselves. In other words, *res extensa* entities do not have inherent values, as they are only mechanical constructions. Humans, therefore, are entitled to become superior to nature

and abuse it according to their needs and wishes (Tóth 26–27). In this understanding, ethical behavior towards nature is the only option for reinterpreting this dual–

and rather imbalanced–value assignment.

The application of an ethical approach to non-human entities in *Tarzan* is quite obvious. Clayton's behavior is unethical and his aim to capture the gorillas and sell them in England for a fortune shows that he does not consider the possibility that these animals could have any inherent value. Moreover, he shoots unnecessarily at everything, thus destroying the natural surroundings, which is another sign of assigning instrumental values to non-human natural entities. On the contrary, Mr. Porter and Jane have an ethical attitude towards gorillas and natural environment as well. Although as scientists who observe and describe the mechanical logic of nature, it is exactly them who could behave unethically (according to the Cartesian pattern criticized by environmental philosophers). The recurring appearance of scientific objects, models and tools in the research camp suggest the enthusiasm of Mr. Porter and Jane towards science and the mechanical understanding of the world, serving as contrast to their ethical behavior. Since they are man and woman of reason, they would be most expected to consider themselves superior to nature and assign instrumental values to its entities, which are objects of their research. Still, Mr. Porter and Jane assign inherent values to the gorillas and to the jungle; they do not want to harm or possess them. Their non-intrusive scientific activity is carried out through observation and with constant respect to the animals and nature. In this sense, *Tarzan* represents a preservationist stand-point. According to Corbett's definition of this ideology, a preservationist attitude focuses on the conservation of nature because of its scientific-ecological, aesthetic or religious importance. When Mr. Porter and Jane realize Clayton's plan to capture the gorillas, they despise it on the ground of their preservationist attitude.

The characterization of Jane and Mr. Porter cannot be categorized if Booker's dualism of natural as good and unnatural as bad is accepted. Following the above-detailed philosophical argument about Cartesian dualism, these two characters should represent the unnatural pole, as they are described as representatives of the mechanical understanding of nature. However, they are not at all 'bad' characters, as Booker's distinction would suggest. Their characterization is perfor*mative* in the sense that the age-old binarism is too rigid to accommodate categories that come about through ethical attitude towards nature. *Tarzan*, in this sense, deconstructs the dichotomy by creating a precedent of humans' environmental ethics.

Brother Bear (2003) tells the story of three Inuit brothers, long before colonization. The Inuit colony is described as living in complete symbiosis with nature, and their social rules and ceremonies are all determined by nature and the power assigned to it. The film starts with an initiation ceremony: the youngest brother, Kenai, is given his totem, the bear of love. Social practices like this show the intertwined relationship of nature and the Inuit society. This relationship, however, turns out to be deeper than it first appears: nature and especially animals are spirits that are capable of carrying out magical transformations. Soon after Kenai's ceremony, Sitka, his brother sacrifices himself to save Kenai and Denahi from a bear. Believing that the bear is responsible for his brother's death, Kenai kills the bear out of spite. To give a "whole new perspective on things" (Blaise and Walker 0:25:13), the spirits of nature (which are all characterized as animals) transform Kenai into a bear, who is now pursued by the third brother, Denahi. Kenai sets out to find the place of the spirits to get them to transform him back.

The film cannot account for anything "unnatural" as it consciously and strictly depicts people as part of nature, their lifestyle being completely defined by natural rules. Moreover, the magical power of nature is retained and positioned as the central mover of the story (the film produced in 2003, therefore, reaches back to earlier Disney animations in which magic was still generally applied). The central problem of the story grows out rather from an unethical attitude towards nature. In other words, killing animals for food or out of self-defense are characterized as acceptable deeds, but killing a bear out of spite is unethical. Whether Kenai's revenge on the bear is ethical is repeatedly addressed. When Kenai tells his brother, Denahi that he is going after the bear, Denahi says: "I know what you're feeling, but killing that bear is wrong" (0:14:59). After being transformed into a bear, Kenai is told to find his brother's spirit, so that he "could make up for what [he has] done wrong" but he does not understand: "But I didn't do anything wrong!" (0:25:30–35). His quest to find his brother's spirit so that he could change back turns out to be an ethical odyssey. Kenai is accompanied by a young bear cub, Koda on his journey. Koda's questions and reactions to humans serve as moral teaching for Kenai. When observing a cave-painting of a bear (depicted as aggressive and much bigger than humans) being attacked by a man with a spear, drawn in a rather conventional design, the bear cub says: "Those monsters are really scary… especially with those sticks" (0:46:45–50). Koda (still not knowing that Kenai is a human) later asks him why people hate bears. Kenai defends the viewpoint held by people: "We're bears. So you know how they are. They're killers. […] Most bears will look for any excuse to attack the human." Koda objects: "But Kenai, *he* [the hunter] attacked us" (0:52:20–44, ***emphasis in***

original). When Kenai realizes that Koda is the cub of the bear he previously has killed, he understands the unethical nature of his deed and admits: "Koda, I did something very wrong" (1:03:53). After learning the lesson, Kenai is offered the choice to be a man or a bear and he decides to become a bear.

Although the story itself has its potentials, the environmental ethical attitude is rather commonplace. Seemingly, Koda's personal tragedy is the only reason that Kenai decides to remain a bear, which on a holistic level–as the film strives to describe the Inuit culture–has not much to do with environmental ethics. The idea of positioning a revengeful hunter in the prey's place is creative and offers a great possibility to convey some deep morals on environmental awareness, but the film fails to make the most out of it. Instead of deep(er) environmental ethical views on the holistic envisioning of nature, Kenai and Koda's story is more about getting attached to a cuddly little bear.

It cannot be denied, however, that the depiction of the Inuit beliefs is in accordance with environmental beliefs of Native Americans. Corbett claims that the belief in the mythical, spiritual power of nature, sharing a lot with pantheism, is typical to Native Americans (49). The presence of spirits, their guidance and their active role in the life of the Inuit is verbally as well as visually emphasized. Corbett also highlights that "there is a great deal of ritual in Indian interactions with animals to demonstrate reciprocity and balance in human-animal relationships. For anything taken, something has to be offered in return, as a matter of fair exchange and respect" (50). Kenai's transformation into a bear, thus, serves not only a moral lesson for the young Inuit, but it can be understood as an offer in return to the bear he killed. Corbett places Native American beliefs about nature among the transformative ideologies in the spectrum of environmental ideologies. These ideas are the closest to the ecocentric pole of the spectrum; in other words, they are the most far-fetched from the typical Western practices of unrestrained instrumentalism. *Brother Bear* on the whole does not advertise transformative ideologies, but it does emphasize the need for another perspective on animals. With Kenai's transformation, the film could convey ideas about the unethical nature of hunting (out of spite) and about how often animals are under the threshold of human moral sense. By the end, however, *Brother Bear* seems to focus on the emotional relationship between humans and animals, which, as P. W. Taylor writes (179), should not be confused with the respect towards nature. Respecting nature is the basis of an ethical attitude, whereas love or sentimentalism towards nature is a subjective emotion, which is unable to account for a firm ethical attitude towards the whole of nature. *Brother Bear* starts out with an ethical problem (it is wrong to kill a bear out of spite) but it fails to bring the lesson through, as the

story diverts from the ethical path and highlights the emotional attachment of Kenai to Koda. In this respect, the animation remains a perfor*mance* of anthropocentric environmental ideologies although it would have had the potential to introduce holistic concepts in depth. The film remains problematic from an environmental ethical point of view, which is incoherent in the imagined context of a culture that is based on the holistic world view of nature. This aspect is much detailed and depicted in a rather conscious manner in *Pocahontas* (1995), in which the holistic world view of the Native Americans is contested by the anthropocentric ideas of the Western colonizers.

Pocahontas (1995) is undoubtedly the most American topic Disney has ever dealt with as it retells the historical event of the British colonizers' arrival on the American continent. The story is one of the grand narratives of the American culture: through Captain John Smith's memoirs, the–alleged–heroic deed of Pocahontas survived hundreds of years, making it to the sweatbox of the Disney Studio. Disney's *Pocahontas* is an unfulfilled love story, a razor-sharp postcolonial fight and the boldest-bravest environmental lesson ever drawn on Disney's screen. Even though the historical veracity of the film is just as often questioned as John Smith's memoirs themselves, the environmental message told in the Native American context functions as the most explicit summary on ethical behavior towards nature in the Disney canon. Beyond the obvious postcolonial clash between colonizers and Natives, the film strongly emphasizes the clash between differing environmental ideologies as well.

In 1607, the British colonizers "sailed the open sea, for glory, God and gold, and for the Virginia Company" (Gabriel und Goldberg 0:00:14–0:00:20). This very first line of the film contextualizes the story and the opening song clearly states the aim of the colonizers: "on the beaches of Virginny, there's diamonds like debris / there silver rivers flow and gold you pick right off a tree" (0:01:23–0:01:30). Fulfilling this economic interest cannot be hindered by any Native Americans as the song puts later on: "We'll kill ourselves an Injun / or maybe two or three" (0:05:02–0:05:05). The concept of the colonizers concerning how they can manipulate the earth as well as the Native Americans shows a parallel. For this reason, the film presents two central problems: besides the visible postcolonial fight between the Native Americans and the colonizers, the question of moral behavior towards nature is also raised.

The opening scene of the colonizers is followed by that of the Native Americans: the scene of the troubled ship, the Susan Constant, dissolves in thick fog and a distant drum can be heard. Drumming and chanting accompany the song "Steady as the Beating Drum," which introduces the audience to the world of the Native Americans. The scene already emphasizes the importance of nature as it starts from the oceans, zooms in to the seashore, goes through a

thick forest and flies over river bends until it arrives at the tribe of the Powhatans. The introductory song describes the intertwining relation of nature, religion and lifestyle among the Powhatans, emphasizing the importance of the spirits, of Earth and of natural rhythm in their lives. The song, however, depicts only a vague and superficial picture of this relationship, and the accompanying visuals do not help much either, as David Whitley remarks (86). The simple references to the seasons, to plants and to natural beings are made to show a rather preservationist attitude: the economic and religious importance of nature is highlighted, which is packaged as Native American environmental ideology. The lines "Season go and seasons come / steady as the beating drum / Plum to seed to bud to plum" (0:06:39–0:06:49) echo the concept of the circle of life in *The Lion King* (1994), although the ethical Native American reasoning later–revealed in Pocahontas's interpretation–turns out to be somewhat deeper.

Pocahontas is the mischievous, free-spirited daughter of the chief of the Powhatans. Her character is seemingly designed to be an ambassador of all Native American values, thus making her role disturbingly stereotyped. She is the one and only Native American character who is shown in close contact with nature, with spirits and who is endowed with all the alleged characteristics of Native Americans. This fact already leads to an imbalanced depiction of the Native Americans: the other members of the tribe are flatly constructed Native figures who do not really live up to the values Pocahontas advertises. As Whitley wisely points out, Pocahontas herself bears this ambiguity: her movements and gaze at creatures of nature are not in accordance with what she summarizes as the tribe's beliefs. The visuals also show several discrepancies with Pocahontas's words:

> Everywhere in Pocahontas there is a gap between words and images that are designed to embody them. The words betoken respect for an animalistic, spiritually alive, natural world that elicits wonder and is, often literally, enchanted. The images translate this gestalt into forms that contemporary commodity culture has appropriated for selling things. (87)

Similarly to the above detailed *Brother Bear*, filmmakers strive to depict Native American ideologies but could not really step out of their Western cultural stand-point. Pocahontas's line of "What I love most about rivers / is that you can't step in the same river twice" (0:12:24–0:12:28) clearly refers to Heraclitus's ancient piece of wisdom, and the visuals with the lyrics of the song "Just Around the River Bend" conjure up the lyrics of Henry Mancini's "Moon River" which gained popularity through the 1961 cult film

"Breakfast At Tiffany's." The representation of natural creations, such as the river, is thus highly loaded with connotations referring to Western collective cultural memories instead of their roles in a holistic view on the environment.

The crooked river leads Pocahontas to a sacred place, to a weeping willow in the middle of the stream. Grandmother Willow is depicted as an old willow-woman, offering reflection to those in need of contemplation. Grandmother Willow is a natural creature, endowed with spiritual qualities: she appears as a spirit of the Powhatans, knowing its members and its history. This kind of depiction is in accordance with Corbett's words about Native American ideologies. She claims that "nature is viewed as *hierophanic*, as a source of spiritual revelation" (49, *emphasis in original*). Grandmother Willow is a mother-figure for Pocahontas, helping her in trouble and suggesting solutions, but she is also shown as symbol for Disney's pastoral view on nature as a whole, giving shelter and peace. This peace is however disturbed by the arrival of the British.

Taken aback by the beauty of the new world, the colonizers claim the land theirs, informally ("It's incredible! And it's all ours!" [0:18:55]) and formally ("I hereby claim this land and all its riches in the name of His Majesty King James the First and do so name this settlement Jamestown" [0:22:54–0:23:01]) alike. Governor Ratcliff quickly makes it clear that they must "dig up Virginia […] and mine every mountain" (0:25:00–0:25:07) to find as much gold as possible. Ratcliff's play on the word "mine" nicely expresses a purely anthropocentric ideology on nature: his men should mine (i.e., exploit) every mountain to get the gold that belongs to him ("it's mine!" [0:25:26]). By his command, the colonizers start shoveling the ground, felling trees (with saws and cannons) and exploding the forest. The colonization of the land is soon followed by the first fierce encounter between the colonizers and the Powhatans, in which one of the Natives gets shot. The chief seeks and gets help from other tribes and at the same time forbids his people to go near the colonizers.

In the meantime, John Smith is exploring the area, joyfully singing about "the land [he] can claim, a land [he] can tame (0:26:54–0:26:57), which describes an attitude similar to Ratcliff's. During his scouting, Smith meets Pocahontas, who has been following and observing him. The obvious problem of communication between the two is easily overcome by Grandmother Willow's sound advice about listening to the wind with one's heart. The communication channel is therefore built by magic that originates from the power of nature. The flow of their conversation, however, is soon disrupted by a heated argument about the colonizers' plan. Smith tells Pocahontas that they will show the Native Americans "how to use this land properly, how to make the most of it […to] build roads and decent houses"

(0:36:47–0:36:55). Smith wants to explain his point to the offended Pocahontas, claiming that they could teach so much to the Native Americans, and that they have "improved the lives of the savages all over the world" (0:37:10). The scene ends with a lesson that Pocahontas teaches to Smith about their ideology towards nature and all its beings and about an imagined, peaceful co-existence of colonizers and Natives.

Pocahontas's song "Colors of the Wind" is a lyrical song with heavy, metaphorical meaning, making the song unusual for Disney. The point that Pocahontas makes in the song is that without the same understanding of nature, white and copper-skinned cannot live peacefully beside each other. Smith's argument earlier about making the most of the land, urges Pocahontas to frame the song with the concept of the propriety of land and to sing about Land Ethic in between. Many of the lyrics and phrasing of the song echo Aldo Leopold's relevant chapters from *A Sand County Almanac*. Leopold's famous chapter "Thinking Like a Mountain" argues on preserving the wilderness as any kind of interference leads to a disturbance in nature. His personal example of killing wolves for the sake of more deer shows the disastrous result of defoliated trees and dead bushes and that of the "deer herd, dead of its own too-much" (131–132). He claims that a person who does not understand the consequences of his act, and does not see the complexity of natural systems "has not learned to think like a mountain" (132). Thinking like a mountain is the same metaphor as Pocahontas's "Can you sing with all the voices of the mountain? / Can you paint with all the colors of the wind?" (0:39:09–0:39:15). The ethical attitude towards nature (including all its creatures) and to the land is the central point in Pocahontas's argument. An ethical approach and moral obligation towards these entities can only be formed if one assigns inherent values to natural beings, living and non-living alike. This is already a great step away from the anthropocentric pole of Corbett's spectrum of environmental ideologies, doing away with mankind's exclusive right to inherent values. Pocahontas describes this value that goes beyond pure instrumental value: "Come roll in all these riches all around you / and for once never wonder what they're worth" (0:39:42–0:39:50). Inherent value is assigned not only to animals but also to plants and other natural beings as well, such as rocks or–in Leopold's metaphor–the mountain: "I know every rock and tree and creature / Has a life, has a spirit, has a name" (0:38:31–0:38:40). These entities are "all connected to each other / in a circle, in a hoop that never ends" (0:40:00–0:40:07). Leopold describes this co-existence with the image of the biotic pyramid (the Land Pyramid), which is a network of "co-operation and competition of its diverse parts" (215). The environmentalist's concept lies on the importance of and attitude to land, which idea is also emphasized by Pocahontas: "You think you own

whatever land you land on / the Earth is just a dead thing you can claim […] You can own the Earth and still / all you'll own is earth until / you can paint with all the colors of the wind" (0:38:25–0:40:55). The last sentence with the conditional "until" summarizes Leopold's whole argument on the Land Ethic and the problem of land propriety. As pointed out earlier, Leopold proves that land ownership encourages its exploitation but it is still the preferable solution, rather than leaving the land for open access (leading to the results proven by Hardin in *The Tragedy of the Common*, discussed in Chapter 3.3.2). Leopold concludes that as long as we live in a system governed by anthropocentric principles, we cannot do away with land propriety but we can develop an ethical approach–the Land Ethic– towards the land (Leopold 201–214). Corbett points out that it is "impossible for Indians to fully practice their ideologies in a populous country with extensive private land ownership […] but it does not obviate their ideologies" (48–49).

Even though they try, Pocahontas and Smith cannot convince their people to settle the conflict peacefully. Ratcliff is certain that the reason they cannot find any gold is that the Natives have it and they do not want to share it. Ratcliff's logic follows the path of unlimited instrumentalism, the ideology that associates only use and exchange value to nature. He believes (because he does not know it otherwise) that Native Americans have the same concept of nature as the colonizers; whereas the reason they have not found any gold lies in the simple fact that there is none. When Smith tries to explain to Pocahontas what gold is ("You know, it's yellow, […] comes out of the ground, it's really valuable" [0:45:44–0:45:48]), Pocahontas mistakes it for maize, and when Smith shows her a piece of gold, she says that there is nothing like that around there. Ratcliff does not believe Smith when he forwards the information, and insists on killing the Natives and taking away the gold with force: "This is *my* land! I make the laws here" (*emphasis in original*, 0:51:45).

As the war is drawing near, the importance of nature as a spiritual entity is emphasized. Pocahontas introduces Smith to Grandmother Willow, which is depicted as a symbolic initiation into contemplating with spirits of the nature. The willow becomes their accomplice and encourages them to stand up and talk with their people. Unfortunately, the secret meeting between the lovers is observed by the jealous Kocoum (the bravest Powhatan warrior), who attacks Smith and by the young Thomas (Smith's young friend), who shoots the Indian warrior. Smith sends Thomas away and takes full responsibility for the death of Kocoum. The Powhatans capture Smith, which serves as perfect pretext for Ratcliff to attack the Natives. Praying to spirits, Pocahontas runs to the cliff where her father is about to execute Smith: "Eagle, help my feet to fly, […], mountain help my heart be great, […], spirits of the Earth

and sky, please don't let it be too late" (1:04:16–1:04:27). This strong spiritual relationship to Grandmother Willow and to all the creatures of nature aims at describing a complex co-existence of people, nature and transcendence. Corbett draws a parallel between Native beliefs and pantheism, inasmuch as both identify a supreme being or supreme beings with the forces of nature. (Corbett 49). Moreover, reciprocal relations between natural entities lead not only to respect but to a certain kind of identification with them. Corbett cites Paula Gunn Allen: "We are the land. […T]he earth is the mind of the people as we are the mind of the earth. […] In the Native American system, there is no idea that nature is somewhere over there while man is over here" (50–51). In this respect, the root of the postcolonial conflict can really be identified with the opposing attitudes towards nature.

Pocahontas describes this unity of man and nature, drawing a parallel between the problematic fashion of exploiting the land and colonizing the Native Americans. The strong references to the differing viewpoints and concepts about nature hints at the fact that the cause of the fight between the two groups lies in the different environmental ideology: unlimited instrumentalism on one side, and ethical and value-driven ideologies on the other. The movie, however, fails to paint an authentic picture about transformative Native American values on the environment, which are apparently too far-fetched and unorthodox for Disney's conservative manner. Still, the lines on ethical behavior towards nature are the most explicit in the Disney canon, even if the accompanying visuals do not express these features. *Pocahontas* is, therefore, perfor*mative* in numerous aspects. Besides being Disney's first animation based on history and on historical figures, the idea of envisioning the fight in the context of opposing environmental ideologies is also without precedent in the Disney canon. The two leading characters–Pocahontas and John Smith–are also perfor*mative* subjects in the sense that they resist the ruling power of their peoples, thus becoming in-betweeners. Their subversive position is meant to be powerful enough to change the flow of colonial events in Jamestown: the final scene shows Native Americans and colonizers recognizing the foe not in each other but in Ratcliff, and both sides lower their arms. This romanticized and unhistorical closure of the narrative reinforces the importance of subversive, perfor*mative* acting.

3.3. Disney Goes to the City

Story-telling has gone through its turning points in several aspects: oral folk tales were compiled and sold in a book format with the advance of printing; printed stories crept onto the movie screens in moving picture format–a mechanical and social process that connected

story-telling more and more to urban conditions. Recently, a new wave of urbanization can be observed. Contemporary feature film animations do not take place over the Seven Seas, in castles, in wild forests or on unknown lands any more but somewhere much closer to the audience: in the contemporary (American) city or suburbs. The represented urban lifestyle, being closer to the personal experience of the audience, makes it easier for them to identify with the characters or with the situations familiar to them from outside the cinema. References to current social and urban issues fit more smoothly in an urban context, enabling the moral of the story to be conveyed successfully. This process is carried out through a semiotically multilayered channel that implies thematic focalizations, cultural references, wordplay and filmic intertextualities (among many others), primarily aimed at the adult audience, on the one hand. On the other hand, these animations are still "constructed first and foremost to attract and entertain children" (Booker 49). Booker coins this technique "double-coding" and claims that it is essential to all Disney-Pixar films and lately in Disney animations as well (49–50). The practice of "double coding," however, is somewhat more sophisticated and accounts for the appearance and incorporation of subversive cultural elements as well. The 'semiotically multilayered channel' in Disney animations makes it possible to smoothly involve elements of subversion in an otherwise normative pattern of narrative. Bringing about new scripts and texts occurs on a higher semiotic level of the narrative channel, which is primarily accessible for decoding to those with a conscious cultural collective memory: that is, for youngsters and adults. The lower semiotic levels, which are accessible to children as well, are responsible for the normative interpretation of Disney animations (for more on the semiotically multilayered channel, see Chapter 2.1). The negative commentaries on urban environmental problems go against the mainstream, every-day practices; therefore, their presence in these animations is rather unorthodox.

Re-locating animations in urban settings means that the environmental topics discussed earlier yield way to other environmental issues related to urban lifestyle. Instead of the traditional power of the magic of nature, animations introduce the 'magical power' of man-made technology. The technical and technological advances appear mostly in urbanized contexts, and they provide a new ontology for the environment as well as for the characters. Through this paradigm shift, animations can weave contemporary environmental problems in contemporary urban settings.

These environmental issues are fragmentarily touched-upon, show a great variety and appear in Disney animations first in urban contexts: the water treatment and sewage disposal of bigger cities appear in *Finding Nemo* (2003), as the fish of the aquarium want to return to

the sea through the toilet, knowing that "all drains lead to the ocean" (Stanton and Unkrich 0:46:35). The otherwise clean ocean is depicted as a wasteland around the main drains of sewage, hinting at the massive pollution that inappropriate water treatment can cause to the seas and rivers. Chemicals and packaging materials appear in *Monsters, Inc*., *Toy Story* and *Bolt*; garbage cubing and garbage selection on an industrial level (outside private households) are incorporated in *Monsters, Inc*. and in *Toy Story 3*. The presence of cars, car culture and the highway system in *Cars* are detailed; an allegory on energy crisis, nuclear energy and renewable energy sources is provided in *Monsters, Inc*. All the movies analyzed in this chapter recursively portray the urban consumerist society, presenting on the whole a rather anti-consumerist picture. The animations chosen for discussion entertain the above-mentioned environmental problems and aspects, even if they are not the central questions of the films.

Toy Story (1995) is not only Pixar's first feature film but also the first Disney animation to introduce the audience to the animated American suburbs. *Toy Story 2* (1999) and *Toy Story 3* (2000) as well as the first part of the trilogy highlight an anti-consumerist message by emphasizing the importance of holding on to old toys and keeping them in good condition, thus criticizing throw-away practices of our society. *Toy Story* is an innovative film in the sense that it extends the subject category of the living natural creatures to mass-produced objects. Endowing commodities with subjectivity is the celebration of the creative power of technology. The new ontology of the protagonists' subject categories accounts for a new perspective on consumerist practices.

Pixar's 2001 animation, *Monster's, Inc*. focuses on the topics of energy resource exploitation, nuclear energy and renewable energy sources–in a rather unobvious manner. *Monster's, Inc*. is a great example of how a semiotically multilayered channel functions. The visual references, mainly formed to be understandable for the adult audience, are enough to convey the idea of the fear of uncontrolled nuclear energy, for example, without ever saying the phrase "nuclear energy". The reference is still unambiguous, mostly due to the fact that the film describes the active presence of the media in the same manner as various forms of media react to environmental problems in real life.

Cars (2006) is a tribute to the American car culture, more specifically to the car racing sport event, NASCAR and to the American phenomenon of the road trip. The effect of the highway system on the natural terrain and the fragmentary advertisement of organic fuel re-appear throughout the film. Similarly to the *Toy Story* films, *Cars* strongly verbalizes non-consumerist views by claiming that old cars are just as good as new ones, and by creating an

emotional attachment to the car-characters. Besides the non-consumerist ideas, the film also advertises anti-capitalist views. The thesis discusses *Bolt* (2008) in the same chapter as *Cars* because *Bolt* is yet again a road-trip movie, discussing the manipulative nature of Hollywood and how it alienates the natural environment. Moreover, the film also alludes to various environment-related topics that receive less emphasis here than in *Cars*. These aspects are discussed through the observation of the subject-creation processes in both films. The profit-driven, capitalist world of the Piston Cup and Hollywood forbids the protagonists to take agency on their subject formations. When, however, they accidentally get further away from this world, they manage to experience a closer, more direct contact with the environment, which helps them (partially) break away from the consumerist practices that manipulate them as well as the environment.

The animation that is most outspokenly critical concerning contemporary environmental problems and consumerist practices is *WALL-E* (2008). I consider this film unorthodox mostly because it is a dystopia about the future of mankind. The excessive technological development and the pointless consumption of mass-produced commodities destroy the natural environment on the Earth, and humans are forced to leave the planet. Because of the existing technological conveniences, humans stop developing and lose the ability to walk. Technological devices take control over humans as well. Ultimately, the omnipotent power of technology re-creates both the environment (macrocosm) and humans (microcosm) too. Therefore, I devote a separate chapter to *WALL-E* at the very end of my argumentation: Chapter 5 is completely devoted to this film, in which the performative power of technology on the environment as well as on the subject formation of humans is decisive.

