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Novel Ways of Seeing:
Victorian Novels, Animated Adaptations, and the Disoriented Reader/Viewer

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Ayra Laciste Quinn

June 2014

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Susan Zieger, Chairperson
Dr. Joseph Childers
Dr. Susan Laxton

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The Dissertation of Ayra Laciste Quinn is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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I would like to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation for those that helped make this project a reality.

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Last but not least, I'd like to thank Dr. Susan Zieger, a wonderful advisor and colleague. Thank you so much for all the time spent discussing ideas with me, reading my work, and encouraging my development as an academic professional. I could not have asked for a more dedicated mentor.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following:

To God Almighty, whose saving grace through Jesus Christ makes life exceedingly sweet and beautiful;

To my husband, who prays with me, lives sacrificially for me, and has never once doubted my ability to see this all the way through;

To my brother, sister, and godmother, who brighten each day with their love and laughter;

To my cats, who always keep me company by sitting on my books and stepping on my keyboard while I work;

To all my friends, relatives, and fellow colleagues, whose genuine interest in my work and constant support encourage me to keep going;

And last but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad, whose loving sacrifices remind me every day that education is an investment with countless returns. This achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Novel Ways of Seeing:
Victorian Novels, Animated Adaptations, and the Disoriented Reader/Viewer

by

Ayra Laciste Quinn

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, June 2014
Dr. Susan Zieger, Chairperson

This project uses reader and viewer disorientation as a means of historically linking 19th century literary texts to their modern-day animated adaptations. Building on the premise that animated adaptations (as opposed to live action adaptations) recursively reinscribe those difficult-to-identify social and cultural tensions spilling out of their source literary texts, this project aims to move beyond the fidelity aesthetic in favor of a more historical framework to shape our understanding of how these texts disorient their audiences. The introduction explains the concept of disorientation as appropriated in this project and stakes a claim for animated adaptations as central to better understanding 19th century texts as well as modern-day adaptations in terms of disorientation. The first chapter pairs Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* alongside Director Robert Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* with Victorian technologies (such as the railroad and the telegraph) and the cinematic technology of motion capture to demonstrate how technological disorientation becomes figured as unnatural speed and bodily movements in both texts. The second chapter examines Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Books* and Disney's *The Jungle Book*

alongside photography and 2-D hand drawn animation to show how ideological identity differences and exclusion in terms of animated framing disorient both reader and viewer. Finally, the third and final chapter explores the idea of animation in terms of life-giving force and stop-motion cinematic technique using Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Director Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* to demonstrate how both form and content work together to disorient the audience. Ultimately, this project aims to move away from the idea that cinematic adaptations reflect only their historical moments of inception; rather, they extend 19th century disorientation by redeploying it through both narrative and animated technique.

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Introduction: Why Animation?

I. The Disoriented Reader/Viewer

For the Victorians, the world was becoming increasingly animated. Feats in engineering and mechanization led to unprecedented technological progress, advancements in transportation and communication made distant lands and people accessible, and increasing urbanization motivated the movement of people and goods. G. Kitson Clark in *The Making of Victorian England: Being the Ford Lectures Delivered Before the University of Oxford* argues that such changes had been many years in the making and did not simply arise out a vacuum. However, he argues that the Industrial Revolution, which he locates as occurring from 1770 to about 1840, was different in that the "effect was explosive" (86). His description of the changes, especially of the improvements in transportation, are notable especially in terms of movement and speed: "Hitherto the fastest speed which man could travel was that of a man on a galloping horse; now the steam locomotive has broken that limitation for ever. Hitherto man had needed the movement of the air or water to carry his boats along…now the steamboat was beginning to enable him to move swiftly over the waters at his own behest…" (86-87). The emphasis in Clark's prose is on the newfound ability of the Victorians to break the expected laws governing movement by achieving miraculous new standards of speed and motion.

Changes were occurring at the discursive level as well. For example, 19th century photographic discourse was tied to new understandings of how powerful and subjective

the human eye actually was. According to Jonathan Crary in *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* and Geoffrey Batchen in *Burning With Desire: The Conception of Photography*, because the eye was beginning to be understood as an entity in motion, vision was increasingly viewed as fluid and active rather than static and objective. Photography became a means of studying movement, as evidenced by Eadweard Muybridge's successful attempt to photograph a galloping horse in 1878 (Brian Clegg). Living bodies were seen as in motion. As evidenced by the work of Henry Fox Talbot, who recognizes the medium's potential for conveying information in *The Pencil of Nature*, photography itself became a means of knowledge production and absorption in the 19th century.

The Victorians certainly experienced many firsts in terms of movement, motion, and speed, prompting them to reconsider their own relationship to the physical world, as well as to other people. In *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, Ian Baucom explores the meaning of Englishness. Baucom notes that "Englishness…emerges as at once an embrace and a repudiation of the imperial beyond" (7). Simply put, an individual's relationship to the imperial empire is in need of constant negotiation, since Englishness is defined with and against the British Empire. In a discussion of one of Rudyard Kipling's texts, *Kim*, he points out the inefficacy of maps to establish concrete boundaries, since boundaries are rather abstract in a material process that involves material bodies and material spaces (94). Key to Baucom's argument here is his focus on movement; boundaries can delineate spaces but not dictate movement across

those lines. Again, movement confuses understandings of ideological fixity by rendering understandings of identity and space fluid and permeable.

It is apparent from this discussion that the changes occurring in the Victorian era in particular and the 19th century more generally were physically disorienting; they restructured the way that people understood their own physical bodies and movements in relation to a world in constant motion. Reponses to these changes varied. As noted in the first paragraph, these changes were on the one hand lauded as enabling Britain to achieve new heights of global power. These displays of mechanical ingenuity and imperial prowess were highlighted in the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations of 1851 and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, respectively. On the other hand, the changes wrought by increased urbanization and mechanization were viewed with suspicion. Thomas Carlyle in "Signs of the Times" (1829) famously comments, "The time is sick and out of joint" (84). He laments the idea that increasing mechanization has made people increasingly mechanical and robotic. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 1843 poem "The Cry of the Children" posits that industrialization, and more specifically the forced laborious movement of children's bodies, is inimical to faith and the well-being of the nation as a whole.

The implications of intensifying movement could be seen in the period's literary texts. Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) traces the movement of bodies and of a valuable gem through England and the imperial beyond. Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855) highlights the contrast between industrial movement and rural stasis. A great number of these 19th century texts have become popular sources for cinematic

adaptations. Many critics have already discussed the affinity between the 19th century novel and the cinematic adaptation, proposing different reasons for the continued use of 19th century texts as cinematic material. However, these texts do not use 19th century movement as a means of conducting these studies. For example, Deborah Cartmell focuses solely on the different adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* in her book, *Screen Adaptations: Jane Austen's* Pride and Prejudice: *The Relationship Between Text and Film*. Though Cartmell does analyze the social imperatives driving each individual adaptation, movement as ushered in by steadily increasing industrialization, modernization, and urbanization is not one of them. If cinematic adaptations of 19th century texts have become a focal point in discussions centering on the function of adaptations, why then have animated adaptations of Victorian texts received so little critical attention?

Animation is a medium that lends itself naturally to the discussion of disorientation. Animated films are capable of pushing spatial and temporal boundaries in a way that live action films simply cannot. They are capable of manipulating movement, and even more significantly, are able to transform the fantastical into an acceptable absorptive reality that draws viewers in and keeps them invested and engaged throughout the entire film. In other words, animated films are able to establish and maintain the viewer's suspension of disbelief even if the movements, characterizations, or narrative trajectories refuse to conform to referential images or predictable laws of motion. Animation is especially suited to narratives characterized by shifts, transformations, and logic-defying motion and movement.

It is my contention that animated adaptations of literary texts have been overlooked as a rich source of information about the period being adapted and the period performing the adaptation. The following project seeks to redirect attention from live action adaptations to animated adaptations in order to move beyond a superficial comparative approach to a more concrete and substantial historical framework through which literary texts and animated adaptations can be examined alongside each other. Disorientation is a productive means through which to conduct this investigation, by forging a historical link between the disorientation experienced by the reader of a 19th century literary text and the disorientation experienced by the viewer of its corresponding animated adaptation.

A sequence from Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) can perhaps best illustrate what I mean by disorientation in terms of animation. In an instant, animation can change the terms of locatable reference and can transform one reality into another. This type of disorientation jolts the viewer in a physical way, as there is no way to prepare for what may change in an instant. Such is the disorientation linking the 19th century to our own historical moment.

When the Cave of Wonders starts to disintegrate after Abu greedily grabs a forbidden gem, both he and Aladdin attempt to make a quick escape on a magic carpet. The carpet moves with incredible speed, ducking falling objects and fluidly moving this way and that in maneuvering through the contorted cave. The toggling between various viewer points of view makes for a disorienting experience. After the carpet rescues Aladdin from falling into the lava and they scoop up Abu, a long shot shows Aladdin,

Abu, and the magic carpet flying from a lava tidal wave that threatens to envelop them. There are then shots that give the viewer a frontal look at Aladdin, and then shots that switch the viewer's point of view completely, as if to simulate following behind on the magic carpet. Right after the long shot of the tidal wave, the point of view switches again to behind to front to behind to front. At this moment, the viewer's point of view is then aligned with Aladdin's; a rock is falling. The shot again switches to a frontal view of the three as they duck, going out of the frame. When they emerge again, there is a close up of Aladdin's face; Abu is wrapped tightly around Aladdin's head. As Aladdin attempts to remove Abu, he exclaims, "Abu! Abu, this is no time to panic." The point of view changes again, aligning the viewer's with Aladdin's. The viewer can see that a dead end is coming up, and the shot again changes to a close up of Aladdin's face as he gasps and says, "Start panicking." The viewer's point of view is then again aligned with Aladdin's, and the viewer is flipped upside down and then turned to the side as the carpet makes a dash for the exit. After this, the sequence goes back to a long shot of them escaping the columned entrance of the treasure trove just seconds before the lava spews out behind them.

Because the viewer is unable to sustain positional certainty at any given point in time during this sequence, this series of shots in *Aladdin* effectively illustrates what I mean by disorientation. The result of toggling between the different shots and points of view gives the viewer the simultaneous feeling of watching the events as they unfold and experiencing them alongside Aladdin, Abu, and the magic carpet. The entire experience

is jarring, as movement, speed, and multiple perspectives leave the viewer physically disoriented.

Disorientation then continues when Aladdin rubs the magic lamp that Abu had taken from Jafar's pocket. An enormous genie emerges from the lamp. Next to Aladdin, he looks exceedingly large. He then begins a series of transformations, which prompt Aladdin to wonder whether he is actually conscious. Paul Wells in *Animation and America* calls the Genie's characterization "Warneresque" and points out the film's subversive potentialities: "Embracing rapid metamorphoses, narrative condensation and associative relations, the film was much more invested in the 'primal' roots of the form, and reasserted its 'modernity' accordingly, especially in relation to the defining and anticipated aspects of the Disney canon" (110). The idea that typical Disney animation deviates from other animated texts will be explored further in the third section, but it is important to note here how motion figures heavily into how an animated film is perceived in terms of modernity.

Reader and viewer disorientation are at the heart of the three chapters in this project, which will be discussed in detail later in this introduction. The first chapter, which pairs Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) with director Robert Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (2009), examines disorientation arising from movement and motion; the spatial and temporal functions of both the literary text and the animated adaptation are grounded in a concrete historical look at the increasing mechanization, urbanization, and technological innovation occurring during the 19th century, as well as the motion capture and computer technology used to produce the animated film.

Disorientation arises out of a physical jolt that results from being confronted with unnatural movement, and the disorientation examined in this chapter is most closely aligned with that illustrated through the sequence in *Aladdin*. The second chapter examines Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895)—referred to collectively hereafter as *The Jungle Books*—alongside Wolfgang Reitherman's *The Jungle Book* (1967). The disorientation examined here is tied to photography, referential categories of identity, and knowledge production in connection with a photographic visual culture. The animated adaptation is discussed in terms of the animator authorship and the exclusionary technique of 2-D hand drawn animation. Finally, the third chapter looks at Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* (2012). Though not a Victorian literary text, Shelley's *Frankenstein* figures quite nicely into the discussion of disorientation, as it raises concerns over the nature of the soul and the extent to which scientific power should be wielded. Burton's *Frankenweenie* uses a stop-motion animation technique to tell the story, which rounds out the discussion of animation technique.

The foundational argument for each of these chapters is that the literary texts and animated adaptations converge historically in ways that go beyond mere issues of fidelity. The literary texts are themselves fraught with various questions, issues, and tensions that reflected those of a 19th century audience. Interestingly, the literary texts in question do not attempt to resolve any of the tensions that they explore; they instead leave them exposed, which can be disorienting to the reader. The animated adaptations of these literary texts are themselves also disorienting to the viewer, for they engage these

tensions through both the narrative and the animated format. Thus, what links the two historical periods is the recursive deployment of uncertainty and physical surprise at both the narrative and technical levels of the literary texts and their animated adaptations.

II. Going Beyond the Fidelity Aesthetic

As has already been suggested in the first section, this project wishes to break away from the fidelity aesthetic, the more conventional approach utilized by critics in the adaptation field. My desire is to produce a work that engages literary texts and adaptations in unexpected ways, and animation is key to this. Critical studies of cinematic adaptations of Victorian novels have largely focused on either the fidelity aesthetic or a comparative framework that seeks to identity those thematic elements that are particularly engaging to audiences today. As a critical field, adaptation discourse needs more critical emphasis, as critics have long sought after an ever-elusive theory of adaptation. Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* is one such work that fails to produce any kind of working theory about adaptation. He begins by noting the popularity of adaptations, even citing Morris Beja's finding that adaptations garner a majority of "Best Picture" Oscars (8), before attempting to explain the current state of adaptation theory. He explicitly argues from the beginning that the fidelity aesthetic is inherently unproductive, but then is reluctant to explore adaptations apart from their source texts. The fidelity aesthetic then conspicuously resurfaces when McFarlane differentiates between elements like plot, or "what can be transferred from novel to film" (23) and elements like the novel's linearity, or "elements

of the novel which require *adaptation proper*" (26, author's italics); in doing so, he seems to suggest the existence of what Robert Stam would call a "transferable core" (*Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Adaptation* 15) that can be carried over from a novel to a film. The latter part of McFarlane's book is a series of case studies that notes the differences between the source text and the adaptation (*The Scarlet Letter* and *Great Expectations* are among these studies). Thus, McFarlane openly disparages the fidelity aesthetic as fruitless, but in comparing novels to their adaptations, reproduces the very system that he repudiates.

In similar fashion, Linda Hutcheon's work, *A Theory of Adaptation*, fails to produce any sort of viable theory about adaptation. Instead, she relies on a series of what she calls clichés about adaptations in general, and then argues against these clichés in the hopes of recuperating the adaptation as a text worth studying. For instance, the second cliché she tackles is the idea that interiority is best handled by the literary text, while exteriority is best visualized in the cinematic and interactive modes (56-63). She argues that this is a misconception, as cinema is able to use camera techniques such as the close-up to convey interiority (57). The rest of the book is devoted to defining what an adaptation is exactly and the various reasons why filmmakers adapt literary texts, which include cultural capital and economic incentives.

McFarlane and Hutcheon's inability to produce a theory about adaptation reveals the problematics of trying to theorize a discourse that needs to be grounded historically. More successful critical assessments of adaptations have also relied on comparative frameworks, but rather than try to produce a theory, have instead relied on a historical

approach to discover why the Victorian era is ripe for the picking in terms of cinematic adaptations. For example, Liora Brosh and Diane Sadoff employ a similar approach in their respective texts, *Screening Novel Women: from British Domestic Fiction to Film* and *Victorian Vogue: British Novels Onscreen*. Rather than evaluate the extent to which an adaptation adheres to its source Victorian novel, both Brosh and Sadoff examine those conflicts and issues of significance that have both preoccupied the Victorians and continue to preoccupy audiences and readers today. Brosh, for example, differentiates her study from other adaptation texts by calling attention to her method, which uses the ideological discourse of gender to examine the 19th century British domestic novel (7). She argues that "nineteenth-century domestic fiction both constructs and questions cultural ideals that define women in terms of their domestic roles. It is this ideological content that drives the recurring cinematic return to these novels" (3). Essentially, Brosh's work is comparative in that she identifies the roles of women in several works of fiction, like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and then examines how these roles have shifted in their 20th century adaptations to reflect current cultural and social attitudes. Sadoff does something quite similar in her work, where she identifies different "ages of anxiety" (xiv), such as the 1990s, when Victorian texts were most often adapted. She sees the connection between source novel and adaptation as residing in the "social contradictions" (xiii) that both attempt to resolve. For example, she sees the connection between Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and more current cinematic adaptations hinging upon the need to respond to each respective period's scientific, technological, and economic fears. This approach, in finding connections

between crisis and instability, is more successful in locating a substantial connection between the Victorian period and our own.

Studies by critics such as Brosh and Sadoff are more productive in terms of locating a historical connection between Victorian texts and their adaptations, as they focus on how social and cultural attitudes, issues, and ideas are worked through both novel and adaptation. However, though this method is a step in the right direction in terms of getting beyond the evaluative and into the historical lines of inquiry, they are still mostly just comparative and topical in nature. In other words, they focus mostly on the narrative and thematic functions of each text, showing how each novel and adaptation reflect the respective cultural moments of inception. What they do not yet do is examine how form and technical production become crucial to the understanding of these moments. Instead of just taking a look at how themes and social attitudes have been updated for a modern audience, I am more interested in tracing a historical link between literary text and animated adaptation through both content and form. Simply put, I am less interested in how modern adaptations latch onto and adapt easily identifiable and containable topics for a modern audience; instead, I am interested in examining how animated adaptations of 19th century texts have extended the disorienting qualities of these literary texts. Rather than posit an argument that demonstrates how modern adaptations appropriate 19th century fears and make them their own in an attempt to resolve them, I wish to argue that the animated adaptations discussed in the following chapters recursively reinscribe those difficult-to-identify social and cultural tensions spilling out of their source literary texts.

Thus far, critical analyses of animated adaptations have focused on adaptation issues; fidelity, structural organization, and characterizations are featured in these discussions. However, these analyses are not yet anchored in a concrete historicity that links the 19th century reader to the modern day viewer. For example, Michael Newton approaches the animated adaptation from the angle of childhood and play but does not yet ground this discussion in a wider historical context. In one section of his article, "'Til I'm Grown: Reading Children's Films; Reading Walt Disney's *The Jungle Book*," Netwon examines the structural arrangement of the Disney film, arguing that it is organized in such a way as to promote play. He sees this particularly in the delayed appearance of Shere Khan, the film's main antagonist. For Newton, play also becomes a way for Mowgli to escape the inevitability of claiming his own humanity and identity: "The jungle represents the possibility of gratuitous play for a child who must forsake such play by assuming the fixity of adulthood and, indeed, humanness. For a while, in the jungle, Mowgli can be any kind of thing. But it is always certain that he must end up by being one thing: a human boy" (25). Newton touches here upon the issue of identity, and he spends time in his article discussing King Louie's song, "I Wanna Be Like You," in terms of identity. His ultimate point—that identity is fixed—lacks the historical grounding to really make this argument compelling. The argument here thus becomes more of a close reading at the micro level, which hinders the animated adaptation from inclusion in historical and interdisciplinary circles.

Even reviews of animated adaptations focus on contemporary issues and concerns as reflected in the films without drawing any kind of historical link to the 19th century.

Richard Corliss opens his *Entertainment Review* article on *A Christmas Carol* with these sentences: "Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is a fable for all times; Disney's *A Christmas Carol* is a fable for this time—the Great Recession, when Wall Street money lenders, Scrooges in Armani suits, are multiplying their stash and breeding Ignorance and Want in the surplus population. Hollywood can't wait to deliver this message…" (par. 1). Again, this review locates the adaptation in the context of larger national issues, but does not yet comment on the historical context of Dickens's literary text.

As witnessed by this discussion, the field of adaptation studies is far from exhausting its critical potential, and a lot has yet to be said about the connection between 19th century novels and their animated cinematic counterparts in terms of disorientation. My ultimate aim is to extend the critical focus of adaptation studies by creating more interdisciplinary bridges between studies of animated adaptations and studies of 19th century technological history, as well as to make 19th century studies even more relevant, accessible, and exciting to scholars and students alike through the study of animated adaptations.

III. Animation and Disney

Central to my argument is the idea that the medium of animation becomes necessary in extending the disorienting qualities of each literary text. What differentiates my project from other studies of cinematic adaptations is the focus on how animation itself becomes a tool in the deployment and perpetuation of the disorientation of each literary text. Though my project does not specifically focus on the historical development

of animated films, it does trace a historical connection from the 19th century to the present in terms of reader and viewer disorientation. In addition, the project attempts to answer the following questions: How can animated adaptations of 19th century texts be used as an index of disorientation? What is it about 19th century texts and their historical moment of emergence that authorize their animated cinematic counterparts?

All of the animated adaptations examined in this project are Disney films. As Newton notes, "'Disney' is not a simple word. It refers to the man himself; to a kind of animated or live action film; to a studio, a corporation, an ethos; a consuming American imperialist process, and a way of living in the world; among other things" (20). The impact of Disney's animated feature films on American culture simply cannot be ignored. Disney's cultural currency may perhaps be due to its commitment to the audience. According to Susan Ohmer in "Laughter by Numbers: The Science of Comedy at Walt Disney Studios," Walt Disney Studios operated according to a profit-driven system; Disney's foray into animated feature-length films was even motivated by the potential for profit after the studio's success with short animated films (109). *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, released in 1937, was so successful that the company decided to produce more feature-length animated films and construct the Burbank studio (109-10). However, as Ohmer makes clear, though the economic stakes were high, Walt Disney refused to adhere to a distribution schedule merely to release films (111). He was scrupulous about his company's work, and he was so audience-centered that he dedicated much time to acquiring audience feedback (118). Clearly, his dedication to the audience has endeared him, his work, and his legacy to audiences on a scale unmatched by rival studios even to

this day. It is thus no surprise that the three animated adaptations discussed in this project are in some way affiliated with Disney. Because *The Jungle Book* was the last film produced during Walt Disney's lifetime (Newton 20), I will be referring to the animated film from this point on as Disney's *The Jungle Book*. Because the other two animated features discussed in this project are very much tied to their directorial authors, I will be referring to them as Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* and Burton's *Frankenweenie*, respectively.

Three different types of animation are explored in this project: motion capture (which involves computer-generated imagery, or CGI animation), 2-D hand drawn animation, and stop-motion animation. Each animation technique has its own unique production process, and the labor involved in the production of these animated films takes on different forms.

The medium of animation is itself a hotly debated topic, as will become apparent in the first chapter. One facet of the debate is where animation stands on a realist spectrum. Stephen Rowley in "Life Reproduced in Drawings: Preliminary Comments Upon Realism in Animation" recognizes the futility of attempting to articulate a definitive theory of "animated realism" (65), wishing instead to draw attention to the various ways through which realism can be understood in terms of animation. However, early on in his discussion, he does situate animation outside of realistic modes of cinema: "Animation, after all, is cinema that belies the founding assumption of realist theory: it is not based upon photographic reproduction of the real world" (66). Rowley's definition of what animation is not will surface again in the first chapter, where I will link Stephen

Prince's discussion of computer-generated imagery in terms of (absent) photographic referents to the mode of animation used in Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol*. One important critical idea highlighted by Rowley is the idea that "Disney features have come to be accepted as the pinnacle of animated realism" (82), an idea that will be complicated in all three chapters. Though Rowley identifies different types of realism in animation, his ultimate inability to produce a definitive statement about what "animated realism" actually is demonstrates the unproductive maneuver of trying to assign terms to an ever-changing technology.

This project engages with this aspect of the animation debate but makes no evaluation of animation on a realist scale. Instead, animation is discussed throughout in different terms, including whether or not it adheres to the conventions of live action cinema (which approximates realism), its spatial and temporal functions, and its relationship to the animator in a critically historical way. In this way, animation is taken out of this either-or debate in service of an in-depth look at how the medium overall functions to disorient the viewer.

As mentioned earlier, the fierce debate over what constitutes animation is discussed in detail in the first chapter. For those on the side that real animation is done by hand, motion capture and CGI technology seem like unwelcome encroachers. For purposes of this project, I have decided to include Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* in this project simply because it is not a live action film and actually required much animation work in order to complete the finished product. However, the production process also shares similarities with live action cinema. According to Don Hahn in *The Alchemy of*

Animation: Making an Animated Film in the Modern Age, "The camera movements in the mocap process are often manipulated by a camera operator, who uses controls similar to the wheels that control a live-action movie camera, navigating the virtual camera through virtual space. This gives the camera a very natural, human quality" (74). The almost hybrid quality of the resulting animated film makes it particularly ripe for a discussion on technological disorientation.

With regards to 2-D hand drawn animation, or what I will sometimes refer to as traditional animation, Hahn highlights the authorial dimension of this technique. He notes, "Great animators put themselves into a character's shoes in order to empathize with it and find the best way to channel that character's emotions through their pencil and onto the paper" (90). He later comments on the signature stamp that each animator places on his or her work when he states, "Just as everyone's handwriting is slightly different, every animator has his or her own personal style" (95). 2-D hand drawn animation figures in the discussion of Disney's *The Jungle Book* in the second chapter of this project. The work of Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston play an important role in the discussion of this type of animation as an authorial medium, as well as its implications for disorientation.

In his discussion of stop-motion animation, Hahn aligns the technique with the conventions of live action cinema (103). According to Hahn, the sets in a stop-motion production require extensive labor and must be strong enough to "withstand the stress of long days and the rigors of real lights and cameras" (104). The characters, or puppets, must also be constructed, and this is also a laborious process; the puppets in a stop-

motion production contain steel or aluminum armatures that enable animators (puppeteers) to position the puppets as needed (107). The animator's job is particularly grueling: "Imagine a set with multiple characters. An animator has to crawl into the set from a trap door or a side angle and then move all the characters a small amount with finesse and grace, keeping track of each movement individually. Then, the animator has to sneak out of the frame without disturbing anything. One frame of film is exposed" (114). This process is then repeated for each frame of film. The technical process is explored in much greater detail in the third chapter of this project. The work is labor intensive, but according to those working on *Frankenweenie*, was well worth the effort. According to Burton, "There is an energy with stop-motion that you can't even describe. It's got to do with giving things life. And I guess that's why I wanted to get into animation originally" (Hahn 101).

My understanding of animation derives in part from Judith Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*. Arguing that narrative possibility is facilitated by animation and most particularly CGI animation, Halberstam posits the idea that animation becomes crucial to understanding "alternative" (23) narrative trajectories. She refuses to subscribe to the simple entertainment objectives of animation by arguing that it actually serves a political purpose, bringing to the surface "models of contestation, rupture, and discontinuity for the political present" (19). For Halberstam, ways of understanding traditional definitions of success and failure are tied to an American capitalistic outlook, and she argues that overturning these expectations uncovers alternative ways of knowing (2).

Wells also calls attention to the subversive potential of animation. Wishing to situate animation as a "potentially radical art form and a culturally determined language of high social significance" (1), Wells argues that Disney films are perceived differently than animated works from other companies and studios. Regarding Disney's very first animated feature, Wells views *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as simultaneously benefitting and hindering animation; in approaching realism in its form, the technique proved it could situate itself along the same axes as live action (46). However, this achievement also necessarily called for "abandoning the distinctive dynamics of the cartoon and the experimentation inherent in the abstract" (46). For Wells, Disney animation is typically viewed as "tradition-directed" whereas other animated works, such as those produced by Warner Bros., are seen as "inner-directed" (65). In this framework, the subversive potential in Disney animated works is minimized in favor of readings that are more thematically and morally conservative (64-65). However, Wells suggests that though Disney films are viewed as conservative, they too can be critically examined outside of this conservative framework (111).

The foundational arguments of both Halberstam and Wells are similar to my own in that the medium of animation becomes the means of producing knowledge. Because animation has the ability to manipulate space, movement, and characterizations on a grander scale than live action, the potential for subversion, alterity, and non-normativity becomes more pronounced. However, though significant in pointing out how animation engages with contemporary tensions and issues, these studies still only discuss animation from a single ideological area: politics. Even Wells's project, which engages with the

historical beginnings of animation, does not yet anchor the discussion outside of this context. My project seeks to reinvigorate the discussion of animation by performing historical work that links animated adaptations to the 19th century.

IV. Method

This project pairs each literary text/adaptation duo with a concrete technology from which to launch into a larger social and cultural discussion. By using familiar 19th century technological advancements as a means of examining each literary text/adaptation pair, I hope to distance my project from the comparative fidelity framework embraced by other critics in favor of a historical approach that draws concrete connections via reader and viewer disorientation. This method also draws animation away from familiar discussions regarding realism and situates the medium squarely in adaptation discourse. Instead of debating the value of animation in terms of realism, this project sees animation as already inherently valuable in its recursive deployment of historical and cultural knowledge.

The first chapter discusses *A Christmas Carol* primarily alongside the development of the railroad, which changed the ways Victorians perceived their own surroundings. The railroad in effect disoriented the Victorians, whose locatable points of reference for movement, time, and space suddenly became warped. Through the medium of animation, the adaptation deploys and perpetuates the disorientation found in the source literary text. The second chapter examines Kipling's *The Jungle Books* and Disney's animated adaptation through the framework of photographic discourse.

According to Crary and Batchen, the emergence of photography cannot be discussed apart from new 19th century understandings of subjectivity, vision, and the ordering of the world. As such, photography ushered in new ways of thinking about how knowledge is produced and how identities are understood. Because Mowgli does not fit into a recognizable category of identity, his physical body becomes unlocatable and thus, disorienting. The animated adaptation reveals through both narrative and technique that trying to package his identity in binary terms is nearly impossible. Finally, the third and last chapter explores *Frankenstein* and *Frankenweenie* through technical production/creation. This chapter differs from the first two in that the concrete technology being discussed is not as apparent; electricity, cinematic production tools, and the structure of the 19th century novel all figure as prominent technologies in this chapter. Pairing each literary text/animated adaptation duo with specific technologies allows for a grounded discussion of much larger and less concrete issues.

