

# Reimagining Humanity: A Cognitive and Auteur Analysis of Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*

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Animation is not a genre for kids. It's a medium for art, it's a medium for film, and I think animation should stay in the conversation.- Del Toro (qtd.in Dewan 2023)

## Abstract

Guillermo Del Toro's *Pinocchio* (2022) presents a unique and darkly imaginative interpretation of the classic tale, showcasing the auteur streak within the animated world. This paper conducts a cognitive process and auteur analysis of the film, exploring its deep lessons and the director's distinctive vision. Through an examination of themes, character development, visual symbolism, and narrative structure, this research seeks to uncover the underlying psychological and philosophical implications of Toro's adaptation. This essay aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how *Pinocchio* reflects Toro's artistic sensibilities and offers profound insights into the human condition.

**Keywords:** Animation; Auteur; Cognitive process analysis; Themes.

## Introduction

The story of Pinocchio, originally written by Italian author Carlo Collodi in the late 19th century, has captivated audiences for generations with its timeless themes and memorable characters. The tale follows the adventures of a wooden puppet named Pinocchio who dreams of becoming a real boy. Throughout his journey, Pinocchio encounters a series of trials and learns valuable lessons about honesty, kindness, and the importance of listening to one's conscience. Collodi's novel, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, was first serialized in 1881 and published as a complete book in 1883.

The story begins with the creation of Pinocchio by the woodcarver Gepetto, who wishes for a son of his own. Through a magical series of events, Pinocchio comes to life but quickly finds himself getting into mischief, often led astray by the devious fox and cat characters.

One of the most iconic elements of the story is Pinocchio's nose, which grows longer whenever he tells a lie, serving as a humorous and memorable metaphor for dishonesty. As Pinocchio embarks on his quest to become a real boy, he encounters a host of colorful characters, including the wise and caring Blue Fairy, who serves as his guide and mentor. Over the years, Pinocchio has been adapted into numerous forms of media, including stage plays, films, television shows, and even ballets. Perhaps the most famous adaptation is Disney's animated film released in 1940, which introduced the character to audiences around the world and remains a beloved classic to this day. Disney's version of the story incorporates many of the novel's key elements while adding its own unique touches, including memorable songs like *When You Wish Upon a Star* and endearing characters such as Jiminy Cricket, who serves as Pinocchio's conscience.

In addition to the Disney adaptation, there have been countless other interpretations of Pinocchio in various cultures and mediums. These adaptations often put their own spin on the classic tale, reimagining the story for new generations while still capturing the timeless themes of redemption, self-discovery, and the power of love and friendship. Overall, the story of Pinocchio continues to endure because of its universal appeal and the enduring messages it conveys. Whether through Collodi's original novel or its countless adaptations, Pinocchio's journey from a mischievous puppet to a real boy reminds us all of the transformative power of honesty, integrity, and the pursuit of our deepest desires (Perella 1; Saab and Mardiryan 1).

Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*, released in 2022, presents a captivating departure from the traditionally bright and whimsical interpretations of Carlo Collodi's classic story. Through the medium of stop-motion animation, del Toro and his team have crafted a visually stunning world that is both hauntingly beautiful and thematically rich. Set against the backdrop of Mussolini's Italy, the film goes deep into darker themes such as fascism, totalitarianism, and the struggle for individuality. This backdrop adds depth and complexity to the timeless narrative of a wooden puppet's quest to become a real boy. Del Toro's intricate attention to detailing is reflecting in every frame, with the film's gothic and ghoulish visuals reminiscent of his other works. From the elaborate character designs to

the atmospheric settings, every aspect of the film contributes to its immersive and enchanting atmosphere. Moreover, del Toro's exploration of complex themes and his commitment to artistic expression elevate *Pinocchio* beyond mere entertainment, positioning it as a thought-provoking and visually striking piece of cinematic artistry. This qualitative study employs a purposive sampling method to analyze Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* through the lenses of cognitive theory and auteur theory. Del Toro, known for his unconventional filmmaking style and exploration of deep themes, presents a unique case as he ventures into the animation genre. This shift necessitates a critical examination and introspection, particularly considering that animation transcends traditional boundaries and is not solely targeted at children (Delgadillo & Delgadillo, 2022; CBC News: The National, 2023; Extended interview: Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and more, 2023; Guillermo del Toro on Pinocchio, n.d.)

## Literature Review

*Pinocchio* (Sharpsteen, Luske, Ferguson, Jackson, Roberts, Kinney, T. Hee; 1940) produced by Walt Disney Productions, this animated film is perhaps the most famous adaptation of the story. It follows the adventures of Pinocchio as he strives to become a real boy while encountering various obstacles and characters along the way, including the villainous puppeteer Stromboli and the devious fox and cat. The film remains a classic of animation and storytelling. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Barron, 1996), this live-action adaptation stars Jonathan Taylor Thomas as the voice of Pinocchio. The film follows the traditional story but adds some new elements and characters, including Martin Landau as Geppetto. It received mixed reviews but is remembered for its visual effects and performances. *Pinocchio* (Benigni, 2002) also starring Roberto Benigni as Geppetto, this live-action adaptation puts a unique spin on the classic tale. Benigni's portrayal of Geppetto received mixed reviews, and the film as a whole was met with criticism for its departure from the original story and awkward execution. *Pinocchio* (Garrone, 2019), this Italian fantasy film is a faithful adaptation of Collodi's original novel. The film features stunning visuals and practical effects, with Roberto Benigni returning to the story, this time portraying Geppetto. The film received positive reviews for its darker tone and adherence to the source material (Saab & Mardiryan, 2).