3.3.1. "YOU ARE A T-O-O-O-Y!:" The *Toy Story* Trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010)

Toy Story (1995) was a milestone in the history of Pixar Animation Studios and in the history of animation production. Besides being the studio's first feature film, it is also the most popular, warranting two sequels, *Toy Story 2* (1999) and *Toy Story 3* (2010). The film was also the first animation completely produced with CGI technology. Booker claims that *Toy Story* is as much of a technical revolution in the animation genre as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was back in 1937 (78). Apart from *Pinocchio* (1940), *The Brave Little Toaster* ([1987], originally produced by Hyperion Pictures, a "pre-Pixar" studio) and *Beauty and the Beast* ([1991], where most stock characters are enchanted to be household objects), Disney always starred human or anthropomorphized animal characters in its animated feature films.

Pixar, however, started a new tradition with *Toy Story*, bringing objects into life and thus elevating technology and electricity to a transformative status previously reserved for magic (Booker 78). Constant technological development characterizes the studio's work as well, making it possible to create the characters and the scenery in every Pixar film as natural as possible. Pixar's first feature-length animation is perfor*mative* in numerous ways. First, it breaks the traditional bond between mainstream American animation and the genre of musical, which was developed from the early years of Disney feature films and which has been reinforced in the Disney Renaissance. The *Toy Story* movies are "buddy movie[s]" (Butler 0:00:38) in the intersection of western, science-fiction and action films. The idea of starring commodities (toys) is also ground-breaking, a new territory besides humans and animals, which can shed light on consumerist issues more directly (Disney's *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* [1961] vaguely presents the troublesome nature of consumerism through Cruella's obsession with puppies). Moreover, *Toy Story* introduces contemporary consumerist practices in fitting context, in the American suburbs, thus ultimately replacing (the magical power of) nature with (the electric power of) technology.

Toy Story (1995) takes place in an average American suburb, more precisely in the bedroom of an average 5-6 year-old boy, Andy. The toys in Andy's room are typical American toys: a cowboy doll (Woody), Mr. Potato Head, a dog with a springy body (Slinky Dog), a dinosaur (Rex), a pink piggy bank (Hamm), a lady doll with sheep (Bo Peep), and so on. Although no human character in the film knows about it, these toys come to life when no one is watching them. The film starts with Andy's birthday, which–like every birthday and Christmas–causes huge stress for the toys in the bedroom: they are afraid of being replaced by newer, better, shinier toys. Andy does get a Buzz Lightyear, a spaceman action figure, equipped with a laser and wings. Buzz's appearance in the bedroom causes several problems. First of all, Andy stops playing with his all-time favorite toy, Woody, which leads Woody and Buzz into heated arguments, then to jealousy, and eventually to physical revenge. Secondly, Buzz experiences an identity crisis when he realizes that he is just a toy, a commodity advertised on television, and not *the* Buzz Lightyear, who has to save the galaxy. Despite the numerous action scenes, the story is rather simple (Woody and Buzz become friends), leaving enough room for dialogue about the status (in this case, individual nature) of commodities in consumer society.

Toy Story 2 (1999) entertains the very same questions, focusing now on economic object values as well. After being stolen by a collector, Woody learns that he used to have his own western TV-series ("Woody's Roundup") in the 1950s and 60s and now he and three

other character dolls (Jessie, The Prospector and Bullseye) form a complete collection, bringing a fortune to the greedy collector. This fact–and seeing himself in the TV series–makes Woody so mesmerized that he experiences an identity crisis: he would be ready to leave Andy and be shipped to a Japanese museum to be an exhibit item. Buzz, however, convinces Woody to come back, using Woody's own words from *Toy Story*: "Woody, you're not a collector's item. You're a child's plaything. You are a toy!" (Lasseter *Toy Story 2* 1:04:09).

Toy Story 3 (2010) continues discussion of the value of toys, this time focusing more on their dispensable nature. Fifteen years after *Toy Story*, Andy is leaving for college and his toys–already shrunk in number and not at all played with for years–are afraid to be thrown away or being removed to the attic. After being donated to a daycare, Andy's toys realize that toys there are inmates of a prison, ruled by a fluffy, strawberry-smelling, pink bear, Lotso (short for "Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear"). Lotso despises toys who attach to their kids and who cannot face the fact that they are commodities. The bear's cruelty and despise are rooted in his tragic flaw of having been lost and then replaced by another Lots-o'-Huggin' Bear, proving to him that he is a replaceable commodity. Since then he believes that "[toys] are all just trash, waiting to be thrown away!" (Unkrich 1:10:23). The movie, as the other two *Toy Story* films, is deeply critical of practices of the throw-away culture: a scene in the landfill details what happens to trash (thrown-away toys), how they are cut into pieces and then burnt in a crucible. The depiction of the landfill (1:12:54) is an intertextual reference to *WALL-E* and to the dystopic vision of the Earth covered with garbage, which is produced through exaggerated consumerist practices.

The value of toys as commodities is interpreted at several levels in the films. Even though the toy-characters are depicted with some intrinsic value and deep personality, the films do not hide the fact that they are in the first place commodities ("I'm from Playskool. / And from Mattel. Well, I'm not really from Mattel. I'm actually from a smaller company that was purchased in a leveraged buyout." [Lasseter *Toy Story* 0:17:50-57]). People treat toys as commodities: they buy them, sell them, re-sell them, steal them or take them out from the flow of the commodity-circle (by throwing them to the top-shelf or under the bed if they cease to function; or they simply destroy them by blowing them up in the garden). The life of these toys is thus described as full of danger, thrill and fear, all because their values can be interpreted in many ways. Taking Baudrillard's theory on functional, exchange, symbolic and sign value, the many layers of toy values can be easily understood.

In a functional sense, the *use-value* of these objects is that they are toys, playthings in a child's bedroom, and, being completely passive (in the presence of people), they are exploitable and controlled tools to act out a child's imagination in the act of playing. A recurring scene in both *Toy Story* films is when Andy acts out little stories in his bedroom, involving most of his toys in the play. The *exchange value* of these toys is the actual economic price of them. When Mom collects old, non-functioning toys for a yard-sale, she throws them in a box with a sign: "25¢." When Woody wants to save Wheezy (a penguin figure whose asthmatic condition has been aggravated by dust, making him unable to squeak) from the yard sale box, the other toys start panicking: "What is he doing? / He's selling himself for 25 cents. / Oh Woody. You're worth more than that!" (Lasseter *Toy Story 2* 0:17:40–0:17:49). The money that the toy collector hopes to receive in exchange for the full collection of "Woody's Roundup" is the one and only reason why he steals Woody. Indirectly, all TV commercials for toys refer to their exchange value as well. *Toy Story 3* is the first to introduce the internet as a platform for selling and purchasing commodities.

Baudrillard defines a so-called *symbolic exchange value*, which can be best exemplified with the idea of gifts: "it is inseparable from the concrete relation in which it is exchanged, the transferential pact that it seals between two persons. […] Once it has been given–and *because* of this–it is *this* object and not another. […] The gift is unique, specified by the people exchanging and the unique moment of the exchange" (64). This is the seed of the individual characterization of toys in the *Toy Story* films. Andy gets new toys for every birthday and Christmas (0:09:12), that is, they are gifts, therefore unique. At this point, it does not matter that there are hundreds of mass-produced, "cloned" Buzz Lightyears on the shelves of Al's Toy Barn (0:45:53), *the* Buzz Lightyear in Andy's room is a birthday gift from Mom to Andy, making Buzz unique. Moreover, Andy makes the uniqueness of his toys official: "Your chief, Andy inscribed his name on me" (0:22:30). Andy's name on Buzz's boot serves as identity proof in *Toy Story 2* when both Andy's Buzz and another Buzz escaped from the toy store correctly–try to prove that they are Buzz Lightyear. Andy's mark, however, gives an individual status of his Buzz because exactly this piece of plaything was given to him on his birthday. Baudrillard's fourth type of value is the *sign value*: "the object-become-sign no longer gathers its meaning in the concrete relationship between two people. It assumes its meaning in its differential relationship to other signs" (66). Baudrillard calls these objects "objects of consumption" and draws a parallel between the unique wedding ring (a symbol) and an ordinary ring (an object of consumption): "It is a non-singular object, a personal gratification, a sign in the eyes of the others. I can wear several of them. I can

substitute them" (66). As previously mentioned, Disney animations in general are rather anti-consumerist; therefore, this value is not presented as a positive aspect. Andy's toys are deprived of their sign value since all of them are characterized as unique and irreplaceable. Most of the toys that belong to the neighbor kid (Sid), however, are characterized as having a sign value. Sid is a weird and aggressive child whose hobby is to explode toys in his garden. Since he considers all the toys replaceable and dispensable, his toys are depicted speechless, frightening but most importantly without any kind of individual character. They are objects of consumption (Sid is actually shown in Pizza Planet by the claw vending machine getting a zealot [mass-produced, green alien clones, characterized without even a touch of individualism]). All the toys Sid possesses are objects of consumption and as such described in a rather negative and horrifying way. *Toy Story 3* characterizes Lotso as evil, mostly because he believes that the most decisive value toys have is their sign value. He tells Woody that "you are a piece of plastic [and] you were made to be thrown away" (Unkrich: 1:08:23), and when Barbie leaves Ken to stick with Andy's toys, Lotso points out: "She's a Barbie doll, Ken. There's a hundred million just like her!" (1:08:54).

The symbolic value of Andy's toys functions as a jumping board for the toys' uniqueness and identity. Once they are characterized with an identity, they can and they do have identity crises, mostly because their values have so many aspects. They all know (except for Buzz in the beginning) that their function is to be a toy: "This is what it's all about: to make a child happy" (Lasseter *Toy Story 2* 1:06:27). They all know as well that they are Andy's toys, as his name is written on them and, in this sense, they are unique. Their identity, however, needs to be re-constructed every time they see themselves as objects of consumption. Buzz is convinced that he is an astronaut on an intergalactic mission (the spaceman identity seems to be programmed in all Buzz figures) and feels completely lost when he learns from a TV commercial (!) that he is a simple object of consumption:

> The world's greatest superhero! Now the world's greatest toy! Buzz has it all! Locking wrist communicator! Karate chop action! Pulsating laser light! Multi-phase voice simulator! And best of all, high pressure space wings! (NOT A FLYING TOY!) Get your Buzz Lightyear action figure and save the galaxy near you! Available at all Al's Toy Barn outlets in the tri-county area. (Lasseter *Toy Story* 0:45:22–0:45:57)

Depressed by being an object of consumerism, Buzz coins himself "a stupid, little, insignificant toy" (0:55:55). Woody convinces him of the fact that it is much better to be a toy than a Space Ranger because being a toy means belonging to somebody: "You are his

toy" (0:56:12). In other words, Woody makes Buzz forget about his sign value (being a mass-produced Buzz Lightyear commodity) by pointing out his symbolic value (his unique status as Andy's Buzz). Woody goes through a similar crisis in *Toy Story 2* when he learns that he is "valuable property" (Lasseter *Toy Story 2* 0:29:47), and he and his TV series used to be a "national phenomenon" (1:03:47). Woody, Jessie, The Prospector and Bullseye are about to be sold to a Japanese museum for a real fortune. Woody is amazed at his special status (which is expressed in his increased exchange value) and at the fact that his show had numerous merchandised commodities. Woody thinks about giving up being Andy's toy but Buzz convinces him to return to Andy's room (using Woody's words from *Toy Story*) by reminding him of his symbolic value as Andy's toy.

The brilliant trick of the *Toy Story* films (and all the Disney-Pixar films starring objects) is that they make the audience forget about the sign value of the toys, that is, they stop seeing them as objects of consumption that would indicate the owners' financial and social status. Going beyond the conventional borders of cultural imagination, these films create a fantastic, by inviting the audience to believe that in a consumerist culture a mass-produced, mass-mediated, dispensable commodity–an *ad absurdum* object–can have an identity and become a subject. The films apply this mode of expression to encourage the audience to identify with the objects endowed with subjectivity. In other words, the subject in the audience positions itself into this false, created subject-object position. The false promise of a position where subject and object are not differentiated, a position before the thetic break, revives "a search, an experiment to regain the lost or unreachable totality," which is so typical to the working mechanism of the fantastic (Kiss 28, *translation mine*). Woody and Buzz's repeated lines of "Reach for the sky!" and "To infinity and beyond!" can therefore be interpreted as (false) road-markings towards the Real, full semiosis and self-transparency. This promise creates an enormous energy in the microdynamics of the subject to retrieve the Real. The created desire is the 'hook:' showing the object with its own subjectivity makes us believe that a position like this exists, and we want to retrieve this position when we buy the merchandised items outside the cinema. Selling the fantastic as a commodity functions exactly because the film revived our desire to find the position where subject and object do not differ. The business of selling merchandise can make a tremendous amount of profits–the merchandise for *Cars* has already passed the 10 billion dollar mark worldwide–("Cars") because consumer society celebrates the fantastic and posits it as the primary object of desire (Kiss 31). Kiss refers to Žižek's concept of repressive desublimation, which

> succeeds in getting rid of this autonomous, mediating agency of 'synthesis' which is the Ego: through such 'desublimation' the Ego loses its relative autonomy and regresses towards the unconscious. However, this 'regressive', compulsive, blind, 'automatic' behavior, which bears all the signs of the Id, far from liberating us from the pressures of the existing social order, adheres perfectly to the demands of the Superego, and is therefore already enlisted in the service of the social order. As a consequence, the forces of social 'repression' exert a direct control over drives. […] The agency of social repression […] assumes the form of a hypnotic agency that imposes the attitude of 'yielding to temptation'–that is to say, its injunction amounts to a command: 'Enjoy yourself!' (Žižek 16)

This command in consumer society would be "Consume!"–a message which supports the purchase of the commodity of the fantastic. Once the desire is made to retrieve the Real, and the social command is to enjoy ourselves through consuming, no wonder that merchandising brings back a lot more profit than the films themselves. Through the purchasing of the merchandise sold in parallel with the films, we try to prolong the promise that we can find the Real. The merchandised item, however, lacks exactly what we bought it for: its (cheated, created, illusionary) subjectivity. The subject of the object does not exist; it is just a fantastic, a *fata morgana*. The empty object has no intrinsic value any longer, and as soon as a new film comes out, creating yet another, newer desire to reach for the Real in the form of buying its merchandise, the empty object will be thrown-away.

This process is clearly pronounced in *Toy Story 2*. The Prospector tells the story of Woody's puppet series. "Woody's Roundup" (a probable reference to *Howdy Doody* [Booker 83], an American western puppet series from the middle of the 20th century) was never properly finished as "once the astronauts went up, children only wanted to play with space toys" (Lasseter *Toy Story 2* 0:29:36–40). The pattern of the western being replaced by science fiction is actually the same pattern as Woody being replaced by Buzz in *Toy Story* (1995). Moreover, The Prospector talks about toys and not about TV series, thus highlighting the importance of the profit made through merchandise in the film industry (this scene actually shows various merchandise from *Woody's Roundup*). *Toy Story 2* refers to merchandising once more in the scene at Al's Toy Bar when Tourguide Barbie shows Andy's toys around: "And that's the Buzz Lightyear aisle. Back in 1995, short-sighted retailers did not order enough dolls to meet demand" (0:47:19). The year 1995 is a clear reference to *Toy Story* and to the immense success the film had in the cinemas and in toy stores. Self-advertising is very common in Pixar animations: the cross-references of earlier or upcoming animations of the studio in a "product placement" fashion are typical to most Pixar movies. The ball in *Luxo Jr.*

appears in *Toy Story* and in *Monsters, Inc.* (here with Jesse and Nemo); Gerry (from the Pixar short *Gerry's Game*) is the toy repairman in *Toy Story 2*; Dinoco is Pixar's recurring petrol company.

Focusing on the subjectivity of their object characters, Pixar animations, and significantly the *Toy Story* trilogy advertise the importance of holding on to commodities, in this case, toys. In this respect, most of these animations with object characters have a rather anti-capitalist message that warns against the tendencies of consumerist practices. On the contrary, by starring objects as protagonists, which are the most suitable figures to be merchandized, these animations actually propel the selling rates of merchandized items.

3.3.2. Think Green: *Monsters, Inc.* (2001)

Monsters, Inc. is probably the most complex animation of all those observed in this chapter as it fittingly and creatively wraps up current environmental issues in its multi-layered semiotics. Similarly to the *Toy Story* trilogy, it takes place in a city bearing much resemblance to an American metropolis. "Monstropolis," representing a world inhabited by monsters, is going through a severe energy crisis for which experts are trying to find a solution. The prime energy source of the monster world is the screams of human children and as it is getting more and more difficult to scare children, the city is running short of its energy source. Monsters, Inc.–the company that collects and refines screams into energy–faces a bankruptcy, which is about to be avoided by the extreme and forced exploitation of the energy source. The two protagonists, Sulley and Mike, however, discover that children's laughter could function as a renewable and alternative energy source as it is ten times more powerful than the screaming. Three aspects of the movie are discussed in this chapter. First, the characterization of the behavior of the media during the Monstropolis energy crisis incorporates several motifs of real-life journalism that are responsible for making the news service on environmental issues rather scaremongering. Second, according to Hardin's theory, during times of shortage of the energy source, it is a rather logical and human–though insensible and harmful–reaction to ignore the crisis and keep on exploiting the available resource. The behavior of the CEO of Monsters, Inc. aptly depicts how most people keep on clinging to traditional energy use instead of applying limited or alternative practices. Third, the happy-ending of *Monsters, Inc.* lies in the complete industrial conversion to alternative energy-use (children's laughter), which is described as ten times more powerful, renewable and environment-friendly (instead of scaring children, monsters make them laugh). These

aspects qualify *Monsters, Inc.* as one of the most complex and elaborate Disney animations on contemporary environmental issues.

The movie aptly describes the role of the media in channeling information about the energy crisis as well as about how dangerous uncontrolled energy-sources could be to the city-dwellers of Monstropolis. The repeatedly shown newspaper articles and headlines frame environmental issues in a very similar manner as our contemporary journalism tends to deal with these topics. Various forms of media in Monstropolis inform monsters about the deadly threat human children pose to monsters. As the CEO of Monsters, Inc. says: "There's nothing more toxic or deadly than a human child. A single touch could kill you" (Docter: 0:03:13–17). In other words, the monster world depends on the energy, coming from human children with whom any direct contact would be fatal. This pattern and the visual codes in the film refer to nuclear energy use.

The movie presents Monstropolis going through a severe energy crisis. Besides the narrative references (monsters do not drive to work because of the scream shortage, for example), articles in the local newspaper, *Monstropolis Horn*, appear repeatedly, signaling of the presence of the media. Even though the articles themselves are not readable, the method of framing of the stories is fairly obvious. Framing is a journalistic practice to make the given story easily interpretable through the application of various semantic elements, such as headlines, photographs, quotations, highlighted sections, etc. Even if the articles cannot be read, these elements are enough for the (literate) audience of the film to have a clear idea about the stories covered by the newspaper. The first front page that is shown in the film bears the headline "Rolling Blackouts Expected" with a photograph of a factory resembling a refinery. Under the photograph, "Prices Double at the Pump" can be read in smaller captions. On the left of the page, "Scream Shortage Looms" appears with a photograph of Henry J. Waternoose, suggesting an article based on an interview with the CEO of Monsters, Inc. On the right, the root of the problem is identified in the article with the title "Modern Kids Harder to Scare" (0:07:10). Since the front page of the city's daily paper presents articles which are all related to the energy crisis (in a cause-and-effect or in a descriptive manner), the overall idea conveyed is that the topic has more importance and primacy than any others. This journalistic practice of agenda-setting suggests the severity of the environmental crisis. As Cox points out (175), agenda-setting is a technique which is fairly effective in drawing the public's attention to unobtrusive environmental issues. The scream shortage is not visualized as an environmental catastrophe but it is a problem urgent enough to repeatedly appear in the newspaper.

Monsters, Inc. also depicts how the media deal with environmental catastrophes. Monsters believe that children are fatally toxic and when one of them (Boo) accidentally manages to enter the monster world, the media reacts hysterically. The news spot in the TV news about the sighting of a human child is introduced with a slightly-manipulated version of the trefoil symbol (the international black and yellow symbol of radiation): instead of the central circle, a figure of a child can be seen. The TV spot is presented as follows:

> **TV Anchorman:** If witnesses are to be believed, there has been a child security breach, for the first time in monster history.
> **CDA [Child Detection Agency] AGENT:** We can neither confirm, nor deny the presence of a human child here tonight.
> **WITNESS #1:** Well, a kid flew right over me, and blasted a car with its laser vision.
> **WITNESS #2:** I tried to run from it, but it picked me up with its mind powers and shook me like a doll.
> **WITNESS #3:** It's true! I saw the whole thing.
> **EXPERT IN THE STUDIO:** It is my professional opinion that now is the time to panic! (0:27:18–42)

The coverage is composed in a fashion that it lives up to journalistic tendencies of reporting on environmental catastrophes. As summarized earlier, there are a number of criteria that define the value of news, many of which are not difficult to fulfill once it comes to environmental catastrophes. These stories, as Cox sums up (160–161) are event-centered (a child security breach), tied into a 24-hour daily circle (child sighting occurred "tonight") and characterized by strong visual elements (the monster-international symbol of child-danger, the footage of the chaotic scene). The coverage also lives up to the criteria of prominence ("for the first time in monster history") and proximity (child sighting happened in Monstropolis) and observes the norms of objectivity. The TV anchorman's introductory line ("if witnesses are to be believed…") and the statement of the CDA spokesman show how representatives of the media strive to remain objective. Objectivity also means quoting multiple sources (CDA agent, witnesses) and to show sufficient expertise on the issue (expert). The news spot, however, turns out to be quite imbalanced due to the fact that witnesses as well as the expert (who is expected to have the highest credibility) over-dramatize the situation and these statements are incorporated in the spot. The front page of next day's *Monstropolis Horn* shows a close-up photo of Boo shot from a low position, thus magnifying the height and the alleged power of the child. The headline says "Kid Sighting at Sushi Bar" and the accompanying articles summarize how authorities try to gain control

("'Stay Calm' Pleads Mayor") over the chaos ("Child Feared Loose in City"). In other words, the front page of the daily paper shows the power of framing to highlight given aspects and to influence the readers. These media examples from *Monsters, Inc*. are in close parallel with real-life media practices of applying stylistic tools to (slightly) over-dramatize environmental issues (event-centered or not).

The movie advertises the advantages of alternative energy sources, which turn out to be human children's laughter. Through direct contact with a child, Mike and Sulley realize that children are not toxic at all and that they could collect energy in a child-friendly (i.e., environment-friendly) manner if they reorganize Monsters, Inc. Their plan is hindered by the CEO, Henry J. Waternoose, who wants to forcefully exploit children, by kidnapping them and extracting their screams by torturing them. When Sulley and Mike realize how children are about to be exploited, the CEO silences them by eliminating them from the company. The CEO's personal interest in saving the factory that has been in his family for three generations (0:18:37) makes him so blind that he would be ready to "silence anyone who gets in [his] way" and to "kidnap a thousand children before [he would] let this company die" (1:12:21–27). The urgency of an energy crisis, that is the finiteness of the energy source, can be best understood by Hardin's concept.

In 1968, Hardin published his influential article on *The Tragedy of the Commons*, which discusses how resources that people have open access to can be deteriorated even though all the participating people seek their interest on a clearly rational basis (Hardin's term of the "commons" instead of "open access" has already been proved problematic). The central idea of the article is a game theory that hypothesizes a pasture with open-access to herders. If every herder lets only one cow on the pasture, all the cattle will be healthy and fat and the herders can sell them for a fortune. Using the pasture in an open-access manner, herders are allowed to send in a second or a third cow, as it is a logical interest of a herder to double or triple his income. However, there is a point in this process (an X number of cows), where the pasture can still provide for the maximum number of cattle in an optimal quality. From this point on, these two variables (number of cows, quality of pasture) cannot be increased at the same time. If a herder decides to send one more cow on the pasture, his profit is obvious, the costs, however, are almost invisible: the more cows graze on the pasture, the less the pasture can provide for the animals and the more deteriorated the pasture itself becomes. This cost, however, is divided between all the herders, meaning that the cost is almost invisible, compared to the doubled-tripled income of one single herder (Hardin 1244). Logically, all herders will continue to increase the number of their cows. This process ends in

a crisis, as the decreased quality of the pasture means lean and later on haggard or dead animals and the total deterioration of the land. As long as there are still free plots suitable for new pastures, herders will move on in a nomadic fashion and exploit the land. The tragedy of the commons can be divided into four parts: Golden Age, Silver Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age (Tóth 67–74).

Hardin, however, does not apply this game theory only to the human-land relationship. All natural resources available for human use follow the same pattern because these resources are limited. However, the concept of pollution in all its forms can be understood with the help of this game theory (in this case, however, the pattern is somewhat different: we do not exploit nature, we burden it with waste). Given the fact that the resources and the space nature provides us is finite, Bentham and Mill's theory on the "Greatest Happiness Principle" is simply impossible in an environmental understanding (Hardin 1243). The maximum quality of welfare for the maximum number of people cannot be carried out due to the finite quantity of resources.

Following Hardin's concept on the tragedy of the commons, Monstropolis is in the phase of the Bronze Age, that is, the energy source has proven to be insufficient, having a visibly negative effect on the everyday life of the city-dwellers. At this point of the process the users of the energy source arrive at a bifurcation: they either insist on the lifestyle that was affordable in the Golden Age but already proved to be unsustainable in the Silver Age, or they realize that exploiting the source is not possible anymore and they adapt their lifestyle to less energy and/or apply alternative energy sources additionally. According to Tóth, the latter is difficult to realize, as the power of tradition is generally so strong that the community of the users of the energy source fails to perceive the critical nature of the shortage, and they end up entirely exploiting the source (73).

Mr. Waternoose aims at solving the energy crisis of Monstropolis by extracting screams from children with a torturing machine called The Scream Extractor (0:50:02). The machine and the brutal way to exploit children is a fitting symbol of contemporary methods for exploiting natural energy sources. Moreover, Waternoose is characterized as a CEO who is blinded by personal and company interests and ignores any ethical moves that could be benevolent to the environment (children) but most probably financially harmful for the company. His evil plan, however, is carried out by Randall, an evil scarer, thus making Waternoose transparent in the conspiracy. Corporate interests hindering alternative energy use and ethical behavior towards the environment are referred to in *Cars* (2006) as well, thus presenting these capitalist interests in a negative light.