V. Chapter One: *A Christmas Carol*

The first chapter is the longest, as it sets up the framework for the other two chapters in this project. The main question posed by this chapter is very simple: What is it about Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* that allows it to be examined historically alongside its animated adaptation? Dickens's text is more than just a commentary about the haves and have-nots. The narrative alone may be driven by socioeconomic and moralistic imperatives, but the text as a whole reveals the technological uncertainty characteristic of the period. By visiting other spatiotemporal periods, Ebenezer Scrooge defies the logic

imposed by the Victorians' understandings of time and space. The language of the text demonstrates that Scrooge is suddenly and instantaneously able to appear elsewhere, an idea that necessarily accompanied the emergence of both the railroad and the telegraph. Without resorting to a kind of technological determinism here, my argument is that Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* approximates an underlying discomfort and overwhelm with the changes encouraged by these emerging technologies. The constant movement and motion necessitated and perpetuated by industrialization and urbanization can be witnessed in the literary text, most particularly through Scrooge's travel through space and time as well as his overall transformation from a hoarding and static grump to an energetic and exuberant man who moves himself as well as his money back into society, an idea posited by Andrew Smith in "Dickens' Ghosts: Invisible Economies and Christmas."

As will become apparent through a study of 19th century emerging technologies and a series of close readings of the text, that Dickens's text is saturated with motion and movement is reflective of the various conditions that made possible such a rendering of Scrooge's journeys. A section of the chapter is also dedicated to examining how Dickens himself was a man of and in motion, a quality that carries over into his work. The chapter is thus concerned with technological disorientation, or how the Victorians' new understandings of time and space wrought by developing technologies become crucial to understanding how the conception of Scrooge's time and space travel even become possible.

Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* uses the medium of animation to perpetuate the disorientation at the heart of the literary text. The motion capture animation technique as well as the CGI technology used in the film very closely approximate Scrooge's time travel; by moving him indiscriminately through time and space, the film disorients the viewer, who follows Scrooge through a series of speedy journeys that leaves Scrooge himself unaware of where he is at various points in the film. As will be demonstrated in the chapter, this quality earns favorable reviews from various critics. However, because the motion capture and CGI technology used in Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* allow the film to aspire to realism, the film is representative of those groups of films that occupy an uncertain status in the animated world.

The last section of this chapter focuses on the motion capture debate and its relationship to animation. The debate is fierce; there is no consensus yet on whether or not motion capture technology qualifies as animation. As will be explained in detail, even Zemeckis refuses to clearly categorize the film as an animation, calling attention instead to its hybrid technologies and unique mode of production.

VI. Chapter Two: *The Jungle Book*

The second chapter in this project shifts the focus from technological disorientation to ideological disorientation. Kipling's *The Jungle Books* intersperses the stories of Mowgli with other short narratives, but it is the Mowgli stories that will be discussed in this project. As a non-white, non-British subject inhabiting the jungle and human worlds at various points throughout the story, Mowgli occupies an uncertain

status in the 19th century British imaginary. His identity is one without reference, for he cannot be easily classified into a definitive identity category. Thus, he becomes an enigma for readers, who become disoriented by their inability to definitively say who and/or what Mowgli is.

In this chapter, the discussion of identity is framed through the discourse of photography. Studies of Victorian photography abound, the most important of which lay a foundation in this chapter for the linking of vision, identity-formation, and technological development. It is important to first discuss Nancy Armstrong's articulation of a differential framework in relation to photography. Armstrong argues in *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* that identifiable difference figured as the key determinant of identity-formation and knowledge-production for 19th century viewers (20-21, 24). In other words, people began to understand identity not by identifying with certain categories, but against them. Photographs provided the means for these categories, and the standard for realism become synonymous with that which could be photographed or imagined in a photograph (26, 168).

Disney's animated adaptation engages and extends the identity puzzle in more ways than one. Because the animated adaptation follows a conventional story plot—that is, an inciting incident launches the protagonist into the main conflict, which then builds to a climax and finally ends in the denoument—the film is pressured to create highly identifiable characters that can be easily circumscribed within closed identity categories. The film initially attempts to skirt questions revolving around Mowgli's identity by instead grouping characters according to good/bad and hero/villain binary categories. The

film then focuses on the main conflict, which is getting Mowgli out of the jungle. By hiding the more complicated questions attending Mowgli's identity behind the conflict, the film is initially able to avoid engaging with the issue of Mowgli's uncertain identity status. However, as will be demonstrated in the chapter, the film is unable to contain these issues, and they eventually spill out of the narrative. The viewer becomes disoriented once these questions become exposed and remain unresolved.

As an animated adaptation, *The Jungle Book* also engages these identity questions through the medium of animation itself. Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, authors of *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* and animators for *The Jungle Book*, hail the animator as responsible for bringing characters to life; according to them, hand drawn animation is highly authorial, as animators select and choose how to depict characters and which traits to highlight and minimize (323). As a traditional hand drawn animated film, *The Jungle Book* necessarily operates according to a differential framework, where animators must decide what the viewer will see. At the technical level then, the animated film is a series of choices centering on exclusion. This exclusion functions to make the animation seamless to viewers, so that the narrative trajectory feels complete. However, as will be examined in the second chapter, this process of exclusion becomes evident to viewers, prompting them to wonder what exactly is outside the frame. The narrative thus spills outside of the animated frame, creating an excess that becomes disorienting to viewers.

Though not mentioned explicitly, the idea for this chapter springs from the premise that the West created the rest of the world, an idea foundational to works such as

Edward Said's *Orientalism*, "Orientalism Reconsidered," and *Culture and Imperialism*; Linda Nochlin's "The Imaginary Orient," a chapter in her book, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*; and James Ryan's *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*. These texts most notably shaped my understanding of the ideological construction of the world by pointing out how various mediums—the novelistic form, painting, and photography, respectively—became instrumental in portraying and perpetuating specific ways of understanding the world. These studies laid the groundwork for the building of my argument in terms of Armstrong's idea of the differential framework of identity.

VII. Chapter Three: *Frankenweenie*

The third and last chapter in this project devotes much space to stop-motion animation and its implications for the modern viewer. As a stop-motion animated film, *Frankenweenie* highlights its own technical process through the use of an explicit and campy mode of filmmaking meant to encourage the viewer to situate the film within its historical and cultural traditions and legacies. Most importantly, *Frankenweenie* draws upon 1950s monster flicks, Cold War America attitudes and views, and contemporary Hollywood technologies in its extension of the disorienting narrative and technical properties of Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In live action and animated films that approximate realism, the technical aspects of the film promote the narrative without drawing attention to its own method of production. In other words, the suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer requires the mode of production to be invisible. However, *Frankenweenie*

refuses to make its production process invisible; in fact, the viewer maintains an awareness throughout of the technique behind the film. Because the viewer is simultaneously aware of the production process and absorbed by the narrative, the viewing experience can be a disorienting one.

This chapter examines Shelley's *Frankenstein* as just one of the sources informing *Frankenweenie*. Drawing upon criticism by Martin Willis and Gayatri Spivak, among others, the chapter locates the narrative and technical disorientation as originating in Shelley's text and perpetuated by Burton's. Willis discusses the question of the soul within the larger Romanticism/materialism debate occurring during the 19th century in "*Frankenstein* and the Soul." His garnering of evidence to support both sides regarding whether or not the Creature has a soul is demonstrative of the rather complex status of the Creature's essential identity that is then witnessed in *Frankenweenie* through the character of Sparky. Spivak in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" provides a useful way of understanding the technical disorientation of Shelley's novel. Spivak argues that Shelley does not use the novel format in a way familiar to 19th century audiences; rather than employ the novel as a tool for imperial othering or domestic childrearing to forward the "project of soul making" (248), the novel instead breaks apart those expected structuring devices in service of non-narrative and non-textual closure. Spivak cites the ending as an example, calling attention to the Creature's final words and non-depicted final acts as ultimately spilling out of the pages of the novel (259). At the technical level, the novel is thus disorienting, pointing to an excess that cannot be contained by its own form.

In a similar way, *Frankenweenie* asks viewers to look beyond just the sum of the film's parts to discover the film's true meaning. The film constantly reminds viewers that Sparky is a reanimated corpse by pointing to his inability to either drink water without it squirting out from the stitched seams on his neck or to function for an extended period of time without maintaining a full electrical charge. However, the film simultaneously asks viewers to unquestionably accept his reanimation as valid, making him essentially the same dog. In this way, Sparky becomes emblematic of *Frankenweenie* itself, as viewers are asked to both maintain an awareness of the technical and then move beyond that in order to access the emotional core structuring the entire narrative. This move can be disorienting to the viewer, as the film ultimately highlights its technical process and then asks viewers to move beyond it in order to reclaim the underlying message that love is the most powerful force.

VIII. Goals

It is ultimately my hope that the three chapters will together provide a productive means of engaging the 19th century literary text. By moving away from the familiar pairing of 19th century novel and live action adaptation, I wish to draw attention to the underexplored medium of animation, whose revelations about the historical trajectories bounding our own cultural moment to the 19th century have yet to be fully tapped. My goal is not to add to the confusion of theories that abound regarding adaptations, but rather to use the avenue of reader/viewer disorientation to discover how animated adaptations are historically linked to their 19th century literary texts. Perhaps this project

will bring animated adaptations into a more critical spotlight; as texts that deploy through form and content the ideological frameworks of a specific historical moment, they prove to be more than just fun, linear, recognizable means of entertainment. When examined closely, they shock. They problematize and trouble different ideas. They provide a space for the alternative. Hopefully, this project will move animated adaptations to a more prominent place in cinematic discourse as a useful means of performing interesting historical and interdisciplinary work.

Chapter One: *A Christmas Carol*

My only comfort is, in Motion. – Charles Dickens

I. Chapter Introduction

In Robert Zemeckis's 2009 animated adaptation of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge attempts to extinguish the flame of the Ghost of Christmas Past in an attempt to shut out painful memories associated with the former love of his life. However, instead of shutting off the vision, the spirit instead transforms into a kind of rocket projectile and catapults him high into the night sky, propelling him and the viewer at face-contorting speeds until the object he is riding sputters and disappears. It is then that Scrooge plummets back to the ground and opens his eyes to find himself inches from his bedroom floor.

Scenes like the one described above are animated in such a way as to invite praise from critics, who believe that the adaptation faithfully captures Dickens's text. A.O. Scott, in his *New York Times* review entitled "Ghosts of Technology Present," writes: "But the surprise of this movie—a welcome one—is that, in the midst of obeying the rules of modern-day spectacle, it sticks close to some of the sturdy virtues of the source material" (C1). Likewise, Richard Corliss's *Time* review entitled "Spirited Away" also praises Zemeckis for his skill: "Zemeckis' fidelity to the text (virtually every word comes from Dickens) boldly underlines the story's poignant contemporary relevance" (par. 3). Finally, in his *Commonweal* review entitled "Transformers: 'A Christmas Carol' &

'Precious,'" Richard Alleva admits that he was not expecting much "but was surprised and conquered by the flexible faithfulness of Robert Zemeckis's adaptation. Quite a bit of the Dickensian magic is preserved" (18). Alleva then goes on to pick out certain scenes that are enhanced, but not overrun by, the technology used to render the story for the big screen.

Though all three reviewers do mitigate their praise with criticisms—all three, for example, point to the third spirit's chase of a miniature Scrooge through the streets as displaying too much theatricality—it is clear that critics are generally pleasantly surprised by the animated film and find it both faithful to Dickens and relevant to audiences today. However, though critics are satisfied with the adaptation in terms of fidelity, what needs to be performed is a historical analysis of the ways in which Dickens's text authorizes this animated adaptation. In other words, what is it about Dickens's text and the historical moment of its emergence that enables such a satisfying rendering of the narrative more than a century later?

This chapter acknowledges and is indebted to Sergei Eisenstein's "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today" but does not operate according to his premise that Charles Dickens was pre-cinematic in any way. Eisenstein is of course well-known for his argument that Dickens's writing somehow anticipated and encouraged the development of cinema, as well as his examination of Dickens's use of techniques such as parallel action and close ups as prefiguring and as analogous to those same techniques utilized by filmmakers. Especially integral to his argument is the championing of D.W. Griffith, who in Eisenstein's estimation was able to approximate these techniques first used by

Dickens. Eisenstein's claim that Griffith's "*montage exposition*" (217, author's italics) and "*montage progression of parallel scenes*" (217, author's italics) derive from Dickens's "urbanism" (216) and "head-spinning tempo (216-17)" are especially relevant to the discussion here on movement, motion, and disorientation. His argument that Dickens's novels are cinematic in nature and the weight he gives to Dickens's "nearness to the characteristics of cinema in method, style, and especially in viewpoint and exposition" (206) have long been discredited by numerous critics, including Kamilla Elliot, who in *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* finds a problem with this idea because in part "it bestows on novels and novelists seminal, prophetic, and prescient powers, rendering them not only precursors and progenitors of cinema, but also mystical and atemporal ones" (114). However, though Eisenstein's argument no longer seems fitting in terms of current adaptation studies, I want to amend Eisenstein's statement by agreeing that there is an affinity between Dickens's novels and cinematic technique, but with the caveat that this affinity rests in a more historical convergence. What Dickens's novel approximates is an underlying discomfort and overwhelm with the changes wrought by emerging technologies. Disorientation arises out of a physical jolt that results from being confronted with unnatural movement, and the constant movement and motion necessitated and perpetuated by industrialization and urbanization can be witnessed both in the novel and its animated counterpart. This forges a connection between the two that goes beyond just issues of adaptation fidelity. Therefore, instead of being viewed on the dangerous ground of a kind of technological determinism, both Dickens and cinema can instead be examined from the vantage point of technological disorientation.

Moreover, this chapter operates according to Diane Sadoff's claim in *Victorian Vogue: British Novels On Screen* that the cinematic adaptations of 19th century texts must be examined from a historical standpoint (xiii). Her suppositions regarding heritage films can be used in this discussion of Dickens's text and its animated adaptation, as she sees the cinematic adaptations of 19th century texts as historically motivated. Her identification of "several modern ages of anxiety" (xiv) prompts her to examine 20th century adaptations alongside their 19th century literary texts in terms of the social and cultural tensions engaged by each text in their respective historical moment. As already mentioned in the introduction, her method still focuses mostly on the narrative and thematic functions of each text, showing how each novel and adaptation reflect the respective cultural moments of inception without yet examining how form and technical production become crucial to the understanding of these moments. However, her use of historicity to ground her discussion of various adaptations is a starting point for this chapter, which builds on the premise that the spatial and temporal functions of both the literary text and the animated adaptation need to be grounded in a concrete historical look at the increasing mechanization, urbanization, and technological innovation occurring during the 19th century.

The 19th century should thus not be viewed as merely preceding our current historical moment, but as participating in the way technological forms are used and deployed today. Thus, 19th century technologies should be not be seen as primitive antecedents of modern day technology. Tom Standage even argues in *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-line*

Pioneers that the Victorians would be unimpressed by the modern-day internet because the Victorians invented it: "If any generation has the right to claim that it bore the full bewildering, world-shrinking brunt of such a revolution, it is not us—it is our nineteenth-century forebears" (213). Numerous studies have already been conducted linking Victorian technology to new Victorian understandings of motion, speed, and space; studies have also been done linking Dickens's own role within this changing world.

What I wish to achieve in this chapter goes beyond simply drawing an analogy between Victorian technologies and animation, both of which obviously manipulate(d) conceptions of motion, speed, space, and time. Though this comparison is a component of the chapter, my ultimate aim is to draw a historical connection between the Victorian period and ours in terms of reader/viewer disorientation. How do animated adaptations of Victorian texts capitalize on changing Victorian conceptions of motion, speed, space, and time? How does *A Christmas Carol* in particular reflect these disorienting changes and continue to disorient audiences today? Beyond just issues of fidelity, what is it about the animated film that prompts Scott to remark in his review, "There is real sweetness and sublimity in the way Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past swoop over the roofs of London on their way to Ebenezer's childhood home, a blend of fancy and realism that feels both quaint and eye-poppingly new" (8)? My objectives in the pages that follow are several: 1) to define what I mean by Victorian disorientation by closely looking at a few significant Victorian changes and developing technologies, thereby establishing the parameters of my discussion; 2) to contextualize the writing of Charles Dickens by demonstrating how his propensity for movement and motion carry over into his writing;

3) to closely examine important key scenes in *A Christmas Carol* in both its literary and animated forms to illustrate how they converge in terms of disorientation; and 4) to meditate briefly on the challenges of assessing technological forms such as CGI animated films in our own day and age in order to discover how current technological discussions extend these Victorian critiques.

II. Technology and Change in the Victorian Period

Various technological innovations, which enabled quick and efficient mass production, changed the pace of everyday life for the Victorians. As Walter Houghton puts it in *The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870*, "But it was less the mechanical speed of the new inventions than the speed of living they produced which impressed the Victorians. Faster locomotion, of goods and letters and people, simply increased the number of things one crowded into a day, and the rush from one to another" (7). England was thus in the throes of change, a change that can be categorized by speed, incessant movement, and motion.

Herbert Sussman's *Victorian Technology: Invention, Innovation, and the Rise of the Machine* provides a detailed look at the nature of these technological and industrial changes in his discussion of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations of 1851. In this London display, the various machines that England now relied upon to mass produce different commodities signaled a change in the culture itself by ushering in "the first consumer society" (54). Sussman notes that Prince Albert was largely responsible for the conception of this project, and also that his goals were several: "His

aim was to encourage manufacturing in England, raise the standard of design for British machine-made goods, and demonstrate the position of England as the world's leading industrialized nation" (54). Sussman additionally points to the "complex transformation" exemplified by this display, especially as regards the word "industry" (54). He points out that the word had been previously applied to a hardworking and skilled individual, but that in the 19th century "applied less to a human quality than to the set of institutions organized for the purpose of mechanical production. Thus…the term industry had come to refer to what we now call industrialism, the system of machine production" (54-55). Sussman repeatedly refers to the Great Exhibition as a "spectacle" (60), noting that visitors from all classes came to admire the machines that, for them, were almost too much to take in. Of course, though these machines were admired for their potential to improve life, Houghton points to the underlying sense of "superiority to the less gifted and less fortunate nations of the world" (44) that undoubtedly enveloped the Victorians.

People's habits were consequently changing, and the pace of life was becoming quicker, busier, and more rapid. As will be explored further in the next section, Charles Dickens was emblematic of this a man in/of motion. Grahame Smith argues in *Dickens and the Dream of Cinema* that Dickens was very much a product of the changes that characterized his time and that both his novels and the emergence of film are predicated on increasing urbanization. He argues particularly that Dickens's location in the city is inflected in his novels' content and form; because film was also tied to the city in this way, he sees both as urban and industrial processes (3). Smith argues that though Dickens's work predated cinema, an "uncanny phenomenon" exists wherein it is

"possible to trace what might be called proto-filmic elements in his writing" (7). What Smith seems to identify here is the connection between urban movement, Dickens's work, and the conditions of possibility that enabled the emergence of film. Urbanity is key here, and movement thus becomes inseparable from his writing. He argues, "If Dickens does dream cinema it becomes possible to suggest that his work played some part, however small, in the cultural and material movements and transformations that made it possible" (10). Smith is careful not to resort to a kind of technological determinism that somehow allows Dickens to foresee the advent of film, but instead examines the "urban phenomenon" that, in Smith's estimation, should be credited for the fluidity and "energy" that characterizes Dickens's work (13). Smith notes that the "relationship between consciousness and social change" (11) can be witnessed in the change in the perception of time; people were now living according to set hours (brought about by innovations like railway time, factory schedules, etc.) instead of "the rhythms of nature" (11). Smith clearly links the emergence of film to both Dickens's writing and the industrial and mechanical changes that shaped people's social and consumer habits (11). Thus, for Smith, the conditions of possibility that allowed for the emergence of cinema can be found in Dickens's work; his argument encourages the idea that the very idea of film resides in movement, motion, and speed.

A similar argument can be found in Sussman's book. Though not concerned specifically with Dickens, Sussman identifies the changing perceptions of motion, speed, and space that characterized the Victorian period. According to Sussman, the first railway fatality occurred as a result of a miscalculation of speed (2-3). This unfortunate

occurrence is emblematic of the disorientation produced by this emerging technology. The new technology was both progressive and also potentially dangerous, and engaging with it necessitated a new and systematic approach to successfully and safely harness the power of the rails. As Sussman successfully shows, the railway was not developed in a vacuum; its emergence was actually the product of many connected and necessary technologies predating the 19th century. As such, the railway also required changes not just in speed, but also necessitated a change in the way society functioned as a whole (7). The standardization of time, materials, and schedules were required to ensure that the railway could operate efficiently and safely (7, 77). Thus, as Sussman argues, the railway was just one of the many interconnected technologies resulting in a sense of disorientation and the attempt to contain this unsettling feeling.

Of course, the widespread technological changes that characterized the Victorian period were not unquestioningly accepted as good. The railway itself was just one example of a technology that was regarded with mixed feelings. In *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, Wolfgang Schivelbusch analyzes how the ways in which the Victorians viewed their world were challenged in the throes of industrialization. For instance, he argues that the emergence of the railroad changed the way travelers related to the landscape as well as the way they related to fellow travelers. Gone were the days when travelers studied the landscape and conversed with their companions in a closed carriage; the railroad instead fostered a sense of disconnect with the land and travelers hid behind their reading materials on the way to their respective destinations (64, 67). For the Victorians, he argues, the world became

both more vast and also shrank in size (37). Schivelbusch notes the contradictoriness of this situation and comments extensively on the railroad's effect on the Victorian mindset.

Michael Freeman likewise makes this point in *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* when he argues, "The sight of a moving cylindrical contraption on wheels, belching smoke and fumes, but without any visible means of animate propulsion, brought desperate fears and anxieties, as well as awe and admiration. Many thought that there was something supernatural about steam locomotion" (13). Freeman's choice of words paints a picture of something almost grand and monstrous, and it is quite easy to see why the Victorians were overwhelmed by such a machine. He then cites different accounts of journeys taken by rail, including Thomas Carlyle's: "For Thomas Carlyle, journeying on the Grand Junction Railway in September 1839, the steam railway was the devil's mantle…" (13). Freeman demonstrates that associations between the railway and hell were not uncommon during this period. What the advent of the railway thus did for the Victorians was push them to reconsider their own subject positioning vis-à-vis a technology that for them enabled an extremely unnatural—and thus disorienting—movement of bodies. Though the Victorians were once in tune with the land and landscape, the railway severed their own connection with physical space, a space that now operated in ways unfamiliar to them.

Another contemporary discovery that destabilized their connection with physical space was the idea that the human eye did not objectively view the objects it encountered. The Victorians soon came to accept the idea that the human eye actively constructed what it encountered; one of the implications of this was that an object did not necessarily have

to be in motion to appear that way. One of the topics Geoffrey Batchen discusses in his book, *Burning With Desire: The Conception of Photography*, is this shift in the understanding of seeing. He argues that in the 18th century, nature was viewed as orderly and a reflection of the Divine (58). Figuring prominently into this equation was the camera obscura, which "had become both a dominant metaphor for human vision and a crucial and ubiquitous representation of the relation of a perceiving subject to an external world" (82). Batchen continues, "In this representation, subject and world were understood as pregiven, separate, and distinct entities" (82). However, this model changed in the 19th century when people began to view the earth as "unruly" and as an "active organism with a prolonged and continuing history" (59). Batchen notes that the change from viewing the earth according to geologic time instead of Biblical time helped enact such a shift in seeing (59). He also notes that the reliability of the eye came under fire, as people began to view the eye as an active constructor instead of a passive receiver (83). The connection between sight and movement here is undoubtedly clear; the idea of the world as static is abandoned for the idea that the world is actually in constant motion. As demonstrated by the appearance of the railway, motion was always accompanied by the potential for danger. A living, breathing world could likewise be viewed in this light.

In his discussion of vision, Batchen references the work of Jonathan Crary, whose work is foundational to the understanding of how the Victorians capitalized on such optical discoveries. In *Techniques of the Observer*, Crary treats the idea of a change in the observer at length, arguing that the 19th century saw a shift from a "geometrical optics" to a "physiological optics" (19). The discovery of the retinal after-image, for

instance, revealed that the eye actively constructs what it sees (97-98). Crary thus links modernity to the "collapse of classical modes of vision" linked to "stable representations" (24). He argues that in the 19th century, studies of the eye and of vision dismantled the idea of a stable external reality received as such by a passive observer. The understanding of vision as active enabled the development of various entertainments such as the phenakistiscope and the zootrope (both developed in the 1830s), which created the illusion of movement using static images (109-110). Thus, new understandings of motion and movement were widespread and occurred at both the scientific and industrial levels of society.

III. Dickens, a Man in/of Motion

A recent collection of Dickens's letters easily categorizes him as a man full of energy. This collection, *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Jenny Hartley, is comprised of "the epistolary of exuberance" (ix). The letters chosen to represent Dickens in this volume indeed reveal a constantly active day-to-day life. In the introduction to the collection, Hartley is careful to note that though Dickens's correspondence is extensive (with about 14,000 letters surviving today), Dickens did not devote much space to his own thoughts and feelings. She emphasizes the volume of Dickens's letters, calling attention to the energy that enables them:

> What the letters give us, then, is not so much inner Dickens as Dickens in motion. Humphry House, the prime mover of the Pilgrim Edition, claimed that "even for the ordinary reader the view of Dickens's personality could

> never be complete without seeing day after day the streaming energy of his correspondence in bulk and detail…" (xiii)

Hartley notes that letter-writing for Dickens served different purposes, not the least of which was allowing Dickens to create for himself a character he refers to in the third person, the Inimitable (xii). In addition, his letter-writing served to absorb his "surplus of writerly force" and to "vent what he called his 'superfluous energy'" (xiv). Finally, of course, letter-writing for Dickens was also a "pleasure and a need" (xiv). As evident from these passages, an act as simple as letter-writing enabled Dickens to keep his mind and body in motion.

Interestingly, Dickens's signature has also been worthy of discussion. Hartley points to J. Holt Schooling's analysis of Dickens's signature and his conclusion that it serves as "our only evidence of Dickens's body in motion…He estimates that the curves in the flourish are sometimes 'equal of about a two feet length of pen stroke, a fact which indicates an extraordinary amount of personal energy'" (xv). The point here is clear; Dickens clearly bubbled with energy, an energy that could not help but spill onto the pages of the letter he happened to be writing.

Of course, Dickens did not just sit in order to reveal his high level of mental and social activity; he also was physically on the move. The fact that Dickens enjoyed walking is well-documented, and roaming the streets of London served as a particular pastime of his. Michael Hollington in "Dickens the Flâneur" points out that George IV's aim to "build an elegant modern capital" encouraged leisurely walking, as "Regent Street and the newly widened Strand became showcases for dandies to show off their highly-

polished boots without fear of the ruinous effects of London mud" (73). However, Hollington argues that Dickens's walking served a special purpose, and identifying him as a "flâneur," claims that his walking was "a paradoxical form of activity, a kind of negative capability permitting a special heightened form of observation" (74). Thus, Dickens did not just passively observe the events unfolding around him, but rather took advantage of the opportunity to actively take in what was happening in his field of observation. This is demonstrated in a short letter to Daniel Maclise dated November 20, 1840; Dickens writes, "I have been writing all day, and mean to take a great, London, backslums kind of walk tonight, seeking adventures in knight errant style. Will you come with me?" (Hartley 70). Dickens's proposition that the walk be undertaken "in knight errant style" showcases this purposefulness even in his walks, as it is evident that Dickens is actively looking for exciting things to happen along the way. Interestingly, Dickens anticipates that the walk will also be therapeutic, a nice reward after a long day of work. Finally, the letter reveals much about Dickens's sociality and his enjoyment of being in the company of others.

In another letter dated August 7, 1844, this one to Count D'Orsay, he commends the Paris environs: "I walked about the streets—in and out, up and down, backwards and forwards—during the two days we were there; and almost every house, and every person I passed, seemed to be another leaf in the enormous book that stands wide open there. I was perpetually turning over, and never coming any nearer the end. There never was such a place for a description" (136-37). The direct connection that Dickens makes between what he observes during his walk and a literary text perfectly illustrates Hollington's

claim that Dickens's walks were anything but "idle" (74). His excitement at experiencing such an active and unique atmosphere almost bursts from these lines, and his creative powers had obviously been stimulated by what he encountered on his walk. The description of Paris is made all the more stark by his later description of Italy. In the same letter to the Count, he criticizes Italy for being motionless:

> What a sad place Italy is! a country gone to sleep. And without a prospect of waking again!...It seemed as if one had reached the end of all things—as if there were no more progress, motion, advancement, or improvement of any kind beyond; but here the whole scheme had stopped centuries ago, never to move any more, but just lying down in the sun to bask there, 'till the Day of Judgment. (Hartley 138)

It is evident that Dickens deplores stasis; instead of perhaps viewing Italy as quaint, quiet, calm, or picturesque, he instead sees no vitality in a country that, for him, has clearly run out of energy. His dramatic language reveals just how important movement is. For Dickens, if you are not moving forward, you may as well be dead.

In a final illustrative example, Dickens comments on his need for movement in a letter to his wife, Catherine Dickens, on November 8, 1844: "It is dull work, this travelling alone. My only comfort is, in Motion. I look forward with a certain shudder to Sunday, when I shall have a day to myself in Bologna; and I think I must deliver my letters in Venice, in sheer desperation. Never did anybody want a companion after dinner (to say nothing after supper) so much as I do" (147). Interestingly, there is a sense of fear here at the mere thought of being left alone; Dickens clearly depends upon being

constantly social for fulfillment. Moreover, Dickens clearly only enjoys purposeful movement; the act of traveling in and of itself is not enough to satisfy that need. As Hartley states at the end of her introduction to the collection of Dickens's letters, "More than all these, what these letters revive for us is the sheer energy of being Dickens" (xx).