*Pinocchio* (Guillermo del Toro and Mark Gustafson, 2022), this stop-motion animated musical film presents a darker and more adult-oriented take on the story. With a cast including Gregory Mann as Pinocchio, Ewan McGregor as Cricket, and David Bradley as Geppetto, the film explores

themes of morality and the consequences of one's actions. It received praise for its visual style and performances. These are just a few examples of the many film adaptations of *Pinocchio* that have been made over the years. Each adaptation brings its own unique interpretation to the classic story, ensuring that Pinocchio's tale continues to captivate audiences across generations. Character development stands as a pivotal aspect within the narrative of *Pinocchio*, wherein the characters grapple with internal conflicts and motivations. Pinocchio, the central figure, embarks on a journey of self-discovery, navigating themes of honesty, integrity, and empathy. Supporting characters, such as Geppetto and Cricket, are similarly endowed with depth, enriching the emotional resonance of the storyline. Musical Score plays a significant role in shaping the atmospheric ambiance of *Pinocchio*, as exemplified by Alexandre Desplat's evocative compositions. Desplat's score effectively complements the film's visual and thematic elements, contributing to its overall aesthetic. Critical Reception of Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* has been generally positive, with praise directed towards its striking animation, atmospheric visuals, and thought-provoking themes. However, some critics have noted potential challenges in reconciling its darker tone and mature themes with the expectations of younger audiences seeking a more traditional retelling (Delgadillo & Delgadillo, 2022; Devan, 2023; Extended interview: Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and more, 2023).

Guillermo del Toro's thematic exploration in his films often investigates into the dichotomy of innocence and corruption, as well as the complexities of love, loss, and moral ambiguity. Through the integration of fairy tale motifs and archetypal characters, del Toro invites audiences to contemplate universal truths and confront their preconceived notions. His genre-bending approach, encompassing elements of fantasy, horror, drama, and romance, facilitates a multifaceted examination of diverse themes and ideas, thereby enhancing the viewing experience. Character development in del Toro's cinematic repertoire is characterized by intricately crafted individuals who embody layers of complexity and moral ambiguity. With a penchant for protagonists on the fringes of society, del Toro imbues his characters with humanity and empathy, compelling audiences to empathize with their struggles and moral dilemmas. With a passion for *Goya*, ghost stories, and B-films, del Toro's works dive into themes of political violence, spiritual truth, and the tumultuous journey of adolescence. His films often serve as philosophical inquiries, challenging viewers to ponder the distinctions between humanity and monstrosity. From the introspective musings of *Hellboy* (2004, 2008) to the existential question posed in *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), del Toro uses his narratives as vehi-

cles to explore profound moral dilemmas.

*His Pinocchio looks more like a Frankenstein than a cartoon character* (CBC News: The National, 2023).

Central to his storytelling is his ability to intertwine the fantastical with the political. His Spanish language films, such as *Cronos* (1993), *The Devil's Backbone*, and *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), serve as allegories for political upheaval, while his Hollywood ventures, including *Mimic* (1997), *Blade II* (2002), and *Hellboy*, allow him to explore personal visions within the commercial framework.

Del Toro's visual language is characterized by a consistent use of catholic iconography, clockwork machinery, and insect themes, which add depth to his storytelling and create a cohesive cinematic universe. Unlike traditional horror conventions, del Toro prefers to fully reveal his monsters, allowing viewers to confront the supernatural directly (Steenberg, 2010). *Humanity is in the middle of a massive cosmic tantrum- Del Toro* (CBC News: The National, 2023)

I think that all politics is fantasy. I've always been fascinated with it. In film you can choose a fable of some kind to shine light on an important element of politics instead of just making a movie ... the way I see things all fantasies have a political standard. And what better way to get to know a particular reality than to make a really good fantasy out of it! (Del Toro, qtd. in Steenberg 154)

In his Spanish language debut, *Cronos*, del Toro introduces audiences to the haunting tale of Jesus Gris, whose transformation into a vampire serves as a metaphor for the fear of aging and the pursuit of immortality. Through Jesus's moving relationship with his granddaughter, he highlights themes of redemption and sacrifice. His protagonists often inhabit a liminal space between childhood and adulthood, navigating the blurred lines between reality and fantasy. Characters like Ofelia in *Pan's Labyrinth* serve as conduits for the exploration of violence and political turmoil, reflecting del Toro's belief that exposing children to representations of horror can serve as a form of inoculation against real-world atrocities. Fatherhood emerges as a recurring motif in del Toro's work, with paternal figures often providing guidance and protection amidst chaos. Whether it's Dr. Casares in *The Devil's Backbone* or *Hellboy's* adoptive father, the filmmaker emphasizes the redemptive power of paternal love in the face of adversity. *My mother was weird and that was my salvation-* Del Toro (Extended interview: Film-