After unveiling Waternoose's evil plan to the CDA, Sulley and Mike manage to re-organize the factory. The role of the CDA (Child Detection Agency) is a mixture of the duties of SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics, a counter-terrorist elite team of the USA) and of those of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency of the USA, with the mission to protect human health and the environment through developing and enforcing regulations ["EPA–Our Mission"]). The agents of the CDA appear every time there is a threat of human contact with monsters, but they also serve as secret agents to detect unethical abuse of the energy source (1:13:33). In other words, Monstropolis is characterized as a community in which environmentally unethical deeds are subject to legal regulation. Moreover, these regulations are enforced even during the time of a severe energy crisis. In this respect, *Monsters, Inc*. depicts an urban society that is environmentally conscious and ethical to such an extent that is not typical of our urban societies. Waternoose's plan to exploit the energy source is not only unethical but illegal as well. Once he is taken away from the company, Sulley becomes CEO and revolutionizes the energy industry by making children laugh: a non-intrusive, environmentally-friendly way of gaining ten times more powerful energy. The happy ending, the paradigm shift in gaining energy is covered with the slogan "Think funny" (1:18:40), which is a very possible reference to the environmental maxim 'Think green.'

Monsters, Inc. manages to discuss current environmental issues in great depth without turning the movie into a 'green' animation. Using mostly visual semantics, the film conveys environmental ideologies in a very subtle manner. Visual references to international symbols, to well-known American agencies, and to the activity of the media during environmental crises are enough to make the criticism of contemporary environmental practices coherent and easily understandable. Even though the topic of the energy crisis appears perfor*mative*ly in the Disney canon, it does not disturb the lower semiotic channels, leaving the movie entertaining for the younger audience. Similarly to several previously discussed animations, *Monsters, Inc*. inserts the perfor*mative* topic in the context of perfor*mance*: the story clearly follows the normative pattern of good vs. evil and it incorporates the compulsory happy ending. Both of these tools are typical in American animations but neither of them has the potential to fully support the expression of environmental issues. The strict categorization of good and evil are problematic because these matters are normally too complex to clearly make a distinction who acts properly or improperly. The narrative cliché of the happy ending is even more problematic, considering the fact that contemporary environmental issues do not seem to have a happy ending, at least not in this generation. These tools are traditional

elements in animations (perfor*mance*) but they are most problematic when it comes to representing contemporary environmental issues (perfor*mative*)

3.3.3. On the Road: *Cars* (2006) and *Bolt* (2008)

This chapter aims at showing how the performative power of the American entertainment industry functions as a main mover of subject formation in two Disney animations, *Cars* (2006) and *Bolt* (2008). The Piston Cup (alternative of NASCAR) and Hollywood, respectively, have the ideological power not only to hail at their partakers but also to manipulate the environment that they present as natural. Both movies draw a rather negative picture about these institutions, going as far as claiming them and their participants fake. The protagonists' distancing from this mass-mediated, performative power is shown in the framework of a road movie, allowing the characters to enter spheres where they can recreate their subjectivity through experiencing direct contact with the environment. These new spheres are described in a manner referring with nostalgia to the fifties-sixties' America, to road trips and to small, rural settlements as opposed to American metropolises.

The performative power of the American entertainment industry in *Cars* and *Bolt* could be best understood with Bollobás's theory of performative constructionism. The mass-mediated and merchandise- and profit oriented world of the American entertainment industry has a performative power on the protagonists' subjectivities: both movies depict how perfor*mances* (intended by this power) turn into perfor*mative* constructions of the subject (unintended by power). This critique of the dominant power is best expressed in the film genre of road movies. As David Laderman (2002:1) describes the genre in the introduction of his book, *Driving Visions: Exploring the Road Movie*: "… [T]he road movie: rebellion against conservative social norms. The driving force propelling most road movies, in other words, is an embrace of the journey as a means of cultural critique." In *Cars* as well as in *Bolt*, the American interstate highways and scenic, minor roads function as settings of a subversive transformation of the subject, offering an embedded critique on the contemporary society subjected by the ideological power of the American entertainment industry. Depicting the environment as a manipulated, created whole, in which the natural is subjected to unnatural, profit-oriented interests, shows an allegory with the protagonists being subjected to and contrasted by the same performative power.

The 2006 Disney-Pixar hit, *Cars* celebrates the American car culture and car racing traditions by staging a world inhabited only by cars. The protagonist of the film is Lightning

McQueen, an arrogant rookie at the Piston Cup. After losing track on the interstate, McQueen ends up in Radiator Springs, a forgotten little village on Route 66. Having torn up the main street of the town, McQueen is sentenced to repair the road. Unwillingly, he spends some days in the town during which he gets to know the other cars living there and the unhappy history of the settlement. After taking part in the last race, where he gives up the Cup for the sake of helping an old, destroyed racing car finishing its career respectfully, McQueen returns to Radiator Springs and decides to set up his headquarters there, thus placing the settlement back on the map. Despite its rather simple story, the film aptly describes the performative power of the American entertainment industry, here the mediated, profit-oriented world of car racing.

The Piston Cup is the platform where cars of the latest technological development compete with each other, attracting hundreds of thousands of viewers on the spot and through mass media, thus functioning as an enormous screen of advertising. The fictive Piston Cup is depicted as a business and profit-oriented machinery, propelled by ideological practices carried out by the racers, the audience, the sponsors and the like. Following Althusser's argument (695), the race itself is the material existence of the ideology, a State Apparatus, through which individuals can be interpellated as subjects. In other words, the audience as well as the racers are subjected to the discourses of this ideological power, making them blind to the fact that their relationship to their real conditions of existence are just imaginary. Since they take their position unambiguous, the practices they carry out will ensure the realization of the ideology. These practices are all shown in the first scenes of the film.

The ideological world of the Piston Cup is the diegetic form of performative power: the very first sentences coming from the dark, from a yet-unknown character show how he creates his subjectivity in accordance with the hailing ideology of the Piston Cup: "OK. Here we go. Speed. I am speed. […] I am faster than fast. Quicker than quick. I am Lightning. (0:00:30–34)." Lightning McQueen is shown both as an ambitious and determined racer bringing much entertainment to the audience and also as an arrogant, big-headed egoist, whose motivation for the Piston Cup is fuelled by the promise of Dinoco (a fictive oil company first appearing in *Toy Story*) to become McQueen's new sponsor. His vision (0:12:30–0:13:03) of himself being financially supported by Dinoco depicts a McQueen who is not only a race champion but also a successful womanizer, a Hollywood celebrity and even a planet-rescuing action hero. The business-driven world of the race is therefore the materialization of the dominant ideology, hailing at the individuals and subjecting them as race cars.

Even though the first racing scene highlights the race cars' potency, fame and success, and thus seemingly positions them in a dominant category of subjectivity, the narrative of the film swivels around this misinterpretation: race cars are not active, potent agents in the process of their subject-formation, instead they belong to a marked, object position. Bollobás describes this category as follows: "[T]hose in the marked positions–who are defined in their otherness, their corporeality, their being the object of language and vision, patients "suffering" the acts of agents (who they are not), in short, as Gilles Deleuze puts it, as "object beings" (Foucault–Deleuze 206)–are excluded from subjectivity" (78).

Race cars of the Piston Cup live up to this description: they are sights, offered to the audience to look at them because of their different corporeality (race car technology); they are copied and resold in the form of merchandise (0:16:39), which reassures their object position. Because they are constantly present in the mass media, they are abused for profit by companies that obviously cheat their customers or hurt their interests (Rust-eze lies about bumper shine; Chick Hicks's sponsor is called "Hostile Takeover Bank"). Moreover, the introduction of the character of the agent (Harv) in the narration places the race cars in a patient-position, forcing them to be controlled by their agents ("You've gotta get to Cali, pronto! Just get out of Radiation Stinks now, or Dinoco is history, you hear me?" [1:27:30–38]). Despite all these factors, race cars are not shown discontent with their position: they love the limelight and their success ("I love being me!" [0:11:53]). This reaction is exactly what Louis Althusser describes by: "the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself'" (701, *emphasis in original*).

As Bollobás (81) argues, "poststructuralist theories can accept the idea of agency as, to use Butler's definition, "the assumption of a purpose *unintended* by power" (Psychic Life 15; *emphasis in original*)." This move away from a subjectivity intended by power (perfor*mance*) to a newly created ontological entity unintended by power (perfor*mative*) is the basic narrative of *Cars*, showing the protagonist, Lightning McQueen, resisting the power placing him in a marked, object position (a race car controlled and abused by business interests) by creating a transgressive subjective ontology: a race car living outside the world of car racing. To get to the "outside" of car racing, McQueen has to leave the beaten track (the Interstate) and (re-)discover new, neglected roads. Roads being quintessential for cars, they are endowed with several symbolic layers. Moreover, the difference between various kinds of roads is the key to refer to nature in the completely technology-driven world of cars.

The race scene at the beginning of the film ends in a three-way tie, so the organizers decide on a tie-breaker race in California in a week. McQueen leaves the East Coast in his truck (Mack) on Interstate 40 to the West Coast. The manner in which the highway system is represented is rather impulsive (with the extradiegetic song "Life Is a Highway"), showing the ever-growing, invading conquest of man-made technological constructions over nature: a multi-level highway junction; a meander of a river passed over by the road, hills and mountains cut through for the sake of a straight highway, etc. (0:16:55–18:16)–all these visual representations as well as the possible dangers of long drives on the interstate (Mack falls asleep, other cars bully him, etc. [0:19:20–21:50]) depict a rather dubious and negative picture of the otherwise practical highway system. Mack accidentally loses McQueen who–in a desperate search to find Mack again–ends up leaving the interstate and starts roaming about on Route 66, the historical, cult-road of cross-country American travel.

He reaches Radiator Springs, a forgotten small town described with a load of idyllic, nostalgic values. As M. Keith Booker points out, *Cars* is "an homage to America's car culture in general, with a nostalgic look back at the days of driving on scenic highways in the days before interstates" (Booker 94). This nostalgia is emphasized by the characterization of the town-dwellers of Radiator Springs and their far from hectic lifestyle. Except for Sally (a newer edition of a Porsche Carrera), the cars are old models, many of them resembling American cars of the 1950s and 1960s. Besides not being the latest editions, for McQueen, they are also "hillbillies" (0:40:33). Radiator Springs is described as the opposite of the media and business-propelled world of the fancy Piston Cup that has made McQueen a successful racing car. In this forgotten town, however, McQueen is unknown as a racing rookie, and he is often called "sticker" (after the many sponsor stickers he wears), "punk" or "prisoner." Unwillingly though, he accepts his position as a "prisoner" in the town and fulfills his punishment: he repairs the main road in the town which he has accidentally torn up. The town-dwellers are very thankful and in the meantime make friends with McQueen, who by now takes an in-between position: by claiming "I'm not them [the world of car racing] (1:18:40)," he discursively positions himself against the so-far dominant power.

The road that the race car fixes has several layers of meaning. First, the road is property of the town, which rightfully orders McQueen to repair the damage caused. Second, the road is quintessential for the town to financially survive, as the small, private businesses run by the dwellers can only exist if there are customers: cars that pass through the town on the main road and stops by the stores, motel and café. Third, the main road connects the dwellers together and forms them as a community. As McQueen repairs the road, the inhabitants start

"renovating" their stores as the new road brings about a communal renewal. Fourth, this road (and not the Interstate) leads McQueen to Radiator Springs, distancing him from the rather negatively depicted world of the Piston Cup. In the technology-driven world of cars, the slower but scenic Route 66 is characterized as the 'natural environment,' the sphere of encountering the forgotten nature. The road is the way that offers McQueen the possibility to create his subjectivity against fame, success and egoism: characteristics that are created by the world of car racing.

McQueen realizes the difference between the ideology represented by the Interstate and that of the smaller roads during a drive with Sally, who shows him the landscape from above. He marvels at the creations of nature, undisturbed by roads and points out that cars traveling on the Interstate have no idea what they are missing. Sally explains:

> Forty years ago, that Interstate down there didn't exist. […] Back then, cars came across the country a whole different way. [*The Interstate fades away and the untouched hilly landscape is shown.*] The road didn't cut through the land like that Interstate. [*Old-fashioned "footage" about a busy, lively Radiator Springs from forty years ago.*] It moved with the land, it rose, it fell, it curved. Cars didn't drive on it to make great time. They drove on it to have a great time. […Then] the town got bypassed just to save ten minutes of driving. [*The Interstate re-appears, Radiator Springs disappears from the map, there are no more customers arriving.*] (1:11:20–12:35)

Sally's lesson makes McQueen understand how the natural environment is subjected to and being intrusively manipulated by fast technological development, which is best advertised through car races, like the Piston Cup. The allegory of the two different roads (the mainstream Interstate and the bypassed slow road) shows McQueen two clear-cut options concerning his subjectivity: ride the Interstate to California and keep "livin' life in the fast lane" (1:10:05), which makes him a race car, or give up that life for other values that he is getting to know now. McQueen cannot make such a black-and-white decision; (re-)creating his subjectivity either as a racecar or as a "hillbilly" is not an option any more although, for the first time, he is able to take agency to construct himself as a subject. Therefore, he refuses to be abused by predator sponsors, has his ad stickers painted over and takes some new ones advertising Radiator Springs. He tanks Fillmore's organic fuel instead of Dinoco's petrol after the following short but surprisingly to-the-point conversation:

> **MCQUEEN:** Wow! This organic fuel is great! Why haven't I heard about it?

> **FILLMORE:** It's a conspiracy, man! The oil companies got a grip on the government. They're feeding us a bunch of lies, man. (1:19:57–1:20:08)

At the tie-breaker race in California, even though McQueen is just some meters from winning the Piston Cup, he would rather give it up victory to help The King, an old racecar finishing his last race respectfully. McQueen is offered Dinoco's sponsorship, which he desired so much at the beginning of the film, but he firmly rejects it, saying that he wants to stay loyal to his own small-business sponsors. McQueen decides to set up his headquarters in Radiator Springs, brings customers to the town and places it back on the map.

McQueen takes agency to re-construct his subjectivity not according to the ideology of the entertainment industry but against it: he remains a racecar but becomes a member of the community of Radiator Springs, rejects the sponsorship of a mega-corporation but accepts that of the small, local companies: his subjectivity is an in-between category, perfor*mative*ly creating a new ontology by resisting the dominant ideology.

Two years after the release of *Cars*, Disney created a story of yet another a famous character living in the limelight of the American entertainment industry. *Bolt* (2008) starts by telling a story of a superdog whose mission is to save his owner Penny, a young girl fighting to rescue her father from the evil Dr. Calico. At the start, the movie makes the audience believe that the story is about to be formed around Disney's age-old "super-animal-rescues-human" cliché. Soon, however, the audience is proven wrong: *Bolt* is something brand-new in the Disney canon, a brave step, rather unexpected from such a conservative studio. Bolt's life, his actions, his mission to save Penny is nothing else but a highly successful television series produced by Hollywood. The first ten minutes of *Bolt* (a rapid action scene with a lot of violence) deludes the audience into believing that the film is going to be a Disney-action movie until a bell rings (Howard 0:10:30), signaling the end of shooting the scene: a movie-in-a-movie construction. The real twist, however, is that scenes are being shot by this fictive Hollywood studio in a way that Bolt should not recognize that it is only a film. *Bolt*, thus, has very much in common with Peter Weir's movie *The Truman Show* (1998), in which the life of the protagonist (played by Jim Carrey) is staged and directed by a film studio without him knowing about it. In both movies, then, the subjectivity of the protagonists are performatively created by the American film industry, denying them the possibility of defining themselves outside the discourse of the diegetic film-making by guaranteeing an inauthentic pseudo-reality and environment.

Bolt has to be kept in the dark so that his reactions on the screen remain real. As the director explains: "We jump through hoops to make sure Bolt believes everything is real. It's why we don't miss marks. It's why we don't re-shoot. […] Because […] if the dog believes it, the audience believes it" (0:13:45–14:10). The world of Hollywood, potentially even more than that of the Piston Cup, is straightforwardly described as cold, profit-oriented and pretentious. The studio scene clearly points out that creating *a* reality is a tool to trick the audience in and to attract as many of them as possible so that the viewing rates would not drop. For this reason, the next episode of the Bolt TV series ends with a cliffhanger: Penny gets separated from Bolt, who–obviously–keeps on searching for her in the studio after shooting until he gets lost and accidentally ends up being shipped to New York. As Bolt is distanced from the world of Hollywood, he comes in contact with the authentic environment, experiencing it for the first time without the manipulation of Hollywood. Bolt's way back from New York to Hollywood qualifies the movie a road movie, sharing many similarities with *Cars*.

The journey–yet again–from the East Coast to the West offers Bolt the chance to create a subjectivity for himself–for once, outside the performative discourse of Hollywood. As long as Bolt keeps "failing to recognize its own fictionality" (Hedrick: 41), the existing scripts and patterns acquired in Hollywood will be acted out, sustaining his subjectivity created as a perfor*mance*. Bending the bars, the heat vision, the famous "superbark" and the like makes Bolt believe in his superdog-being and as these functions are "suspended" outside the studio, his real corporeal functions appear: pain, bleeding and hunger. Mittens (an alley cat, one of Bolt's sidekicks on the journey) enlightens Bolt: "Look, genius, you're part of a TV show. You know what's that? Television. It's entertainment for people. It's fake. Nothing you think is real is real" (0:46:30–46:38). Realizing that the natural environment functions according to different laws, Bolt needs to re-evaluate whatever he knows about the environment as well as about himself as a natural being. He blames the loss of his super powers on Styrofoam package peanuts that keep sticking electrostatically to his fur, for example. He discovers the laws of the environment on the road trip from the East Coast to the West on the highway, in trailer parks and in a mobile home. In other words, *Bolt* limits the representation of the environment mostly to the technologically influenced aspects, leaving the animals (Bolt, Mittens, Rhino and the pigeons) the only creatures of nature.

The question of what counts as *real* (i.e., not a Hollywood-creation) is repeatedly addressed in the movie, showing the nature of this concept as relative, constructed and

mediated–similarly to the postmodern understanding of reality. Bollobás summarizes it as follows:

> In this [postmodern] theoretical framework, literature will offer examples for where the "real" has been most spectacularly lost; […] where "facts" can be approached in mediated forms, textual or otherwise; […] where universes and selves have become plural; where the world cannot be read referentially but only as a series of signs and sign systems, or as interlocking signifiers without corresponding signifieds. (11)

As the director of TV show says, Bolt's reality is constructed by film-makers (they create the surroundings around Bolt in a way that he perceives them as real), taking agency over Bolt's subject formation as well. This subjectivity becomes relative as soon as what he has experienced as real so far turns out to be a "shifting, moving entity" (11). As Mittens points out, the performative power of Hollywood to create relative and constructed "realities" (best symbolized with the lightning bolt mark being painted on Bolt but which he considers the natural [birth]mark of his power), Bolt starts constructing a subjectivity perfor*mative*ly. Outside the Hollywood studio and its performative power, Bolt–now conscious of not having any bionic power to be a superdog–retains his position as a dog saving others, and rescues Mittens from the pound and Penny from the burning studio. Re-creating his superdog-being out of resistance to the power that constituted him is a perfor*mative* similar to Lightning McQueen's racecar-being created in opposition to the dominant power of the Piston Cup. Bolt's agency in his subjectivity creation, however, is limited to the time he spends on the road: as soon as he arrives back to Penny, he fails to take agency any more. The reason for this is a many-layered dependence hierarchy in which the characters are subjected to various ideological relationships between them and a character standing above them.

Bolt is owned by Penny, whose Hollywood presence is guarded by her rather powerless mother. All Penny's effort to break away from Hollywood withers away because of her unsupportive mother and her pretentious, profit-oriented agent. The character of the unnamed agent–besides personifying all the negative characteristics the movie suggests about Hollywood–takes agency instead of Bolt, Penny and the mother, leaving them impotent to speak for themselves, thus pushing them in an object position. Bolt has the chance to create his subjectivity on the road from New York to Hollywood but once he returns to the studio, he inserts himself back into the hierarchy of agency, losing his perfor*mative*, subversive subject category of being a superdog outside Hollywood without super powers. After the dramatic end-scene, where Penny and Bolt almost die among the burning stages of the studio

(a strong symbolic summary of how Hollywood grows over them and 'takes their life away'), Penny's mother fires the agent and quits (in the name of Penny and Bolt) and the family moves to a silent detached house. Bolt–as Penny's dog (possession)–in accordance with the dominant ideology, acting out regular social scripts, becomes an average house pet. His transgressive, in-between perfor*mative* is re-created into a normative perfor*mance* of an average non-superdog.

The two movies, *Cars* and *Bolt*, are fitting examples to how Disney weaves subversion into its narratives. The working pattern of Bollobás's performative constructionism can be detected in recent Disney animations as well. The observed movies present the technology of subversion in the genre of road movies, which offer a fitting framework for cultural critique, in these cases, a critique on the ever influential, performative power of the American entertainment industry through (mass-) media. The subtlety of subversion and of the perfor*mative* creation of new ontologies of categories of subjectivity are expressed in an allegoric manner, keeping the magical and imaginative flavor of Disney films.

As Annalee R. Ward points out, Disney's more and more often presented postmodern worldviews cannot be shown straightforwardly deconstructive because they would be inconsistent with the ethical and moral traditions these animations are rooted in (126–127). She argues that–following Carl F. H. Henry's "hard core destructive" and "soft core constructive" practices of postmodern worldview–Disney animations are rather alternative constructivist as they celebrate individual freedom and the studio "builds its profit on advocating a world in which good and evil exist." There is a legitimacy of poststructuralist reading of contemporary Disney animations, however. The way Henry describes deconstructive practices does actually fit the present interpretation of *Cars* and *Bolt*, and is in accordance with Bollobás's theory on performative constructionism: "Absolute relativism prevails; […] destructive postmodernism eliminates […] freedom, purposive agency, the self, realism, truth, good and evil, and historical meaning" (qtd. in Ward 126). Contemporary Disney animations avoid drawing a clear-cut distinction between good and evil by characterizing the protagonists as flawed and by not inserting one single character of the 'evil' anymore (or if so, they are relatively powerless). The narrative turns are centered around the performative (re)creation of the self either in accordance with the dominant ideology (perfor*mance*) or against it (perfor*mative*), in which scenario the essence of good and evil (as well as other binarisms) become meaningless or irrelevant. In *Cars* and *Bolt*, the performative power of the American entertainment industry is criticized by a narrative,

telling how the protagonists subjected to this power manage to take agency and create their subjectivity in a perfor*mative* manner.

One should not, obviously, overlook the fact that Disney itself is a significant part of the American entertainment industry and, logically, it does have a performative power on its audience. Despite it, the two movies do not show any kind of apparent inconsistency because of two major facts. First, following Stephen Greenblatt's argument (121–161), the production and containment of subversive practices by the ideological system guarantees its constant functioning. In other words, critique on the dominant ideology self-generated by the system would muffle and absorb possible subversions unintended by the system. Second, both movies focus primarily on the character "on stage" and not on the diegetic audiences. In this fashion, the performative power exercised on the audience is represented as marginal, showing it less visibly. Thus, subversion and the post-structural understanding of subject-creation can smoothly fit in the Disney narratives.

4

The Animation Microcosm: Disabled Bodies

4.1. The Ideal and the Disabled Body

The construction of the perfect, idealized body as young, healthy, and proportionate has always been a rule of thumb in Disney animations. The politically and ideologically overloaded bodily forms have been critiqued from various academic standpoints: Annalee R. Ward (2002) discusses–among other factors–the body as a channel of morality; the chapters of *From Mouse to Mermaid*, edited by Bell, Haas and Sells (1995) focus on the gender aspects of bodies constructed in Disney films; M. Keith Booker (2010) repeatedly discusses the racial aspects of body representations. Few articles are, however, devoted to the disabled body and the representation of disability in Disney animations although the phenomenon of depicting characters with corporeal differences, impairment and handicap has been present in the studio's animated films since the beginnings. The twenty years between 1990 and 2010 showed significant re-conceptualizations of disability: characters with changed or disabled bodies start taking agency and create their own subjectivity, thus interrogating the traditional object position of individuals with marked bodies. Disability appears not as a timeless, transparent essence of the character but as a social construction: disability is in the eye of the beholder; disability is what a given community at a given time calls disability. This part of the thesis highlights that such re-conceptualization, urged by changing cultural and social views on disability, extends the limits of Disney's age-old idea of the perfect body in a subversive manner.

For the purpose of discussing the disabled body as a social construction, the general concept of the body needs to be revised, which has constituted a great part of the academic discourse as a surface or metaphor for exploring and interpreting texts in the power and political discourses within which it exists (Mirzoeff 2). Instead of being purely a biological given with its physical extension, the body becomes understood as a creation of power relations, which control, form, supervise and regulate it. The body is therefore a discursive construction, always-already subjected to the forces of these powers. In *Discipline and*

Punish, Foucault argues that these technologies of power place the body in a system of subjection through various institutions which traditionally have a regulating role in the social setup (military, school, etc.). Within these institutions, the methods that control the operations of the body, thus subjecting them to the power relations are the "disciplines" that produce "docile bodies" (*Discipline* 137–138). These models of domination in certain institutions, however, soon turned out to be the general practice of controlling the whole society, and the power-mechanisms started to function outside the institutional framework, thus creating the illusion of a "free" state (211). Foucault applies Jeremy Bentham's concept of the architectural design of the *Panopticon* to explain how these power relations function without physical force or even without the visibility of the "source" of the power. Bentham's design has never been built (Mirzoeff 8) but the logic of the power structure can be applied to social practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when special discipline schemes were gradually extended to the whole social body, thus forming a "disciplinary society" (Foucault, *Discipline* 209). Bentham's *Panopticon* construction functions on the basis of visibility. The architectural complex is arranged in a ring-shaped pattern with a central tower in the middle, from which the supervisor has visual access to every single cell, which is backlit, thus showing the shadows of the inmates. Foucault writes about the controlling power of the construction as follows:

> Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions […] The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this visibility is the guarantee of order. (Foucault, *Discipline* 200)

Knowing to be seen all the time makes the inmates behave according to the rules even if surveillance is occasional. Since the supervisor is never seen, the inmates cannot be sure when they are being looked at but the architectural construction of the *Panopticon* ensures the state of consciousness of permanent visibility (200). In other words, "power has its principles not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes" (202). The internalization of these power relations is the real subjection, born mechanically from a fictitious relation (202). Bollobás writes about the poststructuralist understanding of the body as follows:

> Poststructuralist theories insist that the human body is not something a priori given, but a cultural text brought about by knowledge, power, and discourse. Bodies, therefore, are not born, but are produced by signifying practices. As such, the body ceases to be the opposite of the soul, but becomes instead a surface inscribed by various social discourses, whose aim is to homogenize, normalize and ultimately control the body. (79)

Subjects are created and re-created in the discourse of power relations in a way that they conform themselves to the rules and conform their bodies to the ideologically loaded ideal body.

