Conclusion

The Labor of Looking

That's how it was in the dream; I was nothing but seeing.
—WALTER BENJAMIN[1]

SEEING DOUBLE

I begin my conclusion in medias res, with a description of the beginning of Chuck Jones's *Sniffles Bells the Cat* (Warner Bros., 1941), which itself begins in medias res.

The cartoon opens with a trio of mice sprinting leftward across the screen. The camera tracks laterally to keep them in the frame, but eventually the mice outpace it. Undeterred, it continues on its leftward track, traveling for more than a second past a seemingly unending stretch of wall (two horizontal bands of blue wallpaper and light brown paneling) and floor (a horizontal band of hardwood, its constitutive panels perpendicular to the wall). At last a fourth mouse enters the frame, and he too soon overtakes the camera, slipping out of view. The camera proceeds with its horizontal movement, and another two seconds elapse before a fifth and final figure catches up with it: the large house cat from whom the mice are fleeing.

The subsequent shot places us inside the home of the mice, a floor-level hole in the wall, with a mouse's-eye-view through its rounded doorframe at the larger room beyond (fig. 5.1). Given that much of the frame is shrouded in darkness, a surprising amount of the room is visible: the leg of a (human-size) chair peeks out just to the left of the opening, and another human-size chair and table are in the distance. In addition, the reflection in a mirror hanging above the table displays the meeting of ceiling and walls in the opposite corner of the room. But before we have time to absorb the plenitude of details of this composition—the sense of the world both depicted within the frame and extending beyond the limits of the frame—the first three mice scramble into the right side of the screen. They dash toward their hole, and as they make their approach they seem to grow in

FIGURE 5.1. A wide-angle view of the domestic setting of *Sniffles Bells the Cat* (Warner Bros., 1941).

size several times over—from extreme long shot to medium shot in just a few short steps. Two pass by the camera, disappearing from view, while a third stays by the door (in cartoons, after all, mouseholes have doors), waiting for the fourth member of their party. The straggler makes his appearance a second later. The cat is hot on his tail, but he reaches his destination just in time for his friend to slam the door in the cat's face.

This sequence creates suspense through its willingness to let the camera linger over spaces devoid of characters: we have to wait for things to happen. The tension is then ratcheted up through the exploitation of two very different cinematographic techniques. The two shots are linked via the basic principles of continuity editing, namely, the preservation of screen direction—the mice and the cat exit on the left side of the frame and reenter in the subsequent shot on the right—but in all other respects they offer radically divergent views of the world. In the first shot, the camera tracks laterally at a uniform rate and at a uniform distance from its subjects, capturing each of the scurrying mice in full shot (the cat, considerably larger than the mice, appears in medium close-up). The second shot, meanwhile, is static—but it is no less dynamic, due to the deployment of a wide-angle lens that effectively reshapes the space of the room, distorting our sense of scale and perspective. The tremendous depth of field of the wide-angle lens allows both the immediate foreground (the door to the mouse's hole, the leg of the chair) and the far background (the table and chair and even the reflection in the mirror) to be in focus. Moreover, it makes the distance between these objects nearly impossible to gauge, thereby heightening the scene's tension: Just how much of the floor do the mice have to cover? Will they make it to safety in time?

Of course there is no camera, at least none conforming to the cameras I have described. No tracks have been laid for a dolly to pass over. No wide-angle lens has

been affixed to the photographic apparatus. For that matter, there is not a single mouse, nor is there a cat, a chair, a mirror, or a door. There is only a stationary camera of prescribed focal length, directed downward at a table, on which is placed a stack of paintings. At the bottom of the stack is a painted sheet of paper, atop which are a series of transparent cels, each individually inked and opaqued. And what I have described consists of far more than two shots. At more than twenty-two seconds from start to finish, the total number of individual shots is in fact closer to five hundred and twenty-five. *Sniffles Bells the Cat* is, like each and every work of celluloid animation, a photographic record of ephemeral documents.