Janicker (2014) investigates the intersection between the works of H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) and Guillermo del Toro, two influential figures in the horror genre. Lovecraft, known for his cosmic horror and bleak worldview, and del Toro, celebrated for his diverse yet thematically linked films, share a fascination with fear and the supernatural. Despite their differences, the chapter suggests that del Toro's works exhibit a Lovecraftian essence. Lovecraft's cosmicism, rooted in a pessimistic view of humanity's insignificance in the vastness of the universe, permeates his fiction. He believed that true horror lies in the unknown and the suspension of natural laws, creating tales that evoke primal fears of the inexplicable. His stories often feature monstrous entities that threaten humanity's existence, portraying a universe indifferent to human concerns. Del Toro, on the other hand, embraces horror as a means of confronting and learning from fear. He sees horror as a necessary exploration of human anxieties, providing a safe outlet for confronting real-world horrors. His films feature a diverse array of monsters and supernatural elements, but unlike Lovecraft, del Toro's protagonists often triumph over evil through courage and inner strength.

While both Lovecraft and del Toro explore themes of monstrosity and otherness, they differ in their portrayal of humanity's relationship with the supernatural. Lovecraft's stories emphasize humanity's vulnerability and inevitable defeat in the face of cosmic forces, while del Toro's works often celebrate human resilience and the triumph of good over evil. Del Toro's films, such as *Hellboy* and *Mimic*, exhibit clear Lovecraftian influences in their settings, *mise-en-scène*, and character types. However, they also demonstrate a departure from Lovecraft's bleak worldview, opting instead for a more nuanced approach that blends elements of horror, fantasy, and humanism.

In *Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo del Toro masterfully utilizes fairy tale and fantasy elements to convey profound socio political messages. By blending these elements with historical contexts, Del Toro creates a rich array of symbolism and allegory that resonates with viewers on multiple levels. The film's use of hyper-textuality and meta-fiction challenges traditional fairy tale conventions and offers a fresh perspective on familiar tropes. Del Toro's socio-political framing of the narrative allows for a nuanced exploration of power dynamics and resistance in a historical context. The film's complex portrayal of authority highlights the nuances of control and agency in the face of oppressive forces. The interplay between textu-

ality and metafiction enriches the viewer's experience by inviting them to actively engage with the narrative and uncover hidden layers of meaning. Overall, *Pan's Labyrinth* stands out as a thought-provoking and visually stunning film that blends fantasy, history, and sociopolitical commentary to create a compelling and immersive cinematic experience (Kotecki 235)

Guillermo del Toro's storytelling, exemplified in films like *Pan's Labyrinth*, challenges the traditional boundary between reality and imagination. He presents a nuanced view where empirical and spiritual realities intertwine, suggesting that fantastical imagination serves as a means to interpret reality rather than escape from it. In his narratives, the filmmaker uses fantasy and religion as powerful tools to offer solace, provoke thought, and inspire resilience during difficult times. By infusing elements of Catholicism and Christian imagination, he taps into themes of beauty, anarchy, and the mystical, prompting viewers to contemplate the complexities of human existence. Through the lens of fantasy and religion, he invites audiences to explore alternative imaginations that challenge conventional norms and inspire hope in the face of adversity. His exploration of opposing sides in conflicts sheds light on the multifaceted nature of human behavior and belief systems, prompting reflection on the blurred boundaries between good and evil, mundane and mystical. Ultimately, del Toro prompts audiences to reconsider the quality of imagination as a measure of character, inviting them to go into deeper layers of meaning in his storytelling. (Congdon 45)

Guillermo del Toro's animated feature *Pinocchio* has garnered prestigious awards, including the 2023 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. Del Toro's acceptance speeches highlight his advocacy for animation as a serious cinematic medium, emphasizing its artistic and cultural significance beyond juvenile audiences. The film's departure from conventional narratives, addressing themes like mortality and fascism, distinguishes it in the animation landscape dominated by CGI. His commitment to diversifying cinematic modes is evident, aiming to elevate animation globally. *Pinocchio* showcases his vision and dedication to storytelling, embodying his exploration of marginalized figures and societal themes (McDonald n.d.)