The ideal body is an illusion, which exists only in its representations and which functions always as a catachresis, a signifier having no signified. The concept of the ideal body has always been defined by the *Zeitgeist*, weighed down in its historical context and constructed by the ideologies and beliefs of the time. The representation of the body, in other words, is always subjected to historical and ideological changes with the function remaining the same: "to control the development of the physical body by promoting certain physical characteristics at the expense of others" (Mirzoeff 2). Mirzoeff writes about the relationship of the physical-biological body and its representations as follows:

> The body in art must be distinguished from the flesh and blood it seeks to imitate. In representation the body appears not as itself, but as a sign. It cannot but represent both itself and a range of metaphorical meaning, which the artist cannot fully control, but only seeks to limit by the use of context, framing and style. […] At the same time, the corporeal sign has very real effects upon the physical body, especially in regard to determining what is held to be "normal." (2)

What is "normal" or accepted as a "norm" is often believed to be measurable and then indicated with statistics. The Western thought tendentiously conceptualizes normalcy as a Gaussian bell curve, thus trying to support the idea of the given, fixed norm. As Davis argues in his influential article "Constructing Normalcy," the concept of measurable, statistically describable "normalcy" appeared in Europe in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth centuries and has not left the traditional Western thinking. Through the all-pervading work of the British and French statistical societies, the concept of the ideal body–which used to be envisioned as a divine body unattainable by humans–soon became re-interpreted as the *average* body. Statistics functioned as a means of monitoring and surveillance. This paradigm shift of the ideal body led to "tyranny of the norm" (6), which celebrated "the bourgeoisie as rationally placed in the mean position in the great order of things" (5), thus excluding

everybody who was at the extremes. A more problematic aspect of this tendency was the association of the "abnormal" categories with the lack of given morals: "the body has an identity that coincides with its essence and it cannot be altered by moral, artistic, or human will" (8). This concept of determinism "grouped together all allegedly "undesirable" traits" (10) of race, gender, nationality, criminality, disability and the like, thus highlighting the presupposed immoral nature of all. Besides the social and political attitude towards these groups (eugenic practices of subtle to intrusive manner were present from the mid-nineteenth century), contemporary representative arts and literature reassured the subordinate social and moral position of people not fitting into the statistically envisioned interval of normalcy.

The tendencies of constructing the "normal" body have been contested by researchers working in the field of disability studies, calling for alternative ways of thinking about the abnormal (17) by deconstructing the tyranny of the normal. Disability studies is a relatively young interdisciplinary field of academic interest, which focuses on the social, historical, and cultural understanding of the disabled body. The dynamic development of the field called "new attention and concern for disability as an essential category–as essential as age, class, race, nationality, and sexual orientation," as editor Davis summarizes in the preface of third edition of *The Disability Studies Reader* (xii). Most research in disability studies conceptualize disabilities and the state of being disabled as a social construction rather than a medical condition of changed physical or psychological disorders. In other words, disability is socially constructed from mental and corporeal differences between disabled and non-disabled, similarly to gender, being socially constructed from biological differences between females and males (Wendell *Rejected* 5). The experience of having some kinds of disability is, therefore, highly influenced by the reaction of the society within which one lives. This reaction can be expressed in many forms "from social conditions that straightforwardly create illnesses, injures and poor physical functioning, to subtle cultural factors that determine standards of normality and exclude those who do not meet them from full participation" (36). These subtle factors point much beyond the essential problems of architectural constructions of public buildings or access-free public transportation. The structure of most spheres of the public world favors the young, the healthy and the physically capable, suggesting that these traits are considered the norm. Despite the legal statutes passed in the United States with the aim to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in federally funded programs, employment, public entities, public accommodations, telecommunications, and so forth (*Rehabilitation Acts Amendments, Section 504* [1973] and *Americans with Disabilities Act* [1990]) and to provide disabled children with special educational methods (*Individuals with*

Disabilities Education Act [1975]), the overall social concept has not significantly changed about people with disabilities (Davidson 144).

One of the reasons why the general social concept of people with disabilites cannot change is that literary works of art keep reproducing the hegemony of normalcy. As Davis points out, disability is present in almost any literary work either through direct references (mostly to side characters) or through the applications of phrases highlighting abnormal instances: although these figures of speech root in linguistic use, the regularity of these occurences serves as a reflexive patrolling function by checking and noting instances of normalcy and those of disability (Davis 15). Elaborating on this very idea, Mitchell and Snyder composed their influential book *Narrative Prosthesis*, in which they claim that the social concept of disability–understood as a problem to be solved–is a metaphor to the literary narrative process. Disability appears as a stock feature for characterization (differentiating any character from the "norm") and also as a metaphor for social and individual collapse "by lending a "tangible" body to textual abstractions" (47–48). In other words, disability functions as a "narrative prosthesis" inasmuch as it signifies bodies not conforming to cultural and social scripts, thus providing a dynamic site around which the narrative could be built. The 'normal', average body does not offer enough potential for a story to be told, whereas a body with any deviance does serve as impetus for a dynamic narrative. The authors summarize a basic scheme of the narrative process centered around a form of deviance:

> [F]irst, a deviance or marked difference is exposed to the reader; second, a narrative consolidates the need for its own existence by calling for an explanation of the deviation's origins and formative consequences; third, the deviance is brought from the periphery of concerns to the center of the story to come; and fourth, the remainder of the story rehabilitates or fixes the deviance in some manner. This fourth step of the repair of deviance may involve an obliteration of the difference through a "cure," the rescue of the despised object from social censure, the extermination of the deviant as a purification of the social body, or the revaluation of an alternative mode of being. (53–54)

The narrative pattern described by the authors is recurring not only in literary narratives but also in filmic ones. Disney animations make use of this pattern by presenting deviancies of the bodies, the corrrection or cure of which is tightly connected with the moralising messages of the animations. The deviant body, therefore, functions in several Disney animations as a metaphorical device for what is unwilling to conform or for what disrupts the imagined orderly world based on strict norms. This is one of the most often applied

techniques of characterizing Disney villains, for example. The evil, deviant subjectivity is anchored down in a deformed body. The symbolic nature of disability in these animations, discussed in the upcoming chapter (4.2), has little to do with the subjective experience of disability, but it functions as a corporeal representation of resisting conforming. Animations like *The Beauty and The Beast* (1991), *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010) and *Brother Bear* (2003) apply disabled or deformed bodies not as a reference to the experience of disability as a social construction but as a narrative symbol of being unable or unwilling to conform to the norm. The correction or cure of the deformed body occurs only when the moral lesson is learned and the character starts acting according to the expected rules and norms. In other words, the deformed body that can be revoked by magic is a form of punishment, and–as the other side of the same coin–the reward is the anonym normalcy. Since the corporeal "norm" in Disney animations is always represented by young, healthy and beautiful/handsome characters with proportionately constructed bodies, these Disney narratives celebrate and solidify these features as the utmost dimensions of the ideal body.

Channelling such a concept of the ideal body is just as problematic as weighing down the concept of the disabled body to immorality, nonconformity and individual irresponsibility. Adverstising the ideal body with such features excludes not only those with impairment but also people who are elderly, suffering from any kind of disease, unable to carry out certain activities or do not possess such body proportionality. The ideal body, re-appearing in public venues such as films offers an extremely limited range into which fewer people can fit than cannot. This is one of the main reasons why the paradigm of the ideal human body should be and has already been contested on several platforms of the academic discourse. The observed twenty years of Disney animations offer numerous instances in which the category of the ideal body is extended by incorporating the characterization of the disabled, the elderly and the disproportionate. *Hercules* (1997), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Finding Nemo* (2003), the *Toy Story* trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010), *Cars* (2006), and *Up!* (2009) are discussed in Chapter 4.3. These animations re-conceptualize the ideal body by (1) gradually breaking away from the allmighty power of magic; (2) dissolving the ideological knot between the marked body and the concept of immorality; (3) pointing out the social construction of disability; and (4) by assigning agency to characters with marked bodies.

These animations do not follow the genre of fairy tales unlike the ones in Chapter 4.2: the gradual omission of magic which turns an unmarked body into a marked one leads to the

re-interpretation of corporeal anomalies. Instead of being shown as punishment for immorality or nonconformity (thus originating in the given character), deviances of the ideal body are understood as biological realities which the social environment keeps re-interpreting. In other words, corporeal differences are no longer conceptualized as the fault of the character who possesses them but as a sole corporeal factor which becomes disabling once the surrounding social attitute considers it a disability. As further discussion shows, deviances of the ideal body such as a hunchback, a lame fin or an elderly body with limited abilities, are irriversible biological realities that keep "staying" with these characters independently of their morality or conformism. Unlike the magically-given corporeal differences, these corporeal categories are constant, and their judgment lies solely in the reaction of the diegetic society. Animations discussed in Chapter 4.3, therefore, focus rather on the disabling power of the social attitude and highlight the fact that once this attitude changes, characters with disabilities ceases to have ideologically marked bodies. This is how the category of the ideal body becomes extended.

The role of technology is essential both in the re-interpretation of the environment and in discussing bodily dimensions. With the appearance of mass-produced object-characters, the concept of the ideal body became partially democratized. The various corporeal dimensions of objects paved the way for the re-conceptualization of the ideal human body. Moreover, corporeal changes and damage of the body can be more subtly depicted with object-characters, functioning as an allegory to human bodily changes. Characters with technological ontology are more often shown with changed bodily dimensions than human characters, therefore in animations such as the *Toy Story* trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010) and *Cars* (2006) the body is conceptualized as a versatile arena constantly exposed to changes. Since these animations, as I have argued in Chapter 3, keep highlighting the importance of clinging to objects, the issues of getting old, having an elderly body and how society deals with the elderly are recurring. The social understanding of aging as a disabling factor appears marginally in Disney animations (*Mulan* [1998] is a significant exception, concerning the fact that she dresses up as a man and takes her father's place in the army, who is elderly and physically not capable any more to defend his country). The first elderly protagonist is the main character of *Up!* (2009), Carl Fredricksen. The film underlines the fact that Carl's elderly state is a natural flow of our lives, it belongs to everybody's life, and aging–no matter how disabling it might be–is part of the normal course of biology. The animation also points out the fact that Carl's abilities are mostly defined by social expectations and reactions, by the pace of life and by the availability of technological equipment. In other words, *Up!*

depicts the disabling nature of the biological process of aging as a result of social factors. Carl's elderly body and ability to carry out certain activities are supported by various technological equipment (hearing aid, stair chair lift), making his otherwise limited physical abilities extended. Carl's elderly body with the technological support qualifies as an ideal body, as Davis argues ("The End" 313). In these animations, the concept of the ideal body as young, healthy, proportionate and capable to do any kinds of activities has gone through some serious reconsiderations. Corporeal "norms" have been extended by understanding marked bodies as a social contruction and not as a failure of the character. Thus, new categories of corporeality have been introduced in Disney animations: the disproportionate, the elderly and the disabled are newly-formed subject categories.

To understand the working mechanisms of disability as a social construction, Bollobás's performative constructionism will be applied. Her theory is in accordance with current streams of disability studies that also deny the concept of the subject as an essence and argue for the social construction of disability as well as of non-disability. In other words, the disabled subject is always already constructed–similar to other subjectivities inflected by gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth–in the framework of power and discourses. Performativity and the social construction of disability came into the discourse of disability studies to deny the essentialist standpoint. In a rather reductionist manner, essentialism claimed that "identity was tied to the body, written on the body" (Davis, "The End" 303). This concept was contested by the idea that the body is socially constructed and the identities around the body come about in a performative way (303). Envisioning the state of being disabled as a perfor*mance* led to the active discussion of passing. Passing is an ideological undertaking to become something other than what we are (Smith 464), a form of boundary crossings, involving the transgressions between binary oppositions (Bollobás 167). The passing of disabled people is a practice which aims at denying the markedness of the body and serves as a form (or offers the chance) to overcome physical stigmatization. The use of contact lenses instead of high-dioptric glasses, which reveals the person's impairment, or the application of digital micro hearing aids as well as wearing prosthetic limbs are all various forms of passing, which aim at turning a marked body into unmarked. Besides the application of technological additions–to which several people with disabilities might not even have access–passing most often comes about in acting out expected behavioral patterns. According to Simi Linton, disabled people pass by concealing their impairment or limiting their activities to those that do not uncover their disability so that they could avoid discrimination or to deny to oneself the reality of one's bodily state (Linton 229). As Brenda Brueggemann,

a deaf university professor, describes her experience in her article, passing as hearing was her strategy until she had a "coming out" as a deaf person (209). Her bittersweet memories tell how often she found herself "pressured into passing and then greatly pressured by [her] passing" (212): she could pass well but not completely, which led to situations where she kept finding a mirror reflecting her listening limitations. The practice of passing takes a huge emotional toll from the passers (Linton 229). After her coming-out as a deaf person, Brueggemann writes about passing in retrospect as follows: "I learned that […] I am the narrator of my experience. I learned that there was a price for passing, that the ticket cost more that just a pretty penny, that the fear of always, at any moment, being "found out" was far worse than just telling at the outset" (217).

In Bollobás's terminology, what Brueggemann was doing for twenty-five years was a perfect example of full passing. In Bollobás's definition, full passing "stages existing normative identities" and "it replaces one pole for the other in the system of binaries" (169). Full passing, as a form of perfor*mance*, aims at deceptions by trying hard to act out altogether the opposing pole: as a deaf person, Brueggeman performed the hearing. As a form of deception, full passing is a deadly serious game (169), where no slippage is allowed (171). Such forms of passing can be found in several instances of Disney animations I discuss here. Although they are often just visual references to perfomed manners expected by the society, films like *Finding Nemo* or *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* deal with the topic in its depth. Bollobás differentiates full passing from play passing, which interrogates the binary system by constantly revealing the slippage of passing. In other words, instead of replaying the norms of the other end of the binarism, play passing creates a new category, thus contesting traditional dichotomies. In this respect, play passing is deeply subversive and in the context of disabled bodies in Disney animations no evidence can be found for such form of passing. The reason for it is that these animations still perform rather conservative ideologies and incorporate only modest subversive instances. The animations produced in the last twenty years managed to detach the disabled body from immorality, nonconformity and the concept of the individual's fault, and also from the idea that disability is reversible once moral lessons are learned. Animations leading up to this change are discussed in the next chapter, 4.2. Non-symbolic, non-moralizing interpretations of disability–discussed in Chapter 4.3–envision the disabled body as a biological impairment the disabling effect of which depends on the character's social and technological environment. In these cases, morals are not anchored down in the disabled body and disability is shown irreversible, i. e. by the end, the *status quo* is restored not by the "cure" of the disability but by the changing of the social interpretation

of disability. This factor re-assures the premise that disability is always already a social construction, and even if the biological impairment remains, the concept of disability can be re-evaluated. In a nutshell, in the first group of animations, change is expected from the disabled, in the second group, change is expected from the society. This idea and the incorporation of other subtle subversions are promising steps to change the general concept on people with disabilities, and hopefully they will be followed by more daring concepts to re-interpret the social understanding of the body, especially that of the disabled body.

4.2. Body Moralities: *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010) and *Brother Bear* (2003)

Disney animations are one of the central sources of children's moral education. Often relying on well-known European fairy-tales, these animations "shape children's views of right and wrong, their morality" (Ward 2) by repeatedly referring to social scripts and ideologies that need to be followed to be an accepted member of the society. As Annalee R. Ward's book *Mouse Morality* shows, there are numerous instances in Disney animations where clearly defined moral cases of virtue and vice, and acceptable and deviant behavior are problematized. This chapter focuses on cases where morality is most visible: on the surface of the body. The observed animations offer evidence to the unfortunate social practice of associating negative morals to marked bodies, quickly leading to stigmatization. The intertwined nature of moralities and corporeal dimensions is emphasized by the omnipotent power of magic, which can create the change on the surface of the body and can withdraw it once the moral lesson is learned. This practice re-assures the concept that deviant bodies are caused by one's own fault and immorality, on the one hand, and celebrates the idea of the perfect, idealized body, on the other hand. Moreover, it also places the expectation of a (moral) change in the character with a marked body instead of expecting it from the environment, that is, the society. Marked or deviant bodies are interpreted here as symbolic disabilities, leading to characterization that discourages the social reconsideration of disability. The narratives of the animations are perfect examples for Mitchell and Snyder's concept of the narrative prosthesis as they swivel around a disabled body and its "cure." The cure in these animations is expected from the character with the marked body and not from the diegetic society. The deviant body is a moral fault, a sin for which penance should be done. The animations dicussed in this chapter apply this dogmatic concept of fairy tales but

they are tendentiously opening up for the re-interpretation of the relationship between body and morality. In line of this thinking, these animations pave the road to the conceptualization of disability detached from moral issues and envisioned as a physical/biological impairment that is disabling only because of the improper reaction of the society.

Beauty and the Beast (1991)–similarly to *The Little Mermaid* (1989)–is Disney's return to the genre of fairy tales in the Disney Renaissance period. The theme of the beautiful girl and an enchanted man in a beastly body was a recurring pattern among the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' French literary fairy tales, written by Perrault, Mlle Bernard, Madame d'Aulnoy, Madame de Villeneuve and Madame Leprince de Beaumont, among others (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 47). Disney's version is closest to de Beaumont's tale even though there are numerous changes in the Disney screenplay (Jeffords 165). As Susan Jeffords argues, by revealing the curse at the very beginning of the plot, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* places the Beast and his enchanted state in the focus of attention (166). In other words, from the narrator's very first lines on, it is made clear that the "spoiled, selfish and unkind" prince was turned into a beast "as a punishment" because he rejected giving shelter for an old woman with haggard appearance. Having no love in his heart, the prince was doomed to live as a beast until "he could learn to love another, and earn her love in return" (Trousdale and Wise 0:00:57–0:02:14). The punishment for the prince's immorality and rude behavior is multipled by the fact that the old woman/beautiful enchantress transformed the prince's servants as well–into household objects. The moral failure of the selfish prince, therefore, changes other lives and other bodies as well.

The unveiling of the tragic flaw sketches out the upcoming story, which centers around the beastly body and its 'cure' that would re-establish the *status quo*. The focus of attention is directed to the marked body of the Beast, which–envisioned as a symbolic articulation of disability–functions as a narrative prosthesis. The story of the *Beauty and the Beast* would collapse without the marked corporeal dimensions of the Beast, which serves as the surface of moral engraving in the magically-driven fairy tale scenario. Due to the omnipotent power of magic and the conceptualization of changed bodies as a result of immoral acting, the story solidifies and reassures the idea that "the 'deviant' subjectivity violently erupts upon the surface of its bodily container" (Mitchell and Snyder 58), thus anchoring bodily differences to individual flaws. The Beast's characterization and his complete withdrawal from society suggest the rightful interpretation of his state as a disability. Newly disabled people often experience the feeling of loneliness, alienation and despair (Wendell *Rejected* 25) besides frustration, grief and shame (27). The Beast performes all these features, categorizing himself

as a "monster" (0:34:41) and constantly yielding to his aggressive temper which roots in all these emotions. The Beast hides himself in the castle and has no social contact with anyone, except for the servants, who are also enchanted. Even though he lacks direct contact with the people of the neighboring village, the Beast constructs his beast-subjectivity according to the social scripts that stigmatize marked bodies. In a Foucauldian understanding, he fails to have a docile body in the power structure of society, and even if social reactions are not visible in the castle, the Beast has internalized the disciplines of normality and knows that with such a body, he cannot live up to these disciplines. In this sense, his negatively interpreted bodily dimensions are socially constructed even though he lives separately from the society.

The Beast's castle functions as a heterotopia. Foucault argues that there are places which are unreal places, presenting "society itself in a perfected form"–these are the so-called utopias–; and there are places which are real places, "something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted," which he coins as heterotopias ("Of Other …"). In other words, heterotopias are organic, real spaces that are built into another space but they are not organic parts of it. Heterotopias guarantee the proper functioning of this other space, especially if they function as "crisis heterotopias" or as "heterotopias of deviation" ("Of Other…"). Crisis heterotopias are "privileged, sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly" ("Of Other…"). The West Wing of the Beast's castle functions as a crisis heterotopia because this is the space where he is condemned to be and where he keeps the enchanted rose, which tells how much time is left for the spell to be broken. The West Wing thus functions as a metonymy for the Beast's crisis, and it is a strictly forbidden space for Belle. The power relation between the Beast and Belle, as his prisoner, can only be maintained if Belle does not find out the moral flaw of the Beast. The castle itself, in which the Beast locked himself up, is a heterotopia of deviation. In Foucault's argument, these are places "in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" ("Of Other…"). Heterotopias nowadays are hospitals, prisons and retirement homes, which all serve as collective places of individuals with corporeal or moral deviances, thus guaranteeing the proper functioning of the society. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the castle is a heterotopia of deviation for the enchanted creatures. The ideology of the place reassures the Beast's and his servants abnormality in relation to corporeal norms of the envisioned society.

The village below the castle, the "poor, provincial town" (0:03:38) is the symbolic place of strict and conservative social expectations. As Belle appears on the streets of the village, people start gossipping and speaking ill about her. Belle is characterized as a beautiful, intellectual woman, reading books and being obviously more educated than the rest of the village. These qualities already go beyond the norms of the little provincial town, and Belle is coined as "strange," "dazed," "distracted" and "rather odd," which makes her "very different from the rest of [the village]" (0:03:52–0:05:44). The strict norms of conformism are highlighted by the people singing that "It's a pity and a *sin*, [that] she doesn't quite fit in" (0:07:14–0:07:17, *emphasis mine*). Belle's strangeness as well as her father's lunacy are ideas created by the society, which the the animation repeatedly highlights. Belle's father, Maurice, is an old inventor, whom the village considers a "crazy old loon" (0:08:18). Even though the doctor of the asylum claims that "Maurice is harmless" (0:48:15), he is ready to change his professional opinion about the old man once he is offered a certain amount of gold. This instance shows how relative the concept of illness and disability are and how much they are socially constructed. Wendell points out that "not everyone who is identified by other people as disabled (either for purposes of entitlement, purposes of discrimination, or others) considers herself or himself disabled" (*Rejected* 25). Maurice is not lunatic but coining him as one and getting him locked him up in the asylum (another heterotopia of deviance) is a tool for Gaston–Bell's suitor–to blackmail the girl into marrying him. Gaston is a self-centered, aggressive "male chauvinist pig" (Jeffords 170), who is depicted as the most handsome man in the village. His popularity among the people is mostly due to the fact that he is mascular and possesses all the corporeal dimensions that qualified a man to be the stereotyped image of male beauty toward the end of the 1980s, such as "cleft chin, broad shoulders, brawny chest, wavy hair and towering height" (169–170). The depiction of the social interpretation of Bell, Maurice and Gaston in relation to their bodies loosens the ideological connection of body and personality: one can be beautiful but considered strange; one can be completely healthy but considered mentally ill; and one can have dubious and harmful morals and be the most handsome. These three instances are narrative and visual tools that pave the way to the acceptance of the Beast's seemingly opposing corporeal dimensions and personality.

Untying the bond between the ideal body and the ideal personality is a significant step in the reinterpretation of the body, but it remains rather weak in *Beauty and the Beast*. The Beast's marked body and its social understanding shows the same pattern as those of people with disability. The narrative and the visuals of the animation depict the Beast as a disabled

character. When Belle arrives in the castle to look for her father there, the Beast's behavior follows the patterns of passing. Performing the unmarked, invisible body is most practical in the darkness: the curtains of the castle are closed, excluding the daylight and thus hiding the Beast's body. As Belle offers herself to stay with the Beast in exchange for her father, she tells the Beast to "come into the light" (0:22:36). Bell is terrified by the Beast, who–knowing that Bell could break the spell–starts performing certain manners to cover his beastliness. Following Lumiere and Mrs Potts's directions how to perform the gentleman, the Beast acquires proper table manners (0:51:25–40), gets bathed, has a new hair cut (0:59:03–59) and conceals his body in his most elegant dress clothes (1:00:12). Belle assists to these instances of passing, showing the Beast how to dance (1:00:59) and teaching him to read (0:57:45), for example. As Linton points out, the passing of the disabled is in many cases demanded and expected by the family or close social environment of the individual because they feel uncomfortable by the (visibility of) disability (229).

Characterizing Bell as the teacher of the Beast is a peculiarity of the Disney version of the story, which ultimately turns the Beast into a rather powerless figure who needs to be taught and taken care of. Jeffords claims that Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* deprives the Beast of his "command of the enchanted powers of the castle," which eventually leads to the Beast's victimization (168). This aspect of the animation reassures once more that the Beast's condition should be understood as a form of disability. According to Erving Goffman, people with socially stigmatized bodies are often victimized by constantly being expected to correct whatever can be corrected about their marked bodies (134). Belle's 'helpfulness' leads to a powerless, dominated version of the Beast, which accounts for a deeply conservative and old-fashioned description of the nature of disability in *Beauty and the Beast*. In this respect, the Beast's subjectivity is created in a perfor*mance* manner as he does not act against the power and the social practice that stigmatizes him.

Conceptualizing disability as a temporary state, which can be changed or reversed by moral acting solidifies the false traditional idea of disability that finds its reasons anchored to the individual's personality and identifies its origin in his or her moral flaws or mistakes. The magic spell cast on the Beast disappears if he works hard for it, that is, he learns to love someone and he is loved in return. By performing proper manners and passing as a gentleman with unmarked body, the Beast manages to fulfill the expectations and the spell breaks. This narrative perfectly fits in the narrative pattern summarized by Mitchell and Snyder, inasmuch as the deviance is repaired by the "obliteration of the difference through a 'cure'" (53), but such a depiction of disability is rather harmful. Claiming that a form of disability ceases to

exist once the individual makes the necessary steps conceptualizes disability as dependant from the individual's will. Wendell claims that "patients may be made to feel that they are not getting well because they do not want to, do not live sufficiently 'pure' lives, are not visualizing their health properly, or are not confronting psychological or spiritual issues that are harming their bodies" (*Rejected* 97). According to the author, this attitude is so prevalent because the constant development of Western medicine and the numerous non-Western medical approaches keep pronouncing the controllable nature of the body, whereas there are many cases in which the body simply cannot be controlled or cured any more. (95–98). The reversibility of the curse on the Beast suggests that the body is completely controllable through proper moral attitude. Such a message is rather conservative concerning the social judgment of people with disabilities because "as long as the goal is to control the body, there is great potential in all healing practices for blaming the victims, and for discarding or ignoring all those whose bodies are out of control, including people who are terminally ill, disabled, chronically ill, fat or addicted" (98). The happy ending of the story is obviously the moment when the spell is broken but the scene turns out to be rather problematic. The Beast is fighting with the jealous Gaston, who eventually stabs the Beast before he falls down from the façade of the building and presumably dies. The Beast's wound is fatal, and he dies indeed for some seconds. His death coincides with two narratively significant moments: the very last petal of the magic rose, signalling how much time the Beast has left to break the spell, falls down; and Belle confesses her love to the Beast–not by the fairy tale cliché of Love's First Kiss but only by saying that she loves him (interpreted as a linguistic performative). The moment of these three coinciding instances–despite providing a happy ending–carries a misleading message about disability. The fall of the last petal signals the moment from which the Beast and his servants's enchanted, marked bodies would become their permanent bodies, i.e. from this moment on their bodies cannot be changed–or in Wendell's interpretation–controlled. This climactic moment is, however, made to coincide with the death of the Beast, which inevitably builds a logical connection between the two events: the uncontrollable body means the death of the body. The peak of the love story becomes the bottom of the representation of disability. Drawing an equation between the disabled body and the dead body goes beyond "discarding or ignoring all those whose bodies are out of control," thus making the interpretation of disability in *Beauty and the Beast* unacceptable and harmful. Even though the narrative and the visuals encourage the detachment of personality and body–by, for example, showing the Beast warm-hearted towards the end, or by characterizing Gaston as a handsome man with terrible morals–,

disability is interpreted as a form of punishment in the context of the individual's morality, and shown as a temporary state that can be changed by the proper behavior of the individual. *Beauty and the Beast* advertises the importance of the control of the body, which–as Wendell has pointed out–leads to the unfortunate concept of placing the blame on the disabled individual instead of realising the disabling nature of social reactions concerning bodies which are considered abnormal.