But how reductive! To look at this sequence frame by frame—shot by shot—is to drain it of its narrative content. There is no suspense, no surprise. We overlook how each mouse is given his own distinct personality through the manner in which he moves, we miss the moment when the fourth mouse snatches his hat before it flies off. What happens to *fiction*? Do I really wish to argue, per Noël Carroll, that "*M* is about Peter Lorre rather than about a psychopathic child killer" or that "*The Creature from the Black Lagoon* is not about a rivulet off the Amazon but about Wakulla Springs, Florida"?[2] Or, in this case, that *Sniffles Bells the Cat* is about paint, paper, cellulose acetate, and glass? The forensic gaze treats each frame as functionally the same as the next, and often demands the disruption of the sequential logic of the filmstrip—and, for that matter, the narrative. As such, we cannot appreciate the film's exquisite tweaking of the narrative tropes that were, by 1941—a mere year after the debut of MGM's Tom and Jerry—already all too familiar. The film can begin in medias res because we do not need to know exactly what led this cat to chase these mice. Cats chase mice. That is just what happens in cartoons.

Yet to see this sequence only for the story it tells is to neglect those formal and stylistic aspects, some more salient than others, that enable the story to be told at all. Those first three mice are able to run at different speeds and in different ways—one pumping his arm here, the other glancing over his shoulder there—because each has been animated separately and then inked and painted onto his own cel. There is a direct correspondence between the order in which the cels are stacked below the animation camera and the putative position of the putative mice relative to the putative traveling camera. In this respect, there is an absolute equivalence between the cel as a physical object before an actual lens and the mouse painted thereon: stack a different cel above it, and the mouse represented by its painted surface moves closer to the imaginary camera. This might seem obvious, but it nonetheless bears mentioning: as I showed in chapter 2, the order in which cels are stacked is both an essential component of the aesthetics of the cel animation technique and also one more variable, one more thing that can go wrong, in a highly complicated production process.

So, too, does the actual graphic content have meaning that exceeds the concerns of the film's narrative. Each mouse is detailed not only in his animation but also

in his design: eyebrows for extra expressiveness, rounded cheeks for extra cuteness, pants and shoes and gloves for just a touch of humanness. (In this respect, the installments in Chuck Jones's *Sniffles* series are the most Disney-like of the Warner Bros. cartoons; that the same director would be responsible for as radical an experiment as *Dover Boys* just a year later is a testament to the wide range of animation styles of the early 1940s alone.) But while the mice are bipedal, the cat runs on all fours. He is animated in a cycle, and the regularity of his stride suggests that animals are closer to machines than we might have thought. Of course, the walk cycle is itself an attempt to mechanize human motion, namely, the motion of the animator—to standardize, streamline, simplify. Nor is cycled animation the only labor-saving technique on display. For instance, the illusion of the camera's leftward movement is achieved by incrementally moving a long, painted background rightward. As the scene unfolds, the background is reused several times over, but its "seam" (the conjunction of where the background ends and where it begins again) is only barely visible: the space reads as continuous.

The cycling of the background affords a pleasure that cannot be assimilated into any normal viewing of the film, particularly in the moments in the first shot in which the tracking camera takes in only "empty" space: the wall and the floor. For more than two seconds, the viewer must look at nothing more than the imperfect loop of the background painting. Certain details, particularly the pattern of the floorboards, the streaks in the wood paneling that suggest grain, and a groove that runs along the base of the wall, give the image some dimensionality (fig. 5.2). Even so, it is easy to ignore these hints of perspectival space and focus instead on the play of pure color—the blue of the wallpaper, the off-white of the wall's base, the reddish brown of the floor—that this camera movement affords. We can even pluck these sequences from the film and turn them into an endless loop of abstract animation, in which horizontal bands of color unfurl ceaselessly before us—save, of course, for the slight hiccup every time the background begins anew.