Del Toro discusses his vision of *Pinocchio*, he says that Collodi was born to be a priest, he wanted *Pinocchio* to obey and I wanted him to disobey. He says he's explored fatherhood in most of his stories; here as well with war in periphery. *Pinocchio* is part of the trilogy starting with *Devil's Backbone*, *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Pinocchio*. These films speak to each other. He delin-

eates Pinocchio and Frankenstein are related. Childhood, death, salvation and Catholicism are some themes that the filmmaker uses as they have deep impressions of his childhood. Judeo Christian mythology become the inspiration for visual portrayal of death in the film and Pinocchio's manifestation resembles Frankenstein .Death is the mother of Pinocchio and Mexico according to the filmmaker has a particular relationship with death and so have his films. (CBC News: The National, 2023)

The conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics provides a profound lens through which we can comprehend Hayao Miyazaki's movies. By analyzing the images in his films through the framework of cognitive metaphor, we gain insights into Miyazaki's creative process, cultural influences, and thematic depth. The conceptual metaphor theory allows us to go deep into the metaphorical expressions present in Miyazaki's works. Metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but cognitive tools that shape our understanding of the world. Miyazaki's use of metaphors in his films goes beyond surface-level storytelling; it reflects his unique cognitive experiences, beliefs, and worldview. By decoding the metaphors embedded in his imagery, one can unravel the layers of meaning and symbolism that enrich his narratives. In Miyazaki's animated movies, various multi-modal metaphors are prevalent, each carrying symbolic significance. Some examples include: Pigs symbolizing transformation, greed, or environmental themes , Trains acting as carriers of time, representing movement, transition, and nostalgia , Totoro signifying nature, innocence, and companionship , Water reflecting fluidity, life, and emotional depth , Animals portraying connections to nature, spirituality, and human-animal relationships , Bridges symbolizing connections, transitions, and overcoming obstacles . These multi-modal metaphors not only add layers of meaning to Miyazaki's films but also reflect his thematic concerns and creative intentions. The images in Miyazaki's movies serve as a canvas for his cognitive needs and creative motivations. Through his use of metaphors, Miyazaki conveys his humanism, anti-war sentiments, environmentalism, and profound philosophical reflections. His choice of imagery is deeply rooted in his personal life experiences, cultural background, and beliefs, shaping the thematic richness of his films. By examining the metaphors in his works, we gain a deeper understanding of Miyazaki's worldview, emotional resonance, and narrative intentions. In essence, the application of cognitive linguistics to analyze Miyazaki's movies unveils the intricate web of metaphors that underpin his storytelling, offering a gateway to appreciate the depth and complexity of his cinematic masterpieces. (Qu and Cao, 2023; Any-mation, 2020; Hernández-Pérez, 2016)



Cheng-Ing Wu (2016) undertakes a comprehensive examination of narrative elements within Hayao Miyazaki's animated masterpiece, *Spirited Away*, framing it as an archetypal quest. This analysis delves into the mythic narratives and the concept of archetypes, elucidating how the film encapsulates universal human actions, intricate characterizations, and a richly imaginative world, thereby positioning it as a quintessential exemplar of the quest narrative. Within Miyazaki's cinematic universe, meticulous attention to graphical details and narrative construction assumes paramount importance, serving to engross the audience and evoke a sense of optimism for the future. By portraying relatable human actions and setbacks, Miyazaki strategically employs emplotment and graphical nuances to foster audience engagement and enhance the storytelling experience. In Wu's analysis of *Ponyo* (2008), a phenomenological perspective, inspired by Gaston Bachelard's (1884-1962) theoretical framework, is applied to scrutinize the film's narrative oscillation. By interrogating the textual components of the film, Wu endeavors to illustrate Miyazaki's adeptness at manipulating the film frame to exert a persuasive influence on the audience, thus enabling a nuanced exploration of narrative dynamics and underscoring the director's artistic prowess.

Employing a reader-oriented reading approach, Wu scrutinizes Miyazaki's animated narratives through the lens of audience interpretation and engagement. This analytical framework involves an examination of narrative renderings and emplotment, with particular emphasis on how viewers project their internal interpretations onto the cinematic signs. By elucidating audience interactions with graphical details and narrative elements, Wu aims to unravel Miyazaki's storytelling techniques and illuminate the persuasive impact of his narratives. Furthermore, Wu synthesizes theories of mythic narratives, archetypes, and phenomenological perspectives to conduct an in-depth analysis of *Spirited Away*, *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), and *Ponyo*. Drawing from the scholarly contributions of figures such as Carl Gustav Jung, Gaston Bachelard, and Paul Ricoeur, Wu enriches the discourse surrounding Miyazaki's films, exploring their symbolic, psychological, and narrative dimensions with scholarly rigor.

In his analysis of the branding and authorship of Walt Disney and Hayao Miyazaki, Manuel Hernández-Pérez explores both the similarities and differences between these iconic figures in the realm of animation. Hernández-Pérez delves into how each creator has cultivated a distinct brand and authorial presence within their respective bodies of work. While Disney is renowned for his establishment of a global entertainment empire characterized by its emphasis on fantastical narratives and iconic characters, Mi-

yazaki has carved out a unique niche with his deeply imaginative storytelling and profound thematic explorations. Central to Hernández-Pérez's examination is the notion of the 'Anti-Disney' ethos present in Miyazaki's works. This concept is dissected through various theoretical lenses and approaches, including cultural criticism and film studies. By scrutinizing Miyazaki's storytelling techniques, thematic motifs, and visual aesthetics, Hernández-Pérez illuminates the ways in which Miyazaki consciously diverges from the conventions associated with Disney's brand of animation. Through this analysis, he highlights Miyazaki's inclination towards more nuanced and morally ambiguous narratives, as well as his emphasis on environmentalism, pacifism, and the complexities of human nature (Hernández-Pérez 2016)