These letters, though demonstrative of the importance that walking and sociality played in Dickens's daily life, only tell half the story. Claire Tomalin in *Charles Dickens: A Life* paints an extremely vivid picture of the typical movement that characterized Dickens's days:

> When he went out of London in order to have peace to write, he would within days summon troops of friends to join him. He was a giver of celebratory parties, a player of charades, a dancer of quadrilles and Sir Roger de Coverleys…He worked furiously fast to give himself free time. He lived hard and took hard exercise. His day began with a cold shower, and he walked or rode every day if he could, arduous expeditions of twelve, fifteen or twenty miles out of town, often summoning a friend to go with him. (xlv)

The reader gets a sense of the extremely full and almost frenzied life led by Dickens. He was constantly on the move, and even his leisurely time was characterized by movement. Especially noteworthy is the fact that many of his activities necessitated other companions, and those that could be performed alone, like walking, often were not.

Though Dickens proclaimed himself to be comforted by movement, his experiences with motion were not all positive. Like other Victorians, he too had to

contend with the potential dangers and fears of a progressing industrialism. Schivelbusch is invested in the study of railway accident trauma as revelatory of this new way of living, and believes that exploring the symptoms of this new trauma would provide valuable insight on industrialized travel's toll on human beings (136). Dickens displayed symptoms of trauma following a railway accident in 1865. Though Dickens was physically unharmed by the ordeal, Schivelbusch identifies the characteristics of "shock" in a letter penned to Thomas Mitton on June 13, 1865:

> I don't want to be examined at the inquest and I don't want to write about it. I could do no good either way, and I could only seem to speak about it to myself….I am keeping very quiet here. I have a—I don't know what to call it—constitutional (I suppose) presence of mind, and was not in the least fluttered at the time. I instantly remembered that I had the MS of a number with me and clambered back into the carriage for it. *But in writing these scanty words of recollection I feel the shake and am obliged to stop.* Ever faithfully, Charles Dickens. (138, Schivelbusch's italics)

Schivelbusch comments on the "abrupt ending" and the "sudden shifts in the manner of writing" (138) as uncharacteristic of Dickens's usual style and views these as indicative of the trauma commonly experienced by railway accident victims (138-39). He notes that reports given by accident victims were overwhelmingly the same; the victims felt fine after the accident but then started to be plagued by memories of the accident (137). Though Schivelbusch's analysis is quite telling, the other unquoted parts of Dickens's letter are worth mentioning here as well. He begins his letter in this way: "My Dear

Mitton. I should have written to you yesterday or the day before, if I had been quite up to writing. I am a *little* shaken, not by the beating and dragging of the carriage in which I was, but by the hard work afterwards in getting out the dying and dead, which was most horrible" (Hartley 392, Dickens's italics). Dickens then proceeds to recount the event detail by detail, starting with how "his carriage hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner" (392) and then moving on to how he calmed his carriage companions and finally got to work helping various victims, including a man "with such a frightful cut across his skull that [he] couldn't bear to look at him" (393) and "a lady lying on her back against a little pollard tree, with the blood streaming over her face (which was lead color) in a number of distinct little streams from her head" (393), both of whom died on the scene shortly after. Interestingly, Dickens's recalled images are remarkably vivid, as if the images continued to haunt him. The sentence prior to the paragraph quoted by Schivelbusch reads: "No imagination can conceive the ruin of the carriages, or the extraordinary weights under which people were lying, or the complications into which they were twisted up among iron and wood, and mud and water" (393). Dickens's imagination fails him here, an incredibly noteworthy and significant indication of his inability to process the traumatic event he had just recently experienced. Schivelbusch's analysis of Dickens's letter completes the picture, as his sociality is likewise stifled, since "[he] could only seem to speak about it to [him]self" (Schivelbusch 138).

When compared to previous letters written about the accident to other correspondents, this letter to Mitton is strikingly lengthy and includes graphic images and

details about the event not mentioned in the others. For instance, in a letter written to Catherine on June 11, 1865, the entire body of the letter is comprised of these scanty lines: “I thank you for your letter. / I was in the carriage that did not go over the bridge, but which caught on one side and hung suspended over the ruined parapet. I am shaken, but not by that shock. Two or three hours work afterwards among the dead and dying surrounded by terrific sights, render my hand unsteady” (Hartley 391). In a letter to his doctor, Frank Beard, on the day prior to that, Dickens includes a similar statement: “I was in the carriage that did not go down, but hung in the air over the side of the broken bridge. I was not touched—scarcely shaken. But the terrific nature of the scene makes me think that I should be better for a gentle composing draught or two” (390). In a postscript to the letter, he adds, “(I can’t sign my flourish today!)” (391). In an editorial note, Hartley writes, “He did a flourish under his initials, but a shaky one” (391). Finally, in a letter to The Head Station Master, Charing Cross, on June 12, Dickens writes on the behalf of one of his carriage companions, asking that if any lost items are recovered from the scene, that her loss may be made known (391-92). The last section of the letter reads as follows: “I mention these particulars to make the lady’s case plain. I would have spoken to you instead of writing, but that I am shaken;—not by the beating of the carriage, but by the work afterwards of getting out the dying and the dead” (392). Dickens’s inability to write steadily and his repetitive insistence that his shakiness is a result not of the accident itself but of his rescue efforts afterwards are significant given his usual writerly profusion. Motion, in this instance, even the usually cathartic motion of writing, provides Dickens little comfort and has even become mechanical and repetitive

in nature. The last letter in this study, that written to Mitton, is more expressive and detailed than the others, which demonstrates more readiness to confront his traumatic experience. However, the end of the letter (that portion quoted by Schivelbusch) echoes the ones written previously, revealing the damaging toll the accident had taken on his ability to unreservedly enjoy the motion of writing. To reiterate Schivelbusch's claim, the increased pace of life was always accompanied by the potential dangers of living in an increasingly industrialized society.

Of course, it is not enough to say that the changes in the pace of living brought on by an increasingly industrialized way of living were solely responsible for Dickens's tendency to be on the move. The social and economic effects of industrialization could very well be viewed as contributing to Dickens's need for movement. Tomalin opens the prologue of her book with an anecdote that very much showcases Dickens's investment in helping social outcasts. In 1840, Dickens served as a juror in the case of Eliza Burgess, a young woman and a maid who was accused of murdering her own baby in the house of her employer after delivering it herself (xxxix). Dickens, touched by the case, resolved to defend Eliza's story that the baby had died on its own (xli). He convinced the other jurors that Eliza had in fact found the baby already dead, saving her from the death penalty (xli). Once home, Dickens continued to do what he could for Eliza by having food and other items sent to her in prison and also securing a lawyer to defend her at the Old Bailey trial (xli). Tomalin sees this event as indicative of Dickens's social consciousness:

> This is a very small episode in the life of Dickens, but it allows us to see him in action, going to the workhouse just along the road from his own

> home, and deciding to help a young woman whose character and history are quite without interest or colour, and who comes from the very bottom of the social heap… (xliii)

Tomalin's use of the word "action" is key here, as it points to Dickens's need for movement as socially motivated. Tomalin further claims that his actions in this case were all the more extraordinary because at this point in his life, Dickens was "living under intense pressure in 1840" (xliii) due to time and effort spent in writing his novels. However, he still found the time and energy to help an unknown person during her darkest hour (xliii). Importantly, this incident was not an isolated one, as Tomalin notes that Dickens spread his wealth around and highlighted social ills (which angered him) in the novels he wrote (xlii). There is a clear connection here between industrialization and Dickens's socially-motivated movements. The same conditions of possibility that encouraged the emergence of cinema also prompted Dickens to take part in a wider social cause.

It should be obvious by now that any perception of Dickens as a passive and quiet fiction-writer is overwhelmingly false. His propensity for constant activity, copious letter-writing, long walks, and social interaction demonstrate that the motion and movement that characterize his writing are not just contained within the pages of his texts. He was, in fact, a man in and of constant motion. However, his experience with the railway demonstrates that his experiences were not wholly untroubled. Like other Victorians, Dickens struggled with reconciling the excitement and novelty of industrial progress and a quickened lifestyle with the inability to foresee all the dangers and pitfalls

attendant on those very changes. Very much attuned to the difficulties exacerbated by industrialization, he was always on the move to help alleviate social ills as well.

IV. *A Christmas Carol*: Movement and Time

Movement and motion play an integral role in the conflict and resolution of *A Christmas Carol*. As both the text and the animated adaptation make clear, Scrooge must undertake a physical journey of sorts in order to see the error of his ways. It is only through this type of movement that Scrooge is able to transform from a stoic, solitary man to one excited to mingle and exchange greetings with members of his community. Near the beginning of the story, Scrooge is established as almost inhuman:

> The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his coffee in his dog days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. (Dickens 34)

Not only is this description of Scrooge unappealing, it also illustrates his demeanor as missing the energy and heat that makes a human a living, breathing being. The words "cold," "frosty," and "low temperature" capture Scrooge's icy temperament. It is apparent that warmth and friendliness are unable to pierce such a hardened heart. Moreover, this type of detail casts an overall feeling of inertness over Scrooge's entire life; his everyday mode of living is marked by stasis.

However, by the end of the story, Scrooge has become one with the movement he had only heretofore observed:

> He dressed himself "all in his best," and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, "Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!" (114).

Here we see a complete turnaround of Scrooge's behavior. No longer aloof, disinterested, and cold, Scrooge is now part and parcel of his community. The animated adaptation makes this embrace of movement even more apparent. After returning from his encounter with the third spirit, the now overjoyed Scrooge dances in his room, slides down the bannister of the stairs, and proceeds to dance with an astonished Mrs. Dilber, who runs away screaming that Scrooge has gone mad. In the adaptation, Scrooge does not even think about changing out of his nightgown, and after buying the prize turkey for the Cratchits, decides to hitch a ride on the back of a cab and skies through town to the amazement of the Londoners already out and about. When Scrooge finally lets go of the cab and tumbles about, the spectators on the street applaud and Scrooge merely sits in the snow, smiles, and wishes everyone watching a Merry Christmas. Later on, when he is finally dressed, Scrooge walks around town, greets passers-by, and even sings along with a group of carolers. It is no accident, in consideration of the various technological and

industrial changes characterizing Dickens's time, that balance and learning to cope with movement is instrumental to one's survival.

However, it is not just movement, but purposeful and community-minded movement, that is essential to Scrooge's survival. Near the beginning of the story, the entrance of Marley's Ghost is marked by movement. While Scrooge sits alone in his chamber, a bell in his room begins to ring, which is then joined by "every bell in the house" (44). In the text, as well as in the animated adaptation, the bells then stop ringing at the same time, and the sound of the bells is then replaced by the sound of Marley's Ghost dragging his chain across the floor. In both tellings, Marley then appears in front of Scrooge, dragging a chain behind him. Scrooge does not believe his senses at first and refuses to believe that Marley is really there. When Scrooge asks about the reason for Marley's visit, he replies:

> It is required of every man…that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes forth not in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness! (47)

Through this speech, the reader gets the first intimation that part of being human is being in solidarity with other human beings, and that moving forward entails working concretely for the common good. Because Marley had not done so in life, he is condemned to a more literal walking of the earth, a movement that has no purpose and that cannot now possibly yield any fruitful or productive results. As witnessed in previous

sections, movement and motion—and for Dickens, walking—came to stand not just for urbanization and a quickened lifestyle, but also a social consciousness so acute that action to help minimize the effects of poverty was necessary.

Marley mentions that this time of year is particularly difficult for him and continues, "Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me*!" (49). While he was living, Marley's walking was socially and ethically unmotivated; instead of recognizing the wider social community he belonged to and the role he could have played in helping his fellow men, he averted his eyes and allowed his walking to take on a selfish and economically-unproductive meaning. In a reference to the birth of Jesus Christ, Marley laments the fact that he did not recognize in time the value of sharing his wealth for his spiritual health and in the name of the common good. It is now too late for him, and he is unable to redeem himself for his life of self-centeredness and unfeelingness for those around him. In the animated adaptation, Marley points out the window and shows Scrooge all the ghosts gathered outside; many of them are tormented because they cannot help their human counterparts. The corresponding scene in the novel describes the sight in this way: "The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in reckless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost…The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever" (52). Clearly, the ghosts, including that of Marley, are tormented by the fact that they must continue moving, but that their

walking the earth cannot produce any kind of social change. The irony here is, of course, that in death Marley is finally able to do some good when he warns Scrooge that he must turn his life around to avoid a similar fate.

After this speech, Scrooge asks Marley about his chain, and Marley warns Scrooge about the length and weight of the chain he will drag around after his own death. When Scrooge asks for encouraging words from Marley, he replies that he has "none to give" since he is doomed to tortuous movement: "I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me" (48). When Scrooge claims that Marley was a good business man in life, Marley retorts, "Mankind was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!" (49). As witnessed in this passage, movement is clearly linked to the common good. If Scrooge wants to avoid Marley's fate, he must move beyond the workplace and engage in worthy pursuits that profit the entire community. Though a successful businessman himself, his refusal to aid his community in generating more wealth by investing his capital prevents him from seeing the ultimate good that could potentially be achieved by freely giving of himself and his wealth. Scrooge's static life has no redemptive potential at this point because his movements do not help his community progress in any tangible way.

The implications of Marley's visit in the industrial age are several. First, Dickens is clearly invested in the well-being of the community as a whole. In what Houghton

would call a laissez-faire society, where "the manufacturer bought his materials in the cheapest market and sold them in the highest, and hired his labor wherever he liked, for as long as he pleased, at the lowest wages he could pay" (5-6), Scrooge in a sense resembles a selfish capitalist, motivated only by self-gain and untroubled by the financial struggles of others (especially of his clerk, Bob Cratchit). However, by refusing to spend the money he has accumulated, Scrooge inhibits the flow of capital as well, ultimately hindering the smooth circulation cycle by taking money out of it but refusing to replenish the supply. Marley's warning about forgetting to help others functions as a clear warning against the extremes of an intensifying capitalist society.

As Andrew Smith argues in "Dickens' Ghosts: Invisible Economies and Christmas," "The issue of poverty is clearly marginalized, because the emphasis is on how Scrooge needs to effect a compassionate change by becoming a *better* capitalist, as it is only through putting his money into circulation that, paradoxically, the inequalities generated by capitalism become alleviated" (45). However, A. Smith is quick to point out how Scrooge's later transformation does nothing to solve the broken system, but instead "invites one to accept it as potentially benign" (45). On another level, Marley's appearance, as well as the subsequent appearance of the other three spirits, can likewise be read in economic terms. Early in his article, A. Smith offers a reading of *A Christmas Carol* that centers upon the problem of how to make visible the rather invisible forces of the market economy. He argues that reading the appearance of the ghosts from an economic standpoint allows us to "identify the presence of an unresolved aporia in his

[Dickens's] thinking which relates to perception, time, and the fluctuations of the new economic verities (money)" (39). He argues further:

> Dickens' explicit reference to ghosts glosses the Marxian model of the subject who becomes disembodied by an attachment to wealth…In Marxist terms the encounter with Marley makes visible what capitalism tries to render invisible, namely the labour which is inherent to, and so sublimated within, the process of commodity production. (41)

A. Smith goes on to argue that the problem is in fact a complex one, where Dickens is able to reveal various economic ills but is unable to solve them, since money itself becomes both the root of the problem as well as the means through which change can be effected (45, 49). In his estimation, the appearance of Marley's ghost serves as a warning to Scrooge to handle his money differently, since the story's suggestion is that invisible wealth—just like ghosts, or invisible people—have no power whatsoever to effect positive change: "Ultimately, the arrival of the ghosts is intended to offer Scrooge the chance to alter the spectral presence of wealth before he too becomes a spectre. The question therefore concerns how money is to be used, or redistributed, for charitable ends" (43). Of course, as A. Smith is careful to point out, the solution is not that simple, as the focus is not necessarily on providing a permanent or viable solution to problems that have surfaced as a result of Scrooge's experiences. Second, that movement is figured here as negative when unproductive suggests that only movement and activity with purpose are worth pursuing. Third, Marley's visit begins Scrooge's, the reader's, and the viewer's disorienting journey. Is Marley's ghost real? Is Scrooge merely imagining him?

It is difficult to tell, especially since Scrooge himself doubts that Marley's presence is genuine.

It is not just movement that figures prominently into the story; time plays an instrumental role in Scrooge's adventures as well. Disorientation in terms of time is established early on in the text. After Scrooge's visit from Marley, he sleeps and then wakes up after an unknown number of hours. He is confused when he awakens to find it is nighttime again: "'Why, it isn't possible,' said Scrooge, 'that I could have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!'" (53). His utter incredulousness reveals the routineness of his everyday life; rather than believe he could have possibly overslept, he questions the existence of the sun! Scrooge's sense of time here is very much warped, and he is clearly disoriented.

This disorientation then continues through his visits with the three spirits, as he encounters them one after the other without ever really having a firm grasp on time. After Scrooge wakes up again in his own room following his encounter with the last spirit, the narrator comments on his joy in discovering he is safe in his familiar bedroom once again: "Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!" (111). Scrooge's excitement emanates from his recognition of the objects around him, as well as from the control he exercises once again over his own life. This excitement is expressed in terms of ownership, as the objects around him—as well as Time itself—have become both familiar and his once again. By now, the implications of Scrooge's sense of control

over “Time” is apparent, as his loss of the sense of time during his encounters with the three Christmas spirits is overwhelmingly disorienting.

A. Smith argues that disorientation in terms of time has an economic implication. According to him, because Scrooge “is unable to either look back or to look forward” (48), he is caught in a present that is not economically viable. In order for Scrooge to become a productive member of society, he must also become part of the economy: “Scrooge is only able to develop a conscience once he overcomes his life of splendid isolation and is put into social circulation. However, before this mobility takes place Scrooge becomes a time-traveller, and this suggests that an alternative, non-capitalist, model of time has an important bearing on how the system is re-evaluated” (48). A. Smith’s argument is a valid one, for Scrooge’s economic rehabilitation hinges upon a complete and utter loss of his handle on time. He must revisit the past, truly experience the present, and peek into the future in order to identify and confront various social and personal defects. However, his emergence into the new present as a new man has more than just economic implications.

It is clear that Scrooge’s newfound sense of balance is dependent upon his ability to reconcile the past, present, and future. In terms of disorientation, this means that the only way to overcome a sense of loss is to incorporate all three modes of living into his everyday life. This is illustrated by his direct exclamation of the lessons he had learned after being visited by all three spirits: “‘I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!’ Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. ‘The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I

say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!'" (111). Scrooge has been awakened to a fulfilling mode of living, one that is neither mechanical nor focused on the accumulation of wealth as the primary purpose of life. The lessons Scrooge learns are not just personal, but can be applied to the experiences of the Victorians at large. Reconciling the disorientation perpetuated by technological, industrial, and social changes, among others, required a suturing of past, present, and future. The challenges faced by the Victorians required an open-mindedness to the changes of the present and future but not a complete break from the values of the past. Thus, as Thomas Carlyle warns in "Signs of the Times," an embrace of progress needed to be checked so as not to create a society of mechanical human beings.

The open-mindedness required of the Victorians to accept things like railway speed and the subjectivity of vision is illustrated with optimism in *A Christmas Carol*. Of course, though the text does not specifically treat these issues, this open-mindedness—or suspension of disbelief—is necessary for Scrooge to become reintegrated into society. After celebrating the fact that he had survived his ordeal with the three spirits, he giddily exclaims: "There's the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat! There's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!" (112). Compare this newfound sense of belief with his earlier suspicion that Marley's apparition may have merely been the result of indigestion. Unlike before, Scrooge believes that he can now differentiate between fact and fiction, or at least is now confident about the purpose of his experiences. This ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality is also

accompanied by the idea that the impossible is actually possible: "'It's Christmas Day!' said Scrooge to himself. 'I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can'" (112). Because Scrooge has opened his mind to the possibility that his encounters with the spirits had in fact been real, he can now appreciate the value of the lessons he has learned. Though he does not quite understand how the spirits have accomplished everything in one night, he accepts it as true, which allows him to reconcile different modes of living and being. Consider the implications of these realizations for the Victorians; railway speed, for example, did not need to be fully understood but could be appreciated for its ability to show the Victorians new and wonderful landscapes in a short period of time. Merging different modes of living as a way of combating the jarring effects of sudden and pervasive change seemed to be the way to overcome disorientation.

V. *A Christmas Carol* and the Three Spirits

What is important to take away from Sussman's assessment in the second section is that technological change was pervasive; each technological change was somehow tied to a related change. Though Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* does not specifically address the advent of the railroad or other connected technologies such as the telegraph, the text is just as concerned with issues of motion, speed, and time. As Scrooge is catapulted into space, as well as taken backwards and forwards through time, he, the reader, and the viewer alike are left disoriented by the logic-defying motions and movements that occur throughout the novel.

In Zemeckis's animation, Scrooge is taken by the hand and zoomed from the present to the past. He is essentially flying backwards through space and time, and the buildings, landscape, and sky are all graphically rendered on screen. In this way, his travel is clearly demonstrated as a departure from point A and an arrival at point B. However, this flight does not exist in Dickens's novel. In fact, in the text, Scrooge's time travel is portrayed as almost instantaneous: "…they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground" (56). An entirely new environment and scene literally appear out of nowhere. To complicate matters further, the spirit tells Scrooge as he looks upon the scene, "These are but shadows of the things that have been…They have no consciousness of us" (57). Clearly, there is something odd and unsettling about the embodied Scrooge experiencing "shadows" of the past, the materiality of which is questionable.

As Scrooge wonders in amazement at his simultaneous existence in the present and experience of the past, the reader is also left wondering how such a feat had been achieved. The viewer of the animated adaptation is likewise left to recover from flight through time. Though the flight is not portrayed in Dickens's text, the impact is to be felt on a much greater scale in the text. Because the viewer of the animation is able to travel with Scrooge in the adaptation, the journey, albeit logic-defying, is felt. However, in Dickens's text, the journey itself is eliminated; one scene simply turns into another. For the Victorians, such an experience was not uncommon, as the railway, the telegraph, and

other related technologies enabled what was then viewed as unnatural bodily movements. Because the railway could travel at what was then considered immense speed, travelers were forced to literally take their feet off the ground and fly at unnatural speeds.

The possibility of instant change from one scene to another became conceivable during the Victorian period with the advent of technologies such as the electric telegraph. As Standage convincingly demonstrates, the telegraph was essentially a culmination of the efforts of different inventors and innovators, and the result was nothing short of a newfound, distance-shrinking global information network that began taking off in the mid-1840s with Samuel Morse in the United States and William Cooke and Charles Wheatstone in Britain. To make his point, Standage peppers his study with various accounts of how the telegraph itself changed the concept of space and time: "'Time itself is telegraphed out of existence,' declared the *Daily Telegraph* of London, a newspaper whose very name was chosen to give the impression of rapid, up-to-date delivery of news. The world had shrunk further and faster than ever before" (102). Sussman has a similar point of view, and just like Smith, also sees Dickens as a product of the changes occurring around him:

> Always receptive to technological change, Charles Dickens, the great Victorian novelist, incorporated the electric telegraph into his imagination. In his private memorandum book he connected the operation of the electric telegraph with the narrative method of his novels and his own work as a novelist: "Open the story by bringing two strongly contrasted places and strongly contrasted sets of people into the connexion necessary

> for the story, by means of an electric message. Describe the message—be the message—flashing along through space—over the earth, and under the sea." (Sussman 78)

Scrooge's experience can thus be described as telegraphic, enabling him to be in two places at once. Through the suggestion of instant time travel, Dickens's text very much reflects the technological possibilities that could now be feasibly realized during the 19th century. That Scrooge's encounter with the past is figured as an instant change gives insight into just how disorienting contemporary changes were for the Victorians. Just like that, it seemed that the Victorians went from agricultural to mechanical, small-scale to large-scale, horse travel to locomotive. As experienced by the Victorians, the change was almost an instant one, and it was tough to gain sure footing. Dickens's text authorizes Zemeckis's animated adaptation of the film, for the same disorientation that accompanied the advent of the railway and connected technologies also drives the animated cinematic format of this film as well. Scrooge's physical travel and time travel are portrayed in such a way that disorients the viewer, as Scrooge is able to move in ways that defy natural laws. This is more than just a simple analogical comparison between these technologies and the cinema, which can transport moviegoers into different times and different worlds.

After Scrooge has been with the Ghost of Christmas Past for some time, he decides that he can no longer bear the scenes laid out before him. He thus attempts to bring himself back to the present by extinguishing the spirit's light and is only partly successful: "The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light:

which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground" (70). Scrooge then stops fighting and is brought back to the present time: "He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep" (70).

Compare this to the animated scene described in the first paragraph of this chapter. Figured in the animated adaptation is Scrooge's rocket-like projection into space and his long fall back to earth. More than questions of fidelity, the animated adaptation is able to connect historically with Dickens's text. The very act of him hurtling through space is emblematic of say, the Victorian experience on the railway, where travelers felt like they were likewise being hurtled through space. Interestingly, Schivelbusch comments on the dangerous potential of the railroad when he states, "The nineteenth century found a fitting metaphor for this loss of continuity: repeatedly, the train was described as a projectile" (53). Thus, what enables Zemeckis's animated adaptation is not merely a claim to narrative fidelity, but rather, the ability to connect with Dickens's text at the level of motion, movement, and change, and therefore at the level of technological disorientation.

Nowhere is this dedication to motion, movement, and change more clearly felt than during Scrooge's encounter with the Ghost of Christmas Future in the animated adaptation. In this sequence, the third spirit, figured as a grim reaper-like shadow, remains silent throughout. Scrooge falls onto the steps of a building, where he hears three men discussing a man's death. When these men disappear into thin air, the spirit appears

and points to a shadow of a chariot and two horses against the wall. Suddenly, the shadow of one of the horses comes off from the wall, becomes three-dimensional, and looks at Scrooge with red eyes. The spirit snaps his finger at Scrooge and the horses and chariot fly off the wall and begin to chase Scrooge through the streets of London.

What follows is nothing short of a terrifying obstacle course for Scrooge. After he tries to shake the horses and chariot by suddenly turning into a different street, different human specters pop out of the ground in an attempt to obstruct his path. The horses and chariot then emit some kind of force field that causes Scrooge to shrink down and also enables him to hide in a pipe. In a long shot of the London road that follows, Scrooge is barely visible as he emerges from the pipe onto the large, dark, rainy, and puddle-covered London road. After a moment of quiet, the horses and chariot give chase again, and Scrooge ends up riding a bottle, falling through a vent, sliding down snowy rooftops, crashing into icicles, and eventually falling into another scene.

As critics have already pointed out, this sequence of events does not exist in Dickens's text. However, this sequence actually perpetuates the disorienting experience already established by Dickens and thematized by Zemeckis. What critics argue is that the scene is too theatrical and spectacular; Scott argues that "This attempt to juice up the third act with action-movie thrills is alien both to the spirit and logic of the story, and it's the one major lapse in a movie that otherwise strikes an impressive balance between sensationalism and understatement" (8). I disagree with this evaluation, as I see this scene as perfectly in keeping with the disorienting quality of the narrative itself. What better way to convey the historical significance of Dickens's social and cultural experiences

than through an experience that is both exhilarating and frightening at the same time? In addition, as Smith argues, Dickens was hungry for entertainment; he sees this hunger in his writing. For Smith, Dickens's writing "can be related to his immersion in the full range of Victorian visual entertainments—the magic lantern, the panorama and diorama, the huge elaborations of stage machinery" (172). Notably, Smith interprets Dickens's writing as participating in this urge to entertain: "He contributes, for his contemporaries as much as for us, to the meanings that inhere in the city as metropolis through the imaginative power which creates images of the urban world at the same moment as it critiques them. His London is an act of creation as well as reflection" (172-73). Scrooge's experience of London through his miniature stature allows him to experience London as entirely new, and needless to say, his experience immerses audiences in an entertaining survey of the London streets. The imperative to disorient is thus very apparent here even though this sequence does not exist in Dickens's text.

As suggested in the previous paragraph, it is fitting that Scrooge is shrunk down and that the otherwise familiar London roads suddenly threaten to overcome and destroy him. As Smith compellingly argues, "panoramic perceptions" (35) became widespread in the 19th century and were not just limited to the new ways of seeing introduced by railroad travel. He states, "The panorama itself was clearly one of those inventions which opened people's eyes, in more ways than one, by helping them to grasp, for example, that the urban world presented itself as a panoramic spectacle once the clue provided by the panorama experience had been absorbed" (35). For the miniature Scrooge as well as for the viewer, the London street becomes a type of panorama, its vastness and depth

becoming noticeable for the first time. From a technical point of view, the CGI technology enabling this animated rendering encourages this type of panoramic viewing because it allows for depth and dimension instead of just a flat surface, an idea that will be discussed further in the next section.

Just as the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come threatens to engulf him, so the prospect of the future becomes uncertain and terrifying. In one sense, futurity itself threatens the life of the old Scrooge; only by adapting and changing his ways can he survive and avoid the tombstone that has already been carved for him. Therefore, even though the scene in the film is nowhere in the literary text, it is very much in line with the disorienting imperatives very much present in Dickens's work. The scene, derided by critics as just another typical action sequence, actually touches upon the Victorian feeling of instability associated with entertainments such as the panorama and technologies such as the telegraph, which caused people to lose their sense of grounding in concrete space and real-time movement.

The intensity of motion and movement in this animated sequence becomes even more pronounced when compared to the unfolding of events in Dickens's text. The third spirit is "shrouded in a deep black garment" (95) and is also silent when spoken to by Scrooge. However, their encounter with the future is much different than that which is figured in the animated adaptation: "The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along" (96). Notably, Scrooge is the one following the spirit, not the one being chased by a phantom horse and chariot. In addition, his movement is involuntary,

as the spirit is the one taking him for the ride. Though the movement itself here may not be as intense as in the animated adaptation, it is equally disorienting, as neither Scrooge nor the reader exercises any control over what is going to happen next.