Another instance that ruptures the film's stylistic cohesiveness occupies just a single frame: an elaborate dry-brush smear that accompanies the moment when the mouse slams the door against the cat (fig. 5.3). Irregular lines of brown (the door), red (the mouse's hat), auburn (the mouse's ear), and white (the mouse's glove) reverberate outward, but more than simulating motion blur, the jagged patterns of paint give the image texture it would otherwise lack. Taken on its own, isolated from the full action of which it is a part, the image is strange. In its left half, the bottom of the cat's paw reaches through the hole, toward the viewer, while the right half directs its energy along the X-axis, as the door is pushed one way and the dry brushstrokes ripple in the opposite direction. It abounds with curious, unintended rhymes between the two sides of the composition: the red of the cat's open mouth is matched by the red of the mouse's hat, and the pattern of the black pads on the cat's white paw is inverted on the reverse side of the door, with the pattern of white dry brushstrokes against the dark interior wall of the

FIGURE 5.2. A background painting in *Sniffles Bells the Cat* (Warner Bros., 1941).

FIGURE 5.3. Sniffles's friend closes the door just in time in *Sniffles Bells the Cat* (Warner Bros., 1941).

mouse's hole. In a single frame thus coalesce multiple planes and axes of action, but regarding the image as a coherent unit in its own right invests its component parts with fresh meaning.

Each of these ways of looking at *Sniffles Bells the Cat* might seem to be mutually exclusive. The conventions of formal analysis permit us to examine how its expert cinematography and mise-en-scène work in tandem with the narrative, but everything else I have described is superfluous. Alternatively, attending to the scene's fluid staging means losing sight of the labor-intensive production process that allowed for the scene to be staged at all. Must one watch this cartoon with

each eye trained in a separate direction? Having been broken down, can *Sniffles Bells the Cat* ever be put back together again?

DEEP FOCUS

I return now to the language of formal analysis—particularly the terminology of camera movement and camera lenses—in order to describe the opening of *Sniffles Bells the Cat*. As I have already indicated, these two shots were not photographed with a tracking camera or a wide-angle lens. Rather, they simulate the effects thereof. And while the imprecise shorthand I naturally fall back on is more or less clear in spite of its imprecision, it comes at the expense of any truly rigorous discussion of the art, labor, and technology of celluloid animation: it elides the particular technology of the animation stand, the specialized labor of, among others, the camera technician and the layout artist, and the aesthetic appeals specific to animation. I have, effectively, opted to treat *Sniffles Bells the Cat* as a live-action film that happens to feature four fully clothed mice.

But perhaps I am not the one at fault here. How can I blame myself for identifying the cinematographic techniques the cartoon is clearly intending to evoke? Anthropomorphized mice aside, we might very well say that *Sniffles Bells the Cat* is a cartoon that pretends it is not a cartoon: instead of deploying the formal techniques proper to its medium, it draws on the visual language of photographic cinema. This, certainly, is a critique many film theorists might level at it, just as they did (and continue to do) with Disney films from the late 1930s onward. In 1940, Siegfried Kracauer looked back to animation's first decade for an exemplar of the form, finding it in the films of Émile Cohl, whose work he likened to that of Paul Klee. According to Kracauer, the "nimble evolutions" of Cohl's "white stick-figure . . . are still unbeatable today."[3] While he did not have recourse to Sergei Eisenstein's concept of the plasmatic at the time, Kracauer nevertheless suggests that the strongest animation is that which engages with the expressive capacities of the line—a line gone out for a walk, to paraphrase Klee. But Kracauer would also extend his criticisms beyond the quality of the animation per se. His negative review of *Dumbo* (1941) makes an explicit ontological claim: "The cartoon film tends toward the dissolution rather than the reinforcement of conventional reality, and its function is not to draw a reality which can be better photographed."[4] A review of *Bambi* (1942) in the *New York Times* distills Kracauer's thesis to an incisive rhetorical question: If cartoons are simply going to resemble life, then "why have cartoons at all?"[5]

By contrast, I argue that *Sniffles Bells the Cat* is an animated cartoon not in spite of but indeed *because of* its reliance on cinematographic codes. Its simulation of the wide-angle lens in particular demonstrates not a slavish adherence to preexisting codes of representation but rather an imaginative expansion of the possibilities of cinema as a whole—not just animation. What it might lack in the plasmaticness of its figures, it makes up for in plasticity of the entire image.