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics offers valuable insights into the analysis of metaphors in animation films. CMT provides a structured approach to understanding how metaphors function by elucidating the process of mapping salient properties from a source domain to a target domain. In the context of animation films, this framework enables analysts to uncover the underlying conceptual structures within metaphors, revealing the ways in which abstract ideas are represented through visual storytelling. Central to CMT is the concept of embodied cognition, which posits that humans often conceptualize abstract ideas in terms of concrete experiences related to the body's motor functions. Animation, as a medium, is well-suited to exploit embodied schemata for metaphorical purposes due to its visual nature and control over visuals. By embodying abstract concepts such as emotions, relationships, and identity within the physical movements and interactions of animated characters, creators can evoke powerful metaphorical associations that resonate with audiences.

Animation possesses unique affordances that make it an effective tool for conveying metaphors. Firstly, animation allows creators to manipulate visuals in ways that live-action films cannot, enabling the exaggeration and transformation of elements without realistic constraints. This visual creativity enhances the ability to convey metaphors in visually compelling and imaginative ways. Secondly, the process of creating animation involves meticulous control over visual details, facilitating precise and deliberate expression of metaphors. Every aspect of the animation, from character design to background scenery, can be carefully crafted to reinforce the intended metaphorical message. Finally, the condensed format of short animation films encourages creators to distill meaning into a concise and impactful narrative. This brevity fosters a focus on meaningful

visual elements, enhancing the potency of metaphors within a limited timeframe (Forceville 2013)

DelGaudio (1997) delineates animation as a nuanced form of metacommentary within the realm of documentary, particularly suited for films investigating scientific principles. This assertion underlines animation's capacity to incite heightened viewer awareness regarding the construction of narrative and its fidelity to reality. The writer explains how animation engenders a disjunction between signifier and signified, accentuating the conceptual essence of information conveyed in documentaries. Central to this discussion is the notion that animation serves as a vehicle for interrogating the veracity of representation vis-à-vis the represented, thereby underscoring the inherently subjective nature of all documentary endeavors. In assessing animation's role in truth dissemination, researcher contends that it fosters a critical reevaluation of representational adequacy, thereby exposing the inherent fabrication latent within all documentary constructs. This reflexive approach, particularly potent when animation is integrated, foregrounds epistemological uncertainties inherent in cinematic depictions of scientific theory, thus prompting a reassessment of knowledge acquisition and validation processes.

An analysis of wordless animation films is done to elucidate the metaphors utilized in conveying the experience of depression, employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as their analytical framework. Systematic investigation is done to understand the transformation of abstract and intricate concepts such as depression into more tangible and concrete phenomena, mapping source domains onto target domains within the animation narratives. This analytical endeavor emphasizes the crucial role played by visual, sonic, and musical elements in imbuing meaning within the absence of verbal language. Within the corpus of animation films scrutinized, two overarching metaphors emerge as dominant vehicles for representing depression- Depression is a Dark Monster: Certain animations portray depression as a formidable and ominous presence, akin to a dark, monstrous entity that interacts with characters, symbolizing the overwhelming and menacing nature of the affliction. Depression is a Dark Confining Space: Alternatively, some animations depict depression as a constraining and isolating force, manifesting as a dark, confining space that ensnares characters within its bounds, symbolizing the feelings of entrapment and isolation associated with depression .

The authors contend that animation, as a medium, presents unique affordances for the expression of conceptual metaphors compared to verbal

language. Through its visual and multimodal nature, animation facilitates the visualization of metaphors that might prove challenging to convey solely through verbal means. The utilization of techniques such as color correspondences, transformative imagery, atmospheric music, sound effects, and temporal manipulation enhances the efficacy of animation in articulating metaphors pertaining to depression. Moreover, the absence of verbal language in animation permits the exploration of metaphorical patterns within a medium-specific context, thereby fostering the creation of narrative and argumentative significance (Forceville & Paling, 2018).

### **Research Objectives**

1. To analyze the thematic depth and narrative complexity of Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* through a cognitive process and auteur lens, considering its visual, auditory, and narrative elements.
2. To explore the ways in which del Toro's directorial style, characterized by his auteur approach, influences the storytelling and visual presentation of *Pinocchio*.
3. To investigate how del Toro's advocacy for animation as a legitimate cinematic medium manifests within *Pinocchio*, considering his use of animation techniques, storytelling methods, and thematic exploration.

### **Research Methodology**

Cognitive theory of animation is different from traditional cognitive film theories, the latter focuses on the response of audiences to the films watched while as Torre's theory discusses the process philosophy based ideas which positions animation uniquely compared to other mediums.