Just like with the first and second spirits, Scrooge again encounters a scene that magically seems to appear out of nowhere:

> They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often. (96)

What is again eliminated in this scene is any sense of journey; there is no sense that the spirit and Scrooge traveled to their destination; as the "city rather seemed to spring up about them." In a move like this, neither Scrooge nor the reader has any way of preparing for or anticipating what the next experience will be, as they suddenly are just "in the heart" of the street. Because Scrooge at this point has no idea that he is the one who is dead, the connection between the pursuit of money and death as the great leveler is made quite clear; though no demonic horse-drawn chariot chases Scrooge here, the movement of money is just as threatening. The scene itself interestingly ties the social with the economic, as merchants are busy with the day's transactions as well as conscious of the "money in their pockets" and the limited time they have to accomplish the day's tasks. As discussed in an earlier section, the new market economy structure enabled merchants to

become increasingly wealthy and to command new levels of power in society at large. By conducting business out in public, the merchants pictured in this scene are suggestively contrasted with Scrooge as productive members of society; not only are they accumulating wealth, but the scene implies that the money in their pockets will soon be put back into circulation. Scrooge, on the other hand, is both literally and figuratively dead at this moment since the wealth he has hoarded in no way promotes social or economic growth.

Like the chase scene in the animated adaptation, the final scene of Scrooge's encounter with the third spirit is likewise characterized by intense motion and movement. When Scrooge asks the spirit who the dead man on the bed is, he suddenly finds himself falling through the snowy and thunderous sky into the cemetery, where he pleads with the spirit as his name is slowly revealed to him on his future tombstone. At that point, the ground sinks away and Scrooge desperately holds onto a root to avoid falling into the coffin that awaits him below. However, the spirit flicks him into the grave. He falls slowly into the open coffin, but just as he is about to land in it, he opens his eyes and finds himself in his bedroom once again.

The scene in the text is quite different. After Scrooge sees his name written on the tombstone, he pleads with the spirit but is not swallowed by an open grave: "In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him" (78). Scrooge's reappearance in his bedroom likewise is not preceded by a long fall into a coffin: "Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and

dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost" (78). Unlike in the animated adaptation, here the spirit itself transforms into his familiar bedroom.

Though Dickens's text may seem at first glance to be less frightening than the animated adaptation, his prose actually displays the properties of animation that make it such a potentially disorienting mode. Aylish Wood argues in "Re-Animating Space" that animation's potential to "re-invigorate" (135) how cinematic space is viewed has been overlooked, and wishes to examine cinematic space as having primary importance in certain animated films rather than as just serving as a vehicle through which character actions can be understood. When viewers experience space as "potentially unknowable" (135) and as not conforming to their expectations, they "find themselves caught between their expectations and the images that resolve on the screen" (135). Wood then cites several segments from different animated films to showcase how "unexpected shifts between familiar and unfamiliar space provoke disorientation" (137). In both the text and animated adaptation, Scrooge's experience of space is likewise uncertain, shifting, and surprising. In the text, the spirit's transformation into a bedpost is spatially disorienting, as there is no way for Scrooge—or the viewer—to anticipate or prepare for such a transformation. Likewise, Scrooge's fall into a waiting coffin that suddenly transforms into his bedroom floor is disorienting, as both Scrooge and the viewer expect one thing and experience another. In terms of exemplifying "processes of reverberation: existing beyond the location of events, fluid and marked by heterogeneity, shifting between familiarity and uncertainty, and finally, as chaotic and potentially unknowable" (135), Dickens's text is already imbued with the potential for disorientation, and it is this quality

that enables the telling in Zemeckis's animated adaptation. Again, this goes beyond just issues of fidelity into the narrative and historical properties that resonate in both tellings.

Scrooge's encounter with the Ghost of Christmas Present is best understood through the concept of the panorama and through the disorientation perpetuated by the advent of the railroad. Dickens's text is replete with the movement and instantaneousness already witnessed in Scrooge's encounters with the other two spirits. After Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Present, the spirit commands him to touch his robe. The following then happens:

> Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses: whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms. (74-75)

The incessant listing in the first sentence and the actions and vivid descriptions in the second sentence assail the senses and contribute to an overwhelming sense of movement, color, and sound. In addition, the reader cannot ignore the abundance of the feast prior to its disappearance. This is clearly a consumer culture, where wealth is determined by the ability to consume a wide variety of goods. Scrooge's momentary beholding of this feast

suggests that he can make such a vision a reality, if only he would invest his wealth instead of storing it away. The fullness of the scene contributes to making it seem panoramic, as what can be seen, heard, and felt surrounds both Scrooge and the reader on all sides. Again, as with the first and third spirit, Scrooge's surroundings transform in a single instant, and he is in the company of others at a moment's notice.

As Scrooge travels on with the spirit and takes in different views of the city and its inhabitants, they are able to cover much ground in a short period of time:

> …and they went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which Scrooge had observed at the baker's) that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall. (78)

Dickens's text is not entirely clear about their mode of travel, as Scrooge and the spirit simply "went on, invisible." Such prose is puzzling to the reader, who is constantly bombarded by vividly descriptive images throughout but left wondering here how such a feat is achieved. In addition, the spirit, which is described as "gigantic," is seemingly able to fit into any space without trouble. It is here in this passage that the viewer is overwhelmed with a sense of almost magical possibility.

In the animated adaptation, the spirit commands Scrooge to touch his robe, and upon doing so, the floor seems to disappear and different scenes appear as the room moves about and jostles Scrooge around. The room appears to travel through the sky,

providing Scrooge and the viewer with an aerial perspective of the city. Just like with the first spirit, Scrooge is whisked around and shown different scenes from both the vantage point of the street as well as the London rooftops. At one point, the view settles behind a cross, giving Scrooge and the viewer a peek at the entire city. Scrooge remarks simply that the view is "beautiful." It is after this aerial flight that the spirit allows Scrooge to witness the scenes at Bob Cratchit's house as well as his nephew's house.

Interestingly, there is no aerial flight in Dickens's text, but this flight seems to be the natural way to graphically render Scrooge's encounter. What awes Scrooge as well as the viewer is this sense of the panoramic; beautiful and all-encompassing views of the city are only enabled by this supernatural encounter. Recall Freeman's words in the second section of this chapter, that many Victorians felt that "there was something supernatural about steam locomotion" (13). In his work, Freeman includes pictures of the various views afforded to railway travelers, noting that these panoramic views allowed people to experience the beauty of the landscape like never before. For Scrooge, these new ways of seeing are clearly linked to social awareness, and it is no accident that his confrontation with poverty at Cratchit's house is immediately preceded by his flight through town. In this way, his ultimate realization that there are worthy pursuits and causes outside of his own need to make money is a result of the panoramic. Seeing the bigger social picture is thus enabled by Scrooge's physical experience of the bigger picture.

In Dickens's text, this connection is made even more forcefully. In a passage not adapted in the animation, the spirit shows Scrooge the underbelly of society, where the miners "who labour in the bowels of the earth" live:

> And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed—or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse, rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night. (85)

This passage demonstrates the antithesis of movement and motion, and the descriptions, though detailed, point to stasis and murkiness. The land itself is described as dry and barren, fertile enough to encourage only the growth of desolate plants. Moreover, the "frost" seems to further hinder growth. Most chilling of all, the sun itself seems to want to withdraw its gaze from such a place as this, a land unworthy of light.

However, when Scrooge and the spirit look inside a particular dwelling in this sad and gloomy place, what they find is a scene of spirited celebration. A family of several generations is inside enjoying each other's company, singing and reveling in the joys of Christmas. The entire picture is one of health and happiness, and the contrast could not be more pronounced. The juxtaposition further alerts Scrooge to the idea that wealth does not necessarily equal happiness. The working class as portrayed in this passage is

spiritually and emotionally rich, though lacking in material wealth. As evidenced again, Scrooge's own internal transformation hinges largely on the panoramic, the ability to experience the bigger picture.

As already suggested in an earlier section, the resolution of the narrative (in both text and animated film) requires a reorienting of Scrooge within society. Moving only between his residence and his workplace, Scrooge contributes nothing to the social and economic health of his community. He absents himself from social circles and takes his accumulated wealth outside of normal circulation, hindering economic growth by preventing its spread to all levels of society. This conscious refusal to circulate both self and money results in an unnatural and non-viable movement through society (A. Smith 43-44), one that results in the rather drastic attempts at reintegration through reorientation. Because he already operates outside of viable time and space, he must be taken outside of it even further to normalize his movements. Thus, the sources of his disorientation—unexplainable transformations, non real-time encounters, and substance-less journeys—later become his means of reintegrating into society. In this way, the narrative suggests that overcoming this disorientation does not necessarily involve full comprehension of how things are, but rather a suturing and balancing of past, present, and future.

VI. CGI, Animation, and the Motion Capture Debate

As a cinematic medium, it is quite clear that animation is able to achieve narrative trajectories, character transformations, and plot twists that need not be determined by

natural laws. *A Christmas Carol* makes use of motion capture and computer-generated imagery (CGI), which allow for a very jarring experience of the animated mode. Because motion capture allows animation to aspire to realism in terms of human expression and movement, the very unnatural and logic-defying movements that allow Scrooge to hurtle backwards and forwards through both time and space are disorienting to the viewer, whose experience of physical space is unlike that of Scrooge's own. Important to viewer reception of the film is the ability to go along with seeming impossibilities in movement and motion that occur in the animation.

Much like the way Scrooge is at first unable to differentiate between fact and fantasy in his encounter with Marley, both the reader of the text and the viewer of the animated film are challenged by the illogical physical movements and motions that happen throughout the story. There is, of course, the additional challenge experienced by the viewer, who is very aware that the animated characters onscreen are in some part rendered performances of well-known actors like Jim Carrey and Colin Firth. These motion capture performances muddle the line between animation and realism, as will be demonstrated further on in this section. The function of space in Dickens's novel knows no bounds, as Scrooge takes several journeys that cannot even truly be called that, since travel is itself eliminated. The animated adaptation is able to capture this disorientation, this inability to predict the properties of physical space. Because animation can defy movement in ways that live action simply cannot, it is the ideal medium through which to both convey and perpetuate the disorienting energy that carries the narrative.

Much as the way Victorians were disoriented by the technological changes that completely distorted their preconceived views about time, speed, and space, animation likewise posits the seemingly limitless possibilities of a narrative told outside the concrete boundaries that simply do not exist in an animated world. CGI technology brings to the forefront different questions revolving around the disorientation that results from this kind of technology: How does space function in an animated world? How do viewers make sense of the function of time in an animated world?

Though I am not the first to posit these questions, the discussions that have been taking place regarding the questions posed above will highlight the various gray areas surrounding films like Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol*. In "True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images, and Film Theory," Stephen Prince tackles the issue of cinematic realism in the age of CGI technology. He argues that CGI has challenged the conception of realism in film theory, which had primarily relied on "indexically based notions of photographic realism" (29). Prince argues that the model must now be updated to account for CGI technology. What he terms "perceptual realism" (28) is essential for understanding how computer-generated images can function as realistic images. He argues that even if an image has no photographic referent, it is perceived as realistic because the viewer is able to imagine how such an object would function in physical space (32). Because Prince's primary example is *Jurassic Park*, a live action film peppered with computer images, his call for this "correspondence-based approach" (34)—though a step forward in terms of updating existing film theory—does not yet address the potential of CGI to break outside of these realist boundaries. Prince's primary

concern is to reinforce viewer comfort through the reassurance that computer images in live action movies are realistic in terms of motion and movement. Animated adaptations like *A Christmas Carol*, however, do not pretend to adhere to the laws that govern realistic movement. Does *A Christmas Carol*, for instance, qualify as having a photographic referent, since it relies on human performance to render the characters? Additionally, how can viewer comfort be assured for a film that does not operate according to how people perceive real-time and real-space movement?

Zemeckis's animated adaptation makes use of motion capture technology in order to produce the characters seen onscreen. A bonus feature included on the DVD entitled "Capturing Dickens: A Novel Retelling" breaks down the process of motion capture in order to make the technology accessible and comprehensible to the viewer. This segment includes footage from the production process itself, as well as commentaries from various actors, production team members, and even Zemeckis explaining how motion capture enabled the making of the film. The following paragraphs include comments from Zemeckis, Gary Roberts, and Jim Carrey, all of whom are featured in this DVD extra.

Especially helpful in "Capturing Dickens" is the footage itself, which shows actors like Carrey donning suits with sensors, wearing helmets outfitted with cameras, and sporting faces full of marker dots. Carrey and the other actors perform on a stage with props while wearing these outfits, and the juxtaposition of the actors' performances with shots of the resulting digital puppets onscreen really gives the viewer the opportunity to see all of the work and minute details that must be attended to during the production process. At one point, Zemeckis explains the various steps involved in

capturing the actor's face alone; meanwhile, shots of Carrey's face alongside a digital rendering of his face illustrate Zemeckis's explanation regarding this complex process: "When the pores and the dots and the creases in the actor's face are recorded, they're then transferred to this very sophisticated 'virtual puppet,' if you will, that moves all of the surface of the skin on the digital actor. On the capture stage, the actors wear a helmet rig that has four high-def video cameras that are looking at their face." The process itself looks labor intensive, and all of the steps necessary in completing the process are many.

Equally noteworthy is the transfer of the data captured from the actors' sensors to the computers themselves. Roberts, Motion Capture Supervisor, explains that all the data makes its way into what is called the "Mission Control" room. He points out the monitors in the room and the raw data that is then transformed into a working digital model:

> These six monitors are actually capturing data from over a hundred motion capture cameras on the main stage. So those little white markers, the system is capturing them. We capture what we call a "range of motion," and we use this range of motion to build a model, and we use that to help animate the characters during post. We solve a skeleton of the character that the actor's playing, to their marker data. You can almost think of it as puppeteering or marionetting the entire character's skeleton. So that skeleton then takes on the motion of the actor. And this gives the most natural and accurate-looking motion.

It is clear from this explanation that the actors' performances are not exactly copied onto the computer screen, but that the dots of motion must be connected in order to create a

digital puppet. Once these puppets are created, the rest of the information can then be filled in.

What shines through in this bonus feature is the hybrid quality of films made using motion capture. Jim Carrey states that the experience is a "fun mixture of really intense acting work and pantomime" since acting involves working with imaginary or stand-in props. In addition to the unconventional acting work involved in the process, Zemeckis suggests that motion capture is somewhat removed from animation, as he points to the acting work as indicative of its proximity to live action: "Creating the illusion of motion capture, we didn't want them to look like they'd been hand drawn or make them look like they're cartoon-y, so what we do is actually put actors and stunt men in flying rigs and harnesses and we fly them around the set…so it looks believable." It is clear from this comment that the motion capture used in this film is intended to distance this film from other animated films.

One of the most significant pieces of information conveyed in "Capturing Dickens" is that the resulting digital world could then be filmed as a real-time and real-space environment would; Zemeckis makes clear that he is able to perform his camera work directly inside the digital environment to secure exactly what he wants in terms of camera movement. He claims: "As a director, what I can do is I'm able to do anything that I want. I can put the camera anywhere I want. I can make the weather anything I want it to be. I can make the lighting anything I want it to be. And at the same time, I've got the magic of human performance that is always fresh." Clearly, Zemeckis views the technology as adding to, and not detracting from, the performance of the actors. The

focus here, as well as throughout the entire bonus feature, is on showcasing how human performance and digital technology can co-exist to produce something special on screen.

Though the tone throughout "Capturing Dickens: A Novel Retelling" is enthusiastic and optimistic, the mixed reviews regarding the perceived success of Zemeckis's use of motion capture illustrate the general wariness with which viewers consume the images onscreen. Andrew Osmond in his *Sight Sound* review, for example, claims that Scrooge is "the most accomplished motion-captured character yet, with Scrooge's virtual quasi-reality entirely befitting such a gargoyle of Victorian mythology" (par. 3). However, he tempers his praise of the technology later in the review: "Away from Scrooge's sagging wrinkles, the supporting characters sport the usual array of inhumanly smooth skins, immobile faces and other hallmarks of 'Uncanny Valley', as this kind of animation is called. Sometimes it's hard to know if Zemeckis is making a joke out of the limitations" (par. 6). There is an obvious hunger for realism in this film, even though animation as a form cannot fall into this category.

Scott is more impressed with the very technology that enables the blending of forms, as evidenced by his positive approach to the film's characters:

> Other problems with the film seem intrinsic to the state of the art of turning the movements and expressions of real actors into animated images. With ghosts, grotesques and a few other major characters (Colin Firth as Scrooge's nephew, Gary Oldman as Bob Cratchit), Mr. Zemeckis and his effects crew create uncannily lifelike performances. But minor characters and extras have the cold, rubbery look of video-game avatars

> (who are created in similar ways), and you can be impressed by the technical accomplishment that sets them in motion without being moved by what they do. (8)

Interestingly for Scott, the minor characters in the animated film are mere technical creations that lack the vitality and energy that characterize the rest of the cast. This assessment demonstrates an assumption that life somehow carries over from the motion captured performances of the actors into the animated world of the film. On a realist scale, then, the cast of characters is divided, with some actually approximating live action standards.

In terms of spatial transformation, the topics of motion capture and realism are likewise paired in discussion. Alleva points to the moment in the animated film when the children who emerge from beneath the robe of the second spirit frighteningly transform into social pariahs as "pivotal" (18). He states, "Precisely because this is done using motion-capture (computerized animation imposed on flesh-and-blood actors), the children retain a certain brutal realism amid all the technological razzle-dazzle" (18). Noteworthy is Alleva's connection between motion capture and realism in this claim; the physical transformations from child to adult enabled by motion capture technology actually prevent any realistic depiction of this age progression, yet Alleva aligns the moment with realism. The children morph into their adult personas quickly and unpredictably, the very characteristics that identify animation itself. Wood states, "A confrontation with the unfamiliar precipitates the (re)discovery that what is mapped out through familiarity is only one dimension of a multiplicity of possibilities" (143). Though

referring to cinematic space in particular, this argument can just as easily be applied to the characters of the children themselves; their sudden and frightening transformation into social outcasts reveals to Scrooge that this will be their fate if all remains unchanged, but that, as Wood suggests, this is only one possibility out of many.

As the above reviews demonstrate, there is no general consensus on how to evaluate the technical aspects of motion capture. Yacov Freedman in "Is It Real…or Is It Motion Capture? The Battle to Redefine Animation in the Age of Digital Performance" examines the debate surrounding possible definitions and appropriations of motion capture technology, highlighting the inability of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to come to a consensus on how to categorize films utilizing this technology. The real hot-button issue here, according to Freedman, is "the question of agency" (39). He describes the technology as follows:

> The basic process captures live movement as digital data instead of completed images, providing a three-dimensional rendering of the action. The rendering can then be easily inserted into any digital environment, freeing a performance from the constraints of a static setting. The downside, however, is that motion capture provides much less immediate detail than is available in a photograph or reel of film…The result, therefore, defies the usual definitions of recorded versus synthetic cinema. An image is being recorded, to be sure, but in practical terms, the data are impossible to view—let alone exhibit—until they have gone through multiple layers of digital modifications. Motion capture, almost by

> definition, requires additional animation to succeed as a work of recorded cinema. (39)

Motion capture itself cannot thus stand alone in the production of a finished film; it requires finessing and additional animated work in order to be completed. How, then, can such a technology be understood according to current definitions of animation?

Freedman opens his essay with a reference to *Ratatouille*'s end credits, which are punctuated with the following: "'Our Quality Assurance Guarantee,' it reads, '100% Genuine Animation! No motion capture or any other performance shortcuts were used in the production of this film.' Next to the statement stands a winking caricature of a 1950s businessman giving the audience a thumbs-up…" (38). Such a move obviously suggests that the integrity of animated films utilizing motion capture technology has been compromised, as well as the idea that motion capture technology enables "shortcuts" rather than encouraging true artistic performance.

What does this mean for Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol*? Freedman notes that Zemeckis himself views motion capture as neither animation nor as a threat to traditional animation: "Instead, he contends that it is a completely novel approach to making movies, one that combines the most irreplaceable elements of recorded cinema (actors and performance) with a more expansive and cost-effective environment than can be provided even by traditional animation" (42). For Zemeckis, motion capture enables film to achieve new heights; it does not falsify or compromise the art of animation. Freedman quotes Zemeckis in a 2009 interview with Harry Knowles stating, "My feeling is we now have this new art form to present stories that shouldn't be animated and are impossible to

make live action" (42). This line of thinking can be effectively applied to discussions of Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* since the narrative itself blurs the line between reality and fantasy.

Central to Freedman's discussion are the numerous hurdles encountered by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in classifying certain films into appropriate categories. When Zemeckis's *The Polar Express* (2004), for example, was up for consideration, members had difficulty classifying that particular film as an animation. However, Freedman, citing "Rules Approved," demonstrates that because it fit the main animation criterion—"in which movement and characters' performances are created using a frame-by-frame technique" (40), it was deemed eligible to be considered for nomination. Of course, as Freedman argues, the distinction is not easily made. Even realism itself does not serve as an appropriate marker, as Freedman cites Barry Weiss as stating, "You can turn the dial to photorealistic, or you can turn the dial to more stylized, but what we're putting the weight on is how the characters are created and performed. That's what we're putting the weight on in defining it, or not, as an animated feature" (46). What becomes highlighted, then, is not the look of the finished product, but rather the technology used to put it together. Of course, the focus on technology is a cause for contention among those involved in the various areas of filmmaking. Many Hollywood workers, from animators to actors to special effects teams, strive to appropriate the technology for themselves and seek recognition for their efforts. New Line Cinema, for example, campaigned for Andy Serkis (Gollum) to receive a nomination in the Best

Supporting Actor category, which ultimately failed (43-44). There is thus a wariness in definitively categorizing the technology one way or another.

The ambivalence with which the Academy approaches motion capture is reminiscent of the ambivalent Victorian attitudes of technologies like the railway. Unsure quite of what to make of it, the Academy has tried to establish various parameters in an attempt to clearly define what motion capture is and whether or not certain films and performances qualify as animation. However, as this article clearly demonstrates, the debate is disorienting for Academy members, filmmakers, and filmgoers alike. I have decided to refer to Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* as an animated film throughout this chapter because though it relies on and heavily markets its celebrity performances, the finished product is the result of animation processes.

As witnessed in the foregoing discussion, motion capture technology has caused numerous tensions between animators, actors, filmmakers, and even Academy members, and the debate will only continue to intensify as the technology continues to be utilized in the production of different films. However, relevant to our discussion of *A Christmas Carol* is how the technology dialogues with the Victorian literary tradition. Tanine Allison in "More than a Man in a Monkey Suit: Andy Serkis, Motion Capture, and Digital Realism" uses Peter Jackson's *King Kong* (2005) to discuss how motion capture technology is being framed as a technology that does not disrupt realism, but instead enhances it. Of course, Jackson dealt with many of the same issues already experienced by other filmmakers and critics: "How do you seamlessly integrate CG characters with live action actors? How much photorealism do you strive for? How do you get audiences

to suspend their disbelief when confronted with a creature that has no referent in the real world?" (325). Because Jackson decided to reveal in extensive detail how the film was made through materials that appeared prior to and after the film's release, he broke away from the tradition of keeping the production process under wraps (325-26). Allison argues that instead of concealing the processes that enabled the production of the title character and the film as a whole, Jackson decided to depart from established and conventional notions of realism, which allowed him to "frame motion capture in terms of authenticity and reference to the real world" (326). Interestingly, Allison points to the attempted transparency of the production as a means of showing the audience how motion capture fits neatly with "traditional cinematic acting" (333); Andy Serkis, the actor who provided the movements for King Kong, "is seen *as* Kong, as the actor who authored the performance of Kong. Similarly, Kong is discussed as a character just like any other, not as a computer-generated effect" (333). As Allison notes, the interchanging of Serkis and Kong and the attempt to view them as inseparable encourages audiences to connect with Kong emotionally and to feel for him as they would for any other character, which was one of Jackson's goals for the film (333).

This move on Jackson's part to make public the means of creating the title character of the film illustrates the need for audiences to be able to understand motion capture technology alongside and within the boundaries of already existing forms and technologies. Allison's main argument encourages us to think about how motion capture technology is less of a novelty than a historical continuation of familiar technologies: "Motion capture demonstrates that indexicality persists in the digital age. Instead of

positing a break between celluloid index and digital icon, motion capture prompts us to reevaluate the continuities between 'old' and 'new' media, investigating both as fusions of historical record and visual illusions" (326). Like Prince's framing of computer-generated imagery as indexical, and thus, digestible for filmgoers, Allison's argument stems from the idea that new technological processes must be understood in relation to, and not apart from, prior technologies. Towards the end of the article, she reiterates: "The production diaries thus walk a thin line between selling the new (new special effects, new technologies, new spectacles) and reassuring viewers that these new techniques still participate in long-lived cinematic traditions (Method acting, rich characterization, records of real movement and performance)" (338). In this way, the disorientation arising from the overwhelm of a generally little understood technology is potentially minimized.

Allison explains that if we think about motion capture in terms of indexicality, it differs from photography in an important way (335). A photograph corresponds to a specific referent and looks like the object being captured, meaning that it "is both an index and an icon" (335). Motion capture, however, does not translate iconically; the end result does not look exactly like the object being captured (335). However, as Allison argues, motion capture does rely on a kind of indexicality, since "it is created through a physical connection and contingent relationship between the sign and the referent…" (335). Of course, Allison's discussion opens up a range of questions in terms of realism and photography, which will be addressed in the next chapter. For now, it is clear from Allison's discussion that motion capture, though understandable from the vantage point of photography, does confront audiences with new ways of understanding how objects

(computer-generated or not) function in time and space. Even motion capture itself, Allison argues, does not produce a perfect representation of the actor's movements:

> The only way to visualize mo-cap in its "pure" form would be to look at binary code—something that, once again, cannot be comprehended by the unaided eye. Motion capture thus forms a record of movement without movement. In order to restore movement, the mo-cap data must be applied to a 3D digital puppet. (335-36)

In other words, the data captured via motion capture must be translated on a computer and then applied to a digital puppet. Once the data is in a sense uploaded onto the puppet, the digital character can begin to move.

A lengthy but key passage in Allison's article demonstrates that an understanding of motion capture depends upon an understanding of Victorians technologies as well:

> …some would claim that motion capture makes no difference as to the naturalism of the digital character's movement; it is just a time-saver for the animator who can plug in mo-cap data instead of doing it all by hand. In this sense, it is a digital tool and part of the animation process. On the other hand, motion capture in its very name signals an attempt to capture movement. This process makes a record of movement. The process makes a record of motion, which can then be 'played back' when attached to a digital model. In this way, motion capture borrows from the internal logic of photography and (analog) celluloid film. The genesis of cinema more than a century ago sprang in part from Eadweard Muybridge's desire to

> isolate and analyze movement as well as Etienne-Jules Marey's attempt to capture motion in experiments with chronophotography. (335)

Allison's discussion of motion capture as originating in photography clearly illustrates the historical trajectory of technology necessary for understanding how Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* has more in common with Dickens's text than just narrative, plot, and characters. Beyond just adapting the story, the animated adaptation shares a historical affinity with its Victorian counterpart. Scrooge's renewed understanding of society and his place within it through time traveling and through his seemingly impossible experiences is as relevant to audiences today as it was for readers in the 19th century, since his transformation required a reconciling of past, present, and future. He may not have fully understood the process, but no matter; his disorientation is conquered once he learns to make room for all these different experiences.

VII. Conclusion

Allison's observation of the bridging between the familiar and the unfamiliar speaks volumes about our current culture's experience of technological disorientation. Just as the Victorians—and even Scrooge himself—had to quickly adapt to new technologies and ways of living without completely abandoning traditional values and priorities, so now do audiences likewise have to reconcile traditional modes of technology with new ways of understanding realism and our own place within emerging technologies that force us to think of things in different ways. Thus, our own current experience with technological disorientation does not replace that which the Victorians

experienced, but links our cultural moment to theirs in significant historical ways. Ultimately, what we have is a historical convergence in terms of technological disorientation; both Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and Zemeckis's animated adaptation are linked not just by narrative and plot devices, but by a historical convergence much more significant than just faithfulness to the storyline.

Chapter Two: *The Jungle Book*

I like being a bear. – Mowgli, Disney's *The Jungle Book*

I. Chapter Introduction

Rudyard Kipling plays with the boundaries of identity and of empire in *The Jungle Books* (1894, 1895), seemingly arguing that there can be no stable identity categories. Most noticeably, Kipling refuses narrative closure in *The Jungle Books*. His literary characterization of Mowgli suggests that one's identity goes beyond that which can be authorized by actual photographs; in other words, there seems to be no existing material referent to establish Mowgli's identity in concrete terms. Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967) attempts to narrativize the Mowgli stories by transforming them into a linear narrative with a clear narrative trajectory. However, the differential system at work in both Kipling's *The Jungle Books* and Disney's animated *The Jungle Book* has a disorienting effect for the reader and viewer alike because the process of exclusion undermines the pursuit of narrative closure. Put simply, the disorientating effect of Kipling's text is a result of the rather unstable identity categories present in the narrative itself. The plot and overall narrative operate according to a differential system, wherein Mowgli is characterized according to who/what he is not. However, in determining who/what Mowgli is not, determining who/what he actually is proves to be a conflict that

remains unresolved through the entire text.[1] This lack of identity fixity is disorienting for the reader, who expects to understand the characters through a differential system that relies on stable categories and identity markers as a means of producing knowledge about the story's characters. However, this system fails to produce definitive answers about identity. Disney's *The Jungle Book* is likewise disorienting, but in a slightly different way. Generally ignoring the problem of identity, the film makes the plot all about saving Mowgli's life by getting him out of the jungle and away from Shere Khan. Of course, the film makes it explicit that Mowgli's humanity is the cause for all of this, but it lacks the general tension of identity determination that characterizes the Mowgli stories in Kipling's text. By making the plot all about Mowgli's journey out of the jungle and into the Indian village, the film attempts to establish an us/them ideological structure that assumes fixed identities. This results presumably in clear heroes and villains as well as a clear conflict and resolution. However, it becomes increasingly evident throughout the film that identity is fluid, and this excess threatens to erupt from the film at any given moment. Therefore, though the film works to adhere to this supposedly stable framework, slippages occur both in the narrative and technical layers of the film that undermine this fixity. It soon becomes clear that the film also operates according to an unstable differential system, thereby perpetuating a sense of disorientation by self-reflexively making these gaps known.