My reasoning is simple, even simplistic, at least at first glance: *Sniffles Bells the Cat* is in color. The year of its release, 1941, was also the year of Howard Hawks's *Ball of Fire*, William Wyler's *The Little Foxes*, and, of course, Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, all films photographed by the pioneering cinematographer Gregg Toland, best known for shooting in deep focus. But these films were in black and white. Technicolor film stock was simply too slow to allow for this kind of depth of field, something evident in a number of other films of the period, such as Sam Wood's *Our Town* (1940), photographed by Bert Glennon; *Kings Row* (1942), photographed by James Wong Howe; John Ford's *Tobacco Road* (1941) and *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), both photographed by Arthur C. Miller; and William Dieterle's *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941), photographed by Joseph H. August. Cel animation could thus achieve what conventional cinematography could not.

To support this claim, we need look no further than Gregg Toland's own forays into Technicolor. In 1948 he and Hawks remade *Ball of Fire* as the Technicolor musical *A Song Is Born*, with Danny Kaye in the Gary Cooper role. In the earlier film, a scene of a group of characters clustered around a table was shot with a wide-angle lens. Cooper, sitting at the table's head, is closest to the camera and is, as a consequence, significantly larger than the other men. When restaged in *A Song Is Born*, the scene was shot with a normal lens, and in the resultant image Kaye is the same size as his companions (fig. 5.4). A minor difference, to be sure, but it invites closer investigation into both the aesthetics and the formal function of deep-focus cinematography (one that, alas, this conclusion can only gesture at). More telling, perhaps, is a shot in *A Song Is Born* that *does* have tremendous depth of field: Kaye's character, framed in medium shot, watches a jazz band performing off-screen—except that the jazz band is visible in the image thanks to a mirror strategically placed behind Kaye's head, allowing two disparate shot scales to be in sharp focus. But this deep-focus image is, in fact, a composite, comprising two shots taken at different times and combined via the optical printer. Like the shot in *Sniffles Bells the Cat*, it only *simulates* a wide-angle lens.

A similar scene appears in Disney's *Song of the South* (1946), for which Toland provided the live-action cinematography. Uncle Remus, played by James Baskett, sits on a log with an animated frog—a pairing facilitated by careful optical printing. The two chat and blow smoke rings—again, a marriage of conventional photography, cel animation, and analog special effects. But it is the subsequent shot that is the most playful: Remus, now framed (along with his amphibious friend) in extreme long shot, throws out a fishing line toward the camera. The line enters the water in extreme close-up, its cartoon cork bobbing up and down (fig. 5.5). It is marvelous to see a flesh-and-blood human converse with an ink-and-paint frog, but it is even more stunning to witness a deep-focus composition in full color.

What these examples underscore are the deep affinities between cel animation and analog special effects, which both relied on frame-by-frame manipulation of

FIGURE 5.4. The wide-angle lens enlarges Gary Cooper's head in *Ball of Fire* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1941) (left) and the same scene as staged and photographed in Technicolor in *A Song Is Born* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1948) (right).