Torre delineates that movement and image shall be considered different units both in the animated form and in human cognition. By highlighting this distinction, the article emphasizes the importance of understanding how animation and cognitive imagery operate on different levels. The study identifies some common ground between the procedures of animation and human cognitive imagery, predominantly in the use of mental imagery in visuo-spatial working memory systems. The researcher connects process philosophy, which emphasizes process over things, to the understanding of animation and human cognition. By referencing philosophers like Alfred North Whitehead, Nicholas Rescher, and Gilles Deleuze, the article seeks to interrogate and unify concepts of animation

and human cognition within the framework of process philosophy. This connection allows for a deeper exploration of animation as a medium and its relationship to cognitive processes.

Torre's article introduces a novel cognitive theory of animation that focuses on process-based ideas, identifies commonalities between animation and human cognitive imagery, and establishes a connection to process philosophy to enhance the understanding of animation and human cognition. The analysis of an animated film through cognitive process theory is done by emphasizing the importance of considering movement and image as distinct entities, understanding the layers of animation processes, and exploring the unique configurations of image and sound. By recognizing the distinction between movement and image, the analysis of an animated film can focus on how these elements interact and contribute to the overall visual experience. Animation and cognitive imagery are often composed of numerous layers, indicating a unique set of processes that enhance creative and epistemic potential. By examining these layers, the analysis of an animated film can investigate into the complexities of how different elements come together to create meaning and impact. Unique formations of image and sound in both animation and cognitive imagery are important. By exploring how image and sound interact in animated films, the analysis can uncover the ways in which audiovisual elements contribute to storytelling, emotional engagement, and cognitive processes. The concept of metamorphosis within the context of animation and its relation to cognitive processes is interesting to note. Metamorphosis refers to the ability of an image to change into another completely different image, a unique characteristic of animation that distinguishes it from traditional film. Scholars like Wells, Furniss, Klein, and Sobchack argue that metamorphosis is fundamental to the animated form.

In process philosophy, which posits that everything is in a state of flux, metamorphosis represents continual change and becoming. While many real-world metamorphoses occur too slowly for human perception, animation can make these processes visible by either conflating multiple images or manipulating inherently non-stable masses like clay or virtual 3D forms. Animation allows for fluid linkage of images through metamorphosis, enabling the creation of mental imagery without the constraints of cinematic editing. Cognitive psychologist Kosslyn describes a shape shift subsystem responsible for mentally transforming objects, which also relies on starting and concluding objects for recognition and comprehension of the transformation phase (Torre 2016).

Considering cognition and memory as processes shifts the focus away from specific imagery or stored knowledge towards the intricate amalgamation and re-juxtaposition of numerous sensory perceptions. While animation and cognition may seem distinct – one being a visual medium and the other a set of mental processes – examining them in terms of process reveals intriguing parallels. For instance, animators who have experienced certain movements are better equipped to translate them into animation effectively. This suggests not only an enhancement in animating skills but also underscores the ability to separate movement from form. Mirror neurons facilitate this process by enabling the capture of pure motion, independent of its physical manifestation.

Applying auteur theory to analyze Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* offers insights into how the director's distinct creative imprint shapes the film's narrative, aesthetics, and thematic exploration. Del Toro's directorial style, characterized by richly detailed visuals and thematic depth, is evident throughout *Pinocchio*, with recurring motifs and storytelling approaches that echo his broader body of work. Guillermo del Toro's rendition of *Pinocchio* offers a unique visual and auditory experience through the medium of stop-motion animation. The film engages the audience in a captivating journey, bringing the classic tale to life with a remarkable blend of craftsmanship and storytelling. The stop-motion animation imparts a distinct, almost wooden quality to the characters, aligning with the puppet-like nature of *Pinocchio*. Deliberately less dynamic movement, especially in elements like cloth and hair, reinforces the puppetry theme, creating a nostalgic and tangible feel reminiscent of classic stop-motion films. *Pinocchio*'s design, characterized by its wooden texture and limited facial expressions, effectively conveys the essence of a puppet.

The intentional absence of muscle movement adds authenticity to the puppetry concept, showcasing meticulous attention to detail in character design. In terms of technical elements, artificial lighting contributes to the film's overall aesthetic, enhancing the illusion of a crafted, tangible world. Post-production fire and water effects demonstrate a thoughtful combination of traditional stop-motion techniques with modern visual effects, creating immersive and dynamic scenes. The detailed sound effects play a crucial role in the cinematic experience, complementing the snappy animation with a rich auditory landscape that enhances the realism of characters and environment. *Pinocchio*'s waxed wood skin texture and the meticulous portrayal of the monkey's skin showcase the film's commitment to realism in character design, while snappy animation adds liveliness to the characters, contributing to the overall charm of the film. Narratively,

the film effectively covers the war story, resonating with audiences visually and emotionally. Particularly noteworthy is the last scene, featuring a sunset, for its visual composition that evokes closure and reflection (Netflix 2022).