My argument in this chapter is indebted to Nancy Armstrong's *Fiction in the Age*

[1] I am not considering "In the Rukh," the final chapter of *The Second Jungle Book*, in my analysis here, since Kipling wrote this prior to writing the rest of the Mowgli stories.

of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism. Armstrong makes a number of arguments that directly inform my own argument, as she articulates the concept of a differential system of identity in the context of photography and realism. As Armstrong argues, photographs created systems of knowledge wherein consumers began to recognize certain types of photographs as belonging to certain categories; if they could be classified, they were considered to be real (20-21). Key to her argument is the idea that, as a result of the ubiquity of images, identity began to be understood within a differential framework in the 19th century: "…with the advent of mass visuality, a member of this culture would have been forced to negotiate a rapid shift from an identity based on identification ('that's me') to an identity based on difference ('that's not me')" (24). Of course, this way of understanding and constructing identity had its limitations, especially given England's imperial mission during that time. The idea of fixed identities took shape with these visual images. As she states, "In representing their own environment in certain ways, those who produced and consumed the spectacles of primitive and Oriental cultures also divided that environment into 'us' and 'them' on the basis of rather crude visual distinctions" (84). In addition to this idea, the most important aspects of her argument—in relation to mine—have to do with how both photographic images and literary fiction worked together to produce and construct truth and reality in the 19th century. Armstrong argues that the emergence of the literary genre of realism in the 19th century corresponds to and is invariably linked to the emergence of the photograph. Central to her argument is the idea that the two mediums were mutually authorizing in the production of knowledge (27). In other words, what was viewed as literary was that

which could be substantiated and verified by the photograph, and vice versa (26). According to Armstrong's argument, the "photographic" (26) did not necessarily refer to that which had a material referent, but rather the imaginative possibility that such a thing could potentially exist. This argument, along with her articulation of a differential system of identity, provides an extremely productive framework for examining how Kipling's *The Jungle Books* and Disney's animated adaptation demonstrate this differential system of identity in different ways.

Daniel Novak in "Time, Space, and Narrative Mediations in Victorian Photography" supplies an equally productive means of understanding the way that photographs and narrative are intertwined. In this text, he argues that contrary to the belief that a photograph captures a specific moment at a specific time and is therefore incapable of "rising to the level of narrative," photography is actually unable to capture space and time, which thus allows it narrative possibility (84). In *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, he argues that the Victorians themselves were largely ambivalent about photography; trusting it in one sense as a means of capturing the real, the Victorians were also distrustful of the photograph's seeming ability to "efface particularity" (5). The various cases of mistaken identity and the seeming interchangeability of faces and bodies in the Victorian period rendered photography as unable to capture the individual and the specific (46, 48-49). Novak argues that this "fragmentation" ("Time, Space, and Narrative Mediations in Victorian Photography" 68) enabled narrative possibility for the Victorians. For example, he cites Oscar Gustav Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson as producing "composition photography" (71),

wherein they would piece together different negatives to form new images. According to Novak, these composite scenes not only did not take place, but were also viewed as "more realistic and more *photographic*" (71, author's italics). Interestingly, Rejlander and Robinson had to manipulate the truth in order to aspire to something more real. This ambivalence regarding photography's ability to objectively capture reality, coupled with new understandings of vision and subjectivity, demonstrates the degree to which the Victorians struggled with photography as a truth-capturing medium.

What is interesting here is the similarity of Novak's argument to Armstrong's in terms of narrative possibility and the construction of the real. As Armstrong states, "In referring to the real world, I am suggesting, realism necessarily referred to something like a composite photograph, especially when a photograph of that person, place, or thing had not yet been taken" (27). The composite photograph factors prominently in their conceptualizations of the link between the visual and the literary. Novak makes an explicit link between photography and the Victorian novel, making it clear that the visual is always an act of storytelling, an important link that helps authorize the discussion of Disney's animated adaptation in light of its 19th century counterpart.

It is important to note that the act of storytelling was not limited to just photography and literary fiction. Other critics, such as Saloni Mathur in "Living Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886" and Antoinette Burton in "Making a Spectacle of Empire: Indian Travellers in Fin-de-Siècle London" use the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 to examine how Victorian England as a whole was committed to the project of establishing a dominant and closed narrative that privileged the country as both

dedicated to and immune to the social effects of broadening its imperial holdings. What is significant in the assessments of both Mathur and Burton is their recognition that England's attempt to impose an imperial narrative on its colonial holdings and subjects failed miserably; visitors from India offered alternative narratives to counter the dominant one, for instance by making visible the queen's abstract power (Mathur 513, 516) or by mapping the streets of London, thereby making it consumable (Burton). In fact, the more determined the attempt to fix the narrative, the more fluid and mutable it proved to be. For purposes of this project, it is important to note that the imperial impulse is inextricably tied to the narrative impulse; storytelling and its mediums—here, the photograph, written text, and animated film—all become motivated by the pursuit of narrative closure. The preservation of linearity and stability relies on the imposition of such a narrative. This could also perhaps account for the disorienting effect of Kipling's text, as the gaps in the story, as well as the general instability of identity, deny the reader the satisfaction of narrative closure.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the focus of this project is not to draw attention to the special relationship between Victorian texts and 20th and 21st century adaptations, since this relationship is demonstrated convincingly in other critical texts. Instead, the goal of this project is to call attention to the various ways that animated adaptations of 19th century texts are historically linked to their literary counterparts. In this case, the Kipling and Disney texts are connected by their differential systems of producing knowledge about the story's characters, a system of knowing that could be linked to 19th century visual culture. It is the ultimate inability of both texts to produce

certain and concrete knowledge about identity that makes them disorienting to readers and viewers.

II. *The Jungle Books*: Disorientation and its Roots

The disorientation that occurs as a result of the characterization of Mowgli's identity is a product of different competing and paradoxical forces in Kipling's text. First, the imperial/colonial paradigm, against which this book must be considered, makes the characterization of Mowgli a difficult and complex one. As John McBratney in "Imperial Subjects, Imperial Space in Kipling's *Jungle Book*" argues, Britons felt obligated to identify themselves in ways that stressed national ties (277). He notes that abroad, and in India especially, the attempt to maintain this clear identity was markedly fierce (277). However, he suggests that such a clear-cut delineation of identity was not always desirable, as he states that in Kipling's fiction, as well as in the fiction of other writers, "male readers young and old embraced the myth that one could grow up to be robustly free and yet remain resolutely manly, Christian, and British" (277). As is clear here, the differential framework that structured the identities of Britons and non-Britons too rigidly created dichotomous spaces that readers could only occupy vicariously through characters like Mowgli.

Part of McBratney's argument is that though the intent of the authors in general may have been to maintain a clear British identity outside of the metropole, characters were limited by the "ideology…urging at once expansion and retraction of the self" but that Kipling's text attempted otherwise: "The narrative of *The Jungle Book*, part fantasy,

part fable, and part adventure story, provides a powerful analogy for the British imperial subject caught between individual desire and social restraint" (278). McBratney's recognition of Mowgli's characterization as both complex and fluid outside of the metropole underscores the idea that crafting a rigidly defined British identity in imperial Britain may not have been entirely feasible. He suggests that Kipling was the only one who understood that the differential system that produced knowledge about different identities could not sufficiently account for a character like Mowgli in a location like an Indian jungle.

What is further disorientating to the reader is that the differential system cannot definitively pin down who/what Mowgli is. The idea that he is unlike other men in no way diminishes his humanity; likewise, Kipling suggests in the narrative that though Mowgli has a unique relationship with the jungle animals, this in no way suggests that he is subhuman. However, Mowgli cannot effectively and neatly align with the models provided for either human or animal in the text. His is a difference without reference. At pivotal moments in the text, he is cast out of both the jungle and an Indian village, but rather than suggest that Mowgli is inherently deficient in some way, Kipling suggests that a perceived lack of completeness on the part of the animal and human communities leads to his ousting in both cases. Therefore, because both the jungle and the Indian village seem to require an unequivocal identity in order to be completely one with the group, Mowgli is unable to fully integrate himself into either world. The differential system in the text is at once unstable and incomplete, unable to provide the reader with a firm definition that explains Mowgli's characterization.

McBratney argues that though *The Jungle Book* seems to initially proffer a coming-of-age story through which Mowgli learns to become a civilized adult, the story actually does not follow this pattern. He argues that Kipling's text allows Mowgli to be both wolfish and an adult man:

> What allows Mowgli this double pleasure is the persistence of a "felicitous space" that emerges in the fantasy of childhood and survives the modulation from fantasy narrative to realist frame…Within this vestigial realm, Mowgli seems able to return to a selfhood of dual aspect the (sic) resists the narrowing definitions of a single, unitary adult identity. (278)

The fluidity of identity encouraged by Kipling's text thus tantalizes the reader with the idea that Mowgli can have a unique identity, and that this identity need not reside in clear-cut boundaries that rely on difference or exclusion. In terms of narrative possibility, the idea of fixity falls apart.

The reader need not look far to find a flesh and blood model for the character of Mowgli, for Kipling's own life may hold the key to understanding the complexities of this characterization. Jane Hotchkiss in "The Jungle of Eden: Kipling, Wolf Boys, and the Colonial Imagination," categorizing Mowgli as a "wild-child figure" (435), argues that Mowgli's characterization demonstrates a kind of double vision through the colonial lens:

> The Mowgli tales register anxieties about the colonial 'other' and demonstrate the anxieties of identity that result from the double perspective of the second-generation colonizer, one whose childhood attachment to the place of nativity is complicated by a sense of exile as

well as by cultural attitudes toward those indigenous to the colonial place. (435-36)

Mowgli's sense of displacement must be taken into account in the examination of his identity, as Kipling's own identity troubled fixed notions of identity.

Though Kipling had heretofore been seen as an apologist for empire, critics are now questioning this rather narrow conception of Kipling and his work. Howard J. Booth, in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Rudyard Kipling*, argues early on that "one-voiced attempts to describe and 'fix' Kipling were not going to work" (1). Harish Trivedi in "Reading Kipling in India" notes that Kipling, who was born in India, "was sent (back?) to England at the age of six, as nearly all children of the Raj were, to prevent them from being contaminated in their formative years" (187). Trivedi's parenthetical "back?" complicates the notion that Kipling even had an English motherland, suggesting that his time in India constituted his identity. Though Trivedi traces Kipling's journeys back to India, then to England, and then to America, South Africa, and finally to Sussex, what is most significant is Trivedi's claim that Kipling had been uprooted, since "[he] 'belonged' to England and wrote in English, but he became a writer in India and wrote best about India…India made him; he would have been half the writer he was without India" (188). This claim suggests that environment and upbringing cannot be divorced from who Kipling is, an idea that certainly is relevant to the discussion of Mowgli's upbringing in the jungle. McBratney offers an even closer look at Kipling's upbringing by demonstrating how the young Kipling possessed the "ability to float between Anglo-Indian and Indian societies, without religious or social sanction"

because of "the Anglo-Indian child's peculiar status in the Indian caste system" (282). Because he was so young, he was "in effect uncasted, existing in a state of suspended caste identity that would be validated only later and that, in the meantime, allowed him free and unpenalized passage between Anglo-Indian and Indian realms" (282). Therefore, as a child, Kipling experienced special privileges that could not be carried on into his adult life, a significant life detail that can certainly be witnessed in Mowgli's ousting from the wolf pack as a young man.

Second, in addition to the imperial/colonial paradigm's impact on the narrative, the formal structure of *The Jungle Books* as a whole makes for a very disorienting experience for the reader. As Hotchkiss argues, the order in which Kipling penned the Mowgli stories must be taken into consideration in the analysis of Mowgli's characterization. Because "In the Rukh," the final chapter of Mowgli's life, was written first, Hotchkiss argues that the narrative finality, and its "tidy and definitely an imperialistic, resolution" (437), cannot be ignored. However, she contrasts this with "The Spring Running," which actually closes the narrative and comes before "In the Rukh" in the text. Hotchkiss argues that "The Spring Running" resists narrative closure. She convincingly argues that as Kipling worked his way through Mowgli's story, the stability witnessed in "In the Rukh" becomes lost, and that Mowgli as a "wild child" enters a space "between civilized and barbarous, between 'sahib' and 'native'" (437). As Hotchkiss makes clear, both the attempt to delineate clear markers of identity and the pursuit of narrative closure are foiled. Because the characterization of Mowgli is so complex, and because Kipling himself was the product of a fuzzy colonial schematic,

Mowgli's story takes on a life of its own, eluding narrative containment by both Kipling and the reader.

"In the Rukh," far from being a simplistic resolution to the Mowgli stories, further contributes to this complexity. Hotchkiss reads the character of Gisborne as a father figure for Mowgli; indeed, he is quick to cling to Gisborne and offer his services to him. Hotchkiss argues that here "…Kipling has created the ideal subaltern, the native without the 'native problem,' by engendering a new Indian race disturbingly divorced from Indian history, culture, and tradition" (441). In this reading, Mowgli is a blank slate, an empty shell ready to attach to someone willing to fill him with a history. Here, according to Hotchkiss, there is a clear separation between self and other (442). In addition, she argues that while in this chapter Gisborne's point of view is privileged, the earlier Mowgli stories (but written later) instead give voice to Mowgli (442). According to Hotchkiss, Mowgli's status as a "wild child" allows for this "slippage" to take place (442). Moreover, the Mowgli stories force the reader to confront those very boundaries as arbitrary: "Moving beyond the fantasy of transforming the native other in order to control him, the *Jungle Book* Mowgli tales offer vicarious satisfaction of the desire to *be* the other" (442). By this point, the clear delineation between self and other has been demolished, and desire itself has been rerouted.

In her article, Hotchkiss does point out the complexities of reading Mowgli's experiences within the imperialist paradigm, as the fact that he is non-white complicates readings that align him with the white colonizer. Hotchkiss acknowledges that Mowgli's destruction of an Indian village may have caused British and Anglo-Indian readers to

recall the violence of the Indian mutineers during the 1857 mutiny; however, she argues that to draw a simple analogy between the two would be entirely amiss. Rather than read the jungle animals as natives who must ward off the colonizers, Hotchkiss argues that it is more worthwhile to say that "confusion is the point," as it "expresses the pain and confusion of inbetweenness, of the character who feels outcast from both elements of his society" (442). Kipling's text itself thus presents the difficulty (maybe even the impossibility) of trying to establish an unequivocal cultural identity. The following section will build upon these ideas to demonstrate that readerly disorientation stems from the inability to find a referent for Mowgli's difference.

III. *The Jungle Books*: Mowgli Stories

A clear example of the inability to define in clear terms who/what Mowgli is occurs in the first chapter, "Mowgli's Brothers." In this chapter, Bagheera cautions Mowgli against the increasingly dissident wolf pack; he feels that as soon as Akela, the wolf leader who had stood by Mowgli, is overthrown, the younger wolves will also turn against Mowgli. When Bagheera informs Mowgli that he will eventually leave the jungle and join his own kind, Mowgli is confused and replies, "I was born in the jungle. I have obeyed the Law of the Jungle, and there is no wolf of ours from whose paws I have not pulled a thorn. Surely they are my brothers!" (Kipling 15). In an attempt to explain why the other jungle animals may be against his remaining in the pack, Bagheera tells Mowgli to look him in the eyes and then is the first to break the stare:

> "*That* is why," he said, shifting his paw on the leaves. "Not even I can look thee between the eyes, and I was born among men, and I love thee, Little Brother. The others they hate thee because their eyes cannot meet thine; because thou art wise; because thou hast pulled out thorns from their feet—because thou art a man." (16)

Bagheera then advises Mowgli to go to the huts in the nearby valley and bring fire back to defend himself against his opponents.

The characterization of Mowgli here is fairly complex; there is something inherently different between Bagheera and Mowgli, but even Mowgli cannot truly understand what that is. This difference cannot be simplistically understood on spectrums of intelligence or emotional capacity, for Bagheera demonstrates incredible insight and tenderness in attempting to explain what this difference is. Even Bagheera refuses to articulate this difference in simplistic terms. There is therefore a difficulty in concretizing Mowgli's identity, even though it is clear that a difference does indeed exist.

When Mowgli learns that Akela had missed his next kill and would therefore be killed as well, Mowgli races to the village and brings back a pot full of coals. At the Council Rock, all are gathered, including Shere Khan. Akela claims that he had been plotted against, but he upholds the law and invites the pack to challenge him one by one. Shere Khan claims the life of Mowgli, while others in the wolf pack declare that he should rejoin the men in the village. Akela, however, stands up for Mowgli, claiming, "He is our brother in all but blood" (20) and denouncing Mowgli's opponents as "cowards" (20). He tries to make a deal with the wolves, and offers to die without a fight

if they let Mowgli return to the village. He incentivizes the deal by stating, "More I cannot do; but if ye will, I can save ye the shame that comes of killing a brother against whom there is no fault—a brother spoken for and bought into the Pack according to the Law of the Jungle" (20-21). It is at this point that Mowgli stands up in his own defense. He claims himself to be a man and renounces kinship with the wolves. He throws the pot of coals, which ignites some moss, and sets a branch aflame, which he uses to terrorize the wolves. He shouts:

> I go from you to my own people—if they be my own people. The Jungle is shut to me, and I must forget your talk and your companionship; but I will be more merciful than ye are. Because I was all but your brother in blood, I promise that when I am a man among men I will not betray ye to men as ye have betrayed me. (21)

He then grabs Shere Khan and beats him with the branch. He declares:

> Pah! Singed jungle-cat—go now! But remember when next I come to the Council Rock, as a man should come, it will be with Shere Khan's hide on my head. For the rest, Akela goes free to live as he pleases. Ye will *not* kill him, because that is not my will. Nor do I think that ye will sit here any longer, lolling out your tongues as though ye were somebodies, instead of dogs whom I drive out—thus! Go! (22)

For the first time, Mowgli's will and the Jungle Law are opposed to each other, and it is here that Mowgli asserts his dominance over the law that had previously ruled him. What is important here is that in order to assert his dominance, Mowgli must definitively

proclaim himself to be inherently different from the jungle animals, and he must claim kinship with the external, human world in order to extricate himself from the Jungle Law. However, there is uncertainty in his words, as he is unsure that fellow humans are actually his "own people." Mowgli understands that his difference will prevent him from living peacefully in the jungle but is not entirely convinced that there is what Armstrong would call "positive identification and repetition" (170) waiting for him outside of the jungle. In other words, the differential framework in the narrative works to exclude Mowgli from jungle life, but it does not provide clear alternatives for him because his identity at this point is still overwhelmingly ambiguous.

After this episode, Mowgli experiences an emotional first and begins to cry for the first time. Bagheera explains to him, "'That is only tears such as men use…Now I know thou art a man, and a man's cub no longer. The Jungle is shut to thee henceforward. Let them fall, Mowgli. They are only tears.' So Mowgli sat and cried as though his heart would break; and he had never cried in all his life before" (22). Mowgli's tears—physical evidence of his emotional capabilities—signal to Bagheera Mowgli's unambiguous identity as a man. However, Bagheera's meaning in calling Mowgli a "man's cub" itself requires explanation. At first glance, Bagheera's explanation seems to refer to the difference between human and animal; because Mowgli can cry, he is human. However, Bagheera's identification of Mowgli seems to stem more from his recognition that Mowgli is now an adult, and as such, can no longer live in the jungle. Mowgli's tears demonstrate his recognition that he has upset the way of life in the jungle and that the jungle is now lost to him. Absent from the animated adaptation, this scene demonstrates

the degree to which difference plays a pivotal role in the structuring of the various social relationships in the novel. This equation of childhood with the ability to live in the jungle reinforces McBratney's argument that Kipling, as a child, was able to access both Anglo and Indian spaces.

In the next chapter, "Kaa's Hunting," which deals with events occurring earlier in Mowgli's life, the concept of difference attaches most readily to codes of conduct. Contrasted with the wolves (otherwise known as the "Free People"), the Bandar-log, or monkeys, are categorized as lawless and uncivilized by the rest of the jungle. On one particular day, Baloo and Bagheera are annoyed with Mowgli because he had been with the monkeys. Baloo explains to him, "I have taught thee all the Law of the Jungle for all the peoples of the jungle—except the Monkey-Folk who live in the trees. They have no law. They are outcaste" (29). Here the conception of difference becomes a bit confused. Whereas in the previous chapter, where the focal point of identity is blood and inherent difference, identity here figures as something external. Because the monkeys do not abide by the Law of the Jungle, which the other animals (and Mowgli) have in some way internalized, the monkeys are, in Baloo's words, "outcaste." In this schematic, Mowgli fits in more neatly with all the other jungle animals, since he himself also lives according to the law.

Of course, the monkeys have a very different outlook on jungle life. That day, to the horror of Baloo and Bagheera, they kidnap Mowgli. Once they bring Mowgli back to their city, known as Cold Lairs, they begin to tell him of their own greatness: "We are great. We are free. We are wonderful. We are the most wonderful people in all the jungle.

We all say so, and so it must be true" (40). The statements made here by the monkeys are significantly complex. Unlike the wolves and the other jungle animals that adhere to the Law of the Jungle, the monkeys equate freedom with lawlessness. For them, rules and codes of conduct inhibit, rather than facilitate, freedom. In addition, they operate according to a kind of mob mentality, where they logically believe themselves to be "the most wonderful people in all the jungle" because they all say so. Of course, the reader can see how such a line of thinking can be viewed as potentially dangerous by the other jungle animals. Following this line of thinking, the ridiculousness of their argument undermines their claim to greatness. In any case, the difference between man and monkey becomes fuzzy when Kaa sees Mowgli for the first time and says: "Very soft is his skin, and he is not unlike the *Bandar-log*. Have care, manling, that I do not mistake thee for a monkey some twilight when I have newly changed my coat" (45). What is interesting here is Kaa's classification of Mowgli according to type. Because Kaa is familiar with how the monkeys look, he is able to compare Mowgli to that existing model but still recognizes that differences exist between the two. Armstrong's differential system of producing knowledge about identity seems to be at work here, as Kaa relies on pre-existing categories in order to process Mowgli's identity.

The next chapter, "'Tiger-Tiger!,'" likewise demonstrates how humans utilize pre-existing categories to try and categorize Mowgli. After breaking ties with the wolves at Council Rock, Mowgli finds a village and attempts to communicate with one of the men that he is hungry. As expected, the man runs off and is joined by other villagers as well as a village priest upon his return. Mowgli and the villagers are wary of each other,

but a woman named Messua, whose son Nathoo had been carried off long ago by a tiger, feeds Mowgli and decides to adopt him. Mowgli, though viewed as different by the villagers, is soon assigned the task of herding cattle. During his herding, he is visited by Gray Brother, his wolf brother, who warns him that Shere Khan is planning to kill him. Mowgli, however, comes up with a plan to defeat Shere Khan, and with the help of Gray Brother and Akela is able to kill Shere Khan by trampling him with the cattle.

Though Mowgli at this point has fulfilled his promise by killing Shere Khan and asserting his dominion over him, the victory does nothing to alleviate Mowgli's feelings of displacement. His reflection after slaying Shere Khan reveals the lack of satisfaction he experiences after his success. He states: "I am two Mowglis, but the hide of Shere Khan is under my feet. / All the Jungle knows that I have killed Shere Khan. Look, look well, O Wolves! / Ahae! my heart is heavy with things that I do not understand" ("Mowgli's song" 67). Mowgli's ultimate assertion of dominance through the act of killing and skinning Shere Khan complicates, rather than elucidates, his relationship to the jungle and its residents. Though in a sense reinforcing his superiority to the jungle animals, his song almost demonstrates the feeling that he has somehow betrayed the jungle in this act, as he is "two Mowglis" instead of one. The reader can only infer that killing a jungle animal has also injured his very being. Mowgli claims that he is troubled and cannot make sense of his feelings, and the reader likewise must grapple with Mowgli's identity.

After this, Buldeo, one of the villagers, claims Shere Khan's hide as his own. However, Mowgli opposes this false claim and intimidates him with Akela. At this point,

Buldeo goes to the village and convinces everyone that Mowgli is some sort of sorcerer. When Mowgli returns to the village, he is cast out by the villagers. Mowgli exclaims, "Again? Last time it was because I was a man. This time it is because I am a wolf. Let us go, Akela" (63). Mowgli then returns to the jungle and spreads the hide across a stone at Council Rock, and Akela calls out to the wolves. Because the wolves had been without a leader since Akela, many wolves are ill, injured, or missing, but some do return to the rock. Once the wolves see the hide, one wolf exclaims, "Lead us again, O Akela. Lead us again, O man-cub, for we be sick of this lawlessness, and we would be the Free People once more" (65). The return to how things were in the past cannot be achieved so easily, however, as Mowgli states, "Man pack and wolf pack have cast me out…Now I will hunt alone in the jungle" (65).

In this short span of time, the identity categories that have almost promised to stabilize are again undermined. There is almost the hope that Mowgli that will eventually fit in with the other villagers and at last discover who he really is, but his brief residence at the village only confirms his inability to truly fit in anywhere. Mowgli, previously dismissed from the wolf pack for not being a wolf, is immediately dismissed from the village because he is not human enough for them. Notably, when Mowgli returns to the jungle, one wolf recognizes that lawlessness does not in fact equal freedom, and calls upon the leadership of both Akela and Mowgli to lead the wolves and transform them into the "Free People" once again. However, though some of the wolves view this joint leadership as ideal, Mowgli recognizes that such a move would not be viable; his self-

conscious awareness of the differences between them and his injured feelings prevent him from even attempting to become one with the wolves again.

The issue of Mowgli's identity remains troubled throughout the rest of the narrative. The chapter "Red Dog" begins: "It was after the letting in of the Jungle that the pleasantest part of Mowgli's life began. He had the good conscience that comes from paying a just debt; and all the Jungle was his friend, for all the Jungle was afraid of him" (268). There is an immediate sense here that Mowgli's relationship with the rest of the jungle inhabitants is an unequal one; the text suggests that their friendship with him springs not from mutual and equal respect, but from the recognition that they are inferior to Mowgli in some way. Again, what is underscored here is how the idea of difference structures Mowgli's relationships with the rest of the jungle creatures.

When an outside wolf approaches the wolf pack and Mowgli about the threat of the Red Dog, Mowgli is adamant that he will stay and fight, though Akela attempts to dissuade him. He argues, "'Listen now: There was a wolf, my father, and there was a wolf, my mother. Therefore I—' he raised his voice, 'I say that when the dhole come, and if the dhole come, Mowgli and the Free People are of one skin for that hunting…'" (272). The complexities inherent in Mowgli's identity are quite apparent here. He recognizes the cultural affiliation with his adoptive mother and father but stops short of proclaiming himself a wolf because of that. However, in his second sentence, he does say that he is one of the wolves, but qualifies that statement with "for that hunting." In other words, because Mowgli and the wolves share a common enemy, he will be one of them for the duration of the fight. His kinship with the wolves is thus not one of blood, but rather of

affinity. Finally, his identification with the wolves here is dependent upon an oppositional schematic. Because there are only two options—friend or foe, wolf or Red Dog—Mowgli must become one with the wolves for this fight.

Interestingly, no one in the jungle believes that Mowgli stands a chance against the Red Dog. Kaa attempts to remind Mowgli of his true identity: "Dost *thou* strike in this? Remember thou art a man; and remember what pack cast thee out. Let the wolf look to the dog. *Thou* art a man" (274). Kaa's incredulousness at Mowgli's intentions underscores Mowgli's humanity and calls attention to the fact that the wolf pack had hitherto disowned him. Loyalty, then, is not fixed. However, Mowgli replies: "'Last year's nuts are this year's black earth,' said Mowgli. 'It is true that I am a man, but it is in my stomach that this night I have said that I am a wolf. I called the River and the Trees to remember. I am of the Free People, Kaa, till the dhole has gone by'" (274). His determination to let go of the past demonstrates his difference in views; Mowgli believes that if he wants to reclaim his wolf identity, he can. However, he again qualifies this identification by claiming that this oneness with the wolves will be broken once the enemy is dealt with.

Just when it seems that Kipling has declared Mowgli to be undeniably a man, his characterization of Mowgli becomes even more complex. While preparing for the fight, Mowgli demonstrates just how fluid his identity can be: "'Mowgli the Frog have I been,' said he to himself, 'Mowgli the Wolf have I said that I am. Now Mowgli the Ape must I be before I am Mowgli the Buck. At the end I shall be Mowgli the Man. Ho!' and he slid his thumb along the eighteen-inch blade of his knife" (280). Mowgli's speech implies

that identity is a choice, and that he has the ability to assume whatever identity is necessary to adapt to the situation at hand. Moreover, because of the structure of identification ("Mowgli the…"), there seems to be no sense that "Mowgli the Man" is Mowgli's true identity, since that identity has proven to be so easily traded for another.

"The Spring Running," the chapter that follows "Red Dog" and closes *The Second Jungle Book*, denies the reader narrative closure. In this chapter, Mowgli is uneasy, troubled, and feels as if he is losing control, but he does not understand why. He finds a village and is reunited with Messua, and he eats and naps in her hut. When he leaves, Messua tells him to return, and Mowgli says that he will. Gray Brother, who had followed Mowgli, reminds him that some of the jungle animals had predicted that Mowgli would eventually return to his own kind. When they reach the jungle, Gray Brother calls out to everyone that Mowgli will be leaving, and he, the other three wolves, Baloo, and Kaa meet at the Council Rock. Mowgli laments his position, and Kaa tries to reassure him: "'Thy trail ends here, then, Manling?' said Kaa, as Mowgli threw himself down, his face in his hands. 'Cry thy cry. We be of one blood, thou and I—Man and Snake together'" (309). Mowgli's friends make it clear to him that the jungle will always be open to him. Though Mowgli is reassured, he is still torn up by his emotions: "'*Hai mai*, my brothers,' cried Mowgli, throwing up his arms with a sob. 'I know not what I know, I would not go, but I am drawn by both feet. How shall I leave these nights?'" (310). Baloo and Kaa reassure him, and Baloo makes clear that Mowgli is different now and that "It is no longer the Man-cub that asks leave of his Pack, but the Master of the Jungle that changes his trail" (311). Bagheera then joins them, tells Mowgli that "All

debts are paid now," licks Mowgli's foot, and runs from him, crying aloud, "Remember Bagheera loved thee…Good hunting on a new trail, Master of the Jungle! Remember Bagheera loved thee" (311). After that, Mowgli shares a tearful goodbye with Baloo, and Gray Brother proclaims that they now "follow new trails" (311). Set apart from this text, the last sentence of the chapter reads, "And this is the last of the Mowgli stories."