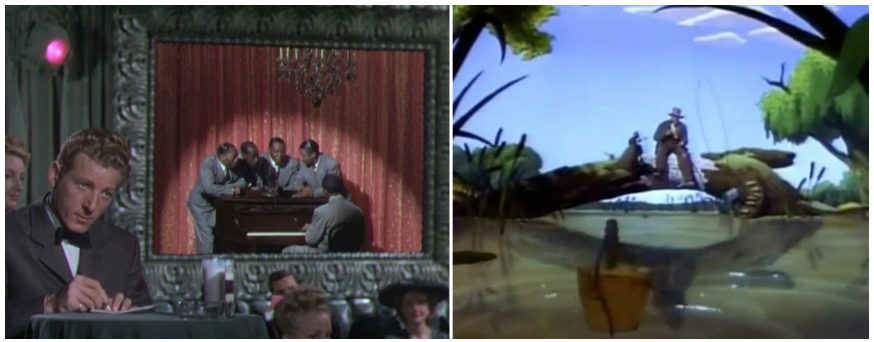

FIGURE 5.5. Animation and analog special effects combine to create deep-focus compositions in *A Song Is Born* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1948) (left) and *Song of the South* (Disney, 1946) (right).

the image. As Julie Turnock has argued in her study of 1960s and 1970s special effects, "optical printing techniques . . . made the film frame more flexible and mutable, and in fact, more like *animation*," allowing filmmakers to "move toward realizing the goal of the *total control of all elements of the frame*."[6] By identifying the ways in which filmmakers drew heavily on animation techniques, Turnock's analysis of such films as Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977) offers a significant challenge to theories of film that prioritize the photographic nature of the medium. But equally significant is the grounding assumption of her work, which emphasizes the fundamental plasticity of the animated image. Even a cartoon that imitates cinematographic techniques must first deform the world in order to make it whole again. It dissolves *and* reinforces conventional reality.

NOTHING BUT SEEING

By enabling action to unfold along multiple planes of the image, deep focus obviated the need for analytical montage, in which space is broken up into fragments and reconstituted on the editing table. This is what André Bazin—other than Toland himself, perhaps the most famous champion of deep-focus cinematography—admired about the technique. Deep-focus cinematography might produce "an impression of tension and conflict, as if the image might be torn apart," but it nonetheless preserves the unity of reality. Bazin termed this effect "*découpage* in depth," which, he claimed, furnishes the image with a "surplus of realism," comprising an "ontological realism" that restores "to the object and the decor their existential density, the weight of their presence; a dramatic realism which refuses to separate the actor from the decor, the foreground from the background; [and] a psychological realism which brings the spectator back to the real conditions of perception, a perception which is never completely determined a priori."[7]

The films I have described, not only *Sniffles Bells the Cat* but also *A Song Is Born* and *Song of the South*, do not satisfy Bazin's description. After all, they still rely on conventional editing techniques to "chop the world up into little fragments."[8] Indeed, animation is montage taken its logical extreme. We might revise a claim Bazin makes about analytical montage accordingly: "In analyzing [or *synthesizing*] reality, montage [or *animation*] presupposes of its very nature the unity of meaning of the dramatic event."[9] But I want to focus in particular on Bazin's claim about the perceptual experience deep-focus cinematography engenders. By forcing the viewer to scan the image for narrative information, Bazin argues, "depth of focus reintroduced [the possibility of] ambiguity into the structure of the image." Indeed, it demanded of the viewer "a more active mental attitude," for it was ultimately "from his attention and his will that the meaning of the image" would derive.[10] Or, as Karl Schoonover explains, "Seeing becomes a form of labor."[11] The viewer must *work*.

The viewer of animated cartoons must work, too, if she wishes to see the labor that went into their making. Looking at cartoons frame by frame is labor intensive—tiring, tedious. Yet her attention and her will must never waver. A single frame, so easily overlooked, might contain a pencil drawing that wasn't meant to be photographed, a profusion of feathery brushstrokes, a telling fingerprint. At the same time, she must also *play*. The monotony of frame-by-frame analysis leads one to daydream. As such, each of the chapters of this book has been structured around a thought experiment. *What if?*, I ask again and again. What if we looked at works of cel animation like we do microform periodicals? What if we thought through cel animation's photographic basis in accordance with both realist and materialist theories of cinema? What if we treated each cel as a work of art in its own right? What if we compared inkers to secretaries? These questions, and the ones that emerge from them, are meant to test the limits of animation.