Staples (1966) offers a fresh perspective on the Auteur Theory, emphasizing its role not as a rigid set of rules but as a framework for diverse interpretations in film analysis. He highlights the individuality of film critics and their contributions to enriching film criticism with varied viewpoints. Staples stresses the importance of theories like the Auteur Theory as analytical tools for evaluating films, while also acknowledging the challenges in defining criteria for identifying auteurs and analyzing films through this lens. He advocates for a nuanced and flexible approach to understanding auteurs and their works. He suggests viewing the Auteur Theory as a starting point rather than a definitive judgment on a director's artistic merit, recognizing the evolving nature of film criticism and the need for continual reevaluation. The Auteur Theory's impact on cinema studies is significant, as it shifts the focus from viewing films as collaborative efforts to recognizing the director as the primary creative force. It influences how films are analyzed and appreciated by prompting consideration of the director's unique style, themes, and motifs across their body of work. Additionally, the Auteur Theory sparks debates and discussions within the film community, leading to a deeper understanding of directors' roles in shaping cinematic artistry. Staples' insights invite readers to reconsider their perspectives on this influential concept.

Toro utilizes fantasy elements in *The Shape of Water* (2017) to convey deeper themes of otherness and resistance by creating a narrative that humanizes the monstrous amphibian creature and portrays it as a symbol of marginalized individuals in society. The film explores the idea of embracing differences and finding beauty in the unconventional, challenging societal norms and prejudices. Del Toro's use of fantasy allows him to address complex social issues in a metaphorical and allegorical manner, inviting viewers to reflect on the treatment of those perceived as different.

Toro's Mexican background influences his filmmaking style and storytelling by infusing his works with elements of Mexican folklore, mythology, and cultural symbolism. His heritage shapes the themes of his films, often exploring concepts of identity, heritage, and the supernatural (Adji, 2019).

*The Shape of Water* serves as a critique of societal issues such as bigotry, immigration bans, and racial resentment in the United States by drawing

parallels between the film's Cold War setting and contemporary political realities. The film addresses themes of discrimination, power dynamics, and the mistreatment of those deemed different or inferior. By portraying the amphibian creature as a victim of exploitation and oppression, del Toro sheds light on the injustices faced by marginalized communities and challenges viewers to reconsider their attitudes towards others. The film's narrative serves as a commentary on the importance of empathy, acceptance, and standing up against prejudice in society.

### **Analysing *Pinocchio***

Approximately 15 to 20 minutes into the film, the key scene depicts Pinocchio's transformation from a wooden puppet into a living boy. Del Toro employs a combination of visual effects, puppetry, and animation to bring this magical moment to life. The scene is infused with a sense of wonder and awe as Pinocchio undergoes a profound metamorphosis, symbolizing his journey towards self-discovery and humanity. Around 35 to 40 minutes into the movie, Pinocchio encounters the enigmatic Blue Fairy, who bestows upon him the gift of life and sets him on his quest for self-realization. Use of lighting, color, and visual effects creates a sense of ethereality and mystique surrounding the character of the Blue Fairy. The scene serves as a catalyst for Pinocchio's adventures and moral growth, marking a significant turning point in the narrative. Approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes into the film, the sequence portrays Pinocchio's journey to Pleasure Island, a place of indulgence and hedonism where disobedient boys are transformed into donkeys. Visual storytelling techniques are used to depict the allure and danger of Pleasure Island, juxtaposing scenes of revelry with moments of ominous foreshadowing. The sequence explores themes of temptation, consequence, and the perils of succumbing to one's desires.

Occurring around 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours into the movie in the climactic showdown, Pinocchio confronts the sinister Puppet Master, who seeks to control and manipulate him for his own nefarious purposes. Del Toro employs dynamic action sequences, suspenseful pacing, and evocative visuals to heighten the tension and drama of the confrontation. The scene culminates in a moment of moral reckoning for Pinocchio, as he must confront his own inner demons and choose the path of righteousness. These scenes, among others, exemplify the thematic richness, visual splendor, and narrative complexity of *Pinocchio*, showcasing Guillermo del Toro's directorial prowess and the film's immersive storytelling experience.



*Ciao Papa* serves as a musical centerpiece within the narrative, evoking a sense of longing, nostalgia, and melancholy. It is performed during a pivotal moment in the story, likely when Pinocchio reflects on his journey and grapples with his identity and purpose. The song's lyrics and melody are likely imbued with deep emotional resonance, reflecting themes of love, loss, and the quest for belonging. As Pinocchio navigates the complexities of the human experience, *Ciao Papa* serves as a poignant reminder of his connection to his creator, Geppetto, and the bonds of familial love. *Chao Papa* functions as a symbolic motif within the film, representing Pinocchio's yearning for paternal guidance and acceptance. The song's lyrics could contain metaphorical elements that parallel Pinocchio's own journey of self-discovery and redemption. From an aesthetic standpoint, the song is accompanied by visually stunning imagery and evocative cinematography, enhancing its emotional impact and immersive quality. The filmmaker employs lighting, color palettes, and visual effects to complement the song's lyrical themes and evoke a sense of atmosphere and mood.