The intensity of this final chapter reveals just how complex issues of identity are in Kipling's text. Mowgli recognizes that he is drawn to the village, but he does not understand why. The transition does not look like it will be an easy one for him, and there is uncertainty on his part regarding what the future holds for him. There is also no hint at this point that Mowgli will indeed be able to successfully become one with his fellow human beings. However, the jungle animals recognize Mowgli's departure as natural and attribute his inclination to his changed status in the jungle. Of course, this recognition stems from an even deeper understanding of how difference functions to establish a divide between them. The final sentence of the chapter foils the reader's pursuit of narrative closure, and the reader is left without the assurance that Mowgli will be able to find his true self.

IV. Disney's *The Jungle Book*: Context

According to Eric Goldberg in "The Bare Necessities: The Making of *The Jungle Book*," a documentary-style extra on *The Jungle Book* DVD featuring artists involved in the production of *The Jungle Book* and well as current critics, authors, animators, and historians, *The Jungle Book* was a "big darn deal" and "very popular" when it debuted at

Grauman's Chinese Theater on October 18, 1967, almost a year after Walt Disney's death. Vance Gerry, interviewed in 1985 and a writer for *The Jungle Book*, notes in this extra that this animation was the "first picture to make a lot of money." Indeed, there seems to have been something very attractive to audiences about the film, as Wayne Warga argues in a 1980 *Los Angeles Times* article entitled "Disney Films: Chasing the Changing Times" that "It is also possible to argue that not since 'Mary Poppins' and 'Jungle Book' (released in 1967 and re-released last year, earning $27.4 million worldwide), have there been any memorable Disney characters" (O1). Warga's argument echoes those of the artists that worked on the film and lauded the sincerity of the characters as key to the film's success. However, it must be noted that Disney's Mowgli is nothing like Kipling's Mowgli. Though the focus of this project is not to compare the Disney film to Kipling's text in terms of fidelity, it is still worthwhile to note that Disney himself was also not concerned with staying faithful to the text. Richard Sherman, one of the songwriters for *The Jungle Book*, recalls that Walt Disney had asked the team whether anyone had read Kipling's book, and when no one answered in the affirmative, he had told them not to; he had a different telling that was "fun" and not "heavy" ("The Bare Necessities"). The focus of the animation is thus on survival and friendship, and not on the problematics of identity troubling the Mowgli in Kipling's text.

V. Disney's *The Jungle Book*: Storyline and Issues of Identity

Disney's animated film depicts a young, pre-pubescent Mowgli caught between the animal and human worlds. At home in the jungle, Mowgli cannot comprehend why he cannot continue to live there and why Bagheera wants to return him to the "man-village"; however, after butting heads with Bagheera, Mowgli is left on his own. It is then that Mowgli encounters Baloo, otherwise known as "papa bear," who wishes Mowgli to remain in the jungle as well. After Mowgli is kidnapped by the monkeys and rescued by both Bagheera and Baloo, Bagheera makes it very clear that the jungle is no place for a man, and so begins the journey of restoring Mowgli to human civilization. However, this journey is complicated when Baloo admits this plan to Mowgli, causing him to run away. The entire plot then centers on Mowgli eluding a few enemies, including Kaa, a snake that almost succeeds in charming and eating him, and Shere Khan, the ferocious tiger that hates all men. Predictably, Mowgli defeats these enemies (not without help from some jungle friends) and is able to scare Shere Khan away by tying a fiery branch to his tail. At the end of the film, just when Mowgli and Baloo share an embrace, Mowgli spots an Indian girl, presumably his own age, fetching water from the river. She spots him as well and blinks slowly, showing off her inviting and attractive eyes. Mowgli climbs a tree to get a closer look at her, and the girl flirtatiously encourages him to follow by dropping her pot of water. While Bagheera encourages Mowgli to enter the village, Baloo softly beckons him back. Wordlessly, Mowgli smiles, shrugs his shoulders at Baloo, and follows the girl into the village while balancing the pot of water on his head. The film

ends with Baloo and Bagheera singing and dancing their way back into the depths of the jungle.

At the narrative level, Disney's *The Jungle Book* follows a conventional and formulaic plot. Not too long after the story begins, an inciting incident pinpoints the conflict and sets the whole story in motion. The narrative climaxes with Mowgli defeating Shere Khan, and then the action quickly falls until the resolution at the end. Because this particular journey narrative centers on getting Mowgli out of the (bad) jungle and into the (good) village, the narrative depends upon an oppositional paradigm. In other words, the characters must either be characterized as heroes or villains, as either dedicated to Mowgli's cause or against it. In addition, the narrative environments must be clearly oppositional. It is made very clear from the beginning of the film that the jungle is uninhabitable for a human being. Most importantly, in such an oppositional schematic, Mowgli himself must be unambiguously human. His entire journey out of the jungle and into the village hinges upon the taken-for-granted assumption that his identity is clear and that he does not belong in the jungle. Moreover, his heterosexual humanity is reinforced at the very end of the film when he is immediately attracted to the girl in the village. As the ending suggests, he enters into a human relationship rather effortlessly, and his transition into life in the village looks easy and promising.

What is clear from the animated film is that it relies on an us/them ideology to structure both the identities of the characters as well as the narrative plot. The ideological structure is so foundational to the narrative trajectory that it soon becomes a taken-for-granted assumption that Mowgli cannot be and never can be one of the jungle animals.

Though the film initially posits the possibility of Mowgli becoming part and parcel of the jungle, it then quickly establishes him as inherently different and therefore removed from what he considers to be his natural habitat. Though a 20th century text, Disney's *The Jungle Book* can be read as operating according to the same system of knowledge produced by the ubiquity of visual images in the 19th century as articulated by Armstrong. As a medium predicated on framing and narrativizing, the animated film seemingly promises to reclassify the fluid and dynamic characterizations in Kipling's text into recognizable and pre-given categories that can be easily understood by the viewer. However, though the film works tirelessly to produce meaning through a strict oppositional schematic, the fluidity of identity seeps through and threatens to erupt from the film at any given moment. Thus, as the following discussion of the animated film will demonstrate, what matters not is how the film adapts Kipling's text (in terms of what is emphasized or excised), but rather how the film fits into the particular economy of difference ushered in by the emergence of a visual culture in the 19th century. As discussed earlier, this differential system proves to be unstable in Kipling's text, for it fails to definitively assign Mowgli to a clear and recognizable identity category. This excess also is present in the animated film.

The film opens with a long shot of a serene and colorful jungle. Bagheera is narrating, and the focus slowly shifts to him and his discovery of a baby in a basket. Inclined at first to simply walk away, Bagheera is won over by the baby and becomes concerned for his well-being. He then takes the basket and places it in front of a cave of wolves, staying behind in a thicket to make sure that the baby is well-received. The

wolves quickly accept Mowgli as one of their own and bring him into the cave with them. The narrative then forwards ten years, and a pre-pubescent Mowgli is seen happily walking through the jungle and enjoying affectionate cuddles from the wolves. Bagheera, watching this scene, predicts that this happiness cannot continue forever.

Though the focus here is not on issues of fidelity, it is worthwhile for purposes of this project to compare Mowgli's entering into jungle civilization in the Disney film to Kipling's text. As previously discussed, Mowgli's proposed acceptance by the "Free People" in the text causes tension in the wolf pack and threatens to divide the wolves. According to the Law of the Jungle, Mowgli must be "spoken for" (11) by two other wolves. Baloo, though not a wolf, is allowed at the Council and speaks for Mowgli, promising to teach him the ways of the jungle. At this point, Bagheera speaks up and offers a bull's life in exchange for Mowgli's acceptance into the pack: "…the Law of the Jungle says that if there is a doubt which is not a killing matter in regard to a new cub, the life of that cub may be bought at a price. And the Law does not say who may or may not pay that price. Am I right?" (12). He continues soon after, "To kill a naked cub is a shame. Besides, he may make better sport for you when he is grown. Baloo has spoken in his behalf. Now to Baloo's word I will add one bull, and a fat one, newly killed, not half a mile from here, if ye will accept the man's cub according to the Law. Is it difficult?" (12). The wolves then examine Mowgli one by one and head to the bull, a clear indication of their agreement to these terms.

The difficulty of bringing Mowgli into the pack and the strict adherence to the Law of the Jungle is nowhere present in the Disney film. Mowgli's acceptance there rests

solely on the wolf family that Bagheera had singled out to care for Mowgli, and no other wolves are present during his infancy to resist his upbringing in the jungle. Presumably, his acceptance by his wolf family ushers in his acceptance by all the other jungle animals. This difference in the depiction of Mowgli's first years is significant in understanding the ideological structure of each narrative. In Kipling's text, issues of identity are closely wrapped up in culture (Since Mowgli is not a wolf, why should he be accepted into the pack?), codes (The Law of the Jungle always prevails), and physical space (Man does not belong in the jungle). However, in the Disney film, familial ties are primary; Mowgli's residence in the jungle is vouched for by his wolf family, and that appears to be enough to justify his stay there.

However, as predicted by Bagheera in the animated film, Mowgli's future happiness in the jungle is threatened by the fact that he is a human. In a gathering that resembles the one that takes place in Kipling's text, the wolves do meet in the film to discuss Mowgli's status in the jungle (He is now ten years old). However, unlike in the text, the gathering of the wolves at the Council Rock is never about determining Mowgli's identity; the issue becomes simply one of survival. The problem with Mowgli remaining in the pack, according to the wolves, is that soon Shere Khan will be after him, and he will surely kill Mowgli as well as any wolves that try to protect him. Akela is the leader here, as he is in Kipling's text, but the gathering of the wolves overall is genial and friendly; there is neither invocation of the Law of the Jungle nor tension between the wolves in terms of leadership. As a group, they decide to cast him out of pack (presumably into the jungle); however, Mowgli's wolf father, Rama, declares his filial

love for Mowgli and protests that he will be killed if he is left to fend for himself. His protest is not a serious clash with the decision of the pack, but rather a voiced concern for the human he has adopted as his own. It is at this point that Bagheera intervenes and proposes taking Mowgli to the man-village himself, which the other wolves agree upon.

Bagheera begins his mission right away, and he takes Mowgli on a journey that lasts an entire day. When Mowgli suggests that it is time to head back, Bagheera informs him that he is accompanying him to the man-village where he belongs. As expected, Mowgli protests, and Bagheera has a difficult time trying to get him to move forward. After becoming particularly frustrated, Bagheera leaves Mowgli by himself in the jungle. It is at this point that Mowgli meets Baloo. Baloo tries to teach Mowgli how to growl and fight, and when Bagheera races back (thinking that Mowgli is in trouble), he is equally dismayed that Mowgli has met this "shiftless, stupid jungle bum." Bagheera explains to Baloo that Mowgli must return to the man-village, and Baloo replies, "Man-village? They'll ruin 'im! They'll make a man out of him." Baloo then says that he can teach Mowgli everything he needs to know and launches into the "Bare Necessities" song. At the end of the song, while Mowgli floats atop Baloo's stomach on the river, he tells Baloo, "I like being a bear." Baloo then tells Mowgli that he will make a "swell bear." The exchanges between Bagheera and Baloo and then Baloo and Mowgli are rather significant in terms of the discussion of Mowgli's identity. When Baloo exclaims that the man-village will "ruin" Mowgli by forcing him to become a man, Baloo assumes that Mowgli is not one already, while Bagheera's view is clearly that Mowgli must return to his own kind. There is a slippage in Mowgli's identity at this moment in the film, where

it becomes possible for Mowgli to actually assume another identity. Though Bagheera had initially referred to Baloo as stupid, the film suggests that there is both an astute wisdom and an endearing naiveté in Baloo's concern for Mowgli; he is wise for recognizing the corrupting influence of human civilization and naïve for believing that Mowgli can become something other than he is. However, the fact of the matter is that, at least for the duration of the song, the film seems to suggest that identity is mutable and pliable, undermining its own oppositional framework wherein identities are supposedly fixed.

Before the film verges on becoming too focused on the issue of identity, the plot is quickly rerouted to its original ideological structure. While Mowgli is floating atop Baloo's stomach, he is kidnapped by the monkeys. When Mowgli reaches the monkey city, he meets King Louie, who wants to know the secret of fire. Karen K. Ciha's "Racism in Walt Disney's *The Jungle Book*" focuses on the portrayal of the monkeys in the Disney animated adaptation. Arguing that the film ultimately "reflects and perpetuates racist ideology" (23), Ciha sees the monkeys' embodiment of stereotypical African-American characteristics as emblematic of racial tensions in 1960's America. Ciha argues that though the general "caste system" (23) carries over from the book (since the monkeys are generally disliked in both texts), the film instead transforms the Bandar-log from a confident and satisfied group to a group aspiring to be human. Besides pointing out the allusion to jazz musician Louis Armstrong in the naming of King Louie, Ciha illustrates the monkey king's general dissatisfaction through the song he sings in the film:

> Louie's song—also absent from Disney's source—is equally symptomatic of the subhuman nature traditionally attributed to African-Americans: his words, "I want to be like you," convey an unquenchable envy of Mowgli and therefore ironically reveal how unlike Mowgli monkeys and orangutans are. When Louie sings, "Now I'm the King of the Swingers, oh the jungle VIP; I've reached the top and had to stop and that's what's botherin' me," he suggests by implication that he has reached the acme of development within the black community and that complete [further] development can only take the form of assimilation—i.e., of becoming fully "white" and human like Mowgli. (24)

Here, Ciha convincingly argues that King Louie's desire to become human does indeed have racial undertones. In other words, there is a social stratification in place that cannot be breached; at best, King Louie can only imitate Mowgli. In addition, Ciha then suggests that King Louie's desire to be like Mowgli "exactly replicates the historical plight of blacks under the laws of segregation" (24). Though this is convincing, what Ciha passes over too quickly is the alignment of Mowgli with "white" in her reading. Ciha's use of quotation marks around the word underscores the fact that Mowgli is in fact not white; as the only human in the jungle, his status is dominant, but he is still dark-skinned.

In terms of Ciha's argument, this rather complicates readings based on color. If the racial ideology promoted by the film relies on an us/them divide that characterizes the monkeys as subhuman and non-white, what does this mean for the dark-skinned Mowgli? In fact, Ciha argues later in the piece that in the film, "Baloo's representatively American

openness, simplicity, and democratic manner stand in dialectical tension with Bagheera's representatively English reserve, refinement, and aristocratic manner" (30). It is the coming together of these characters and their most favorable traits, she argues, that provides Mowgli with an ideal model for behavior (30). However, if Mowgli is to be like them, how is he any different than King Louie, who likewise must play at being human? The argument here does not cohere, as American and English identities are not inherently embodied by Mowgli, who must also imitate Baloo and Bagheera (animals just like King Louie) in order to mature and develop into a civilized adult. Humanness and American-ness/Englishness become divorced from each other in this schematic.

Despite this flawed argument, what is most significant about Ciha's position is her recognition of the racist ideology at work in the animated adaptation. The animated film is clearly a product of its historical conception, an idea that cannot be overlooked when connecting the film to its 19th century counterpart. By pointing out that the film "mirrors contemporary racist attitudes toward African-Americans" (30-31), Ciha highlights the us/them divide that structures the entire conflict and resolution of the film, though the slip in her argument reveals just how tricky it is to draw a too simple line between human and animal. What Ciha indirectly demonstrates is that the concepts of whiteness and humanness remain elusive throughout. The differential framework here, like in Kipling's text, proves to be unstable.

This idea of difference is further emphasized when Baloo and Bagheera come up with a plan to rescue Mowgli from the monkeys. Baloo himself pretends to be a monkey (an endeavor that fails when his coconut lips and grass skirt fall off) in order to distract

King Louie. This attempt at disguise and its inevitable failure very clearly illustrate the film's stance that identities are fixed, that Baloo can no more become a monkey than King Louie become a human. Attempts to do so, as illustrated by Baloo's costume, eventually fall apart. Bagheera, meanwhile, unsuccessfully attempts to snag Mowgli a few times. After a battle for Mowgli that eventually results in the destruction of the monkeys' city, the two finally succeed in rescuing Mowgli. It is then that Bagheera tells Baloo that he "can't adopt Mowgli as his son" because Mowgli must stick with his own kind. Though Baloo is not entirely convinced by this argument, he finally and reluctantly sides with Bagheera when he learns that Shere Khan is a real threat. According to Bagheera, Shere Khan will have no qualms about destroying Mowgli "Because he fears man's gun and man's fire."

Because Baloo is finally persuaded by the threat of Shere Khan, the oppositional schematic where there are clear heroes and villains and a clear place of belonging is quickly restored to the film. However, it is important to note that the film is able to skirt the issue of Mowgli's identity by making Shere Khan the motivating factor for moving Mowgli out of the jungle. In other words, the film does not resolve the issues of identity it had left glaringly open, but instead redirects the focus elsewhere; Baloo is convinced that Mowgli needs to leave not because he cannot ever become a bear, but because his life is threatened by his remaining in the jungle. The film is thus able to work around the idea of possibility and fluidity suggested by Baloo's song, "Bare Necessities."

When Baloo tries to tell Mowgli that he is now convinced that he must return to the man-village, Mowgli's identity is left ambiguously fluid one more time. Baloo borrows Bagheera's words in the first line of this exchange:

> Baloo: "You wouldn't marry a panther, would ya?"
>
> Mowgli: "Gee, I don't even know what you're talking about."
>
> Baloo: "Mowgli, don't you realize that you're a human?"
>
> Mowgli: "I'm not anymore, Baloo. I'm a bear like you."

Baloo's rhetoric suggests that he finally views Mowgli as inherently different. Interestingly, his view on Mowgli's identity seems to change in a split second. The threat of Shere Khan seems to establish unequivocally Mowgli's identity as a man; thus, a clear villain in turn crystallizes Mowgli's true identity. Mowgli's inability to understand Baloo's initial analogy signifies both his childish innocence and his ignorance of the conventions of human civilization. However, as will be discussed more fully later on, his natural attraction to the Indian girl at the edge of the river suggests that Mowgli had been destined for the village—and manhood—all along. Baloo's final attempt to open Mowgli's eyes to his true identity is met with a flat denial from Mowgli that he is human. In fact, in his eyes, he has traded in his human identity to become a bear like Baloo. It is here that Baloo is finally able to capture Mowgli's attention and inform him that he must go back to the man-village.

At this point in the film, Mowgli runs away from Baloo, stubborn and convinced that he has no friends. Baloo and Bagheera then begin to search for him. Bagheera calls upon Hathi the elephant for help, and though he refuses to help at first, his wife convinces

him by telling Hathi that Mowgli is "no different than" their own son. Of course, by this point in the film, a clear us/them ideology has already been reestablished, and the viewer understands that Hathi's wife is not trying to identify Mowgli as an elephant, but rather, to make the point that a lost child must be recovered. This is a pivotal moment in the film, for whereas minutes earlier during the "Bare Necessities" song there still existed the possibility of Mowgli becoming a bear like Baloo, by this point that possibility can no longer be entertained.

This failure to become something else is also evident shortly after, when the film depicts a lonely Mowgli walking through what looks like a barren and charred part of the jungle. A group of vultures spots Mowgli and interrogates him, and when Mowgli sheds a tear, the vultures are softened and offer to make him an "honorary vulture." Mowgli at first declines and says he'd rather be by himself, but then the vultures lighten his mood by singing a song about friendship. Though Mowgli's mood is noticeably improved by the vultures' companionship, the song is just a temporary fix; the real issue is that Mowgli cannot be a vulture—or any other jungle animal for that matter—and must settle for an "honorary" title.

At this point, Shere Khan, who had been hunting for Mowgli, discovers him with the vultures. Mowgli stands his ground and refuses to run, and just when Shere Khan lunges for him, Baloo appears from behind and stops him by pulling his tail. During a fight that involves Baloo getting beaten and lightning striking a tree, the vultures inform Mowgli that Shere Khan is afraid of fire. Mowgli then picks up a fiery branch and ties it to Shere Khan's tail. Singed by the flames, he takes off, the branch trailing behind.

The resolution quickly follows this climax. Mowgli, believing Baloo to be dead after the encounter with Shere Khan, mourns him alongside Bagheera. Baloo gradually awakens, however, and listens tearfully to his own eulogy. He surprises both Bagheera and Mowgli by getting up, and when he embraces Mowgli and tells him that nothing can ever separate them, Mowgli notices the Indian village, which is adjacent to their spot. He also notices a girl going to the river to fill her jug with water, and he creeps along a branch to get a closer look. The girl, aware of Mowgli's presence, bats her eyes at him and pretends to drop her jug on the way back to the village. Mowgli picks up her jug, refills it, and follows her, and just when he is about to enter the village, looks back at Baloo and Bagheera, who are hiding behind the bushes. Baloo beckons him back and Bagheera encourages him on. Mowgi shrugs his shoulders and follows the girl, and Bagheera says simply, "Mowgli is where he belongs now." The film ends with Baloo and Bagheera dancing and singing their way back into the jungle.

The ending seems to prove what Bagheera had been arguing all along. Mowgli's shrugging of his shoulders and his love struck expression suggest that he is drawn to the village in ways that he does not yet understand. The village then becomes figured as Mowgli's natural home. He cannot help but be attracted to both the girl and the village; at this point, the viewer can assume that Mowgli will successfully fit into village life, eventually marry the girl, and live out his days in the village. The jungle, though his home for ten years, is no match for the village life, and the viewer does not get any sense that living there has contaminated Mowgli in any sense.

As opposed to the Mowgli in Kipling's text, the Mowgli in the animated film seems at ease with his transition; entering the Indian village is natural, easy, and inevitable. Though initially struggling with the idea of leaving the jungle and adamant that he can change his identity and become a bear, this Mowgli surrenders to the allure of the Indian girl he encounters. He may not understand the forces that attract him to the girl and the village, but he accepts them without question. As already discussed, the Mowgli in Kipling's text is continuously troubled and in limbo; in essence, his identity is characterized by his conflicted feelings about who he is and where he belongs.

VI. Disney's *The Jungle Book*: Narrative and Ideology

The narrative thus operates according to a differential system similar to that articulated by Nancy Armstrong. Mowgli is identified by who/what he is not rather than who/what he is. The plot centers on getting Mowgli out of the jungle and away from Shere Khan; however, the film dedicates very little time—if any—to meditating on Mowgli's identity. It is enough that Mowgli is different.

The narrative and technical aspects of the film work in tandem to promote this differential system. Although the technical aspects of the film will be discussed in detail in the next section, it is worth looking at a couple of examples from the film of how the narrative and animated medium work together to reinforce the system of difference established by the film. The scene that best illustrates this idea is right after the climax and before the resolution. As Mowgli and Baloo embrace, Baloo reassures Mowgli that they will be together from that moment on. However, something catches Mowgli's eye,

and he asks, "What's that?" When he turns his head, Mowgli's point of view is aligned with that of the viewer's, and a long shot of the long sought after Indian village is on full display. The moment is rather jarring, as the viewer is left wondering how such a full scene could have eluded the sight of Mowgli, Baloo, and Bagheera in the first place. It is as if Mowgli's peripheral vision had been turned off prior to this moment, and it is only during the embrace that he is able to see the village in front of him. This moment is made even more disorienting to the viewer because of the self-awareness encouraged by this lack of peripheral vision. The viewer at this point becomes highly conscious of the idea of exclusion, and is aware that the field of vision is limited in scope. The viewer is left wondering what else exists outside of the frame, and rather than solidify the static and stable identities and narrative the film had set out to originally create, *The Jungle Book* instead undoes them in the very moment of creation.[2] What the film manages to do is point to its own limited point of view, a disconcerting move that alerts the reader to the film's unstable boundaries.

To further complicate matters, the sudden appearance of the man-village is pivotal to the narrative trajectory of the film. Because the entire journey to the man-village had been predicated on Mowgli's escape from Shere Khan, there is now nothing to motivate his return to the village since the threat of Shere Khan had been neutralized. It is crucial for the ideological stance of the narrative plot that something else occur to motivate Mowgli's return to the village. Cue long shot of the Indian village. Once Mowgli turns

[2] Armstrong makes a similar argument in *Fiction in the Age of Photography* regarding the East on exhibit as well as British tourism (82-83, 176-77).

his head and sees the attractive and peaceful scene before him, natural inclination takes over. The viewer assumes that there is now some natural force propelling Mowgli towards the village. His subsequent attraction to the village and the girl also finally reinforces his unambiguous humanity. The film thus skirts the issue of identity by using the threat of Shere Khan as the common denominator to hold the plot together, and once he is out of the picture, relies on the assumption that Mowgli will of course be attracted to what should be his home.

Another example of the narrative and technical aspects of the film working together to promote this differential system occurs near the beginning of the film. After Bagheera drops off baby Mowgli at the mouth of the wolves' cave, the film curiously omits a span of about ten years in Mowgli's life. It goes without saying that these are formative years, where Mowgli would have begun to establish his identity in relation to the wolves and other jungle animals. The viewer is left wondering what Mowgli had been up to during this length of time: How had he been received by the other jungle animals? How had he learned values, morals, and language? How had his upbringing influenced his conception of what it means to be human? Does he even consider himself human? These questions are all swept under the rug when a pre-adolescent Mowgli is seen happily walking through the jungle.

Thus, instead of stabilizing identity, the animated film instead unravels that which it attempts to suture together. The goal of this particular animated film is to tell a story that has a clear beginning, middle, and end, with a clear conflict and purpose. Because the film is dedicated to such a purpose, it cannot entertain tangential or alternative

narratives that do not fit neatly within the narrative trajectory. Because of this, the issue of identity is generally skirted. To this end, there is never a clear consensus about who Mowgli is or what it means to be human. Near the beginning of the film, the wolves agree that Mowgli must leave, but it is a matter of security, not tension caused by inherent difference. This difference is just assumed. Bagheera, the only jungle animal secure in the idea that Mowgli is unambiguously human and must return to the man-village, is still motivated not by the idea of Mowgli's identity per se, but by the idea that his identity makes him one of Shere Khan's targets. Thus, the ideological structure of the narrative assumes fixed identities, but the boundaries and lines in the differential system at work in the film prove to be permeable and unstable.

VII. Disney's *The Jungle Book* and 2-D Animation

At the technical level, Disney's *The Jungle Book* promotes a kind of disorientation by constantly withholding information. As already discussed, the narrative plot avoids the issues of identity that trouble Kipling's text; the film instead trades in that focal point for a related one that centers on ensuring Mowgli's survival by getting him out of the jungle and into the Indian village. The technical aspects of the film support this narrative telling. The technical process of the animated film necessarily renders it photographic in that it undoes its stabilizing goal by virtue of its having to frame—and thereby exclude—certain parts of the field of vision. It is therefore disorienting for the viewer in that the excess, or that which is not contained within the frame, threatens to spill into the frame at any given moment. Thus, the dynamism of an entire narrative

world is necessarily created out of a differential system, where exclusion becomes the determinant in putting together the film.

The Jungle Book necessarily operates according to this differential system because it is a photographic medium. I am not making a deterministic argument here, for I am not arguing that animation as a form is a direct descendent of photography. However, because the 2-D drawings in traditional hand drawn animation require an animator's conscious decision-making process in framing a character or scene—thus deciding what to include and exclude—the process itself becomes photographic. To reiterate Armstrong's argument, photographic practice in the Victorian period was highly differential; identity became rooted in differences, not similarities, and people began to classify and categorize themselves and others based on the different types or categories of photographs they encountered (26). Significant to her argument is the idea that photography itself was not an imperialistic practice; however, an economy of difference emerged from the sheer volume of photographs produced during the period, which then promoted the establishing of different categories.

At the technical level, then, *The Jungle Book* undoes the very thing that it seeks to establish—the illusion of completeness. The limitations of framing are self-reflexively pointed out in the narrative, as in the gap between Mowgli's first and tenth years and in his look that reveals the entirety of the Indian village. Because the film literally cannot contain everything in the frame, its very process relies on exclusionary principles.

According to Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, authors of *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* and early and key animators for *The Jungle Book*, one way Walt

Disney helped to revolutionize the way animators were able to study live action was by developing a system where live action film frames could be printed onto sheets and then attached to the drawing desk, which enabled animators to study motion via a live action flip book (321). Prior to this, animators had relied primarily on rotoscoping, a "tedious" and "time-consuming" process (321), but the flip book allowed animators to study motion and expression closely and transfer them over to the animated medium. Though these "Photostats" (321) provided a means by which the animator could copy movement, there was a clear tension between the two mediums. The frustration of the animators working with photography reveals both an alignment with and departure from photographic principles:

> But whenever we stayed too close to the photostats, or directly copied even a tiny piece of human action, the results looked very strange. The moves appeared real enough, but the figure lost the illusion of life. There was a certain authority in the movement and a presence that came out of the whole action, but it was impossible to become emotionally involved with this eerie, shadowy creature who was never a real inhabitant of our fantasy world. (323)

The animator's relationship to the photostat troubles the idea of realism itself. Instead of providing the animator with an objective, authoritative example of what actually can exist in the animated world, the photostat instead becomes an imposter in the animated world. In this sense, the photostat is both realistic and unrealistic, since it is the semblance of something that had ostensibly existed in the material world but that could have no

possible material substance in the animated world. This understanding of the photostat in relation to animation is "photographic" in terms of Armstrong's argument, as the animated character needs to show what could possibly exist in the animated world, not necessarily reflect that which already has a material existence.