A big-headed, haughty and egoistic monarch, the South-American emperor, Kuzco is the protagonist of Disney's *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000). The animation shows many similarities with *Beauty and the Beast*, still it remains a floppy, moralizing story, colored by some humorous dialogues. The title of the film suggests a Disney-version of yet-another European literary fairy tale. Hans Christian Andersen's short tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, published in 1837, however, proves to be only loosely related to the animation. Andersen's title character, the Emperor, is characterized as a self-absorbed, vain ruler, who does not care much about his official duties. These characteristics are dutifully built in Kuzco's character, who is an eighteen-year-old, unqualified, egoistic emperor, obsessed by his assumed personal perfection. The two swindlers, proving the emperor's haughtiness in Andersen's tale, appear in the Disney animation as Yzma and Kronk. Yzma is Kuzco's advisor, a middle-aged woman with excessive greed for power and knowledge of magic. Kronk is Yzma's side-kick, whose clumsiness and constant moralizing keep ruining Yzma's attempts to kill Kuzco. Andersen's story focuses on the emperor and his ministers' hypocrisy and conceitedness as they all fall for the brilliant trick of the swindlers: they claim that "those who [are] unfit for their position, [will] not be able ot see the fabric they are weaving," similar to those "who [were] unusually stupid" ("Andersen" 2011). Serving in high offices, the emperor and his ministers do not dare to confess that they cannot see anything and believes in the existence of the clothes, a pure perfomative creation of the swindlers. The emperor's hypocrisy and stupidity is publicly revealed as he proceeds completely naked among his people. The Disney animation makes excessive use of the character of the conceited, narcisstic emperor and depicts Kuzco so self-absorbed that he does not realize Yzma's attempts to kill him. Moreover, her miscarried asssissination attempt turns the emperor into a llama, which instance is in parallel with Andersen's motif of swindlers weaking the body of the ruler. Apart from these similarities, *The Emperor's New Groove* detaches itself from Andersen's short tale and centers more around the importance of friendship, which eventually gives Kuzco a new groove, a new "rhythm in which he lives his life, his pattern of behavior" (Dindal 0:05:31–36).

After Kuzco fires Yzma from her advisor position, she decides to take revenge and poisons the emperor so that she could take the throne. Her plan goes awry when Kuzco drinks some llama extract instead of the poison and turns into a camelid. Llama-Kuzco unconsciously ends up on the cart of a local peasant, Pacha, who has just been informed by the emperor that his house and plot will be confiscated and Kuzco's summer resort will be built there. When Kuzco regains his consciousness, he accuses Pacha of turning him into a llama and kidnapping him. Despite the false accusation, Pacha helps Kuzco return to his palace where he supposes Yzma would turn him back to his human form. On the way back, they accidentally meet Yzma and Kronk, and undercover, they realize their treacherous plan to kill Kuzco. Pacha and the emperor become friends during their journey and in the final fight with Yzma, together they manage to defeat her. Kuzco is turned back into a human and learns to be emphatic with other people.

The *Emperor's New Groove* is a rather simple story which revolves around the changed corporeal dimensions of the emperor, which serve as a narrative prosthesis. As opposed to *Beauty and the Beast*, Kuzco's weak morals do not serve as reason for his marked body. His transformation is unintended and originates from a failed assissination and coup d'état, not from his personality as that of the Beast. In this sense, the story envisions the acquisition of the marked body as an accident. Moreover, the curse breaks even without his moral change, which he actually acquires but had he not done so, the spell would have been broken anyway once the antidote is provided. The antidote–a vail of human essence–can be found in Yzma's laboratory, which is not depicted as a sorceress's hidden place for black magic but as a laboratory of scientific research. Yzma and Kronk wear white lab outfit, rubber gloves and protective googles. The lab is equipped with test-tubes and has a special collection of ingredients. The story, therefore, suggests not only the total control of the body but also the importance of Western scientific medicine in curing bodies after accidents. Wendell summarizes how scientific Western medicine "participates in and fosters the myth of control by focusing overwhelmingly on cures and lifesaving medical interventions, and by tending to neglect chronic illnesses, rehabilitation, pain management, and the quality of patients' experiences" (*Rejected* 94). The fight-scene in Yzma's laboratory incorporates numerous transfigurations of the characters, showing the wide potency of (medical) science. Transforming Kuzco back to human, i.e. regaining his unmarked body, is a completely additional, unnecessary instance of the story. Except for losing "[his] beautiful, beautiful face" (0:24:37), Kuzco does not suffer from any disadvantages of being a llama: he is capable to carry out any activity, and the fact that he is a talking llama does not invite any negative

social reactions. The need to restore his original corporeal dimensions roots in three various reasons.

First, *The Emperor's New Groove* is an excellent example for Mitchell and Snyder's narrative prosthesis. Given the fact that the political status quo is restored by the usurper's–Yzma's–'elimination,' the corporeal restoration of Kuzco does not seem necessary any more. It is still incorporated in the story because his changed body functions as a symbol for disability, which is a narrative tool, a narrative prosthesis and as such it has to be rehabiliated or fixed. Second, curing his body is the one possible 'happy-ending' solution in the context of scientific medicine, whose importance is repeatedly highlighted in Yzma's laboratory. Retaining his llama-body would function as a chronical illness, which is a less-favored solution of Western scientific medicine. Third, given the fact that Kuzco is an absolute monarch, his body–as Nicholas Mirzoeff argues (54)–can and should be understood on two levels: as a body natural and as a body politic. The animation creates a very strong tie between the ruler's body and his/her political power. Regaining his human form is necessary for Kuzco to convey his political power through the visual representations of his body.

Mirzoeff elaborates on the perfect, idealized and ideologized body, the body politic and presents it in the context of Louis XIV and the later Republican State. Going back to the medieval and early Europe, Mirzoeff starts his argument with claiming that all human bodies are governed by frailties and imperfections. There is no exception to this rule, not even for kings, and political theorists knew it all the time. For this reason, they developed a theory claiming that the king had two bodies: a body natural and a body politic. Ernst Kantorowicz–cited by Mirzoeff–describes the body natural as a "Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People [than the King]" (Kantorowitz, qtd. in Mirzoeff 54). As opposed to the body natural, the king's body politic is

> a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People and the Management of the public weal, and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and Old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to. (Mirzoeff 54)

Mirzoeff does not forget to point out that in this denial of the natural body, there is only one way the body politic can be expressed and this is through visual representations. Paintings, statues, coins of the king, therefore, are not so much about the king as a personal

entity but about the king's political body standing for the political power, position and law of the king. Damaging, injuring, attacking this body politic (represented through visuals) therefore count as the highest offense as they go against the laws, the state and all the cumulative values of the nation's unity that are encapsulated in the body politic of the king. It was not just attempted assassinations against the king *per se* that deserved severe punishment on the perpetrator's body but in the cases of all crimes committed in the king's jurisdiction (Mirzoeff 55). Foucault writes the following in *Discipline and Punish*: "Beside its immediate victim, the crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince" (Foucault qtd. in Mirzoeff 55). The severe punishment of the offender's body was necessary to restore the king's body politic to perfection (Mirzoeff 55).

The Emperor's New Groove, being a story about a coup, focuses both on Kuzco's natural body, which transforms into a llama and on his body politic, which represents his political power in the form of visual references. The emperor's body politic is created by such visualities as the interior and exterior design of his palace consisting engravings, statutes and paintings of Kuzco. The excessive representation of the emperor refers to Kuzco's self-absorb personality on the one hand, and to his body politic, on the other hand. The latter is made clear in the scene in which Yzma–recently made redundant by Kuzco–is destroying busts representing the emperor. The destruction of visual representations of the emperor's body politic encourages Yzma to make a coup by killing Kuzco:

> **KRONK:** Well, it's better you're takin' out your anger on these things [crashing busts of Kuzco] instead of the real Kuzco, huh?
> **YYMA:** That's it, Kronk! That's it! I'll get rid of Kuzco.
> **KRONK:** The real Kuzco?
> **YZMA:** Of course, the real Kuzco! Don't you see? It's perfect! With him out of the way and no heir to the throne, I'll take over and rule the empire. (0:11:26–47)

Yzma, therefore, contests both Kuzco's natural body and body politic: the former is meant to be eliminated but ends up being turned into a llama; the latter is contested in the political maneuver of a coup, after which Yzma becomes the emperess. The animation extensively shows how the new ruler's body politic overwrites Kuzco's after his 'funeral' orchestrated by Yzma. Kuzco's portraits are overpainted and Yzma's portraits start covering the walls (0:33:44); artists make sculptures of her (0:33:51); and the architecture of the palace is redesigned as a giant visual representation of the emperess (0:33:57). The animation,

therefore, puts a great emphasis on the visual representations of the ruler–both Kuzco and Yzma–thus suggesting their omnipresent political power.

With Kuzco's return to the palace as the lawful ruler and with his return to his human bodily dimensions, Yzma gets her punishment for usurping the throne, i.e. damaging and assaulting Kuzco's body politic. Her punishment is in accordance with Mirzoeff's argument: "Any offence against the absolute monarch's body was a capital crime, punished with spectacular violence against the perpetrator's own body" (Mirzoeff 55). The punishment for the offence against Kuzco's natural body and body politic is executed on Yzma's body: she is transformed into a powerless kitty and– needless to say–deprived of her political power. The final scene shows Kuzco in his restored human body as the rightful ruler of the country. Since the animation envisions such a tight connection between the ruler's natural body and his body politic, the regaining of the ruling power necessitates the regaining of Kuzco's human body: through the visual references to this body can the power of the emperor be expressed.

The Emperor's New Groove detaches morals from the magically transformed, marked bodies, and presents the origin of bodies outside the norm as a form of accident. The film celebrates Western medical science and pictures the elimination of the consequences of these accidents as the only acceptable solution. The story contextualizes the issue of the body in a strict political framework, in which the ruler's body is understood as a natural body and as a mythical body, expressed through the visual representations of the ruler and his political power. Even though the two aspects of the ruler's body refer to his/her decaying natural body and to his eternal, undecaying body politic, *The Emperor's New Groove* sets up a very tight connection between the two, claiming that the 'cured' natural body is necessary to regain political power.

Diseny animations towards 2010 started returning to fairy tale roots. *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) and *Tangled* (2010)–re-writings of the Brother Grimm's *The Frog Prince* and *Rapunzel*, respectively–both apply subversive elements in characterization but remain by the basic fairy tale narratives. As the role of magic was fading away from Disney animations–after *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), only *Brother Bear* (2003) applies the power of magic as a plot device–the studio was focusing more on the power of technology and technological development. This has been mostly represented through Pixar animations, but other, non-Pixar Disney animated films also followed this pattern (*Treasure Planet* [2002], *Chicken Little* [2005], *Meet the Robinsons* [2007] and *Bolt* [2008] neglect the power of magic and applies technology as a plot device). The Disney studio's return to fairy tales (and with that to the profound use of magic) does not necessarily mean a step back. As Booker points

out, from the 1980s on, "children's film has become a much more lucrative enterprise" and there are much more competition in the field of animations than between 1930s-80s, when Disney was in a practically hegemonic position (Booker 112). Studios, such as the immensely succesful DreamWorks SKG contested Disney animations by incorporating deconstructing elements of traditional fairy tale characterization. Animations, such as the by-now cult-film, *Shrek* (2001), clearly questions the ideological world of Disney films by contesting and subverting Disney texts and categories (Zipes *Fairy Tales* 211). *The Princess and the Frog* and *Tangled* are attempts of the studio to keep up with the competition and with the cultural 'trend' of deconstructing social scripts. These two animations are perfor*mative* in many aspects but they fail to re-interpret the concepts of the disabled and the ideal body. The return of the studio to fairy tales around 2010 seems to be ephemeral, as Ed Catmull revealed that the studio does not have "any other musicals or fairy tales lined up" after two other fairy tale movies in development had been cancelled (Chmielewski and Eller).

The Princess and the Frog envisions the magical story in New Orleans, and focuses on the life of Tiana, a poor, hard-working black woman. As a waitress in double shift, she is saving money for her own restaurant. Even though she does not believe in magic, she kisses a frog, who is an enchanted prince (Prince Nadeen) from a wealthy family and who promises her a smaller fortune if she is willing to give him a kiss. The kiss, however, turns out to be a curse, and Tiana as well turns into a frog. Despite the incorporation of numerous perfor*mative*, the film does not separate itself completely from the fairy tale genre: Tiana and Nadeen turn back into humans by the end of the story, reassuring the dogmatic premise that the happy ending can only be guaranteeed through the retrieval of the ideal body.

The fluidity of the body mobilizes the story of the animation. The body, imagined as an unstable form, is subjected to magical and natural/biological powers, and its representation is further problematized by the fact that the story takes place during the Mardi Gras, a carvinal celebration of religious origins. Transformed bodies are in the center of the story and their prevalence almost manages to subvert the hegemony of the ideal body by claiming that the fluid, ever-changing body subjected to various powers is the norm instead of the fixed ideal one. With the retrieval of the human body, *The Princess and the Frog*, however, fails to make this long-awaited step and remains to be a servile re-telling of the age-old fairy tale.

The transformation of bodies is orchestrated by magic and by natural/biological powers. Magic in this animation is repeatedly referred to as "voodoo" and tied to shadows. Voodoo is a clear reference to the "demonizing images of African and African American mystical practices" (Bostic 144). The author claims that similar to other Hollywood

representation of Black religion, *The Princess and the Frog* applies voodoo as a "stereotypical mischaracterization […of] demonic manipulations of power" (145). The compulsory character of the villain is a voodoo magician, Dr. Facilier, also known as the Shadow Man whose own body is a visual representation of the unfixed, unstable body: besides Facilier's biological body, the shadow that this body casts is his second living body. The sorcerer's 'friends' are bodiless shadows (sharing many similarities with the depiction of dementors, first visualized in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* [2004]), whose vicious power lies in the fact that they are detached from a physical body that could produce them. Facilier's voodoo magic turns Prince Naveen and–through his kiss, vicariously–Tiana into frogs. Needless to say, these transformations are highly connected to moral flaws: Naveen pursues a careless, nonconformist life and Tiana kisses the frog–despite her aversion to frogs and her disbelief in magic–because she needs money to open her restaurant. The antidote is offered by the Disneyfied form of the Grimm fairy tale of *The Frog Prince*, which repeatedly appears in a book format in the film. Even though the Grimm version of the story does not neccesitate a princess's kiss (the frog asks the princess to let him be her companion, sit by her at the table and sleep in her bed [Grimm and Grimm 33]), the Disney version swivels around the moment of the kiss. However, when Tiana kisses Naveen to break the spell, the curse turns her into a frog: a moment sharing similarities with *Shrek* (2001). Eventually, the kiss does turn out to be the antidote, once Naveen and Tiana get married–as frogs–after which Tiana officially becomes a princess, whose kiss breaks the spell. The magical kiss, however, is not the only antidote in the animation. When Facilier turns Naveen into a frog, he turns Naveen's servant, Lawrence into the prince. This magic, however, does not depend on a kiss but on the prince's blood: as long as the talisman is filled with the prince's blood, Lawrence can remain in Naveen's body. In other words, the lack of blood breaks the spell, which already shows the importance of nature and biology in corporeal dimensions.

The fluidity of bodies is strongly influenced by changes of natural origin. The film, in this respect, focuses only on two aspects, and fails to elaborate on this proliferate field, which could eventually lead up to the non-symbolic characterization of disability. The two aspects of non-magical, natural changes applied on the body are death and the masquerade. *The Princess and the Frog* envisions a complete family, which soon becomes incomplete through the father's death (thus replaying the usual Disney script of missing parents [Booker 70]). The father's bodily absence, however, does not hinder him to be an organic part of the story: visual and dialogic references constantly remind the characters and the audience to the

presence of the father. The photo of the father as a soldier, wearing a uniform and standing in front of the flag of the USA suggests that he was killed in action. This photo is placed over the cupboard in which Tiana saves money for the restaurant which she and her father wanted to open together. Every step of Tiana, bringing her closer to buying the restaurant is accompanied by a visual or dialogic reference to the father: she looks at a drawing of the envisioned restaurant with it's name "Tiana's" on it, written by her father, as a reminder to her dream and how much she has to fight for it. Tiana's diligence (she works in two shifts to earn enough money) is also a reference to her father, who defies the power of magic by saying: "[T]hat old star can only take you part of the way. You got to help him with some hard work of your own. And then, you can do anything you set your mind to" (Clements and Musker 0:05:15–27). Death, as a natural change of the body, does not necessarily lead to the invisibility of the father: his presence is not encapsualted in his bodily dimensions but in other visual or dialogic references. The figure of a missing parent is nothing new in Disney animations. The violent death of a comic sidekick character, however, is something perfor*mative*, a truly unorthodox step instance in the Disney canon. Sidekicks are stock characters in Disney animations, who are responsible for humorous dialogues and actions. Sidekicks are indespensible characters because they offer actual and emotional help for the protagonist to recover the *status quo*. Tiana and Naveen are accompanied with Louis, a crocodile playing the trumpet, and Ray, an old firefly (most probably the names are a tip of the hat to Jazz legends Louis Armstrong and Ray Charles). Being a firefly, Ray makes light in the dark, which gives him the ability to destroy Facilier's shadow friends. He is an old romantic, who is in love with the shiniest firefly, Evangeline, who turns out to be nothing but the Evening Star. Ray's character possesses all the features that qualify him a loveable sidekick. For this reason, his violent death (Facilier intentionally steps on him because he destroyed his shadow-friends) comes as a rather unorthodox instance. Death is envisoned as an act of nature and even though it happens in a fairy tale context, the power of magic does not prove to be enough to re-turn the course of events. After Ray's funeral (his body is lain in a leaf, which floats away in the swamp), a new star starts shining next to "Evangeline." Similar to Tiana's father, Ray remains visible in the story through visual references, in his case, with the star.

The changes on and of the body are represented in the context of the Mardi Gras festival and in various instances of performing a given identity category. As children, Tiana and her friend, Charlotte La Bouff, dress up as princesses while listening to the story of *The Frog Prince*. Naveen, who would rather be a careless musician than a prince, tries to pass as a

musician on the streets of New Orleans. The party at the La Bouff residence on the eve of the Mardi Gras festival is an event of carnival: the penniless waitress becomes a princess, the senator dresses as the devil–the evening is a topsy-turvy party. The carnival "celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order [and] marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (Bakhtin 686). These seemingly subversive, counter-ideological events, offered by the ideological system, are occasions where laws and rules are temporarily suspended. Besides the representation of newly performed bodies, the screenplay writers take an advantage of the moment of suspended laws and draw a rather subversive picture about the figure of the princess (even though she is not a princess, Charlotte–the daughter of the richest man in New Orleans–is characterized as one). Being extremely nervous about the prince who has not appeared yet, Charlotte starts sweating profoundly: "Give me them napkins, quick! […] I swear I'm sweating like a sinner in church" (0:22:58–0:23:01). Charlotte fills her princess outfit with napkins in her armpit. Soon her makeup is smeared after crying (0:23:13) but as the prince arrives, she quickly re-adjusts her princess look by fixing her make-up, putting some facial powder on her nose and drawing a fake birthmark on her face (0:23:29). Later, she refreshes her make-up by adding some mascara (0:25:11). Such a detailed peep into the 'making of the princess' suggests the imperfectness of princesses. This instance of subversion is embedded in the carnival evening, where all rules and laws are suspended, inlcuding–with an insightful move–the norm of the perfect body of Disney princesses as well.

Despite showing the unfixed, unstable forms of bodies, brought about either through magical or natural/biological forces, *The Princess and the Frog* remains a rather conservative re-telling of a well-known fairy tale. The minor but numerous perfor*mative* instances prove to be rather weak and unfitting once the story concludes with the re-assurance of the normative script (perfor*mance*): the hegemony of the perfect, ideal body. This pattern is once again re-played in Disney's *Tangled* (2010), which is a twin sister of *The Princess and the Frog* in many aspects.

Tangled is the Disney re-telling of another Grimm fairy tale, *Rapunzel*. The story of the princess locked up in a tower by her surrogate mother does not present any unexpected twists or turns compared to the Grimm version, but the origins of Rapunzel's magical hair is re-interpreted on several levels. Unlike the original fairy, in which Rapunzel's hair does not possess any significant magical power, the Disney version describes the girl's hair as the source of youth. The origin of this magical power comes from a magic golden flower that started blooming when a drop of sun fell down from the heavens. The flower had the power

to "make the clock reverse, [to…] heal what has been hurt, [to] change the Fate's design [and to] save what has been lost" (Greno and Howard 0:50:27–0:51:04). A woman, Mother Gothel, found the flower and instead of sharing its power with others, she kept it for herself to retain her youth. Centuries later, the King and the Queen were expecting a baby but the Queen fell seriously ill during her pregnancy. The King ordered his subjects to look for the magic flower, and when it was found, it was taken to the castle and it healed the pregnant Queen. The magical power of the flower lived on in the golden hair of the newborn girl. One night, Mother Gothel sneaked in the palace to cut off a curl of Rapunzel's hair but once cut, the curl turned into brown and lost its power. Crazed about regaining her youth, Gothel stole the child and locked her up in a tower and raised Rapunzel as her own (0:01:13–0:04:05).

The magical power of Rapunzel's hair is, therefore, not an inherent power but–to put it rather profane–a side-effect of a medicine her mother took during pregnancy. Unlike *The Emperor's New Groove*, where the animation indirectly celebrates Western scientific medicine, *Tangled* problematizes the fact that even if a form of cure exists (special medicine, treatment, or here: a unique magical flower), it may only be available for the privileged: "'[C]ures' function not only as benefits to individuals, but also as ways of depoliticizing health, safety and ability for those who are privileged enough to have access to high-technology medicine" (Wendell *Rejected* 161). Even though the flower is not a "high-technology medicine," it functions as such in a magic-driven (as opposed to technology-driven) context. The animation clearly suggests that access to the unique flower is only granted to royal highnesses and denied from the subjects of the kingdom (some of whom must have suffered from similar illnesses since the discovery of the flower "centuries" before [0:01:32]). Another problematic aspect of the 'medicine'-flower is that once taken by the pregnant mother, it seals the baby's destiny.

Rapunzel's hair, no matter how valuable it is, qualifies as an abnormality. The excess of a bodily feature can be just as impairing as the shortage or lack of one, which tendency is in accordance with the interpretation of the Gaussian bell curve: "The norm pins down that majority of the population that falls under the arch of the standrad bell-shaped curve. […] A bell curve will always have at its extremities those characteristics that deviate from the norm" (Davis, "Constructing" 6). Rapunzel's magical power is conceptualized as an extremity, which–through Mother Gothel's closing her up in a tower–turns into a disability. The hidden tower functions as a heterotopia of deviation because it is a separated territory for Rapunzel, who deviates from the required mean. Till her eighteenth birthday, she lives completely separated from society and her only social contact is Gothel, through whom she learns that

she is not allowed to go out because the "the outside world is a dangerous place, full with horrible, selfish people" (0:04:22–28). These lines echo Disney's most direct interpretation of disability, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), in which the physically disabled Quasimodo is closed up in the towers of the Notre Dame by Judge Claude Frollo, who has the same argument: "The world is cruel, the world is wicked" (Trousdale and Wise 0:11:51, see more on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in the following chapter). In line with the fairy tale tradition that Disney has highlighted so far, the story can retain its original equilibrium only if the imperfectness of the body is cured. Thus, as expected, Rapunzel's magical hair is cut by the end, and because it fails to provide Gothel with any power that would rejuvenate her body, her centuries-old body dissolves right away. Mother Gothel's pathological obsession with her young body is presented as a moral sin against the laws of nature. Gothel must be punished for her immoral ways exactly through her bodily dimensions: once Rapunzel's hair loses its magical power, her surrogate mother not only loses her youthness but she must as well be damned for the centuries she cheated away from nature. In a concise but violent scene her hair turns white, her body starts aging, her flesh rots away until her face turns into a skull (at this point, she pulls her hood over her head, covering the rest of the process from the audience), her body shrinks and finally completely disappears under her cloak (1:21:18–50). Claiming the ideal–i.e. young and healthy–body undeservedly for oneself is punished in a most cruel and violent way. Thus, *Tangled* reinforces the tie between morals and looks, and in this sense, it is a return to Disney's fairy-tale norms. *The Princess and the Frog* and *Tangled* are perfor*mances*: they are normative re-plays of the concept of the ideal body because the general idea of the young, healthy and proportionate body remains untouched despite the occasionally appearing perfor*mative* instances. People with acceptable morals qualify for ideal body dimensions and even if they do not possess or have lost them, they regain them, which moment is the restoration of the *status quo*. Those whose morals are unacceptable are characterized or punished by abnormal bodies. Such tendencies re-affirm the hegemony of the ideal body concept and do not encourage the social re-evalutation of disability.

Most Disney animations envision magically-generated bodily changes as a form of punishment for a certain moral flaw, which disappears if the expected morals are learned and acted out. *Brother Bear* (2003) is not an exception either, but it is still unique in the observed twenty years of the Disney canon: Kenai, who has been transformed into a bear, leans down the possibility to regain his unmarked, human body and continues living as a bear instead. The film diverts from the animations discussed earlier in this chapter due to two perfor*mative*

instances: first, the marked body does not change back into the unmarked, which act does not follow the Disney tradition; second, it is the decision of Kenai, the subject with the marked body, to live on as a bear. In other words, he takes agency in constructing his subjectivity and he does so by resisting the expectations and by creating a new category: a man who is a bear.