They are games, but that does not mean they are frivolous. The theoretical riddles they pose reveal buried histories. The counterfactual histories they write upend theoretical truisms. They introduce the possibility of ambiguity into film theory and history.

By looking at frames out of order, I cross-reference collage elements like reused newspaper clippings, locate the source animation sketches for certain cels, and identify staggered walk cycles. By bringing debates about one form of technological reproduction (photography) to bear on another (xerography), I press at the borders between the graphic image and the calligraphic text. By watching a cartoon as Dudley Andrew does *Jules et Jim* or as Virginia Woolf does *Caligari* (chapter 2), I grow sensitive to the flight of dust, the downpour of scratches, and the dance of film grain. I have access to these films in a way that Eisenstein did not. He had to rely on his memories of them and anchor his analysis in analogues from the history of literature (Lewis Carroll, D. H. Lawrence, Herman Melville) and illustration (Honoré Daumier, J. J. Grandville, Hokusai). I, however, can view and re-view these films, rearrange them, even remake them. I am able to look past their immediate attractions—the plasmatic, free-form, potent movement of painted bodies—toward those elements of the image that are static (a newspaper insert, a background painting) or repeated (cycled motion) or fleeting (flicker) or imperceptible (a single frame).

Consider, as a final example, Disney's *Cinderella* (1950). *Cinderella*, certainly more than *Sniffles Bells the Cat*, is a cartoon that is not a cartoon. Its main characters are humans, who speak and walk and run and sing like humans. Yes, like *Sniffles Bells the Cat*, *Cinderella* has talking, anthropomorphized mice. And a key sequence stars a Fairy Godmother, whom we might understand as a proxy for the animator, transforming those mice into horses (and a horse into a coachman and a pumpkin into a coach) before our very eyes. With just a wave of her wand and a gibberish shibboleth ("Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo"), the Fairy Godmother both evokes the trope of the animator's self-figuration common to early animation and sets in motion a series of metamorphoses, of the sort only cartoons are capable of. But those mice are hardly Mickey Mouse. Their bodies cohere; their movements are circumscribed by the laws of physics; nothing about them "disavow[s] experience."[12] Their transformation into horses takes place in just a short succession of frames and is obscured by a flurry of sparkles from the Fairy Godmother's wand. This moment of metamorphosis is not revelatory. It does not challenge the limits of representation, as Eisenstein described Mickey's movements, and wholly lacks the improvisatory and miraculous character of Mickey's existence, as identified by Walter Benjamin.

Still, most contemporary critics singled out the mice (along with the film's other animal characters) and the "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo" sequence as the film's highlights. A critic for *Showman's Trade Review* extolled "the blue birds, red birds, mice, the dog, cat and horse" for adding an "element of surprise" to an otherwise

familiar story, while a review in *Harrison's Reports* declared them to be "as irresistible as any Disney ever created."[13] Bosley Crowther, writing in the *New York Times*, reserved special praise for Disney's anonymous "army of craftsmen," remarking, "Whoever engineered the sequence of the pumpkin transformation in this film—the magical change to coach and horses—deserves an approving hand." Crowther was less generous, however, in his evaluation of the design and animation of the film's human figures: "They're banal."[14] Cinderella, for instance, has no ears and barely even a nub of a nose; the very facial features that would normally be prime candidates for comic exaggeration (just ask Dumbo) are instead discreetly tucked away or only hinted at. Her body does not, indeed, cannot smear, multiply, or fragment. Thus, when the Fairy Godmother gives the poor maidservant appropriate attire for the royal ball, Cinderella herself does not change shape, contort, twist, contract. She just gets a new hairdo (which still conceals her ears) and a fancy dress.