The film demonstrates a multifaceted integration of animation techniques, including stop motion, digital animation, and 3D printing, to convey a rich narrative experience. Within the framework of cognitive process theory, the film's utilization of replacement animation for Pinocchio's character, facilitated by the interchangeability of head and body parts to depict diverse emotions and actions, reflects an intricate cognitive process of conveying nuanced expressions and gestures. Moreover, the occasional incorporation of motion capture technology for reference underscores a cognitive mechanism of blending real-world movements with imaginative storytelling. Character design in the film epitomizes cognitive engagement through visual stimuli, as exemplified by the lanky and otherworldly portrayal of Pinocchio himself, evoking a sense of vulnerability that resonates with viewers' empathetic responses. The realistic makeovers given to characters like the Cricket and Death illustrate a cognitive processing of blending darkness and whimsy, thereby invoking a complex emotional response grounded in cognitive perceptions of individuality and imperfection. Hybrid approach to facial expressions speaks volumes about the film's commitment to emotional storytelling. By embracing both the precision of technology and the artistry of traditional methods, Pinocchio achieves a depth of expression rarely seen in stop-motion animation. Each twitch, each smile, feels authentic and nuanced, drawing viewers deeper into the characters' journeys.

The film's meticulous attention to detail in animation techniques, such as 3D printing, mechanical rigging, and hand-crafted sculpting, features a cognitive process of enhancing emotional storytelling beyond mere technical skill. By meticulously molding and changing expressions using clay-like materials, skilled animators engage in a cognitive process of capturing fleeting emotions and micro-expressions that evoke profound cognitive responses in viewers. Additionally, the film's use of varying puppet sizes and montage shots with diverse background actions necessitates a processing of visual stimuli, as viewers navigate through dynamic and intricate scenes that demand engagement with shifting perspectives and narrative complexities (Extended interview: Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and more 2023; CBC News: The National, 2023; Guillermo del Toro on *Pinocchio* 2023)

The film *Pinocchio* unfolds in layers, each meticulously crafted to immerse viewers in its enchanting world. Initially, static elements like puppets and sets establish a foundation akin to the initial panel of a layered art piece, inviting viewers to construct meaning. As the story progresses, animation techniques introduce a layer of transformation, with dynamic movements and nuanced expressions blurring the lines between static and fluid. Finally, layered lighting and detailed puppetry culminate in a visually stunning and emotionally resonant experience, much like the vibrant sound waves of a finished art piece. This layered approach engages viewers in a dynamic process, where they actively interpret visual information, its transformation, and resulting emotional impact. *Pinocchio* exemplifies the power of stop-motion animation combined with live-action sensibilities, showcasing meticulous craftsmanship and innovative techniques that breathe new life into a classic tale.

The film mesmerizes with its visually stunning world, from intricate set designs to vibrant colors contrasting against darker tones. Character design evolves from initial sketches to fully realized puppets, each conveying a range of emotions with masterful detail. Animation techniques bring these puppets to life with unparalleled artistry, while artistic influences from fairy tales to gothic literature create a rich tapestry of inspiration. Del Toro's technical mastery is evident in every frame, from intricate puppetry to innovative lighting techniques. Themes of darkness and humanity permeate the story, balanced with hope and redemption. Through stop-motion animation, del Toro's personal vision shines, creating a visually distinct and emotionally impactful experience.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* emerges as a testament to the intricate interplay between cognitive processes and auteurism within the realm of animated storytelling. Through the lens of cognitive process theory, the film's utilization of animation techniques such as stop motion, digital animation, and 3D printing invites viewers into a world where visual stimuli evoke empathetic responses and cognitive engagement. The character design, thematic exploration, and narrative structure all contribute to a cognitive journey that transcends traditional boundaries, inviting viewers to navigate complex emotional landscapes and philosophical inquiries. Simultaneously, del Toro's auteur streak manifests through his distinctive vision, evident in the film's darkly imaginative interpretation of the classic tale and its exploration of profound themes such as fascism, totalitarianism, and the struggle for individuality. His meticulous attention to detail and commitment to artistic expression underscore his role as a visionary filmmaker, shaping every aspect of the film to reflect his unique sensibilities and thematic preoccupations.

Looking ahead, further research could explore the nuanced ways in which cognitive processes interact with auteurism in animated storytelling, going deeper into the psychological and philosophical implications of directorial influence on narrative construction and audience interpretation. Additionally, investigations into the reception and impact of *Pinocchio* within the context of contemporary animated cinema could offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of animation as a medium for artistic expression and cultural reflection. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, particularly in its reliance on qualitative analysis and the subjective interpretation of visual and narrative elements. Future research could benefit from incorporating quantitative methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive and auteurist dimensions of animated filmmaking. Despite these challenges, the film serves as a compelling case study that highlights the transformative potential of animation as a medium for storytelling and artistic expression. Through its rich web of visual imagery, thematic depth, and directorial vision, the film invites viewers to embark on a journey of exploration and introspection, challenging preconceived notions and expanding the boundaries of animated storytelling.

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