

Pixar's America

Dietmar Meinel

Pixar's America

The Re-Animation of American Myths and Symbols



Dietmar Meinel Department of Anglophone Studies University of Duisburg-Essen Essen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

ISBN 978-3-319-31633-8 ISBN 978-3-319-31634-5 (eBook) DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-31634-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016950070

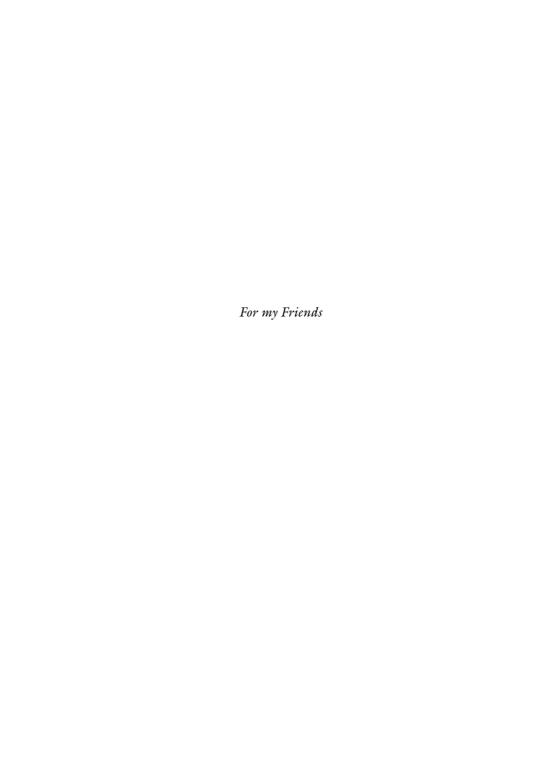
© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG Switzerland



Contents

1	Exceptional Animation: An Introduction	
	From Failure to Fame: The Pixar Studio	
	and Digital Animation	3
	Animating Revolt or Monstrous Beings?	9
	All Ages Admitted	19
	"Every Line Drawn, Object Moved, and Shape Changed"	20
	Animating the Myths and Symbols of American Culture	22
	Remediating the Myths and Symbols of American Culture	28
2	"You Better Play Nice": Digital Enchantment	
	and the Performance of Toyness in <i>Toy Story</i> (1995)	45
	Fearful Sheriff Dolls and Oblivious Space-Ranger Action Figures	47
	Stupid, Little, Insignificant Toys	50
	The Space-Traveling American Adam	52
	The Enchanting Performance of Toyness	55
3	An Animated Toast to the Ephemeral:	
	The Multicultural Logic of Late Capitalism	
	in Toy Story 2 (1999)	61
	The Multicultural Myth of Woody, Buzz, and Bill	63
	A Postmodern Toy Story	66
	The Digital Logic of Late Capitalism	70
	A Toast to the Ephemeral	71

X CONTENTS

4	A Story of Social Justice? The Liberal Consensus	
	in Monsters, Inc. (2001)	75
	Monsters of Plenty	77
	The Liberal Consensus of Monstropolis	79
	A Good Society of Monsters: Individualism, Meritocracy,	, ,
	and Affirmative Government	83
	Animating the Good Society?	85
	The Green, One-Eyed Schlemiel	88
5	"From Rags to Moderate Riches":	
-	The American Dream in Ratatouille (2007)	97
	Pixar's Animated American Dream	100
	Class, Space, and the Animated Dream	105
	Hyper-White Food Critics and Non-White Chefs:	100
	The Villains in Ratatouille	107
	Learning to Perform: Middle Class,	107
	the Ratatouille Restaurant, and (the Aesthetics of)	
	Ordinary Whiteness	109
	An Exceptionalist Rat?	112
6	"Space. The Final Fun-tier": Returning Home	
	to the Frontier in WALL-E (2008)	119
	The Significance of the Post-Apocalyptic Frontier	120
	Mediating the Frontier: Consumerism, Nostalgia,	
	and Digital Cinematography	122
	Gendered Robots: Male Garbage Compressors	
	and Female Drones	124
	The Brave, New World Aboard the Axiom	127
	Earth. The Final Frontier	130
7	Empire Is Out There!? The Spirit of Imperialism	
	in $U_p(2009)$	139
	The Imperial Fantasies of James, Carl, and Charles	142
	Adventure Is in Here: Rewriting the Imperial Fantasy	147
	The Spirit of the Informal Empire	150

8				
	The End of the American Myth in			
	The Incredibles (2004)	163		
	"Celebrating Mediocrity"	165		
	The Incredibles: A Voluntary Association	166		
	Victimizing the White, Male Superhero Body	171		
	From Heroine to Homemaker to Heroine, Again	173		
	Leaving Suburbia	175		
9	Driving in Circles: The American Puritan Jeremiad			
	in Cars (2006)	187		
	Narratives of Individual and National Decline	190		
	Imagined Pasts: The Jeremiad and the Golden			
	Age of the 1950s	195		
	Imagined Spaces: The American South	198		
	The Sound of American Myths and Symbols	200		
10	Animating a Yet Unimagined America? The Mediation			
	of American Exceptionalism in Toy Story 3 (2010)	207		
	Errand into the Daycare Wilderness	210		
	Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Garbage Incinerator	214		
	A Yet Unimagined America?	215		
	11 100 Christian 11morrow.	210		
Bibliography				
Ind	Index			