But, like *Sniffles Bells the Cat*, *Cinderella* also simulates deep-focus cinematography to striking effect. The technique is used throughout the royal ball sequence, when Cinderella is always in the extreme background of the shot, occasionally joined by the Prince. In the extreme foreground, meanwhile, is either a static decorative object (an urn, a tree, a column) or a character (such as the Prince's father or Cinderella's stepmother or stepsisters) straining to get a better glimpse at the mysterious woman in the distance (fig. 5.6). "Take a look at that, you pompous windbag! Who is she? Do you know her?" the King asks. "I know I've never seen her," one stepsister remarks, to which her mother replies, "Nor I." In the entire sequence, Cinderella only appears once in close-up, and she is in that moment engaged in an intimate dance with the Prince; no one else is privy to her face. Deep-focus cinematography, as it is here deployed, has a clear formal function, first reinforcing Cinderella's inscrutability for her rivals and the audience alike and then placing Cinderella and the Prince on a plane apart from the world around them—their love belongs to them alone.

Kracauer could be very well have been thinking of this sequence when he devoted a passage of *Theory of Film* (1960) to excoriating Disney's "growing tendency toward camera-reality":

> Disney shoots his sham nature as he would the real one, with the camera now panning over a huge crowd, now swooping down on a single face in it. The effects thus produced make us time and again forget that the crowd and the face in it have been devised on a drawing board. They might have been photographed as well. In these cartoons false devotion to the cinematic approach inexorably stifles the draftsman's imagination.[15]

The freedom of Cohl, who managed to conjure a world out of the flat drawing surface, has been supplanted by the literal translation, and hence dilution, of cinematographic codes into paint. The layout artist who merely copies photographic

FIGURE 5.6. Deep-focus compositions in *Cinderella* (Disney, 1950).

representation is no more of an artist than the inker, following the paths laid down by another. Kracauer's critique is thus premised on a claim about the qualitative distinction between artistic or creative labor, the expressive capacity of which flows from the mind of the singular artist, and manual or noncreative labor, which is shackled to images generated by another, be it human or machine.

But the "draftsman's imagination" is a red herring. It presupposes, first, that there is a rigid division between creative and manual labor and, second, that this division matters for how we experience art. This book has striven to break down that division. Ultimately, the labor that shapes our aesthetic experience of animated cartoons is our own.

We work at watching animation in order that we might play. We scan the deep-focus composition in order to find Cinderella, and in the process take in its sumptuous blues and pinks, the shadows that have been painted and the shadows that have been photographed, the three-dimensionality of two dimensions. "The child plays at being not only a shopkeeper or teacher," Benjamin writes of mimetic behavior, "but also a windmill and a train."[16] We imitate the animator, the inker, and the camera operator, but also the pen, the exposure sheet, the projector. It is not only our attention and will that gives the film meaning, but also our imagination.

In *The Book of Disquiet* (1982), the poet Fernando Pessoa describes a tram ride in which he studies at length the dress of the woman sitting in front of him:

> I see the material it's made of, the work involved in making it—since it's a dress and not just material—and I see in the delicate embroidery around the neck the silk thread with which it was embroidered and all the work that went into that. And immediately, as if in a primer on political economy, I see before me the factories and all the different jobs: the factory where the material was made; the factory that made the darker colored thread that ornaments with curlicues the neck of the dress; and I see the different workshops in the factories, the machines, the workmen, the seamstresses. My eyes' inward gaze even penetrates into the offices, where I see the managers trying to keep calm and the figures set out in the account books, but that's not all: beyond that I see into the domestic lives of those who spend their working hours in these factories and offices . . .

He is entranced. He grows dizzy. He leaves the tram "exhausted, like a sleepwalker, having lived a whole life."[17] Looking is laborious. But looking is also dreaming.