Thomas and Johnston further complicate understandings of animated realism by theorizing the realism of animation in highly photographic terms:

> No one knows for sure why a pencil tracing of a live action figure should look so stiff and unnatural on the screen, unless there simply is no reality in a copy. The camera certainly records what is there, but it records *everything* that is there, with an impartial lack of emphasis. On the other hand, an artist shows what he sees is there, especially that which might not be perceived by others. His drawings can be closer to the true realism of an object because he can be selective and personal in what he chooses to show…The point is: a work of art is never a copy; for it to have meaning to people of many generations and numerous cultures, it must be the personal statement of an artist. (323)

For Thomas and Johnston, the animated medium is highly authorial, and the animator exercises complete control over the depiction of a character. Interestingly, they align animation with art in their distancing of photography and in the process seem to leave the status of photography in an ambiguous place. According to them, by omitting some details and highlighting others, animation can approach "true realism," much like Novak's conception of the photograph and his exploration of Robinson and Rejlander's

"composition photography." This process of inclusion and exclusion is thus highly differential, as the animator must make decision after decision regarding what the audience will (not) see. Only by getting away from the idea that pictorial truth equals absolute truth is the animator able to get closer to what could possibly exist in the animated world.

The idea that 2-D animation is highly authorial is supported by the very layout of the book co-authored by Thomas and Johnston. This privileging of the animator is witnessed in the book itself, as each sketch, drawing, or painting is accompanied by a caption attributing the work to a specific animator. This approach makes it very clear that the specific animator matters, and that the sketches, drawings, etc. produced by his hand are somehow an extension of him. Thomas and Johnston credit the animator with this ability to bestow life on lifeless figures:

> Only animation is magical. This is its appeal. The creative artist can make something here that exists and breathes and thinks for itself, which gets back to our test of all great art: does it live? Techniques can be copied, mechanics can be duplicated, and even the drawings themselves traced, but the spark of life comes only from the animator. His taste, judgment, and ideas are unique with him and his animation. It is a highly individual effort. (225)

The almost poetic praise of the animator's ability to create something that then takes on a life of its own reveals the very highly authorial nature of hand drawn animation and the integral role the animator plays in framing and designing a character with specific and

unique character traits. A differential framework thus emerges during this process, as inclusion and exclusion figure significantly into what aspects of a character are emphasized and minimized. Thus, the very thing that makes animation "magical" (what the specific animator brings to the table) also self-reflexively makes apparent its limitations within this differential framework.

This idea is further witnessed in "The Bare Necessities." One idea that is constantly emphasized is the importance of character development in *The Jungle Book*, as this is where the "magic" lies. Richard Sherman remembers what had happened once the storyline had progressed: "Nobody knew at that certain point how to finish the storyline because the relationship between Baloo and the boy was so strong now that how could you possibly have Baloo acquiesce to letting the boy go into the man-village?" John Canemaker, an animation historian, notes that it was Disney who had suggested that a girl "entice" Mowgli, which Johnston had initially opposed but then eventually eased into. "Woolie" Reitherman, the director of *The Jungle Book*, even sees the storyline as a hindrance to character development: "Sometimes that storyline that's too complicated can get in the way and [*The*] *Jungle Book* had the simplest storyline ever! [That] the storyline didn't get in the way of the characters is the beauty of that little picture." What is evident from this remark is that the narrative and technical processes are wrapped up in one another and necessarily influence film production. In a final example, Brad Bird, Pixar Animation Studios Director, and Brian Sibley, an author and film historian, reaffirm the strength of character development; Sibley, along with others in the DVD extra, attribute the strength of the relationship between Baloo and Mowgli to Thomas and Johnston

themselves, who were best friends and did practically all of the animation for Mowgli and Baloo. What is emphasized again and again in this extra is the importance of each person's individual stamp on the film, making it clear that the process is highly authorial, subjective, and exclusionary in nature.

Again, to be clear, my intention here is not to point out the differences between Kipling's text and the animated film, but rather to highlight the narrative choices being made, and how they, along with the dictates of the animated medium, structure the viewer's conception of how Mowgli's identity is to be viewed. Disney's *The Jungle Book*, unlike *A Christmas Carol* (examined in the previous chapter), is comprised of 2-D drawings. As an animated film produced in the tradition that privileges the animator as author, *The Jungle Book* necessarily engages in photographic technique. My argument here is not deterministic, as I do not wish to argue that animation in particular or cinema in general is the offspring of photography. What I do wish to argue, however, is that as a medium that relies on a mediator (in this case, the animator), the animated film is constructed and subjectively framed in the same way that photography is. The animator(s) must make choices regarding what is going to be included in and excluded from the frame, and the animator(s) must also decide which objects to privilege within that frame. In other words, as Armstrong would argue, the frame structures the field of vision of the viewer (80).

VIII. Conclusion

The link between Kipling's *The Jungle Books* and Disney's animated adaptation thus goes beyond just the storyline. At the heart of both texts is a differential system that produces knowledge about the characters, namely Mowgli, by demonstrating how he does not fit into neatly defined identity categories. However, in doing this, both the literary text and the film fall short of definitively assigning, without a shadow of a doubt, a particular identity to Mowgli. Though the film comes close to establishing this fixity in the end, slippages occur throughout the entire film in terms of identity that undermine the almost too neat resolution. The effect is thus disorienting to both reader and viewer, and ultimately demonstrates that the economy of difference underlying both of these texts links the Victorian period to ours ideologically as well.

Chapter Three: *Frankenstein/Frankenweenie*

This isn't an experiment. It's my dog. – Victor Frankenstein, *Frankenweenie*

I. Chapter Introduction

The final scene in Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* (2012), a remake of his shorter 1984 live action film of the same name, may simultaneously elicit sighs of relief and feelings of uneasiness in the viewing audience. Sparky, Victor Frankenstein's beloved dog, had been dragged back into a fiery windmill by a hybrid cat-bat after bringing Victor to safety. Victor, his parents, and the entire town of New Holland wait breathlessly for Sparky to escape the windmill, but he never does; the cat-bat, meanwhile, is impaled by a wooden stake. A deceased Sparky is then brought out by a fireman and presented to Victor. Victor's father asks if there's anything they can do for him, and Victor tearfully replies, "You said that I need to let him go." Victor's father, who had been previously rattled by the discovery that Victor had electrically reanimated Sparky's corpse once already after he had been hit by a car, compassionately tells Victor, "Sometimes adults don't know what they're talking about." Hopeful that another substantial electric shock will be enough to reanimate Sparky once again, Victor's parents and the other townspeople, whose previous distrust of Sparky had been turned to admiration by his heroic actions, hook up cables to their cars, attach them to Sparky, and then jumpstart him. The experiment appears to fail, and a brokenhearted Victor weeps and hugs his dog, saying, "It's okay, boy. You don't have to come back. You'll always be in my heart." At

that moment, however, Sparky's tail begins to wag, and an enthralled Victor scoops up the reanimated dog into his arms.

Though a boy's relationship with his dog seems to be at the heart of the film's narrative, the viewer must ultimately confront a pronounced uneasiness with the idea that life itself can be created through some sort of technical process. In her *Los Angeles Times* article entitled "Countdown to the Oscars; Hero Complex," Gina McIntyre writes up an interview with Burton about *Frankenweenie*, which only made $35 million in theatres. According to McIntyre, "the fact that so few people ventured out to see a project he feels powerfully connected to was a blow" (par. 5). She records his thoughts about the subject matter: "'I do feel like people were scared of that concept of death,' he said. 'There is a moment of sadness—it is a quiet moment and it probably makes some parents uncomfortable'" (par. 6). Burton's refusal to shy away from the depiction of death and the overall poignancy of the relationship between Victor and Sparky make for heavy thematic material that may make viewers uneasy.

However, what complicates the film's rather serious thematic elements is its campiness. In exaggerating the characters' physical traits and echoing the highly recognizable elements of 1930s Hollywood classic monster movies in a Cold War America setting, *Frankenweenie* combines a highly stylized and self-reflexive mode of production with a more conventional emotionally-driven narrative plot. Thus, *Frankenweenie* differentiates itself from live action films and animated films that follow the conventions of live action; in dealing with similar topics, those films are able to suspend viewer disbelief by approximating realism and attempting to render invisible the

technical process used to forward the narrative. In contrast, *Frankenweenie*'s campy mode sounds a satirical note, challenging viewers to identity those narrative and stylistic elements that draw upon clichéd motifs from the Hollywood monster movie era as well as 1950s/60s America. However, the film also simultaneously asks the viewer to look beyond this mode of exaggeration (perhaps best exemplified by the over-the-top depiction of the electrical process used by Victor to reanimate Sparky the first time) in order to reclaim the final message that underlies the entire film: Love conquers all. Ultimately, both the narrative and the method of animation become focal points of the film, as the self-reflexive artistry of the form does not simply become folded into the force of the content. Since *Frankenweenie* highlights its own technical process in this way, the suspension of disbelief sustaining the viewer's investment in the movie is accompanied by an awareness of the labor involved in the creation of the film, reminding the viewer that both Sparky's reanimation and the animated film itself are both illusions. As Trey Thomas, Animation Director for *Frankenweenie*, states in a behind-the-scenes look at the production of the film entitled "Miniatures in Motion: Bringing *Frankenweenie* to Life," "It's very tactile. You get in there, you pose a puppet, take a photograph, you move it a tiny bit, you photograph it again. You do that 24 times for one second of film. And when you play it back at 24 frames per second, it creates the illusion of life." Thomas's overview of the process involved in stop-motion animation highlights the frame-by-frame process through which the puppets and props move. Because this process then becomes visible to the viewer, the viewer's experience overall can be a disorienting one.

Simply put, the disorientation that arises from the viewing of the film stems from the simultaneity of technical visibility and narrative absorption. Usually, the suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer is encouraged by the invisibility of the technicality of the film; in order for the viewer to become fully invested in the narrative plot (whether or not such a plot could actually occur in real life), the technical production of the film must be hidden from the viewer. Once that illusion is broken through technical visibility (for instance, through the accidental exposure of a boom mic in the background or an actor breaking the fourth wall[3]), the suspension of disbelief sustaining the viewer's investment in the plot is at least interrupted, if not fully broken. *Frankenweenie* is disorienting precisely because it seeks to achieve both the suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer and viewer consciousness of the artistry involved at the technical level of the film at the same time. This is fully evident in the production team's emphasis in "Miniatures in Motion" on showcasing all of the parts, processes, and labor involved in making this movie work, which will be fully explored in a later section. For now, it is evident from "Miniatures in Motion" that the focus is on viewer absorption, so that the viewer can become truly invested in the emotional stakes of the relationship between Victor and Sparky. As Don Hahn states, "For the audience, you never want to break their suspension of disbelief. You want to have the audience totally believe in this world…So that you never betray the idea that these are characters that are a foot tall in a miniature set" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Clearly, the production team wants the viewer to be as

[3] When an actor breaks the fourth wall, he or she directly addresses the audience, and so breaks the illusion that the viewer is actually just observing what is really taking place, much like a fly on the wall.

captured by the narrative as by the medium of animation itself. However, because the viewer must constantly negotiate between both the visibility of the technical processes of the film and the pull of the narrative, the experience can be a disorienting one.

Like the two preceding chapters, this chapter makes a similar argument about the historical link between literary text and animated adaptation in terms of disorientation. However, the relationship between Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Tim Burton's *Frankenweenie* is rather complex. On the one hand, the novel and film could be viewed as equally disorienting on both the narrative and technical levels, an idea that will be explored in the next section. On the other hand, the animation could be viewed as actually more disorienting than the literary text, since the focus of Shelley's work is not the technical process itself, but rather the consequences of creation without adequate forethought or an understanding of the Creature's needs. In the novel, the process through which Frankenstein creates the Creature is left intentionally vague, and though the horror of the process is highlighted, the focus quickly shifts to the very real emotions and needs experienced by the Creature after his inception. Sympathy is culled from the reader through the positioning of the Creature as human, and the questions attending the process of creation become overshadowed by readerly concern for the creature's well-being. By the end of the novel, the technological creation of life becomes a taken-for-granted and accepted assumption, as the futures of both the Creature and Frankenstein become the most important part of the narrative. *Frankenweenie*, however, relies heavily on a web of references to situate the film and also to promote its satiric and humorous narrative plot; stylistic and technical choices thus receive as much attention as the storyline itself, if not

more. There undeniably is a human component here, as the loving relationship between Victor and Sparky is featured as a force even more powerful than science. However much this may be the case, the emotional content of the film might be viewed as competing with the film's form. Because the stop-motion animation process is so unique—and even new to the general public according to *Frankenweenie*'s Producer, Allison Abbate, in "*Frankenweenie* Touring Exhibit"—in its ability to highlight its own method of creative production, the method of production becomes one focal point of the viewing experience. Add to this the campiness of the mode in general, and the result is a film that crosses several different genres and styles.

Because the viewer is consciously aware of the constructed nature of the film and its illusory quality, there is a parallel consciousness on the part of the viewer that Sparky's reanimation is also illusory. Unlike the glossed over technological creation of life in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the technical process involved in bringing Sparky to life—as well as other deceased pets—receives full attention in *Frankenweenie*, and it is clearly the power of electricity that is responsible for performing this miraculous feat. The film thus devotes a significant portion of the film to this process, in effect also highlighting the very constructed nature of the stop-motion animated film itself. In other words, the film self-reflexively makes visible its technical process by calling into question the very act of animation, or the act of bringing something to life. The frame-by-frame process of stop-motion animation is emphasized again and again in "Miniatures in Motion," and the camp mode demonstrates the desire to make this process visible to viewers (while of course sustaining their suspension of disbelief). Abbate states, "It's fascinating for

people. It's like little dollhouses. People can see that you can make these movies one frame at a time, and especially with technological advances and cameras, making a stop-motion movie is even more accessible than it has ever been before" ("*Frankenweenie* Touring Exhibit"). This aim of making the viewer aware of the film's component parts and the suturing together of different frames highlights the illusory quality of the animation. In *Frankenweenie*, the double resurrection of Sparky serves two conflicting purposes: 1) to put pressure on the supposed magic of animation to bring life to the screen by highlighting the technical process used to reanimate Sparky, and 2) to reinforce that same magic by encouraging the viewer to look beyond the power of science to bring Sparky to life.

Of course, I am not arguing simply that *Frankenweenie* is disorienting to the viewer because it depicts events that could never actually occur in real life. To do so would unravel the arguments of the previous chapters, where Scrooge travels through time and space and where Mowgli befriends a talking panther and bear. My argument instead builds upon the previous chapter, which demonstrates how the differential framework of *The Jungle Book* becomes evident to the viewer, creating a disorienting experience when the viewer becomes aware of the process of exclusion at the center of both the narrative and the technical levels of the film. I wish to make a similar argument in this chapter, but instead of showing how the process of exclusion functions to disorient the viewer, I instead want to show how the process of inclusion can also create a disorienting experience for the viewer. In *The Jungle Book*, the animators worked according to a differential system that sought to make invisible the processes involved in

such a schematic. These efforts were in service of a kind of animated magic, where the ultimate goal was to bring life to the screen through believable and relatable characters. However, as already demonstrated in the previous chapter, these processes become visible, in effect disorienting the viewer. In *Frankenweenie*, the stop-motion animation used to produce the film does not have the seamlessness characteristic of animated films like *The Jungle Book*. However, though *Frankenweenie*'s stop-motion technique is by far technically superior to basic stop-motion technique,[4] the campiness of the film suggests that the viewer is supposed to experience a kind of removal from the film in situating it within its different cultural and historical contexts. Of course, the viewer has the added challenge of remaining consciously aware of the stop-motion animation technique while attempting to fold it into the viewing experience in order to become immersed fully in the narrative. That the viewer must do both can make the experience disorienting.

II. Shelley's *Frankenstein*

As with the other chapters in this project, the goal is not to assess the extent to which an animated adaptation pulls from its source text, but rather to discover the ways the two texts are strung together by the same historical thread. Burton borrows certain elements from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, including the name of the title character as well as the reanimation motif, but Shelley's narrative plays a minimal role in *Frankenweenie*. That being said, both texts are disorienting at both the narrative and

[4] Basic stop-motion is achieved fully by hand. A camera is set to film only one frame at a time. After each frame, the animator re-poses the puppet or prop. The entire scene is filmed in this fashion, without the aid of a computer. If a mistake is made, the entire sequence must be shot again.

technical levels. In terms of narrative, both texts raise serious questions about the nature of the soul, a similarity that allows *Frankenweenie*'s disorienting qualities to be seen as an extension of *Frankenstein*.

It is of course imperative to note the different circumstances attending the reanimation in both texts. In *Frankenweenie*, Sparky had been a living dog; prior to his reanimation, he was a complete being. However, in *Frankenstein*, the Creature is made from motley parts, many of them salvaged from "charnel-houses" as well as the "dissecting room and the slaughter-house" (Shelley 55). The method of animation is also left vague, which raises questions about the nature of the Creature's identity and soul: "With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet…I saw the dull yellow eyes of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (58). The circumstances of the technological creation here indicate that the Creature had no prior existence before being brought to life by Frankenstein. In both cases, the subjects being animated seem to take on an essential identity; Sparky is the same dog he once was, but with the added need to be recharged every once in a while, and Frankenstein's Creature becomes a living, breathing, and reasoning being, capable of learning and of feeling very real emotions.

When examined side by side, Sparky's reanimation seems more logical.[5] Assuming that electrical stimulation was enough to actually bring him back to life, it makes sense that his prior essential identity could also have been restored to him. In other

[5] As will be shown in Section VI, this does not mean his reanimation is untroubled.

words, though his body needed to be reanimated, his soul had never left him. In the case of *Frankenstein*, the nature of the soul becomes trickier. Martin Willis in "*Frankenstein* and the Soul" sees the question of whether or not the Creature has a soul as one that was emblematic of the ongoing tensions between Romanticism and scientific materialism occurring since the late 18th century. Willis finds evidence to support both sides; for instance, he claims that "The monster personifies scientific materialism in the most literal sense, his appearance tangibly paralleling the dominant philosophical beliefs of his creator…" (27). In addition to pointing out the Creature's highly materialist origins, he pushes the argument a bit further, suggesting that something beyond just the Creature's monstrous appearance causes everyone he meets to turn in fear and disgust. Willis asks if this "inhuman 'otherness'" is due to "the absence of a soul" (28). If the answer to this is yes, Willis argues, then materialism triumphs, as there is nothing "divine" (28) about Frankenstein's creature.

However, Willis also finds evidence in support of Romanticism and its championing of the soul. Because the Creature follows so closely the trajectory of Frankenstein's own life (Romantic at first, materialist as he reaches maturity), the argument that he does indeed have a soul can most certainly be made (31). For Willis, the most telling evidence for this view appears at the end of the novel, when the Creature reveals his intention to end his life[6]:

> But soon…I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile

[6] Willis quotes the following in his article, but my citation comes directly from Shelley's text.

> triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will surely not think thus. Farewell. (225)

Willis italicizes the penultimate sentence as indicative of an enduring spirit, one that will last beyond death (33). He sees this as not just a "confirmation of the monster's soul" but a "desire on his part to refute the materialism of which he has been the most powerful narrative symbol" (33). This debate over the existence of the soul carries over into *Frankenweenie*, where it seems logical that Sparky would retain his original character and personality; what shifts, of course, is the belief in the possibility that electricity can in fact restore body and soul. The cause of disorientation then changes from the origins of the soul to the power of electricity to give the existing soul a physical space to inhabit.

At the level of form, *Frankenstein* is likewise structurally and technically disorienting, further linking the novel to *Frankenweenie*. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" examines Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Shelley's *Frankenstein* in terms of "nineteenth-century feminist individualism" and the "project of soul making" (248). For Spivak, what differentiates *Frankenstein* from a novel like *Jane Eyre* is its refusal to participate in the feminist individualism that allowed for "soul making" domestically through childbearing and imperialistically through othering (244, 254). In fact, Spivak argues that *Frankenstein* breaks down female/domestic and male/imperialistic binaries through Frankenstein's experiment, "where both projects are undertaken

simultaneously…" (255). For Spivak, Frankenstein aspires to be both God and woman in terms of (pro)creative power and even destroys the unfinished female companion because he had assumed it had a reproductive purpose (255). Frankenstein thus becomes the "soul maker" (255) here; however, because the Creature had been produced through "natural philosophy alone" (256) rather than a Kantian balance of natural philosophy, morality, and "aesthetic judgment" (256), his character has no referent against which he can be fully understood.

In order to further highlight the way that the novel's form cannot account for the Creature's character, Spivak differentiates between the endings of narrative and text in *Frankenstein*:

> In the *narrative* conclusion, [Walton] is the natural philosopher who learns from Frankenstein's example. At the end of the *text*, the monster, having confessed his guilt toward his maker and ostensibly intending to immolate himself, is borne away on an ice raft. We do not see the conflagration of his funeral pile—the self-immolation is not consummated in the text: he too cannot be contained by the text. (258)

The Creature's story is left open by the end of the novel; it spills out beyond what the words can articulate into a space untouched by the soul making imperative of 19th century feminist individualism.

Finally, Spivak calls attention to Margaret Saville, the sister and recipient of Walton's letters. As Spivak argues, because the reader must assume a position similar to Saville's as recipient, and because the fates of Saville and the letters are unknown, there

is a denial of closure: "Margaret Saville does not respond to close the letters. The frame is thus simultaneously not a frame, and the monster can step 'beyond the text' and be 'lost in darkness.' Within the allegory of our reading, the place of both the English lady and the unnamable monster are left open by this great flawed text" (259). By virtue then of its inability to circumscribe a novelistic space for Mrs. Saville and the Creature to occupy in unambiguous terms, *Frankenstein* does not reproduce what Spivak calls "the dynamic nineteenth-century topos of feminism-in-imperialism" (259). Thus, in form as well as content, *Frankenstein* disorients the reader by refusing to adhere to the framework structuring other 19th century novels that operate according to this order. In a similar way, *Frankenweenie* asks viewers to participate in both the narrative and technical levels of the film for a full experience, which can ultimately be disorienting.

III. *Frankenweenie*: A Pataphysical Film?

Alison McMahan in her book, *The Films of Tim Burton: Animating Live Action in Contemporary Hollywood*, argues that animation and live action should not be thought of as two separate entities, but should instead be thought of as part and parcel of one another. Indeed, she goes so far as to suggest that live action cinema actually grew out of animation techniques (111). However, what is most significant about her argument is her characterization of Burton's films as "pataphysical" (3), a term that allows for a discussion of Burton's *Frankenweenie* in terms different than those used to discuss Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol* (an animated film whose CGI and camera techniques mimic those of live action films) and Disney's *The Jungle Book* (which is animated but

mimics live action in its narrative and technical forms). McMahan calls "pataphysical films" (3) those films that follow an "alternative narrative logic" (61) instead of "classical Hollywood narrative logic and its continuity system of meaning" (3). She argues that though these films are criticized for their supposed neglect of plot, they should instead be viewed as equally productive and meaningful, since they take on new meaning when measured against criteria different than those used to evaluate films that follow Hollywood cinematic conventions (3).

In her discussion, McMahan calls Burton a pataphysical director since his films fulfill what she believes to be the five defining characteristics of pataphysical films: a heavy use of special effects, which then usually results in an emphasis on style rather than narrative or emotional development; the conspicuousness of these effects, which are "'visible,' or 'excessive'"; a "tongue-in-cheek" tone; a general uncertainty of science; and a reliance on an extensive web of references in order to be fully understood (15-16).

Though Burton's *Frankenweenie* remake had not been produced by the time of McMahan's publication, she does discuss Burton's original short. McMahan points out the resemblance to James Whale's 1931 *Frankenstein* as well as the film's citing of various other 1930s horror films, and she also points out that the film in many ways plays like a cartoon; however, she argues that "*Frankenweenie* doesn't fully qualify as a pataphysical film, as the effects are invisible within the conventions of its genre, but Victor Frankenstein would qualify as a pataphysical character" (51-52). Though this may be the case, Burton's stop-motion *Frankenweenie* could in one sense be considered a pataphysical film, as it relies on conspicuous special effects to tell the story, both elevates

and castigates scientific knowledge, is campy, and quotes several different "nondiegetic" (3) sources to enhance the story.

That being said, what most complicates the characterization of the animated *Frankenweenie* is the relationship between the visible technicality of the film and its conventional emotionally-driven narrative plot. On a narrative level, *Frankenweenie* does rely on the audience to interpret the various monster movie references in the film in order to situate the film as satirical; on a technical level, the film also does privilege a highly stylized stop-motion technique and overall campy look over the seamless look of a film like Disney's *The Jungle Book*. These aspects of the film call attention to its own mode of production in a pataphysical way. However, because the visible technicality of the film works alongside the emotionally-driven plot (instead of detracting from it), *Frankenweenie* proves to be both a pataphysical film as well as one that adheres to conventional narrative patterns. By eluding a clear categorization, *Frankenweenie* proves to be additionally complex.

IV. Burton and Stop-Motion Animation

As discussed in the previous chapter, 2-D animated films like *The Jungle Book* were viewed and positioned as highly authorial; the animator crafted a character and in essence was responsible for bringing that character to life on the screen. As also demonstrated in the previous chapter, this process was necessarily a process of exclusion, since the animator had to decide which aspects of the character to highlight and minimize. *Frankenweenie*, a stop-motion animated film, is likewise authorial, but the

authorial focus for the viewer shifts from animator to director. Tim Burton has become a household name, and those familiar with his work will recognize his films' trademark look, complete with unusual and grotesque characters and dark and monotone diegetic environments. "Tim Burton" therefore functions almost in an adjectival sense and becomes aligned with style and aesthetics, rather than with the life-giving force attributed to individual 2-D animators.

As evidenced by the way that Burton and his team discuss the production of *Frankenweenie*, the technical and artistic choices made for and in the film were in service of recreating Burton's original vision of the film as well as using his own childhood memories and influences as a means of contextualizing the film's narrative. Burton states that he had wanted to remake *Frankenweenie* and that stop-motion seemed like the natural choice: "I'd done all the drawings for it and it always felt like there was something in the original spirit of it that I wanted to try and capture. That's kind of why we ended up doing it as a stop motion film" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Hahn states in "Miniatures in Motion" that Burton's original vision had been a black and white short film back when he conceived the original *Frankenweenie* in the 1980s. According to Peter Saunders, who worked in the Puppet Design and Development department for the film, Burton had wanted to focus on Sparky's performance with the remake, and Andy Gent, Puppet Hospital Supervisor, comments that they had to go through maybe 30 sculpted figures of Sparky until Burton approved ("Miniatures in Motion").

Burton's childhood memories also played a significant part in shaping the film's narrative plot, emotional pull, and setting. Regarding the film's web of references, Gina

McIntyre in an article in *Los Angeles Times* comments, "Burton made sure to note that the movie geek references were just window-dressing for a very personal story about processing grief and coping with loss" ("His Regeneration of Sparky…" par. 4). According to Burton, "I was a boy once…I had a dog. It was based on that first kind of pure relationship. It was quite unconditional, your first love in a way" (McIntyre par. 5). Clearly, the emotional strength of the film and Victor's characterization as innocent and vulnerable are rather personal for Burton. Even the town in the film has a special meaning, since according to Burton, New Holland functions as a "symbol" of his childhood hometown, Burbank, California, in the 1950s and 1960s ("Miniatures in Motion"). Alexandra Walker, Art Director for *Frankenweenie*, comments on the task of complementing these choices with the narrative that needed to be told: "This style in this period is so evocative and we really wanted to try and grasp Tim Burton's sense of American suburbia so that you create what looks very normal. And what happens in this world is what's weird and strange. That's why these sets really do feel very naturalistic" ("Miniatures in Motion").

Also apparent in the production team's discussion of *Frankenweenie* is the allure of the work involved in stop-motion animation production. Abbate differentiates stop-motion from other animation, calling it a "handmade craft" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Thomas states, "Stop motion is real. You can see these three-dimensional puppets moving through this real light and these real environments using real props that were all created by hand. It gives it a magic quality" ("Miniatures in Motion"). What is clear from these comments is an appreciation of stop-motion's material referents; there is a tangible

and material production quality that is absent from traditional hand drawn animation. Thus, the stop-motion technique, coupled with Burton's desire to both access his original vision for the film and tell a personal story, makes for a film that privileges neither technique nor narrative, but relies on the strength of both for a unique viewing experience.

V. The Stop-Motion Process

Of course, Burton was not solely responsible for the end product. Though his name has become familiar to filmgoers and has become associated with an eerie and unusual style, many were involved in the production of *Frankenweenie*, and the animators, among others crucial to the film's production, likewise were tasked with making the various puppets and props come to life. "Miniatures in Motion" spotlights the rather laborious and time-consuming processes involved in turning an idea into a finished film and details the various stages needed for the creation and perfection of the puppets and props, emphasizing the many people, hours, material, and space needed to craft everything seen in the film. Andy Gent, Josie Corben, Paul Davies, Roy Bell, Peter Sorg, Maggie Haden, and Barry Jones are all featured in this behind-the-scenes look at the film; their comments are discussed in the paragraphs below.

According to Gent in this bonus feature, there were four hundred puppets involved in the making of the film, and Modeller Corben, who was responsible for the armature inside the puppets, states that the armature was quite complex and needed to allow for free movement and expression. Even the smallest details, such as the pupils,

needed to be made by the hundreds and moved along the surface of the puppets' eyes using Vaseline, according to Davies.

Crucial to the discussion of *Frankenweenie*'s production process is the imagining of the film in black and white. According to Bell, Lead Painter, "The black and white thing has been great fun. We started painting everything naturalistically in full color. We found when these images were rendered in black and white, we were losing an awful lot of detail" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Sorg, Director of Photography, notes in this feature that they provided a color chart to help the art department see what colors would look like in black and white; the different sheets of paper posted on the wall displaying different shades of gray demonstrates just how much variation existed between them. Haden, working with Foliage and Soft Props, gives the viewer an example in this bonus feature of a prop that needed to be painted in unexpected colors in order to be recognizable in black and white. Showcasing a banner that was supposed to be red, white, and blue, she calls attention to its being painted in yellow, white, and brown since "tonally" they "actually read in black and white better…" ("Miniatures in Motion"). After her explanation, the banner then transitions into the scene where it is actually used in *Frankenweenie*, demonstrating just how effectively the colors read onscreen.