Brother Bear, as discussed in Chapter 3.2, takes place in an Inuit tribe, whose social and cultural life are based on holistic ideologies about nature and mankind. The intertwined nature of animals and people offers a cultural context in which Kenai's transformation (his spiritual punishment) as well as his decision to live as a man in a bear's body fit smoother than in any other ideological contexts. With the application of the powerful visuals, the spirits are envisioned as a source of magic rather than as religious, transcendental entities. This aspect qualifies *Brother Bear* to be discussed among other animations in which corporeal changes–most often functioning as a form of punishment–are not of biological or natural, but of magical origin. Kenai kills a bear out of spite because he believes that the bear is responsible for his brother's death. Taking revenge on other living creatures is an unacceptable deed, so Kenai is transformed into a bear so that he would get a different perspective. He is told that he has to find the place of the spirits (a mountain where the lights touch the ground) so that he can talk with them. As opposed to animations in which the magical transformation is a form of punishment and can be cured by a specific deed, *Brother Bear* leaves out the promise of an existing 'cure.' All that the shaman woman can tell Kenai is that if he wants to change, he should arrange it with his brother's spirit, which he can find at a given mountain (0:25:23–31). There being neither external 'medicine' to be found (cf. *The Emperor's New Groove*, for example), nor a specific moral teaching to be acquired (cf. *Beauty and the Beast*), *Brother Bear* suggests that the marked body may be irreversible, and thus permanent. Animations discussed in this chapter so far, conceptualized the marked body–a symbolic form of disability–as something which can (and often has to) be physically overcome. As Linton rightly points out, "it is physically impossible to overcome a disability" (228); therefore, animations that suggest otherwise broadcast a highly problematic picture about the nature of disability. *Brother Bear*, however, is about a journey: the process of how subjectivity is reconstructed after a newly-gained, massive change of the body. Kenai learns to identify with a corporeal dimension that he denies in the beginning: "I'm not a bear. I hate bears" (0:27:14–17). He is accompanied by Koda, a bear cub, whose mother Kenai killed out of spite. The emotional, spiritual and corporeal proximity to the bear cub encourages Kenai to accept his bear-body and not to long for his unmarked, human corporeality. Obviously, the story has a reading that Kenai insists on being a bear so that he could make amends for killing

the cub's mother (Booker 71) but the concept to restore the natural order by consciously retaining an unmarked body is not typical among Disney animations.

The final scene of the animation is an initiation ceremony of the tribe. It is a rite of passage Kenai has been waiting for from the beginning of the story: from a boy, he becomes a man. Kenai's participation in the ceremony as a bear suggests a new category of ontology. Kenai practices the traditions of his people but he does not live with them ("Kenai went on to live with Koda and the other bears" 1:13:45). He is a bear who "does a lot of weird stuff, like he drinks water with a leaf" (0:54:05–10). Kenai interrogates binarisms by transgressing the categories of being a human and that of being a bear by performing instances of both categories. In this respect, "the story of a boy who became a man by becoming a bear" (1:13:58–1:14:04) is the story of a perfor*mative*ly constructed subjectivity: the creation of a new discursive ontology, which denies acting according to the expectations (Kenai leans down the offer to turn back into a human but refuses to act as other bears). Thus, Kenai performs what Bollobás calls play-passing: "a playful approximation and in-betweenness, as well as the opening of the field for new, transitional categories" (170). The story of the three brothers (Sitka, Denahi and Kenai) swivels around the concept of the body as a process and constant change: by the end, the three brother re-unite as a spirit (Sitka), a bear (Kenai) and as a man (Denahi) (1:12:52).

Animations of the Disney canon often envision changed, marked and rejected bodies as a punishment for moral flaws. In this chapter, I have discussed some examples in which this corporeal change is carried out through magic. Since most of these animations have a fairy tale origin, they quote the normative ideological texts and processes that literary fairy tales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries broadcast. Disney's animations do not alter these age-old patterns and cling onto the visual mirroring of immoral deeds: on the very surface of the body. Since most often these corporeal changes are accompanied with the placing of the subject in a heteropia, separated from the surounding society, these changed bodies function as symbols of the disabled bodies. The problematic aspect of such an abuse of the disabled body is that–as mentioned above–disability is then associated with a moral flaw, or at least with the fault of the character. A flawed personality deserves a marked body which is reversible once the expected morals are learned and acted out. The re-affirmation of such a concept in social and cultural venues, such as the films of the most prominent animation studio of the USA, is particularly harmful. As several researchers on the field of disability studies claim, disability is a social construction and it is an unfortunate social practice to tie down disabilities to certain ideological meanings. In this way, these animations do not

encourage any change in the social opinion about people with disabilities but rather facilitate their social stigmatization. Ervin Goffman writes about the stigma as follows:

> While the stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind–in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our mind from a whole and usual person to a tained, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma. (131)

The characterization of disability as a reversible punishment for flawed morals also strengthens the hegemony of an ideal body, which is envisioned in Disney animations as young, healthy and proportionate. The upcoming chapter discusses animations in which disabilities have natural origins (forms of inherent impairment or results of accidents), rather than magical ontologies. I argue that these animations detach the morals and bodily forms, and re-interpret the concept of the ideal body by extending the category to the unhealthy, the old and to the disproportionate.

4.3. Extending Disability: *Hercules* (1997), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), the *Toy Story* Trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010), *Cars* (2006), *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *Up!* (2009)

Between 1990 and 2010, the Walt Disney Animation Studio took up the issue of disability not only as a corporeal deviance that 'arrives' as a moral punishment (as discussed in the previous chapter) but also as a physical condition of biological origin, which turns disabling in the social context. These animations focus in the social reactions to disabled bodies and highlight that disability is in the eye of the beholder. Obviously, there are always some biological or physical realities that are considered to deviate from the norm (for example, Hercules's god-like power, Quasimodo's hunchback, or Nemo's underdeveloped fin, to name some), which in themselves would not be disabling. The way the envisioned society treats these characters, however, turns their corporeal deviances into forms of disability. In most cases of the animations discussed in this chapter, the narrative pattern changes in the sense that happy ending is not exclusively tied to the retrieval of the unmarked body. Because corporeal dimensions are not the results of moral flaws that are expected to be corrected, these dimensions do not change. For this reason, the narratives of the animations

focus more on the society and its reaction to disability, and the happy ending lies in the change of the social attitude.

The previous chapter presented animations in which the deviant corporeal changes occur through the transformation into an animal(istic) body (with the exception of *Tangled*). Once magic ceases to be the ontology of all these marked bodies, different deviant corporeal dimensions has to be expressed. Besides the direct references to deformed body parts and limbs and the representation of other extremities of the body (*Hercules*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Finding Nemo*), Disney takes up the issue of aging, as a natural process of the body. The *Toy Story* trilogy, *Cars* and–more directly–*Up!* describe how aging becomes disabling in the social context. The studio's growing interest in disability as "socially constructed from biological reality" (Wendell "Towards" 338) has started deconstructing the common image of the ideal body as young, healthy and proportionate. As most of these animations suggest, the social environment and practices need to be re-interpreted instead of 'curing' the body. Beyond the proper social attitude that ceases to "other" those with disabilities, the availability of technological advances can also decrease the disabling nature of a certain condition. The gradual incorporation of disability as a social construction is a long-awaited step of the studio since "disability is the most human of experiences, touching every family and–if we live long enough–touching us all" (Garland-Thomson 356). On the other hand, these films still occasionally follow concepts and patterns (disabled hero stories, passing, overcoming, etc.) that are rather problematic from a disability point of view.

Hercules (1997) and *Brother Bear* (2003) are similar in the sense that the protagonists are offered the possibility to choose between the marked and the unmarked body. Disney's loose interpretation of the Greek myth of Hercules, however, depicts the social construction of disability in such depth that it neccesitates the discussion of the animation to be placed in this chapter. From the point of view of understanding disability, *Hercules* is a story about how relatively bodily extremities are interpreted. Hercules–who is the illegitimate child of Zeus and a mortal, married woman, Alcmene, according to the Greek myth (Ward 89)–is presented in the Disney animation as the new-born sunspot of Zeus and Hera. However, he is stolen from among the gods by Hades's two servants, who make him mortal. A failure, however, occurs: they cannot take away Hercules's strength, which is rather a curse than a blessing in his early years. After so many years of being an outcast for his lame behavior and being cursed as a "freak" by other Greeks, Hercules's foster parents (Alcmene and Amphitryon) show him his golden medal which is worn by gods and which directs his steps to the temple of Zeus only to find out that he is Zeus and Hera's lost son. Desperately

wanting to find his way back to Mount Olympus, where he would not be an outcast any more, Hercules needs to prove that he is a true hero. He learns to control his immense power and soon becomes a celebrated hero of the Greek city of Thebes. When he is offered to step through the golden gates of Mount Olympus and become immortal, he rejects it and decides on becoming a mortal person on his lover's Meg's side. *Hercules* has some very insightful observations on the social construction of disability, especially on stigmatization and how people with disabilities attempt to avoid it by trying to pass, on the one hand. On the other hand, the animation assigns too much importance to overcoming, thus visualizing Hercules as a super-crip. Such a characterization is problematic in the sense that overcoming the stigmatization is most often impossible for people with disabilities, as Linton and others claim. Still, *Hercules* interprets the Greek mythological story as a disability narrative, which incorporates significant observations about the social construction of disability.

Hercules is born with an immense power, which makes his father, Zeus very proud. This extreme feature is not at all understood as a form of abnormality because on Mount Olympus–as envisioned at the beginning of the movie–corporeal differences are the norm. Zeus is twice as tall as any other gods, who are varied in age, form, power and color (0:02:50–0:03:40). After Hades gets the child stolen and taken to Earth, Hercules becomes mortal but does not loses this immense strength of his. When Alcmene and Amphitryon, a childless old couple, find the baby left alone on the ground, they start discussing if they should take in Hercules. Amphitryon's remark–"Well, he must have been abandoned" (0:11:43)–is a vague reference to the common Ancient Greek practice of the exposure of newborns if, for example, they were sick or deformed. Hercules does indeed turn out to be special as he reveals his power by capturing and throwing away Hades's two vermin servants (0:11:58–0:12:15), which the to-be foster parents watch in awe. Their shocked expression shows that Hercules's power on Earth is an extremity. In other words, whether a corporeal feature counts as disability or not depends more on the surrounding environment than on the feature itself. Wendell brings an insightful example to the relative nature of disability. Wendell suffers from ME (chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome), which makes her from time to time profoundly weak and often simply unable to carry out the most common everyday tasks. She, "who can walk about half a mile several times a week but not more," does not count significantly disabled in urban Western Canada, "where most people are not expected to walk further than that in the course of their daily activities" (*Rejected* 14). With such conditions, however, she would be severely disabled and in need of "constant assisstance to carry on the most basic life activities" in East African societies, "where women

normally walk several miles twice a day to obtain water for the household" (14). Hercules's case is not much different: his power is completely normal and accepted on Mount Olympus, but on Earth, it is a deviation from the corporeal norm, which invites social stigmatization.

The next scene shows Hercules as a teenager. By now, it is obvious that his immense power is unique among the average people and it causes a lot of trouble for him. People on the square avoid him, they reject his help and other children call him names (geek, Destructo Boy, Jerkules [0:15:12–16]). He is depicted really clumsy (he unintentionally destroys the complete columnline surrounding the square). Despite his father defending him by saying that "[h]e didn't mean any harm, he's a kid [but] he just can't control his strength" (0:16:40–45), people start shouting that he is a "menace" and he is "too dangerous to be around normal people" (0:16:32–37). These discursive forms of stigmatization are the negative social reactions to Hercules's deviance from the norm. As Coleman-Brown claims, "what gives stigma its intensity and reality is fear" (187), and this is exactly what moves the verbal violence against Hercules. Moreover, the ontology of his immense power is unknown, which also increases their fear. The fear of the unknown most often leads to the social and political practice of othering. As Martin Norden claims, "a majority society will do whatever it can to maintain itself in power, and its practice of keeping minorities such as physically disabled people 'in their place' […] represents a significant part of its self-continuance" (2). Othering and the isolation of people with disabilities often occur, therefore, because the unmarked group of majority is afraid of losing its integrity and thus its power-position. Through othering, the ideological norm is reproduced, in other words, the majority defines itself by claiming its difference from the minority.

In the context of disability, as Wendell claims, the Others are always people who "symbolize failure to control the body and the failure of science and medicine to protect us" (Wendell "Towards" 345). Disabled bodies remind the non-disabled to the imperfection and vulnerability of the body, and to the fact that the always-controllable body is an illusion. Hercules's "clumsiness" reveals his abnormal strength which "he just *can't control*" (0:16:38, *emphasis mine*). Not accidentally, this exact sentence–meant by Amphitryon as an argument that would raise some empathy in the citizens–kindles their anger and soon Hercules is called a "freak" and his father is told to keep him away from there (0:16:50). Accompanied with chants of "Freak! Go away!," they go home, where Hercules talks about his experience about passing and trying to live up to the expectations and avoid being stigmatized: "[The people on the square] are right. I am a freak. I try to fit in. I really do. I just can't. Sometime I feel like I really don't belong here" (0:17:05–17). Controlling his power as much as he can, trying

to be very careful and "just stay[ing] by the cart" (0:14:23) while his father makes errands are Hercules's way to hide his abnormality and pass as an average citizen. All these practices demand a huge emotional investment, so Hercules decides to go away and to find a place where he could belong. His foster parents show him the medal of the Gods which Hercules was wearing when they found him as a baby 'exposed'. Hercules finds the Temple of Zeus where his real father tells him that "if [he] can prove [him]self a true hero on Earth, [his] godhood will be restored" (0:21:25). Hercules persuades Philocthetes to train him to be a true hero. Phil's training camp is described as a hard-core military institute, which–as Foucault argues–is one of the traditional institutions that are responsible for creating "docile bodies" (*Discipline* 135–136). Zeus's expectation of becoming a hero is, therefore, nothing more than learning to control the body. After Phil's training is over and Hercules acquired the skills to control his power, they leave the military camp. Tellingly, the camp is envisioned as a heterotopia, separated from the organic body of the society. Hercules's arrival in Thebes is a test of acceptance: if he can use his god-like power in a controlled way and so help the people of Thebes (i.e. being a useful member of the society), he would be finally accepted and not categorized as an Other. From here on, Hercules's career is the narrative of people who disability scholars call "disabled heroes" (Wendell "Towards" 346) or "supercrips" (Riley 4) (for reasons of political correctness, Wendell's term will be used as reference to this category). The narrative of "a miraculous triumph of medical progress teamed with willpower" (4) is a common version of overcoming narratives. In the framework of disability, overcoming is an expression that covers the tendency of disabled people to triumph over their conditions. Linton highlight, however, the problematic nature of the concept. First, it is the disabling social stigma that can be overcome not the disability itself (Linton 228). Second, overcoming is "a wish fulfillment generated from the outside" (228), in other words, it is an unbelievably high expectation of the society from those who are in some ways disabled. Even though it is generated by the society, disabled people often internalize the demand to overcome (228). Hercules's wish to find a place where he belongs is articulated in his overcoming. Subjecting himselft to the social pressure which expects him to conform is an act of perfor*mance*. Thebes cheers for him as the No. 1. hero of the city and turns him into a celebrity. The Muses' song summarizes the narrative of the disabled hero: "He was a no one / A zero, zero. / Now, he's a honcho / He's a hero / Here was a kid / with his act down pat / Zero to hero in no time flat / Zero to hero just like that" (0:47:21–37). The animation fails to emphasize how much work and effort is invested in such an example of overcoming (the scenes of the training camp and of Hercules's acceptance by the society are both only

summarized in two accompanying songs). This practice is very much in accordance with Wendell's comment on the stories of overcoming: "While disabled heroes can be inspiring and heartening to the disabled, they may give the able-bodies the false impression that anyone can "overcome" a disability" (Wendell "Towards" 346). *Hercules*, and several other Disney animations that present disabled characters take advantage of overcoming narratives as they carry the pattern of 'heroism,' which promises a great story.

The issue of the social constructed nature of Hercules's disability is once more discussed in a semiotically very powerful scene. Hercules is on a date with Meg, who gave her soul to Hades and secretly works for him. Hades's plan is to conquer Hercules before his eighteenth birthday because this is the only way he could usurp Zeus's throne. Hades sends Meg to spy around Hercules and find out what his weakness is. Thinking about weaknesses like Achylles's weak ankle, Meg starts asking Hercules about his bodily weaknesses:

> **MEG:** So, do you have any problems with things like this? Weak ankles, I mean.
> **HERCULES:** Oh, no, not really.
> **MEG:** No weaknesses… whatsoever? No trick knee? Ruptured disks?
> **HERCULES:** No. I'm afraid, I'm fit as a fiddle. [*Nervous about Meg's close body contact, he stands up from the bench and goes to a pool, in the middle of which there is the statue of* Venus de Milo.]
> **MEG:** Wonderboy, you are perfect.
> **HERCULES:** Thanks. [*He causally skips a pebble on the water in the pool. The peeble hits the statue so hard that both arms of the female figure breaks down. The statue is shown as it was discovered in the 19th century and as we know it as a piece of Classical visual art.*]
> **MEG:** It looks better that way. No, it really does.
> **HERCULES:** You know, when I was a kid, I would have given anything to be exaclty like everybody else. (0:56:10–0:57:00)

Meg and Hercules's discussion about the perfect body, which has no weaknesses, is accompanied by the Hellenistic masterpiece of the *Venus de Milo* (also known as Aphrodite of Milos). Aphrodite, being the Greek goddess of love and beauty, embodies the perfect body in artistic representations. Placing the *Venus de Milo* in the scene gives depth to the discussion of the perfect body and its relation to the disabled one. The statue stands in the pool in its corporeal totality, having both arms and hands–a version of the *Venus* that the modern Western civilization could never get to know. The statue as we know it and as it has become a cultural and aesthetic symbol, lacks both upper limbs, which makes it the "ironically armless icon of ideal beauty" (Derby). The comical moment when Hercules destroys the limbs reveals the catachrestic nature of the ideal body: the *Venus* remains the

symbol of the perfect body with and without the arms, which suggests that the ideal body is a relative, discursive category. Meg's opinion ("It [the *Venus* without arms] looks better this way") also highlights the discursive, unfixed, unstable nature of the ideal body. Hercules's association to his own story of always fighting to pass as one with an ideal body shows how harmful the 'norms' of the ideal body could be to people with disabilities.

Hercules closes with a scene in which Hercules rejects his acceptance to Mount Olympus. By this point, the narrative has focused almost exclusively on the romantic thread of the story, therefore Hercules's decision is catalyzed mostly by Meg and not by the fact that he has become socially accepted. This happy ending forgets about the aspect of disability the animation has detailed so descriptively. However, the scene in the park with the statue of the *Venus de Milo* offers a minor happy-ending to the disability aspect of the story as it concludes with suggesting that ideal bodies are always discursively constructed, making the concepts of the perfect as well as the imperfect body relative. *Hercules*, however, incorporates several problematic points about disability, most significantly the narrative of the disabled hero and the lighthearted characterization of overcoming, which are acts of perfor*mances*, re-affirming the marked positions of the disabled.

The concept of the disabled hero is perhaps the most openly discussed in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996). Based on Victor Hugo's 1831 novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Disney's 34th animated feature film turns out to be the studio's darkest animation with the most political issues ever discussed in the Disney canon. Besides the obvious problematization of Quasimodo's disability, which was already an unusual topic in 1996, the persecution of minorities and the moral questions of genocide, infanticide and sexual lust are also recurring issues, making the film evidently appropriate rather for a mature audience. Here, I am focusing on the ways the animation treats the title character's disability and deal only partially with the similarly important other political and moral issues. *The Hunchback* re-interprets the original novel in several ways–for example, by providing a happy ending to the otherwise dark and gloomy story–but retains most of its aspects that are unfitting in animation designed primarily for children.

The story is framed with a song by Clopin, a Gypsy street entertainer, telling the story of the bell-ringer to some children on the street. Twenty years before the actual story of the film, already crazed by persecuting Gypsies, Judge Claude Frollo kills a Gypsy mother who is hiding her misshapen newborn. As Frollo realizes that the baby is deformed, his bigotry urges him to commit infanticide: "This is an unholy demon. I'm sending it back to hell, where it belongs" (Trousdale and Wise 0:03:47). As he is about to throw the baby in a well,

the Archdeacon of Notre-Dame warns him about his religious morals. The judge decides on keeping the boy but locks him up in the bell tower, away from the inhabitants of Paris. In this respect, numerous similarities can be observed between *The Hunchback* and *Tangled*, produced fourteen years later (discussed in the previous chapter). The figure of a foster parent, who imprisons a child because of personal interests is the basic motif in both animations. Gothel locks up Rapunzel to use the magic power of her hair; Frollo keeps Quasimodo in the tower because taking care of the child is a form of the judge's penance whose religious morals and secular deeds are in constant discrepancy. As the Archdeacon says: "You can lie to yourself and your minions / You can claim that you haven't a qualm / But you never can run from / Nor hide what you've done from the eyes […] of Notre-Dame" (0:04:05–26).

Twenty years later, we find Quasimodo (meaning half-formed; the name as given by Frollo) in the bell tower. Even though Quasimodo lacks any kind of social contact, Frollo visits him on a regular basis and makes sure that Quasimodo remembers who he is and where his place is (another similarity with *Tangled*). The language that Frollo uses due to his power and dominant position as master, defines Quasimodo in his otherness. He dutifully repeats Frollo's teachings ("You are deformed.–I am deformed / And you're ugly.–I am ugly. […] I am a monster." [0:12:26–43]), thus discursively performing his subjectivity as an outcast (a perfor*mance*). Frollo as a non-disabled and a non-Gypsy holds up a mirror that shows Quasimodo himself as a "deformed, ugly monster" (0:12:26-43). Frollo sees Quasimodo as such, moreover, he wants Quasimodo to see himself as Other. Quasimodo's replies to Frollo's theses show the master's success in making Quasimodo internalize the idea of his Otherness. This is one of the key tools of Frollo to exercise power over the bell ringer and to make him obey.

Quasimodo's obedience, however, is outdone by his curiosity and longing to spend a day outside the cathedral, so he sneaks out on the day of the Festival of Fools (6th January, the European version of the Mardi Gras festival, discussed in connection with *The Princess and the Frog* in the previous chapter). This is not only the first conscious disobedience against the master but also the very first contact with the society as well: a double rite of passage. The carnival and the topsy-turvy day is a perfect occasion for Quasimodo to pass as non-disabled among the city-dwellers. However, he must not reveal his true identity for fear of the anger of the society because of his disability, and for fear of Frollo's anger because of his disobedience. The bell ringer tries to pass as non-disabled with an unmarked body in a full passing manner. No slippage is allowed in his perfor*mance* (Bollobás 171). The Festival

of Fools offers the best opportunity to mingle with the crowd and not to be recognized as a disabled. Even though he covers his body and head with a cloak at the beginning, soon he realizes that it is unnecessary in a carnival, which celebrates the "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (Bakhtin 686). Where everybody dresses up as a fool and shows their ugliest faces ("So, make a face that's horrible and frightening […] / For the face that's ugliest will be the King of Fools" [0:23:43–50]), Quasimodo fits in–as long as no one realizes that his face is not a mask. He is summoned to the stage for the King of Fools contest, and as all the masks are being taken off, his dangerous game of full passing goes awry. His coming out of Notre Dame turns into an unintentional coming-out as a disabled. After the first shock–both on the side of the citizens and of Frollo–Quasimodo is called the "ugliest face in Paris" (0:24:35) and he is shortly celebrated by the crowd as he is the winner of the contest. The celebration, however, turns into the humiliation of Quasimodo, the hunchback, the ugliest face in Paris, the outcast, the disobeying boy. People throw tomatoes and eggs at him, they ridicule him and finally tie him down on the stage so that he could not leave the scene until the social body becomes relieved from its anger, frustration and hostility. Quasimodo's deformed, marked body becomes a scapegoat. Scapegoating is a social practice–as René Girard argues–in which the cumulated violence within society has to be expelled through the ritual sacrifice of a victim (Stiker 30). Following Girard, Stiker also points out that the disabled body often becomes the expelled victim because in a religious context–from which the practice of scapegoating originates–the disabled are distanced from the presence of God (cf. Frollo's remark on the disabled baby as an unholy demon that belongs to hell [0:03:47]). The Parisian society is depicted as a deeply religious one (0:34:50–0:37:47), therefore Quasimodo's humiliation right in front of Notre Dame could also be understood as the religious purification of the social body by making Quasimodo bear the burden of sin. The humiliation is stopped by Esmeralda, a beautiful Gypsy street dancer, who releases Quasimodo despite Frollo's prohibition. Esmeralda becomes the symbol of the Gypsy minority, which Frollo has been persecuted for more than twenty years. The two outcasts, Quasimodo and Esmeralda find sanctuary in Notre Dame.

The reaction of the society to Quasimodo is very much in accordance with what Frollo described earlier to him. The cruel, wicked world that shows little pity to "crimes" like being deformed and ugly (0:11:52–0:12:32) re-affirms Quasimodo's position as an outcast. The bell ringer performs his subjectivity according to the social script of him being an Other: "I am a monster, you know" (0:40:45), he tells Esmeralda. The girl–also an outcast–is the first who shows Quasimodo that one does not have to perform the normative positions that are

expected by the dominant ideology (that is, acting as perfor*mance*). By pointing out that neither of them are actually whom social powers want to categorize them (an evil Gypsy and a deformed monster [0:40:30–0:41:22]) Esmeralda urges the bell-ringer to take agency and construct his subjectivity out of resistance to the power that makes them inferior.