Of course, color was not the only factor in making the props read well onscreen and getting them to look just right. The textures of the props also needed much attention. Bell comments on how the painters were also responsible for making props "look old and used"; he then displays traffic lights and roof tiles that look appropriately worn ("Miniatures in Motion"). Jones, Art Director, comments, "The good thing about stop

motion is the textures of things. Everything you get, it's got a nice quality to them that I don't think you get in CG" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Bell adds, "The miniaturization of everything has always appealed to me. It's lovely to create new wee worlds and make them come alive. So here's our rendition, in shades of gray, of ice cream cones. You can't fail to love it, especially something as cutesy as ice cream cones" ("Miniatures in Motion"). He smiles while happily showing off the ice cream cones, which had been painted in grays and had been appropriately textured to look like the real thing. The comments by both Jones and Bell emphasize the uniqueness of stop-motion animation as a medium that yields results unlike other animated mediums because of the tactile quality of the props, something absent from other types of animation, such as traditional hand drawings or CG animation.

In "One Frame at a Time," Barbara Robertson details the additional labor-intensive visual effects work that went into producing *Frankenweenie*. According to Robertson, the stop-motion film was a mixture of puppetry and visual effects, and the visual effects team produced twelve hundred visual effects shots by the end of project (39). The puppets were each comprised of a steel armature and silicon, and the animators posed each puppet for every single frame (39). Because Sparky was the star and Burton wanted to showcase his lovable personality, he needed to be big enough to pose appropriately; his size then determined the size of the other puppets and props: "To fit Sparky with an internal armature complex enough for these precise performances, the puppet needed to stand three-and-a-half inches high from his head to his toes, and five inches long. That meant the boy Victor was a foot tall, and Victor's parents grew to 16 to

18 inches tall" (39). Tim Ledbury, Visual Effects Supervisor for *Frankenweenie*, states in Robertson's piece that because the puppets were so big, "…we ran out of stage space. So we had to do more digital environments" (39). In the article, Ledbury discusses the challenges of creating elements like electricity and smoke in a stop-motion animated film. Because the crew wanted something that looked less like CG animation and more like stop-motion animation, they painted the electricity frame by frame and shot it in stop-motion style (40). Of the process, Ledbury states, "It was quite painful…But the results are head and shoulders above the standard approach. A group of four or five people had a go at it and got the right look. By the end of production, they could do a shot the first time. They got used to how fast the electricity should move" (40). Ledbury also makes a similar comment about how the crew wanted to avoid a too-CG look for the town, and so added unique touches to really liven up the shots: "We had the real houses on set to follow in terms of style, and we photographed swatches and material samples from the art department, as if we were doing a fantasy live-action film" (40). Other elements, like the fire and smoke in the film, were created using full CG and part CG, part live action, respectively (40-41). All in all, the entire process was laborious and complex, and according to Robertson, Ledbury dubs *Frankenweenie* "an effects film" (41).

What is clear from Ledbury's statements is the unique positioning of stop-motion animation on the cinematic spectrum. On the one hand, there seems to be a marked avoidance of a CG animated look in the film. The crew clearly wished to adhere to a stop-motion look throughout, which is characteristically jerkier and less seamless than the

CG techniques used to produce a film like Zemeckis's *A Christmas Carol*. On the other hand, the labor that went into the production of *Frankenweenie* is akin to that used to produce a 2-D animated film like *The Jungle Book*, since that animation also had to be painstakingly created frame by frame. Finally, there is the sense that *Frankenweenie* has much in common with live action film, as Ledbury's statements regarding the building of the town attest to. According to Hahn, a stop-motion animated film is more like a live action film than a traditional animated film, since both share a similar production process ("Miniatures in Motion"). Tobias Fouracre, one of the Lead Animators for the film, states, "Stop motion has more in common with live action than traditional drawn animation. It's all real, physical stuff. You can touch it. Sets. It's pretty much like live action, but one frame at a time" ("Miniatures in Motion"). Adds Sorg, "There's no impossible camera moves or impossible lighting that wouldn't happen in real life because you are using real cinema lights and real cameras" ("Miniatures in Motion"). There is an obvious positioning of stop-motion animation as more in line with the conventions of live action than traditional animation. However, the more than occasional jerky movement in stop-motion animation betrays the fact that, like traditional animation, the work is laboriously completed frame by frame.

It is apparent that stop-motion animation is unique in its production process, and Ledbury has the final word in Robertson's article regarding the attractiveness of the medium:

> It seems to be more special in a way…The process is grueling. Compared to six months on a live-action shoot in Soho, 70-odd weeks on a shoot can

> wear you down. But the end product can be more satisfying. The shelf life of some live-action films is short. This feels like something that might last. And, the artists at the studio have more ownership, as well. We can wander around at lunchtime and have a look, see the puppets in the workshop. It's a lot of work. But it's fun. (41)

Abbate in "Miniatures in Motion" compares stop-motion prop work to "the Sistine Chapel on the head of a pin" and Alexandra Walker, Art Director for *Frankenweenie*, states, "I've seen the most grown-up people here be reduced to a five-year-old when they pick up a tiny, tiny thing because you can't believe it's possible." What all these comments regarding stop-motion have in common is a kind of awe in the materiality of the process, as well as an additional wonder at being able to manually craft puppets and props on a small scale. There is thus a fascination with the process of creation itself, a process that likewise becomes the heart of the narrative and technical levels of the film.

VI. A Narrative Sum of Parts

Frankenweenie's campiness alerts the reader that the stop-motion technique of the film is meant to be visible and distinctive. However, the beginning of the film challenges viewer expectations of what this stop-motion is supposed to look like. At the very beginning of the film, Victor showcases his latest cinematic production, a stop-motion film starring Sparky the dog, to his very kind and receptive parents. The project is itself crude and jerky, with the toy people and cars moving awkwardly around the set. The frame-by-frame technique of stop-motion is quite exaggerated here. The only actor not

moving in stop-motion fashion is Sparky, a Godzilla-type character that terrorizes the city. Oddly enough, Sparky's movements are fluid and natural compared to that of the toys in Victor's film, and the viewer almost forgets that Sparky is in fact a stop-motion character as well. Russ Breimeier in his *Christianity Today* review of *Frankenweenie* hails the stop-motion animation itself, pointing out the contrast between Victor's "crudely made Super 8 sci-fi movie" and *Frankenweenie*'s "state-of-the-art stop-motion at large" (par. 11). The layering of a stop-motion film within a stop-motion film provides the viewer with a remarkable contrast between crude stop-motion technique and that utilized by *Frankenweenie*, which works to establish the film as the standard for realism. In other words, the function of this opening is to activate the viewer's suspension of disbelief by positing Victor's world as natural and real.

What sets this film apart from others that aspire to realism is the unique co-existence of this suspension of disbelief alongside viewer consciousness of the stop-motion technique of the film. There are several spots throughout the film where the stop-motion technique is most evident. One would be the first scene where Mr. Rzykruski, the science teacher that inspires Victor with his formidable knowledge about science, is depicted. Mr. Rzykruski's exaggerated facial features, including his long and lean face, move rigidly, and at times his eyes and face seem like they are floating along the surface of his skin. Another instance where the stop-motion technique is especially explicit is during the stormy night after Sparky is struck and killed by a car. The streaks of rain cascading down the windowpanes move so jerkily that the viewer cannot help but be reminded of the technical process behind the entire film. However, this visible

technicality does not interrupt the viewer's suspension of disbelief. Because the diegetic world of the film had already been established as the standard for realism, the viewer is able to simultaneously maintain an awareness of the film's technique and the suspension of disbelief that allows the viewer to become fully absorbed by the narrative.

That being said, the simultaneity of technical visibility and narrative absorption can become disorienting, especially when the narrative itself also seems concerned with reminding the viewer that the seeming unity of the finished project is really just a suturing together of its component parts. The viewer is reminded that both the film and the film's characters—Sparky, most importantly—are constructed out of various pieces. This is most evident in the scene after Victor reanimates Sparky. After a heart-rending ordeal, when both Victor and the viewer fear that maybe Victor's experiment had in fact failed, Victor sobs and hugs Sparky's body. Narrative absorption is at its height here, for the viewer's suspension of disbelief has enabled a kind of empathy with Victor's character. In her *USA Today* article, "Burton Taps Emotions with 'Frankenweenie,'" Claudia Puig says that the film is partly "a study of grief" (par. 2) and claims, "The tale will resonate with anyone who has loved a dog and suffered its loss" (par. 7). The viewer is pulled into the scene perhaps by a familiarity with the topic at hand and the ability to empathize with Victor's feelings of hope and sadness.

However, these feelings are short lived. Sparky's tail begins to move, and a reanimated Sparky licks Victor's hand and emerges from under the sheet that was covering him. Sparky wags his tail so excitedly that his tail flies off and lands inside a trash can. Victor happily remarks, "I can fix that." In later scenes, when Sparky drinks

water and swallows a fly, they both emerge from the seams on his sewn-up neckline. In yet another scene, Victor reenergizes a tired Sparky by electrically recharging him. Sparky's reanimation, and especially his sewn-up appearance, can be quite disorienting to viewers, since he now occupies the unique status of reanimated corpse. In other words, Sparky is technically an animated collection of parts (as evidenced by the easy detachment of his tail and the fly's emergence from his neck), but the viewer is asked to look beyond that technicality and instead view him as a living dog. As such, Sparky becomes emblematic of *Frankenweenie* itself, as viewers are asked to both maintain an awareness of the technical and then move beyond that in order to access the emotional core structuring the entire narrative.

These narrative touches seem to get at the larger tension characterizing the film, that between the consciousness of technical creation and the need to go beyond what is merely technical. Though constantly reminding the viewer that Sparky is a reanimated corpse through his tendency to fall apart if not careful, the film also challenges the viewer to buy into the magic that Sparky has actually now come back to life and is still essentially the same dog. In this way, *Frankenweenie* asks viewers to suspend what they know about science and electricity and to believe that love alone is a power unmatched by any other. The film is thus able to simultaneously achieve an awareness on the part of the viewer that the film and Sparky's reanimation are illusory and a suspension of disbelief that allows the power of love to be the film's driving force. Instead of trying to make the technical process behind the film invisible (like in Disney's *The Jungle Book*),

the explicitness of the stop-motion animation technique requires viewers to look at both the film and Sparky as more than just the sum of their respective parts.

VII. Science: Narrative and Technique

As consistent with McMahan's definition of pataphysical films, *Frankenweenie* seems dedicated to both positing and undermining the power of scientific/technological processes at the narrative level. As mentioned earlier, McMahan labels scientific tension as characteristic of pataphysical films. Because the *Frankenweenie* production team explicitly suggests in "Miniatures in Motion" that the act of technological creation in the film operates as a kind of analogy to stop-motion animation itself, the scientific tension in the film can be read as a commentary on the very act of animating in a cinematic sense. Read this way, the uneasy role that science occupies in the film is key to understanding the tension between the technical visibility and narrative pull of the film.

For the schoolchildren of New Holland, Mr. Rzykruski, the new science teacher, is eccentric but compelling. He explains scientific concepts to the children that they appear to absorb and eagerly take in; Victor is especially engaged by what he has to say. However, after Sparky is hit and killed by a car at Victor's baseball game, Victor is depicted as disinterested in his everyday activities, even doodling a picture of Sparky during science class. This attitude does not last long. As soon as Mr. Rzykruski begins explaining the concept of electricity, Victor is all ears. Mr. Rzykruski explains: "Just like lightning, the nervous system is electricity. We are wires and springs and cables to send the messages." At this point, he unveils a dead frog to show the class and hooks it up to a

few wires. He continues: “Even after death, the wiring remains. Watch as the muscles respond to the electricity.” Victor watches as electric shocks animate the frog’s legs, and as evidenced by his sudden doodling of lighting bolts around his picture of Sparky, comes up with the idea to reanimate him using electricity.

After this class, Victor is once again back to his old self. Determined, he gathers lots of different materials and builds something in his attic. He then makes a trip to the pet cemetery and exhumes Sparky’s corpse. Never revealing to the audience what the deceased Sparky looks like, Victor keeps Sparky hidden under a sheet and harnesses electricity by flying kites through the attic window. He then electrifies Sparky. After a rather spectacular scene, which many film reviewers, along with McMahan, point to as reminiscent of Whale’s 1931 *Frankenstein*, Victor succeeds in reanimating Sparky, who emerges from the sheet and licks Victor. Victor, though excited, understands the magnitude of his act and resolves to keep him hidden from other people because “they may not understand.”

What is rather interesting about this scene is the clear depiction of the scientific/electrical process used to reanimate Sparky’s corpse. Though the film does not show Sparky’s corpse, possibly out of consideration to the viewer, the film does not shy away from fully including the process through which Sparky is brought back to life. For all intents and purposes, the process makes no logical sense, and the viewer will most likely understand that harnessed electricity cannot bring an animal back to life. However, in a clear nod to the power of animation, the inclusion of the scene thus challenges viewers to accept both the technical visibility and narrative pull as complementary, rather

than mutually exclusive, forces. Analogous to the tension between the technical visibility and narrative pull of the film overall is the relationship between Victor and Sparky, which both highlights and moves away from the technological/electrical/scientific process required to reanimate Sparky.

Evidence of the competing tension between technical visibility and the complete investment in the narrative is witnessed further in the film. As the film progresses, science is built up as a powerful force, but not as powerful as friendship and love. When Edgar, one of Victor's classmates, accidentally sees the reanimated Sparky, whom Victor had tried to conceal, he threatens Victor that he will tell everyone about his discovery if Victor does not explain the process to him. Once Victor explains the science behind the reanimation, Edgar insists on trying the same process himself, but Victor replies, "It isn't an experiment. It's my dog." When Edgar threatens him again, Victor complies, and they try to reanimate a dead fish. The experiment yields strange results, as the fish becomes reanimated, but also invisible. Interestingly, though Victor had explained to Edgar how he managed to achieve the impossible, he tries to call Edgar's attention away from the technical aspect of Sparky's reanimation. For Victor, the act of reanimating Sparky is an act of love, and electrical forces must be supplemented by the power of the heart in order to create life. However, Edgar does not see it that way, as he is more amazed by what Victor has achieved.

VIII. Science, Technology, and the Cold War

The Cold War setting in *Frankenweenie* provides evidence that the thematic elements of the narrative are an extension of the 19th century concerns present in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In "Lost in Space: Technology and Turbulence in Futuristic Cinema of the 1950s," Andrew J. Huebner argues that post-World War II science fiction films, "for all their cheap thrills and crude storylines" (7), provided a means for American audiences to process the oftentimes conflicting tensions between scientific/technological advancements and the moral/religious/natural values that seemed to slip away in the currents of new and emerging technology. Because 1950s audiences were well aware of the possible negative consequences of cultivating new technology following the bombings in Japan during World War II, Huebner argues that Americans were highly ambivalent about scientific and technological progress, recognizing at once its potential to both improve the quality of life as well as destroy it (17). The post-World War II period was clearly a time of scientific achievement, with the creation of NASA and the development of the polio vaccine as hallmarks of the period (12). However, Americans also worried about the added stress and pressure placed on the land and resources, in addition to the dangers of unchecked scientific and technological pursuits (18).

Set in the Cold War period, *Frankenweenie* clearly dramatizes this tension, and asks openly what the possible implications are of science and technology, much like 1950s science fiction films did for audiences at the time. Huebner argues that the "films did not reject knowledge outright but judged it by its applications" (14). *Frankenweenie* depicts scientific achievement in a similar way. Science appears to be a real threat to the

New Holland townspeople in general, who gather in some kind of town hall meeting to discuss the effects that scientific inquiry is having on their children, especially as taught by Mr. Rzykruski. While the mayor speaks out against the teacher and several parents complain, Victor's father is the only one who stands up in an attempt to defend Mr. Rzykruski. However, his efforts are thwarted when Mr. Rzykruski takes the podium and speaks for himself:

> Ladies. Gentlemen. I think the confusion here is that you are all ignorant. Is that the right word, "ignorant"? I mean, "stupid," "primitive," "unenlightened." You do not understand science, so you are afraid of it. Like a dog is afraid of thunder or balloons. To you, science is magic and witchcraft because you have small minds. I cannot make your heads bigger, but your children's heads, I can take them and crack them open. This is what I try to do, to get at their brains! Thank you.

After the town hall meeting, the gym teacher replaces Mr. Rzykruski as the science teacher. It is apparent that she knows very little about science, and when her authority is questioned by the students, she tells them that Mr. Rzykruski's extensive knowledge is the real problem. When Victor approaches Mr. Rzykruski, who is packing up his car outside, he tells Victor that where he's from, there are many scientists, but not enough here. He then encourages Victor to become a scientist. When Victor comments that "No one likes scientists," Mr. Rzykruski replies, "They like what science gives them, but not the questions, no. Not the questions that science asks." Victor then asks his teacher why his experiment had succeeded the first time and failed the second. Mr. Rzykruski

suggests that perhaps Victor "didn't really understand it the first time" and continues, "People think science is here, but it is also here," pointing first to his head and then his heart. "The first time, did you love your experiment?" When Victor emphatically replies yes, he asks if he also loved it the second time, to which Victor replies in the negative. Mr. Rzykruski then says, "Then you changed the variables." He then tells Victor, "Science is not good or bad, Victor. But it can be used both ways. That is why you must always be careful." He then shakes Victor's hand, gets into his car, and leaves.

In a campy way, *Frankenweenie* echoes and pokes fun at the science fiction films discussed by Huebner, which showcased how Americans likewise both respected and were cautious of scientists. According to Huebner, 1950s films portrayed the uncertain status of scientists, portraying their personalities and values as mutable and fluid: "Popular culture and opinion, then, suggested that scientists' strengths could become their weaknesses. Brilliance could drift toward insanity; devotion might turn into obsession; secular objectivity threatened to beget atheism; confidence could become megalomania" (13). Huebner also notes that these films sometimes portrayed scientists as "social misfits" (14) clearly not interested in family life or values. In *Frankenweenie*, Mr. Rzykruski embodies these 1950s conceptions of the scientist. Except for his students—and Victor in particular—the townspeople of New Holland are generally fearful of the science teacher; wary perhaps of his unbroken attention to science, seeming lack of family, and general oddity, the townspeople are out to villainize him and stop him from encouraging the children of New Holland to engage wholeheartedly in scientific pursuit. In either case, the significance of the conversation between Mr. Rzykruski and Victor is

clear. Science is posited as a neutral force, one that is only a threat if mishandled. The message being relayed through the words and actions of Mr. Rzykruski and Victor is that science can only take you so far; your heart must take you the rest of the way. Compare this idea to the words of different members of the *Frankenweenie* production team, who in awe-like wonder hail stop-motion animation as magical; in "Miniatures in Motion," Hahn says, "When [Victor] brought Sparky back to life, it was from the heart. It wasn't just science; it was actually him and his emotion. And I think that speaks a little bit to the process of animation. You have to love these things into an existence. And I know the audience feels that because they feel the humanity that went into every frame." At the end of this same behind-the-scenes feature, Abbate says, "We play with the concept of if you create life without love, you create a monster. But if you create life with love, you create a hero. And I think that comes through in the work. I think that you see a real sense of love for the medium."

Abbate's words ring true in the latter half of the film, when Victor's electrical formula falls into the hands of his other classmates. A slip up by Edgar reveals to other classmates what Victor had done, and each of them tries to use the same process with different subjects: deceased pets, sea monkeys, a dead bat, a dead rat. However, in each of these cases, something goes terribly wrong. A deceased pet turtle named Shelley, for instance, is electrified and then comes into contact with Miracle-Gro. The result is disastrous, and a Godzilla-like Shelley goes on to terrorize the city. The sea monkeys emerge from a pool after being electrified and instantly go after the boy that brought them to life. In the case of the bat, the young girl's cat gets electrified while holding the

bat in its mouth, and a terrifying hybrid cat-bat escapes through the window. Each of these is an experiment gone wrong, as none of the electrically animated creatures seem to have good intentions.

In comparison to Victor, these students are more interested in the technical process of reanimating a corpse and in winning the upcoming science fair than in anything else. The result is disastrous, as the missing variable, emotional investment, has apparently caused all the resulting experiments to run amok. Abbate's comment above points to the consequences of an act without love; what you get are uncontrollable "monster[s]."

Perhaps this is the most striking parallel between *Frankenweenie* and *Frankenstein*. Technological creation without love leads to disaster. In Shelley's novel, all the Creature desires from his creator is love and attention. This is witnessed in his confrontation with Frankenstein after he had killed Frankenstein's brother and framed an innocent young woman for his death:

> All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends. (102)

After telling Frankenstein his tale, he requests that a female companion be made for him, so that he can live with purpose and companionship. Initially, Frankenstein complies, thinking that this would temper the Creature's feelings of rage. However, after beginning construction of this female companion, he decides to destroy his work, concerned that giving the Creature a female may backfire "and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth" (170). This time, forethought leads to Frankenstein revoking his promise to the Creature and destroying the very thing most desired by him. As a result of being shunned by his creator, the Creature goes on a murderous spree, killing those near and dear to Frankenstein's heart. The message is clear. Without the creator's love, the created will become monstrous.

According to Thomas Vargish in "Technology and Impotence in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," the reasons for Frankenstein's creation of the Creature stem from vanity; he views himself as deserving of the Creature's future admiration of him (328). However, this of course does not happen, and Vargish argues that Frankenstein "violates a primal contract, the universal contract between creator and created which specifies that the father owes his children the means to live, that creation mandates nurture" (329). He then suggests that Frankenstein rejects the Creature after recognizing that the Creature is somehow an extension of him, which then "suggests that *he* is a monster" (329, author's italics). When compared to Victor's desire in *Frankenweenie* to reanimate his best friend, Frankenstein's motives involve no sense of paternity or friendship. His is a desire much aligned with Victor's classmates, who reanimate all sorts of animals just to see if they can do it. In discussing the role that technology plays in the novel, Vargish states, "The

problem is not at this point with power in itself; the problem is with the consequences of creative power, of potency. The problem lies not with the science or the tools themselves but with where they have taken us" (330). His words closely resemble those spoken by Mr. Rzykruski to Victor.

On a technical level, *Frankenweenie*'s campy mode also points to its Cold War cinematic predecessors. As Huebner argues, "The technological sublime infused not only the message of these films, but the medium. In many cases the very *making* of science fiction cinema connoted technological triumphs, as if realistically portraying a mechanized future heralded its arrival" (16, author's italics). He notes that films were marketed with an emphasis on the new cinematic technologies used to produce them; 3D films and films in color heralded a new cinematic age (17). In a similar way, *Frankenweenie* combines a campy aesthetic with novel technology in a nod to its Cold War setting.

Ultimately, *Frankenweenie* extends the disorienting technical and narrative thematic elements of both the 19th century and Cold War America through its treatment of science and technology. Huebner claims, "Hollywood filmmakers of the 1950s did far more than simply broadcast Cold War fears—they wondered aloud about the consequences of science and technology for human life—and their wondering prompted audiences to wonder" (8). *Frankenweenie* asks the viewer to consider these questions through a Cold War lens. After all, Victor's apparent oddity is noticed by his father, who links his scientific leanings to his lack of friends and so encourages him to try a new activity. That Sparky is then hit and killed by a car when Victor hits a home run at a

baseball game is ironic; the Cold War values of family and normative social interaction backfire for him, who pays for joining the crowd and pursuing America's pastime with the life of his best friend. Of course, it is this event that then sets the scientific plot in motion, leading to Victor's triumphant act of bringing Sparky back to life.

IX. Web of references

Shelley's *Frankenstein* is one obvious source informing *Frankenweenie* as a whole. However, *Frankenstein* is not the only source of meaning for the film. In keeping with McMahan's explanation of the common characteristics shared by pataphysical films, *Frankenweenie* points to a world outside of itself by embedding various references to other aspects of popular and historical culture as a means of enhancing meaning. In this way, the film can be seen as a kind of collage of different sources. One rather obvious reference is to the iconic Hollywood sign. Perched in the hills surrounding New Holland, the New Holland sign looks strikingly similar to that of the Hollywood sign in California. This visual choice situates the film squarely in the Hollywood tradition, perhaps differentiating it from the rather European-cosmopolitan feel of Shelley's text. This sign also makes it very clear that *Frankenweenie* can only be truly understood within the context of Hollywood film history.

As an animated adaptation, *Frankenweenie* does use Shelley's novel as one source, but the film also clearly draws from the cinematic legacy of *Frankenstein* retellings. Burton clearly infused the film with his own childhood memories of these retellings: "I grew up watching classic horror films and for me they weren't so much

about horror films; they spoke on another level, much like a fairy tale or folk tale would speak to you about real issues in your own life" ("Miniatures in Motion"). This influence is clearly evident in the film, which pulls from these classic horror films. *Frankenweenie*'s black and white mode echoes Whale's iconic *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). Several narrative and character elements in *Frankenweenie* spring directly from these films, including the scene where Victor electrically reanimates Sparky in his laboratory. In Whale's film, Frankenstein's laboratory is likewise full of gadgets that light up when electricity is harnessed, and Victor's hoisting of Sparky's covered corpse through the attic roof is a clear nod to Whale's film. In addition, the scene where Victor exhumes Sparky's body echoes the beginning of Whale's film, where Frankenstein and his assistant, Fritz, exhume a freshly buried corpse from a graveyard. Finally, the ending of *Frankenweenie* will look familiar to those who have seen Whale's *Frankenstein*, for the scene where Victor becomes trapped in a windmill clearly pulls from Whale's depiction of Frankenstein's Creature taking his creator hostage in a windmill, throwing him off the edge into the crowd below, and then becoming trapped in the windmill when the townspeople set fire to the windmill with their torches. In terms of characterization, *Frankenweenie*'s Edgar "E" Gore character spoofs Frankenstein's hunchback assistant, nowhere present in Shelley's novel but presented as Fritz in Whale's 1931 film. The addition of Edgar is more a nod to *Frankenstein*'s cinematic legacy than to Shelley's novel. In addition, Victor's tall classmate, Nassor, resembles Boris Karloff's portrayal of the Creature in *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein*, with his lanky build, square-ish head, and uninviting demeanor. Finally, Sparky's love interest, the female

poodle that belongs to Victor's neighbor, develops a furry beehive hairdo complete with the lightning-shaped white stripe after experiencing an electrical shock from the reanimated Sparky. The viewer will be familiar with this hairdo, which first appears in Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein*.

Reviewers seem to agree that *Frankenweenie* pays tribute to these classic horror films. Lisa Schwarzbaum, in her *Entertainment Weekly* review of *Frankenweenie*, hails the stylistic elements of the film and says that the "homage to Frankenstein in particular and horror movies in general is exquisite, macabre mayhem and a kind of reanimation all its own" (par. 1). McIntyre calls Burton's film "a black-and-white love letter to Universal horror films and his Burbank youth" ("Countdown to the Oscars" par. 3). Kevin Lally in a *Film Journal International* review of the film even calls the scene where Victor attempts to bring Sparky back to life "a direct visual homage to James Whale's 1930s film classics" (par. 3). However, some reviewers see these references as overdone. Lally argues that though the film starts off well enough, "all hell breaks loose, both visually and narratively" towards the climax and end since the stories that parallel Victor's are not as interesting as the main plotline, and "the chaotic climax feels like extra padding" (par. 4). For Breimeier, the main issue with the plotline is that it has become too recognizable, almost to the point of exhaustion:

> *Frankenweenie* offers some surprises but ultimately plays predictably. What may have been a novel idea in 1984 today seems trite after 25 years of cable television and animated shows that have offered their own

> Frankenstein parodies. A lot of the details from 1931's *Frankenstein* now play as cliché because it's been done so much. (par. 7)

The web of references thus situating the film within various historical and cultural contexts becomes, in Breiemeir's estimation, one of its shortcomings.

Though *Frankenweenie* reviewers may not entirely agree on how well the film credits and makes use of its classic horror cinematic predecessors, the film's campiness makes it apparent that it means to spoof as well as idolize these films and other highly recognizable cinematic characters. Schwarzbaum calls the film a "romp of escalating 'horror'" (par. 2); the quotation marks enclosing the word "horror" point to the film's separation from the genre. One notable example of this in the film is when an electrical shock and a can of Miracle-Gro transform a deceased turtle named Shelley into an enormous monster that terrorizes the town of New Holland in a Godzilla-like way. This scene is clearly not meant to be terrifying, as viewers are expected to find the scene humorous rather than horrifying.

In bringing together different literary and cinematic traditions, the film significantly bridges together past and present. Schwarzbaum dubs the film a "cool little flipbook of historical Burtonian style" since the film is a resurrection of Burton's 1984 short film about Sparky being brought back to life and is a "stitching together of material old and new" (par. 1). In pulling together material from older sources and putting a modern twist on the story with contemporary and updated references, *Frankenweenie* constructs something analogous to stop-motion animation itself, since it is a composite of various pieces and parts. In terms of setting and environment, the film layers together

several notable historical periods, including 19th century Europe, Cold War America, and classic and contemporary Hollywood, as demonstrated by its technological combination of stop-motion animation, CG visual effects, and hand drawn material, as well as its nod to the other films that came before it. All in all, the film seeks not to replicate what had already been done, but to bring different elements together in the creation of something new. As Burton says about the process:

> If you're doing a shot and you've got the actual lighting and you're moving the character through the shadows, you feel it and I think it helps you. It's like you're an actor. And there is something that kind of mirrors the Frankenstein story where the animators are taking a basically lifeless puppet and making it come to life. ("Miniatures in Motion")

Frankenweenie threads together these different traditions in a demonstration that the narrative and technical elements of Shelley's *Frankenstein* have carried over in various ways to stop-motion animation in the 21st century.

X. Conclusion

Frankenweenie may not share *Frankenstein*'s exact storyline, but what they do have in common is a disorienting quality at the levels of both narrative and technique. *Frankenweenie* asks viewers to participate in the technical aspects of filmmaking, and rather than elevate the technique at the expense of the narrative, the film encourages the viewer to be absorbed in the narrative as well as be consciously aware of the mode of production; this can ultimately be disorienting. *Frankenstein* likewise asks readers to

become narratively absorbed, and then points beyond its novelistic form to that which cannot be contained within the pages of the text. Both texts ask the audience to consider each work as more than just the sum of its parts in a way that points to how the disorienting qualities of the film can be traced all the way back to Shelley's text.

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