Quasimodo's lies and disobedience to Frollo, his secret wish to be a couple with Esmeralda and his friendship with Phoebus (captain of the guards who also disobeys the judge) are all subversive perfor*matives*, that is, act committed out of resistance to Frollo's teachings which function as the dominant ideology. After Esmeralda's escape from Notre Dame, the story follows the narrative pattern of "disabled hero" stories. As opposed to the previously discussed *Hercules*, where the story of the disabled hero comes about through acquiring control over the body, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is an overcoming story driven by the physical control of the body but by the active agency taken in re-creating the disabled subjectivity. Quasimodo does rescue Esmeralda from the bonfire through a spectacular action of swinging down on a rope from the bell tower and back, which most of the non-disabled would not be able to do, but this is not part of the disabled hero story. Even though disability scholars discuss these stories as narratives about "performing feats of physical strength and endurance" and accomplishing "things that are unusual even for the able-bodied" (Wendell 2010: 346), Quasimodo is a disabled hero because his overcoming story tells his psychological overcoming of his social categorization. This argument is slightly parallel with Linton, whose one definition of overcoming is that "the person [rises] above society's expectation for someone with those characteristics, [… i.e.] what is overcome is the social stigma of having a disability" (228). Quasimodo's disabled hero story can be followed through his conversations with the gargoyles. The gargoyles are stone decorations of the Notre Dame, to which Quasimodo often talks. As Frollo points out in the beginning, stones cannot speak (0:10:25), so whatever these dialogues reveal is nothing else but Quasimodo's most inner wishes and hopes, his unconscious even. The repeated scenes with the gargoyles narrate how Quasimodo takes agency in constructing his subjectivity. Even though he says at the beginning: "I'm not normal" (0:08:25), he is convinced by the 'gargoyles' to break rules and to re-interpret his disabled position. Quasimodo gradually yields more and more to these inner voices and by acting according to them, he produces his subjectivity in a perfor*mative* manner, out of resistance to the ideology that categorizes him as disabled. Esmeralda and Phoebus's friendly attitude to Quasimodo vicariously re-assures the 'gargoyles' lines while his respect and fear towards Frollo is loosening. After Frollo's unsuccessful attempt to kill Esmeralda and later Quasimodo, the bell ringer rebels against the

judge, and for the first time tells him how he sees the world: "No, you listen! All my life, you have told me that the world is a dark, cruel place. But now I see that the only thing dark and cruel about it is people like you" (1:17:58–1:18:07). Frollo's death liberates Paris, the Gypsies and Quasimodo. The bell-ringer makes a real rite-of-passage coming-out in the final scene: without any attempt to pass as anyone other, he leaves the Notre Dame as he has constructed himself and is accepted by the beholding and cheering crowd.

With such an ending, the animation claims that even if the body cannot change or cannot be cured, the disabling social opinion can be changed. For that, however, the active participation of the disabled is necessary: beyond Quasimodo's heroic deed of rescuing Esmeralda, his active agency in producing his subjectivity is also essential. As the crowd celebrates him, Quasimodo looks back up to the gargoyles and waves them (1:22:30)–this moment highlights the necessity of the–often subversive–subject-constructions of those who are traditionally denied to take agency in categorizing themselves as subjects (either in accordance with or out of resistance to the ruling ideologies). *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* offers some insightful observations about the social construction of disability but–similarly to *Hercules*–it also claims that changing the disabling social opinion has to originate in the change of the person with disability.

Finding Nemo (2003) remains at the topic of disability as a social construction and the need of changing the general social opinion about (people with) disability. Uniquely in the Disney canon, this animation does not urge any kind of change of the disabled, and it criticizes practices like passing and overcoming as emotionally burdensome and often impossible acts. Detaching from *Hercules* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, which both envision social acceptance of the disabled if they make serious efforts, *Finding Nemo* does not focus on the body of the disabled but on the disabling nature of social surroundings. The animation narrows down these effects of society on the figure of Nemo's father, who tries to hide his son's disability and whose overprotective raising methods make Nemo disabled.

Nemo, the young clown fish, receives his impairment while still being an egg: due to a barracuda attack, his mother and siblings are killed, leaving Marlin, his father, alone with one single cracked egg–Nemo. After the attack, Marlin promises to his then-egg son that "[he] will never let anything happen to [him]" (Stanton 0:04:22–25). And so he does: the story swivels around Marlin's over-protectiveness, which disables Nemo more than his deformed fin. Somewhat disagreeing with Ann Millett's observation about the film overlooking the aspects of disability (Millett), I argue that the animation builds upon the issue of disability and its social construction. *Finding Nemo*, as the title aptly shows, is not about the clownfish

son (in this case, the title would bear only Nemo's name, in accordance with the Disney tradition to use the protagonist's name as the title of the film) but it is about finding the way to Nemo: a reference both to the actual quest from the reef to Sydney and to Marlin's learning the way he should deal with his disabled son.

Marlin teaches his son that "the ocean is not safe" (0:06:20), he holds his fin while swimming and tells him not to play with the other kids but go jumping on the sponge beds (0:08:20). Being alarmed that something bad could happen, he does not support Nemo interacting with fish of his age. As the first school day arrives, the other schoolmates soon point out Nemo's disability and ask what is wrong with his fin. Marlin does not let Nemo answer: "He was born with it. We call it the lucky fin". Nemo is fed up with his father talking about his deformed fin (especially coining it as a lucky fin) and he finds the situation truly embarrassing in front of his new schoolmates. Marlin takes extra care and tells Nemo's teacher that "he's got a little fin [and] if he's having trouble swimming, let him take a break: 15 minutes" (0:09:35–44). If so much (unintended) embarrassment were not enough for Nemo, Marlin follows the class on their excursion only to have a heated quarrel with his son in front of the whole class. Believing that his son wanted to swim into open water (although he did not), Marlin starts shouting with his son: "You can't swim well. […] You shouldn't be anywhere near here. […] You're clearly not ready for that. You think you can do these things [*he swims left and right*] but you just can't" (0:12:30–45). Angry and embarrassed, Nemo swims out to the ocean where a scuba diver captures him and takes him all the way to Sydney into his aquarium.

Marlin's quest to find Nemo is the story of how he re-evaluates his suffocating over-protectiveness, which in the case of a son with impairment turns out to be fairly disabling. Marlin is accompanied by Dory, a regal tang fish, who suffers from short-term memory loss. Besides the humorous situations her condition causes, placing an impaired side-kick on Marlin's side has its good reason: once Marlin learns that Dory has short-term memory loss (0:17:25), he starts re-producing the exact same behavioral patterns as he did with Nemo. In other words, Dory is a substitute for Nemo, leaving Marlin in the position of a disabled kid's father. Since *Finding Nemo* is not particularly a story about Nemo but about Marlin's learning how to deal with his disabled son, the side-kick character of Marlin has to be disabled as well. Their underwater quest to find the son is full with new encounters and dangerous situations, which repeatedly test Marlin's reactions. The five main encounters (vegetarian sharks, anglerfish, jellyfish, sea turtles, whale) are carefully built up in a way that at every station Marlin learns a new lesson that deconstructs his neurotic over-protectiveness.

Only after these five main stations can he learn how to deal with his disabled son in a way that he would not raise barriers to him.

The first encounter is with three sharks, who try to pass as vegetarians. Although the idea sounds comical, it is a perfect parallel how individuals are forced to cover their corporeal needs and dimensions only to fit in the society. The three sharks (Bruce, Anchor and Chum) withdraw fish from their diet–a truly serious effort for such carnivores–to fit better in the fish society. To support each other, they regularly organize a meeting, which they start with a pledge: "I am a nice shark, not a mindless eating machine. *If I am to change this image, I must first change myself*. Fish are friends, not food" (0:19:54–0:20:03, *emphasis mine*). The sharks' idea about changing themselves so that they could change the opinion of the society about them is the same idea *Hercules* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* advertised, and what the majority of people think about individuals who cannot fit in for one reason or another. As previously discussed, passing and overcoming are two common practices of disabled people to try to show as little deviance from the norm as possible, and–as it would follow in a lucky situation–to be accepted among the non-disabled. Personal narratives on passing show what an enormous price it takes to press oneself into passing as what he or she is not and to mask one's own corporeality every day (Brueggemann 212–214). Linton claims that overcoming and passing are most often not inner wishes but demand of the society, including closest family members (228–229). Denying oneself to get along better in society is exactly what the sharks do and it is what Marlin urges Nemo to do by hindering them in doing what he wants. The ocean (society) is dangerous, therefore Nemo should control himself and be very cautious (much more cautious than non-disabled fish). The scene with the sharks, however, proves that changing oneself so that the social image would change (passing, overcoming, etc.) is not a working mechanism at all: when Dory's nose starts bleeding, Bruce cannot keep on passing as a vegetarian shark anymore and almost kills Marlin and Dory. Passing, no matter how well it is performed, reveals itself sooner or later, and the emotional toll one has to pay for such an act almost never re-pays. The shark-scene suggests exactly what the movie itself says: it is not the (disabled) individual who should strive to adapt himself to social expectations (perfor*mance*) but the (disabling) social attitude should be changed.

Having escaped from Bruce, Marlin and Dory bump into an anglerfish. The most terrifying encounter ends with coward Marlin conquering the predator fish. The scene is a lesson about the ocean which is dangerous indeed but one can defend himself and overcome dangers. As Nemo points out during their quarrel earlier, Marlin is scared of the ocean

(0:12:40) and he projects this fear on his son. Through the fight with the anglerfish, Marlin starts overcoming his neurotic fear. The third lesson Marlin has to learn is not to ignore what Dory/Nemo says. Dory is told by a school of moonfish that they should swim through a trench not over it. Because of her short term memory loss, she cannot clearly remember this instruction but "something's telling [her that they] should swim through it" and Marlin should "trust [her] on this" (0:43:15–24). Marlin has enough of Dory's disagreeing and he intentionally distracts her attention so that she would forget her argument and they could swim above the trench. They survive a severe jellyfish attack by a close shave, in which both fish lose consciousness and Dory gets injured. Marlin realizes his mistake ("This is all my fault" [0:52:06]), and Dory's injury reminds him not to ignore the opinion of disabled individuals.

They come round in the East Australian Current among a bunch of sea turtles–the fourth lesson to learn. Crush, a father himself, tells Marlin why he goes so easy with his sons: parents need to let their kids "fly solo" and it is the children who know when they are ready for something, not the parents (0:52:40–0:53:40). Saying good-bye to the turtles, Marlin and Dory meet a whale (the fifth lesson) and accidentally end up in the mammal. Dory claims that she can speak 'whale,' which sounds like unarticulated singing. Marlin does not believe in Dory's ability and shouts at her: "No! You can't speak whale. […] No, you can't! You think you can do these things but you just can't, Nemo!" (1:09:18–1:09:28) Mixing up Dory's name with Nemo's and telling the exact same sentence to Dory that he said to Nemo in the beginning (0:12:45) makes it clear for Marlin that he behaves with Dory as if she were Nemo. Agreeing to do what Dory believes the whale said (jumping down in his throat), Marlin follows Dory there and they get out of the whale safe and sound.

The five encounters teach Marlin five very important lessons about how to deal with his disabled son. When they finally find Nemo and they are on their way back home, Dory ends up in a fishing-net with a bunch of other fish. Nemo has an idea how to save Dory but he needs to swim in the net to conduct the plan. This is Marlin's final test: although he wants to hold back Nemo, when his son says that he can do it, Marlin lets him in the net and says: "You're right. I know you can" (1:24:23). Nemo's plan works fine, proving Marlin that Nemo can "fly solo" if he lets him. Nemo finally can assume agency, which has been denied from him next to his father.

Barbara Hillyer details the peculiar relationship between parents and disabled children. She argues that parents are often blamed by their children and by disability activists "if the children do not attain a degree of 'independence' considered desirable for them" (Wendell

Rejected 141). Hillyer also draws attention to the fact that "parents sometimes have trouble letting go of a disabled child, and that they may become dependent emotionally on being needed by the child" (141). *Finding Nemo* offers a perfect example with the relationship of Marlin and Nemo to these observations. Nemo could be more independent concerning his abilities but he simply cannot perform them because of his father's over-protective behavior. The animation makes it clear that change should not be expected from the individuals with disability, rather from the society that considers them disabled and builds barriers around them that make it impossible for them to be accepted among the non-disabled. In this respect, *Finding Nemo* discusses the issue of disability in a transgressive fashion because no other Disney animation so far has argued for a change in social beholding without expecting a change of the disabled individual. Ann Millett neatly summarizes the working pattern of the conventional representation of disability in Disney animations:

> In conventional narrative, disability becomes the sole characteristic of one-dimensional characters that most often require physical change, repair or elimination in order for the narrative to maintain a supposedly preferable state of social and psychic order, or "normality." Such narratives tend to fall into generic categories that typecast disabled characters as misfortunate tragedies or sentimental, largely patronized heroes. ("Other Fish…")

The uniqueness of *Finding Nemo* lies not only in the fact that it subverts the conventional narrative patterns but also that in a subtle manner, it presents abnormal bodies as the norm. Besides Nemo and Dory's obvious disabilities, several other supportive characters are characterized with some forms of impairment (Kirkpatrick 49). On Nemo's first day at school, his schoolmates try to "outdo" Nemo's deformed fin:

> **Octopus** See this tentacle? It's shorter than all my other tentacles. But you can't really tell. Especially, when I twirl them like this.
> **Seahorse:** I'm H_2O intolerant. [*He sneezes*.]
> **Fish:** I'm obnoxious. (0:08:45–58)

The micro-society in the fish tank where Nemo ends up after being caught by the diver also shows various forms and levels of mental disability. In Millett's observation, all the characters with disabilities "swim with and against the undertow, and neither 'overcome' their so-called physical and intellectual 'problems,' nor prevail 'in spite of' them, as conventional narrative and stereotypes would prescribe" ("Other Fish…").

The conception of presenting impairment as the rule rhymes with Davis's thought-provoking idea on the end of identity politics through the advance of dismodernism. Davis claims that dismodernism "replaces the binary of docility and power with another– impairment and normalcy. Impairment is the rule and normalcy is the fantasy" ("The End" 314). Dismodernism goes one step forward than postmodernism and disclaims the dominant social construction of disability. Although this concept is far-sighted even in disability studies (let alone in the conservative milieu of Disney animation) but the idea of impairment being the rule and normalcy being the deviation from it nicely harmonizes with *Finding Nemo*. The social construction of disability, as Wendell points out, does not only depend on society's general opinion on the disabled. There are numerous other factors which construct disability:

> Disability has social, experiential and biological components, present and recognized in different measures for different people. Whether a particular physical condition is disabling changes with time and place, depending on such factors as social expectations, the state of technology and its availability to people in that condition, the educational system, architecture, attitudes towards physical appearance, and the pace of life ("Towards" 339)

Before the actual discussion of *Up!* (2009), which presents the disabling nature of biological aging (339) and how technological advances can decrease it, a short summary is provided on how these two, intertwined topics have been present throughout the observed twenty years of the Disney canon. Aging as a reason to be excluded from general social practices and from the 'norm' of the ideal body has been under-represented in Disney animations. Fragmentarily, it is touched upon in *Dinosaur* (2000), as discussed in Chapter 3.2., and in *Mulan* (1998), where the Chinese girl joins the army instead of her aging father. The issue of aging as a social construction is, therefore, rather poorly represented in the Disney canon. However, animations with object characters do discuss this issue in depth. Ironically, characters with technological ontology introduce the problem of aging as a social construction. Since they are unable to age biologically, their aging comes about as the effect of practices of consumer society (more on consumer practices in Chapter 3.3). The *Toy Story* trilogy (1995, 1999, 2010) as well as *Cars* (2006) discuss disability and aging on a rather symbolic level.

The 1995 *Toy Story* introduces the idea of the obsolescence of commodities. Toys get damaged (cf. Sid's vandalism of torturing, 'operating on' or exploding toys) or "they are replaced by newer, more technologically sophisticated toys [and] because children grow older, enter new phases, change interests, and start to be amused by different things" (Booker

80). In the framework of consumer practices, *Toy Story* initiates the relative nature of aging, which is always understood in a social context. Four years later, *Toy Story 2* picks up the thread where its predecessor dropped it: Jessie's tragic flaw of having been abandoned by Emily, her owner, highlights once more that aging (obsolescence of objects) depends mostly on how the surrounding social context thinks about it. For the first time, the concept of a heterotopia appears as a space where old (but special) items could be separated: the museum. As Foucault argues, museums are forms of heterochronies ("heterotopias [which] are linked to slices in time" ["Of Other Spaces"]), where a general archive of indefinitely accumulating time is established. For Woody, Jessie and the others from the once popular "Woody's Roundup" TV show, going to the museum would mean a final separation from a society which sooner than later would exclude them completely. As Stinky Pete puts it: "It's your choice, Woody. You can go back [to Andy] or you can stay with us and last forever [in the museum]" (Lasseter, Brannon and Unkrich 0:53:00). Being a separated heterotopia for old objects, the museum is seemingly a "safe" place for obsolete toys. Woody, however, does not give up on Andy: "I can't stop Andy from growing up but I wouldn't miss it for the world!" (1:06:04).

The concept of a heterotopia where obsolete toys could be separated is once again addressed in *Toy Story 3* (2010). Fifteen years after *Toy Story*, Andy is old enough to go to college and leave home. His toys, shrunk in number, are still in his room (in a box, though) and they are afraid of being thrown away (conceptualized as the death of toys). The toys end up in a daycare where they would finally be played with and they would not need to worry about being neglected because if kids grow up, there will be new children coming. The daycare is envisioned as a heterotopia, where–as Lotso, the bear, says–"we [toys] are all castoffs here: we been dumped, donated, yard-saled, second-handed and just plain thrown out" (Unkrich 0:24:23). *Toy Story 2* already showed aversion to heterotopias as 'quarantine' of old toys, and *Toy Story 3* suggests no different opinion: the daycare is a brutal place for toys, where both children and Lotso's gang terrorize the toys. Soon the image of the daycare turns into a prison (following the logic of a *Panopticon*): through surveillance cameras, the supervisor monkey can see every single movement or attempted flight. The daycare is envisioned as a terrible place, which underlines the trilogy's general concept: excluding the old from the society by placing them in various forms of heterotopias is not an acceptable solution. As all three films show, by the change of social attitude, individuals who are considered to be old do not need to be excluded from the social norm. In this respect, all three

Toy Story films are perfor*mative* because they do not support the general social practice but call for a new scripts and attitudes.

A similar message is conveyed in *Cars* (2006) as well. In the context of car-racing, which is most typically about the dynamic development of cars, the animation can highlight how easily cars can become obsolete. Among the lessons McQueen learns in Radiator Springs, the most important is that the world of car-racing can be very cruel to those who cannot fit in it any more. Doc, an ex-hero of the Piston Cup, tells him what happened after his accident: "They quit on me. When I finally got put together, I went back, expecting a big welcome. You know what they said? "You're history." Moved right on to the next rookie standing in line. There was a lot left in me. I never got a chance to show 'em" (Lasseter and Ranft 0:18:00–25). Later, Doc returns to the world of the Piston Cup as McQueen's team chief, and the media as well as the spectators cheer for his return. The film suggests that elder individuals can be useful members of the society if it is ready to accept aging as a rule (as the world accepts Doc in a new position: not as a race-car but as a team chief). The need of change in the social understanding of aging is best represented in the last racing scene: McQueen gives up winning the race and pushes The King (the oldest member of the Piston Cup) through the finish-line instead. The King's accident reminds him of Doc's story and by showing that a rookie like him cares about elder members of the society, he sets an example for others, who start cheering him.

These animations, featuring objects, repeatedly show how aging can be disabling not because of bodily factors but because of the social attitude. The idea of aging is fittingly symbolized by object-characters, who–by definition–cannot grow old biologically but they can easily become old (obsolete) in consumer society, which is driven by the constant purchasing of the most modern goods. As claimed in Chapter 3, these films are anti-consumerist from an environmental point of view, but the exact same attitude qualifies these animations to be critical about social practices towards the elderly. The last animation, discussed in this chapter is *Up!* (2009), which addresses the issue of biological aging and its disabling nature in a society that excludes elderly members from the idea of the perfect body. As argued here, (the availability of) technological advances can decrease the disabling nature of aging, which is a recurring motif in *Up!*

After *Hercules*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Finding Nemo* transgressed the category of the ideal body with the introduction of the disproportionate and the physically disabled, Disney's 2009 *Up!* continues this practice by introducing the elderly human body. The story centers around Carl Fredricksen, whom we get to know as a young, silent boy, who

befriends a talkative girl, Ellie. Both admirers of Charles Muntz, an explorer of South America, Carl and Ellie promise each other to travel once to Paradise Falls where Muntz made his discoveries. The friendship turns into marriage and a life lived together. Carl and Ellie buy the old, abandoned house where they used to play as children and get jobs as a balloon seller and as a zookeeper in the South America house of the zoo. After learning that Ellie is infertile and they cannot have any children, Carl reminds Ellie to their childhood plan to travel to Paradise Falls. Even though they dutifully spare money through their lives, they never make it together to South America: just when the now elderly Carl manages to buy two economy flight tickets, Ellie falls ill and dies, leaving Carl alone. These eleven minutes are narratively and stylistically "a little masterpiece of its own kind" (Booker 110), summarizing Ellie and Carl's life in a truly touching manner, without a single dialogue.

With Ellie's gone, Carl becomes a bitter, grumpy, old man who lives alone in their house, which a real estate agent would happily buy. By an instant of losing his nerves, he injures a construction worker and the court orders him to leave his house and move to a retirement home because he is "a public menace" (Docter 0:18:05). Carl does not give up on their dream about flying to South America and during the night, he attaches thousands of helium balloons to his house, which starts elevating and turns into a 'flying house.' Carl is accidentally accompanied by Russell, a member of a boy scout, with whom the old man is about to explore the wilderness. They do make it to Paradise Falls, where they end up in a real adventure: they encounter speaking dogs, a prehistoric giant bird and even Charles Muntz himself, from whose craze they have to escape. In the meantime, Carl overcomes his bitterness about losing Ellie and befriends Russell, with whom he experiences new adventures.

This Disney movie, for the first time, introduces an elderly man as its protagonist. This is the next logical step in deconstructing the ideal body, which has been conceptualized as young, healthy and proportionate. As earlier said, the previously discussed animations manage to transgress such a traditionally envisioned category of the body by introducing impaired or disproportionate bodies. In accordance with the opinion of disability researchers, aging is the most common form of disability. Aging means losing abilities to carry out tasks and activities that earlier meant no significant problems at all. Aging brings about failures in the body: illnesses, malfunctioning or inadequately functioning organs and the experience of regularly occurring pain are all aspects of a once young and perfectly functioning body (Wendell *Rejected* 18). Getting old is the most natural process of the body; still the elderly body is excluded from the "paradigm of humanity as young and healthy," thus conceptualized

as Other (18). Following this logic, several aspects of what is disabling about getting old originates from the improper social concept about the elderly. In most cases, the lack of necessary help, the unavailability of medical or technological support, and various other aspects of the surrounding social environment (educational system, architecture, the general pace of life, etc,) disable the elderly. As Wendell points out, not even the United Nations observes aging as a social construction although it would be urgent to encourage "everyone to acknowledge, accommodate and identify with a wide range of physical conditions [because it] is ultimately the road to self-acceptance as well as the road to liberating those who are disabled now" (18). Given the fact that Carl is the protagonist of *Up!*, the audience is most likely to identify with his character. The introductory eleven minutes accommodate the audience with the natural flow of getting old, helping them to position themselves in the social and biological reality of an aged man.

The elderly Carl's first scene in the film does not fail to highlight the aging body which is in need of support: medical as well as technological. His medicine lies on his bed-side table (0:11:18), he walks with a metal cane (0:11:42), and he descends from upstairs in a stair chair lift (0:11:50). He has a full denture (1:17:55) and a hearing aid (0:13:27). Carl moves with difficulty, has regular pain in the waist (0:11:36, 1:17:50) and follows a generally slower pace of life. Carl's biological body is completed with technological support. In this respect, his body is a "dismodernist body," as Davis claims. According to his argument, "technology is not separate but part of the body: […] the body is increasingly becoming a module onto which various technological additions can be attached" ("The End" 311–312). The concept of technology completing biological realities is recurring in the film. Beyond Carl's technologically 'improved' body, Muntz's dogs also function as an arena where nature and technology complete each other: each dog wears a collar that enables them to speak human–a futuristic vision how technology can extend natural abilities. (This concept of the intertwined relation of technology and the natural body is best exemplified in *WALL-E*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.)

Up! envisions the 'complete' elderly body with the constant presence of technology. These technological advances are available for Carl to enhance his by-now weakened abilities. Wendell claims that beyond the state of (available) technology, there are numerous other social factors that make aging disabling. Improper social expectations and attitude towards the elderly can be rather disabling. After becoming a widower, Carl is repeatedly encouraged to move into a retirement village so that the urban development project surrounding his house could finally purchase his plot. When Carl loses his nerve and hits a

construction worker on the head with his metal cane, the real estate agent quickly takes advantage of the situation and sues Carl. The elderly man is pronounced a "public menace" and the court decides on his removal to the retirement village. Disney animations, as previously argued, repeatedly show an aversion towards forms of heterotopias (especially to crisis heterotopias or heterotopias of deviation), which–by definition–serve as spaces reserved for individuals who deviate from the socially required mean or norm. Foucault actually discusses retirement homes as a space of heterotopia: "retirement homes [are] on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation since, after all, old age is a crisis, but is also a deviation since in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation" ("Of Other…"). *Up!* continues the tradition of presenting heterotopias in a fairly negative way: since it is the decision of the court to send Carl (a "public menace") in a retirement home, the concept of this heterotopia appears as a 'prison for the elderly.' (The idea of the retirement home as a prison is discussed in depth a year after *Up!*, in *Toy Story 3*.) Rejecting the idea of a retirement home, which is an institutionalized form of social help, the film shifts the source of social help to Russell's character.

Russell is a Wilderness Explorer (the film's version of boy scouts), who needs to collect one more badge to become a senior explorer: the badge for "Assisting the Elderly" (0:15:58). Envisioning social help 'arriving' from individuals and not from institutions (such as retirement homes) is a more preferred idea of the animation. Although Russell's eagerness to help annoys Carl in the beginning, he needs and accepts his help during their adventure in the wilderness. Carl's grumpy reaction (0:15:00–40) to Russell's offer to "assist" him is not surprising: elderly he may be, Carl is independent in many ways. Wendell claims that in a society which prizes independence, people with disabilities (including here then the elderly) "need every bit of independence [they] can get" because "dependence on the help of others is humiliating" (Wendell "Towards" 347). Obviously, people with severe disabilities cannot get along without help, but those who manage alone to a certain extent (such as Carl) tend to reject help in fear of being considered "de-valued" (347). Even if he moves somewhat slower than the young, he takes medicine and walks with a cane, Carl manages on his own. When Russell keeps asking him if he needs to be assisted, Carl rejects it because he clings onto his independence, which means self-esteem and respect in a society which does not tolerate dependence. Wendell suggests that in a culture that would prefer *inter*dependence to independence, asking for help would not stigmatize those in need (347). The yet utopist idea of an interdependent culture is actually carried out in *Up!*: Carl and Russell's adventure in

South America presents numerous situations where both depend on the help of the other, not only physically but emotionally as well.

Besides the merits of the animation concerning the representation of the elderly and criticizing social practices that categorizes them as "Other," *Up!* turns out to be a "disabled hero" story. The action scenes in South America demand such corporeal fitness from the elderly Carl that is unusual even from younger individuals but truly unfitting compared to the characterization of his body in the beginning of the film. Carl's story is a two-fold "overcoming" story: in an emotional and in a physical sense. The insightfully constructed semiotic system powerfully tells the narrative of Carl's emotional overcoming of losing his wife (Dragon). The exaggerated action scenes, however, reveal a corporeal overcoming, which is dissonant with the otherwise fittingly presented elderly body. Carl's active construction of his subjectivity lies more significantly in the fact that he overcomes losing Ellie but not in overcoming bodily dimensions. By tearing up his house from the ground, flying to South America to fulfill his dream and denying going to the retirement home, Carl starts taking agency in reconstructing himself. Through the adventures in Paradise Falls, he learns how to perform himself against the dominant ideologies (which would categorize him as a grumpy old man, living a humdrum life in a retirement home as an Other in the society). Carl's perfor*mative* subject construction is a new subject category: he becomes an adventurous old man, living in an aircraft (called the Spirit of Adventure) but he retains some of the category of the elderly by for example, parking the aircraft in the disabled parking lot (1:24:52).

This chapter highlighted how Disney animations throughout the twenty observed years interrogate the traditional concept of the ideal body as young, healthy and proportionate. Animations were divided into two groups, depending on whether they envision the body and bodily changes with magical ontology or with natural/biological ontology. Animations of the first group tend to conceptualize bodily changes as reversible deviations from the norm, thus tying together individual morals and bodily dimension (by performing the expected behavioral patterns, the ideal body is regained). The overall interpretation of marked bodies suggests that their value derives from the individuals' behavior, not from the (problematic) social attitude towards these bodies. On the whole, these films keep re-affirming the concept of the ideal body and broadcast rather problematic views on understanding bodies that fall outside this fairly limited category. The second group of films, however, center around bodies whose deviation from the norm is of biological/natural origin. These corporeal dimensions are not reversible, thus the animations can problematize the social construction of the body

and of disability. Featuring characters with permanently marked bodies as protagonists interrogate the category of the ideal body: despite supporting the fairly limited ideal body construction as young, healthy and proportionate, the animations of the second group transgress this concept by introducing the disproportionate, the disabled and the elderly as protagonists. More importantly, these films understand disability not as a failure of the individual but as a construction of the society. The improper social attitude, the general social concept of "othering" people with marked bodies and the construction of the environment favoring those with unmarked bodies are all forms of how society can disable individuals with marked biological realities. Although these films have started a deconstructing process, they still occasionally harbor ideas–such as the celebration of "disabled heroes" and the encouraging of passing and overcoming–, which are rather problematic in the context of disability.

5

Conclusion

The intertwined relationship of tendencies to deconstruct the concept of the invulnerable nature and the perfect body is best exemplified in *WALL-E* (2008). The excessive and uncontrolled use of technological resources destroys the natural environment and creates a fully technology-driven one, on the one hand; on the other hand, it turns human evolution back and deforms humans' biological corporeality, thus forcing macro- and microcosm to lie at mercy of technology. *WALL-E* is discussed in the conclusion because through the strong tension between nature and technology, it extensively refers to environmental as well as bodily issues. The film connects the macrocosm and the microcosm and its story is driven by perfor*mative* acts that go against the ideological power. Through the overarching influence of technology, this ideology appears in the form of computerized directives: the film celebrates individuals who dare overcoming their directives.

WALL-E is a science fiction animation taking place in the far future (about 800 years from now). The film presents the Earth being completely uninhabited and destroyed: after making life on Earth unsustainable by producing too much garbage, people left the planet on a spaceship (Axiom) and they are waiting there for Earth's renewal. The ecological catastrophe of the Earth has been preceded by the totalitarian reign of the mega-corporation "Buy N Large" (BnL). Besides functioning as the government, the corporation exercised power over trading, banking, transportation and the media. After BnL arranged the evacuation of mankind, they left robots on the planet to clean up the garbage: in around the year 2800, there is only one functioning Waste Allocation Load Lifter–Earth Class (WALL-E) robot, still diligently producing garbage cubes. WALL-E collects old commodities and stores them up in his container. He proudly shows these objects to EVE (Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator), a robot sent to Earth to check for proof of vegetation. Besides the numerous gadgets, WALL-E presents a plant that he has found under the garbage dump. EVE's directive is to search for and return to Axiom with a "confirmed specimen of ongoing photosynthesis" (Stanton 0:43:10). As EVE is leaving the Earth with the plant, WALL-E (in the meantime, 'falling in love' with EVE) climbs up on the space-shuttle and arrives on the

main spaceship, the Axiom as a stowaway. The appearance of the plant on the Axiom means the end of an era: after 700 years spent in the spaceship, humans can return to Earth. Even though the captain of the ship is really enthusiastic (people by this time have forgotten everything about Earth and their once culture), the autopilot (AUTO, a pre-programmed robot) does not let the spaceship return. As it turns out, AUTO was given directive to remain in space and never to return to Earth. This standoff is solved when man overcomes machine: the captain objects to AUTO, makes his first moves (people have lost their ability to walk as everything is automatized) and switches the autopilot off. After returning to Earth, mankind needs to learn everything from the beginning (land cultivation, for example) and recreate their culture.

WALL-E is a rather dark vision of the future, in which technical development and the comfortable consumer lifestyle lead to an ecological catastrophe, the deformation of human corporeality and to the complete loss of individualism. The environmental degradation is accelerated by excessive consumerism and garbage production, which did not prove to be sustainable after a time in the finite space provided by the planet. In a similar fashion, Hardin's influential publication "The Tragedy of the Commons" (1968) describes a social trap, explaining why pursuing every single person's interest leads to a collective catastrophe (for Hardin's theory in details, see Chapter 3.3.2). After failing to recognize the negative tendency of excessive consumption and its 'side-effect'–garbage production–the population of Earth could not survive any longer on the planet. Nature decays, the pollution of natural resources becomes so high that life on Earth cannot be sustained anymore, leaving the human population only one chance: escaping from the planet. This scenario is also in line with Tóth's summary of the Iron Age: he claims that expansive and nomadic lifestyle has always been present in the history of mankind but given the fact that the present natural and ecological crisis is a global phenomenon, expansion on Earth would be no option any more (74). Even though James Lovelock's Gaia theory is in harsh contrast with Hardin's tragedy of the commons, *WALL-E* makes extensive use of Lovelock's idea to ensure a happy ending.

A rather optimistic concept, the Gaia Theory describes the self-regulating nature of the Earth. Lovelock named the complex entity of the biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere Gaia (Lovelock vii). Gaia, named after the Ancient Greek goddess, is an organized and united whole, striving to regulate the factors of nature so that they would provide the suitable optimum for life. Gaia has been active for three and a half eons (an eon is 1000 million years) (117). Chemical, physical and biological processes of homeostasis make it possible to maintain an optimal environment. Lovelock proves that the average temperature

on Earth (17–20), the optimal ratio of oxygen (21%) (65–72), and the optimal salinity of oceans (81–87) are all regulated and sustained by homeostatic interaction of several natural beings and the evolving system of life. Gaia is such a massive "creature" that it can overcome all environmental degradation and it can recover from all traumas, even if it means the mass extinction of species, including mankind (Tóth 106–107). Lovelock is often scorned for being unconventional and too optimistic–and exactly this optimism qualifies his theory to appear in Disney animations. The tension between the need for a happy ending and the fact that environmental issues do not have any, at least in this generation, can be solved with an optimistic environmental approach. Even though the Gaia theory has a dark side (the possible extinction of species, including humans), the promise that Gaia always overcomes its traumas is a good-sounding happy ending. Lovelock's theory is best illustrated in *WALL-E*, in which the promise of the Earth to recover gives a second chance for humanity on the planet. In this sense, *WALL-E* ties together two opposing ideas, the Gaia theory and the tragedy of the commons.

The film starts with presenting the remains of the Iron Age, the final stage in the scenario of the tragedy of the commons: the Earth is covered with garbage, there is no vegetation and humans have disappeared. The massive garbage production is suggested to be a consequence of significant consumerist and commodity accumulating practices, accelerated by the monopole Buy N Large mega-corporation. The ecological crisis and the human exodus from Earth are told through artifacts of the contemporary media: the headline of a 700-year-old issue of "BnL Times" says "Too much trash! Earth covered–BnL CEO declares global emergency" (0:04:42); a propaganda video also from BnL advertises moving to space: "Too much garbage in your face? There's plenty of space out in space! BnL starliners leaving each day! We'll clean up the mess while you are away" (0:05:30–0:05:36). Originally, the evacuation of mankind was meant to last for five years while special robots clean the Earth and restore the sufficient natural condition so that vegetation can restart. The "five-year cruise," however, turns out to be nothing else but a nomadic resettlement. The expansive nature of the mission is aptly characterized in BnL CEO, Shelby Forthright's commercial slogan ("Because at BnL, space is the final FUN-tier!" [0:06:10]), hinting at Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of the American Frontier (1893); at Kennedy's "New Frontier" policies of space missions; and at the opening line of the *Star Trek* TV episodes and films. Forthright's pun of the "fun-tier" points out the luxurious lifestyle offered on the starliner: "… your captain and autopilot chart a course for non-stop entertainment, fine dining, and with our all-access hover-chairs even grandma can join the fun! There's no need to walk!"

(0:05:45–0:05:50). BnL's commercial is in line with Žižek's concept of repressive desublimation and the social imperative 'Enjoy yourself!'

The imperative of consumer society in 700 years' time, however, causes significant changes. As people are constantly encouraged to consume and they dutifully do so, the inhabitants of the starliner are shown without any individual characterization. The excessive perfor*mance* of the consumerist ideology is criticized in various aspects: people eat the same food, they have the same outfit (moreover, of the same color), all of them are seriously obese and sit in hover-chairs, making them lose the ability to walk or to reposition themselves without technical assistance. The envisioned life of people on the Axiom shows no struggles or challenges as everything is provided due to the immense technological development. The constant physical presence and ideological status of hover-chairs, robots, the computerized hologram atmosphere and most importantly the autopilot are signs of a reverse order: in a dystopic consumer society, objects wield power over the atrophic, dis-individualized human race. Through this reciprocal change, people on the ship completely depend on objects and on the holograms which show/are their (simulated) atmosphere. Instructions and imperatives are given through advertising ("Time for lunch, in a cup!" [0:37:22]–robots bring cups to people who start slurping right away; "Attention, Axiom shoppers! Try blue, it's the new red!" [0:37:35]–people press a button on their chairs after which their red outfit changes to blue in a hologram manner). Drawing a very similar picture, Martyn J. Lee summarizes Baudrillard's concept of a cultural order defined by the sign-value of commodities:

> Individuals have here been reduced to the status of mere consumers, and consumers have become nothing but the vehicles for the transmission of controlled and predetermined differences between consumer objects which function to classify the social world according to the demands of advertising and the mass media. […] Changing their sign-values, consumer objects [are] able to effect changes in consumer needs and behaviors. The manipulation of needs and behaviors in this manner has made the consumer little other than a hollow shell into which the system of commodity production may deposit whichever needs are required for a given moment. (23–24)

The representation of consumer objects and the reaction of consumers in *WALL-E* fit perfectly to this description although the film goes some steps ahead and shows how governmental functions are taken by objects. Even though the spaceship does have a captain, his only assignment is to make a morning announcement–a rather formal job. The *éminence grise*, however, is AUTO, the autopilot robot whose original directive was to control the ship

with the captain and to lead it back to Earth after five years when vegetation on Earth is restored. As "Operation Cleanup" had failed, Forthright sent a message to AUTO:

> Wouldn't you know, rising toxic levels have made life unsustainable on Earth. Darn it all, we're going to have to cancel Operation Recolonise [returning to Earth]. So, just stay in the course […], it'll just be easier for everyone to remain in space. […] Go to full autopilot. Take control of everything and do not return to Earth! (1:05:55–1:06:16)

From here on not even Shelby Forthright can control AUTO as–right after sending the message–he leaves the Earth, murmuring in the oxygen mask: "Let's get the heck out of here!" (1:06:18). AUTO dutifully takes control of everything, and cruelly punishes and tortures everything (e.g. WALL-E) and everyone (e.g. the Captain) who does want to return to Earth. AUTO "lacks the imagination to go beyond its programming" (Booker 105), which would already be a sign of individual will and act. In this sense, the animation suggests that true individuality can only come about in a perfor*mative* manner (that is, resisting the dis-individualizing ideology) because perfor*mance* equals with quitting on the self.

Individuality as a sign of character has disappeared on the Axiom: neither the people nor the robots on the Axiom are depicted with own ideas or personality. As Lee states above, consumers are "hollow shells" (24) and the robots follow their pre-programmed directive. WALL-E, however, develops some kind of individuality despite the fact that he does not even have a name ("WALL-E" refers to the robot type and not the individual machine) and he still carries out his directive–700 years after his programming. WALL-E has a cockroach friend; he gets emotional by the music from an old copy of *Hello Dolly!*; he 'falls in love' with EVE and–objecting to his directive–he leaves Earth to follow EVE. Even though WALL-E is a pre-programmed robot, he is the only character who is presented with some individuality from the beginning on. Underlining the general idea of the dis-individualizing nature of technology, the animation suggests that individuality has better chances to emerge even in the wasteland of the almost dead planet than in the technology-ruled Axiom. Later on, WALL-E's individual behavior sets an example to some robots on the Axiom (EVE, M-O, a group of malfunctioning robots, etc.) and to some people as well. The Captain overcomes AUTO by seeing WALL-E's bravery and he "rises from his automated chair and takes his first steps, thus signaling a declaration of independence from machines" (Booker 107). The semiotic complexity of this scene is a great example for the functioning of the semiotically multilayered channel in Disney animations. The Captain's detachment from

technology is a moment of gaining self-control: taking a step on his own. Literarily, it means carrying out movements without the help of technology, that is, disconnecting the technological attachments from the natural body. Metaphorically, the scene refers to regaining control from technology, to overcome the controlling, subjecting power of technology. The scene is accompanied by Richard Strauss's symphonic poem, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Op. 30 (1896). The incorporation of this musical piece of art serves as filmic intertextuality: Stanley Kubrick's *2001: Space Odyssey* (1968) applied the same musical reference. *WALL-E* employs Strauss's work in relation to human evolution but it can also be understood as an indirect reference to the philosophical piece of work on which the symphonic poem is based on: Friedrich Nietzsche's 1885 philosophical treatise *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. In the academic discourse of subject theory, this work is a cornerstone because it discussess the control of the self and allows the idea of self-construction to enter in the philosophical system (Bollobás 74). Exactly these concepts–gaining control over the self, and constructing subjectivity for the self–are highlighted in the scene when the Captain stands up against the over-arching power of technology. Once again, the Captain's objection to the power of technology is a perfor*mative* act of subject formation, which is depicted as the only way to construct one's subjectivity since the perfor*mance* of the subject is a short circuit, leading to the complete loss of individuality.

It is not only the Captain who learns 'individuality' from WALL-E. John and Mary–two average people on the ship–get to know each other through WALL-E, who accidentally shows them how to switch off their hologram screens (an interface for advertisements and thus control) and see their environment with their own eyes. In other words, WALL-E's, an *object*'s individuality, brought from a place where consumerism destroyed everything and left a vacuum behind, sets an example to people and robots, dis-individualized by the working mechanisms of consumerism, generated by technology. The only way to return to Earth and to get the chance to start life afresh is to overcome the reign of objects by acting as individuals.

The uncritical use of technological power leads not only to an environmental crisis and to an artificially created world which strips people off their individuality but also–as fragmentarily pointed about above–deforms the human body. Technological advances support bodily dimensions and extend abilities (see *Up!* in the previous chapter), thus complementing the biological body and offering a possibility to perform the 'norm'. Numerous technological advances, however, are designed not to complement under-functioning bodily dimensions and abilities but to function instead of capable bodies. These

technological items are most often advertised as a form of comfort (with a remote control, one can remain seated to change TV channels; with online shopping and customer services, one does not even have to–literally–run errands). With technology taking over the functions of the body in the name of 'comfort,' biological evolution slows down. Tóth (discussing H. G. Wells' s *The Time Machine* [1895]) describes how a comfortable lifestyle can affect human evolution (61–63). Humans' intellectual capacity enables the development of technology and various other tools through which nature (environmental as well as bodily) can be controlled and reduced. The technological control of environment (see Chapter 3.3) offers comfortable solutions for humanity, thus struggling with natural powers ceases to become a tensile force of evolution. Technological achievements designed for the body does not necessitate any kind of power investment, thus leaving the biological body without challenges that could motivate it for further development. Tóth argues that once biological entities (such as humans) get liberated from the struggle for existence, evolution slows down and turns into degeneration (62). He also claims, to my mind, quite rightly, that such a process has already started in welfare society. Signs of degeneration are, for example, the general practice of comfortable, consumerist way of life, the low level of birth and death rates, the accumulation of genetic deviances and the prevalence of artificial reproductive technologies, which all forecast the discontinuance of the positive effects of biological evolution (62).

WALL-E envisions this degeneration, induced by the all-pervasive comfort offered through technological advances. The hover-chair that was originally advertised as a form of technological help for the elderly ("[W]ith our all-access hover-chairs even grandma can join the fun! There's no need to walk!" [0:05:48]), turns out to be a general bodily extension of everyone in some years. In other words, bodily limitations that appeared in elderly age become the highest abilities of humanity after seven hundred years spent on the Axiom. This is not only an expressive way to describe how biological development stops and yields to degeneration but also a fitting example to understand to what extend disability and the 'norm' are social constructions. Limited abilities of movement are considered a form of disability before humanity leaves the planet (the only disabled character in the advertisement is the grandmother, all the other people are able-bodied, walking without the help of any technological support). Some centuries later, the 'normal' human body on the Axiom is understood with different measures: the different environmental settings (architecture), the changed attitude towards physical appearance, the slower pace of life and the general availability of technological advances (hover-chairs, robots, etc.) show how relative the

notion of ‘disability’ and ‘the norm’ are. The social construction of these ideas are aptly described by the fact that what used to be a technological support for disabled people turns out to be indispensable at a different time (due to excessive disuse atrophy of muscles and bones, people are resorted to the constant use of hover-chairs). In other words, what used to be conceived as disability becomes the norm on the Axiom, which tendency also shows how the body degenerates once technological comfort is continually offered and accepted.

The intertwined relationship of human evolution and technology is widely discussed by Bernard Stiegler, who extends Heidegger’s understanding of the relationship between nature and technics. Technics command nature and not vice versa, as it used to be earlier (Stiegler 24). Even though technology is a man-made creation and could not even exist if the human intellect had not been powerful enough, technology now destroys its creator: the intellectual power of humanity becomes the power of self-destruction through technology (85). Through the expansion of technical equipment and practices, and the cultural and political traditions growing out from the central, ontological power of technology, nature has been conquered by technology, leading to “the exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of what is called ‘nature’” (87). Beyond the natural environment, the human body and human evolution is highly influenced by technology. Stiegler claims that there is an “urgency of an elucidation of the relation holding, at an ontological level (if one can here still refer to ontology), between anthropology and technology” (88). Human evolution as well as culture has always come about in the framework of this relation, in other words, human anthropology cannot be understood and interpreted without technology. This observation is in line with *WALL-E*, concerning two significant instances. First is the already detailed technological control over humans, AUTO being the source of political and ideological control. In Stiegler’s understanding, then, this control is actually the basis of human evolution. The photos of the previous captains of the Axiom next to each other show (0:42:28–43) how human evolution turned into degradation each captain has a significant bodily deviation compared to the one before), and how this process–as well as the captains themselves–depends on technology, symbolized by AUTO in the background of each photo. The second instance that points out the intertwined relationship between technology and anthropology is the scene which reveals that humans have forgotten all the knowledge Western scientific achievements have accumulated as well as all characters of their once culture on Earth. Stiegler claims that technicization “drives Western knowledge down the path that leads to forgetting of its origin, which is also a forgetting of its truth. This is the ‘crisis of the European sciences.’ Without a refoundation of rational philosophy, science–having lost the object itself of any science–leads

[…] to the technicization of the world" (3). The scene where the Captain re-discovers (0:49:39–45) their origin on Earth by asking the computer to define what earth, sea and alike are fittingly shows Stiegler's point. The lost scientific knowledge is accompanied by the lost knowledge on human culture. The Captain is eager to learn what hoedown, dancing, and farming (0:58:54–59:30) used to be. Regaining this knowledge, the Captain differentiates himself as a human from the technology that practices an excessive power on him, stands up without the help of any technological help and switches AUTO off (1:19:33). Humans return to Earth (which is still covered with garbage but plants are already growing on it), where they have to re-learn everything from the scratch (cultivating the land, irrigation, creating art, architecture, etc. [1:27:05–1:28:50]). The envisioned pictures about the future show nature and technology in balance. *WALL-E* celebrates the importance of individualism by painting the darkest picture of the excessive power of technology, destroying the natural environment, and degenerating and dis-individualizing humans. Categories of the macrocosm and the microcosm are, therefore, created from the tension between nature and technology: a creative power that has been present throughout Disney animations produced between 1990 and 2010.

The previous chapters discussed the tendencies how Disney animated films open up to the interrogation and subversion of categories of the invulnerable nature and of the ideal body. The representation of both the macrocosm (environment) and the microcosm (body) have experienced significant changes in accordance with the contemporary interpretation of these themes in social and academic discourses. I observed these changes with Bollobás's theory on performativity in which she defines two aspects: (1) perfor*mance* is in accordance with the dominant ideology, replaying already existing scripts in a normative fashion; (2) perfor*mative* is created out of resistance to the ruling ideology, thus bringing about new ontologies in a subversive manner. The re-conceptualization of these categories in Disney animations coincides with the powerful diegetic appearance of technology–a contemporary alternative for magic. The dual presence of nature and technology brings about categories of environment that have not been present in Disney animations before as well as new dimensions of the body, which has a technological ontology or is complemented with technological support. The pastoral concept of the perfect, invulnerable nature introduced in Disney animations that are set in rural sceneries gradually gives way to understanding the environment as a category created from the tension between nature and technology. These representations are embedded in urban settings, which provide a framework for the discussion of contemporary environmental problems. The incorporation of current environmental issues is triggered by three factors: due to wider media publicity on

environmental matters, the social prevalence of consumerist practices and the wider acceptance of environmental philosophical trends in the academic discourse, environmental issues appear symptomatically in Disney animations. Since most environmental problems originate from humans' uncritical use of technological power, these films repeatedly touch on environmental ethical questions. Therefore, the concept of the invulnerable nature–which used to be conceptualized as a safe, timeless shelter of protagonists where perfect harmony prevails–has gradually been contested: the new category of environment is a category in process. Environment is neither independent, nor in itself, but in a constant, performative dialogue with humans' environmental concepts and actions.

Deconstructing the idea of the invulnerable, perfect nature is as urgent at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as deconstructing the idea of the perfect body. Following Wendell's observation of "the paradigm of humanity as young and healthy" ("Towards" 339), I interpret the perfect body in these corporeal dimensions rather than in its gender or racial understandings. Traditionally, Disney animations tended to celebrate the perfect body because they weighed it down to accepted morality: the protagonist, who by definition acts according to the advertised conformist morals, is endowed with a young, healthy and proportionate body which is powerful and capable to carry out all the necessary activities. Characters whose moral are ruptured are tendentiously elderly (or middle-aged) and (excessively) disproportionate. Moral flaws, therefore, become visible on the body, but once the expected morals are learned and acted out, the body regains its 'perfect' dimensions.

Such a tradition of conceptualizing the body roots in the genre of literary fairy tales. The first feature-length Disney animations–which brought fame and success to the studio–were based on well-known European fairy tales, in which corporeal changes are often tied with morals. The practice stayed with the studio, whose films constantly re-affirmed the concept of the perfect body. Animations that discuss bodily deviances as reversible dimensions created through the power of magic tend to re-play fairy tale narrative patterns. Because these animations envision a 'proper' happy ending only through regaining the perfect body, these stories highlight the hegemony of this category. The concept of the perfect body is fairly exclusive: the elderly, the ill, the disproportionate and those with any kind of bodily deficit are rejected. This practice of the studio has been widely criticized as conservative, politically incorrect and out of joint in contemporary social attitudes towards marked bodies; moreover, at the turn of the century, the studio aimed at addressing a demographically wider audience, to which they had to adjust their concept of the body.

Similar to the category of the perfect, invulnerable nature, then, the category of the perfect body has been contested. Detaching morals from bodily dimensions, and doing away with the concept of reversible marked bodies, Disney animations started to present protagonists and other characters conceptualized as disabled. Based on corporeal anomalies, these dimensions of the body turn disabling in the social context. In accordance with contemporary results of disability studies, disabilities here are understood as social constructions and as a matter of performativity. Animations that incorporate this approach do not envision disabilities as a moral flaw of the individual but as creations of social 'flaws' that categorize individuals with marked bodily dimensions disabled. The compulsory happy ending comes about in two different ways: characters with disabilities make huge efforts to be accepted in society; or the social opinion and attitude changes in a way that it ceases to 'other' disabled characters. The first version is a re-play of disabled heroes' stories in which the individual overcome their physical limits and thus the society's stigmatization. The second version is more critical about social practices and advertises the need of social changes in viewing people with disabilities. Through re-interpreted perspectives of the society, bodily markedness does not necessarily need to function as a disability. Although this version is closer to what researchers in the field of disability studies advertise, it is not yet prevalent in Disney animations, with *Finding Nemo* being the sole example so far.

Beyond the inappropriate attitude towards people with disabilities, social 'flaws' can be articulated in many different ways, such as architecture, the educational system, the pace of life or the state and availability of technological advances to people with disabilities (Wendell, "Towards" 339). To narrow down the scope of argument, the role of technology was focused on and how it can complement the biological body. As an excellent example, *Up!* shows that technology is a significant factor in deciding what can be considered disabling: being a "module onto which various technological additions can be attached" (Davis "The End" 311–312), the body–similar to the environment–can be envisioned as a category coming about from the tension between nature and technology.

Animations in the observed twenty years have shown significant development in conceptualizing the macrocosm (environment) and the microcosm (body). In both topics, perfor*mative* items are dealt with in a similar fashion: they appear fragmentarily in the normative (perfor*mance*) structure of narration, which does not allow their complex representation in depth. Perfor*mative* elements are incorporated through the extension of the semiotic channel. On the one hand, this is a (profit-generating) tool to address wider layers of audiences; on the other hand, it functions as a referential 'playground' for filmic, literary and

popular cultural intertextualities where visual and textual subversions appear. The extended semiotic channel enables animations to present various genres. The traditional generic hegemony of musicals in American animations is replaced by the multiplicity of genres. With the wide-spread appearance of technology, the genre of science-fiction becomes very popular; the motif of subversion and breaking-away is emphasized in road movies; the pulsating, fast rhythm of narratives demands the genre of adventure films. The merging of various genres is typical to most animations but the decisive genre remains comedy – the 'normative' genre of American animations.

The traditional way of thinking about the invulnerable nature and the perfect body are concepts that sound both discrepant and irresponsible at the turn of the millennium. Visions about the perfect nature and body have been interrogated in Disney animations produced between 1990 and 2010 by showing that these categories are not fixed or given essences, but unstable, unfixed categories, constantly re-created in discursive power relations. Such a paradigm shift in Disney animations is enormous, though not yet prevalent. I observed and discussed transgressive instances that give impetus to practices of re-interpreting the idea of the environment and the body.

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