

A close-up portrait of Michael Jackson wearing a black flight helmet with goggles resting on his forehead. He has dark, wavy hair and is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. He is wearing a yellow and white patterned shirt. The background is a solid grey color.

MICHAEL JACKSON BETWIXT AND BETWEEN: THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN 'LEAVE ME ALONE' (1989)

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Introduction

*'The bottom line is they don't know and everyone
is going to continue searching to find out whether
I'm gay, straight, or whatever
... And the longer it takes to discover this,
the more famous I will be.'*¹

* * *

'Michael's space-age diet', 'Bubbles the chimp bares all about Michael', 'Michael proposes to Liz', 'Michael to marry Brooke'. These may look like part of the usual rumors about Jackson frequently appearing in the media, however, they are not. Instead, these headlines are the opening scene of the music video for Jackson's song 'Leave Me Alone', released on January 2, 1989, and directed by Jim Blashfield. Jackson opens by singing the words:

*I don't care what you talkin' 'bout baby
I don't care what you say
Don't you come walkin' beggin' back mama
I don't care anyway*

'Leave Me Alone' is a response to the rumors that began to circulate in the media after the worldwide success of Jackson's 1982 album *Thriller*. It shows Jackson in an amusement park ride consisting of images and references to the tabloid view of his personal life and public image. The music video is made using a stop motion technique, combining various materials and found footage. Unlike earlier music videos, like 'Bad', 'Thriller', and 'Beat It', 'Leave Me Alone' shows a more self-aware and self-reflexive Jackson. This is because 'Leave Me Alone' could essentially be read as Jackson directly responding to the press. In the 1980s, Jackson's appearance slowly began to change. Compare, for example, an image that was taken in 1983 (fig. 1) and one taken in 1989 (fig. 2). By 1989, Jackson's skin had become lighter and his nose thinner, and his chin now had a cleft. It was these changes that lead to various headlines and speculations. Essentially, Jackson moved from a cute and young black singer, into an adult whose racial identity is unfixed and that does not adhere to the codes of American racial meaning.²

One could say that Jackson was breaking with static categories of identity – black/white, male/female, child/adult, gay/straight – which then led to various speculations and often far-fetched stories, including the idea that Jackson faked his own death. Another example, based on Jackson's various cosmetic surgeries (particularly in the 1990s), was the myth that Michael Jackson and Latoya Jackson were the same person. These rumors go to show that – as Michael Mario Albrecht explains in his paper on Jackson's identity – Jackson is able to 'trouble existing

¹Taraborrelli (1991): 371.

²Gómez-Barris & Gray (2006): 43-44.

assumptions about gender, sexuality, age, and even humanness as well.’³ Albrecht argues that precisely because Jackson cannot be placed into any single identity category, ‘he discursively emerges as a complicated figure deserving of scrutiny and producing anxiety and fascination.’⁴

If indeed ‘Leave Me Alone’ shows a more self-aware and self-referential Jackson, who does not deny certain rumors but instead celebrates them, the music video also shows Jackson attempting to regain control over these rumors. Thus, the video shows Jackson as the author of his own media narrative. In my thesis, I will focus on how identity is constructed in ‘Leave Me Alone’ in response to media narratives. Important in establishing identity here is the element of disability, through the use of ‘freak show’ imagery. Jackson might be what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson dubbed an ‘extraordinary body’, which she calls deviants in a culture of bodily normality. This does not mean that I am identifying Jackson as a disabled person, since to my knowledge he himself has never self-identified that way. I am using the concept of disability, however, to point at the structures at play in defining those bodies that violate normative standards of how a body should both look and function. In a sense, Jackson was identified as (mentally) disabled once the press started using the term ‘Wacko Jacko’ for him.

It is within the context of the field of disability studies that I will analyze ‘Leave Me Alone’, focusing on the ways in which Jackson responds to the ongoing media attention and speculations, the result of his attempt to break with static identity categories. The research question for this thesis will be the following: How is identity constructed in Michael Jackson’s ‘Leave Me Alone’ (1989), and how does dis/ability function in this construction? After establishing both the theoretical and methodological framework, as well as offering a short summary on past research concerning the topic of Michael Jackson and identity, I will use a shotlist as a reference to analyze ‘Leave Me Alone’. Doing so, I will make use of three distinct theoretical concepts. These will be David D. Yuan’s conceptual categories of ‘static enfreakment’ and ‘plastic freakishness’, Victor Turner’s and Arnold Van Gennep’s theory of liminality, and lastly the idea of the collage as a form of postmodern art. I will link these findings on the construction of identity to postmodern notions of identity as socially constructed and show how disability may problematize and complicate this. Essentially, I am interested in the ways in which Jackson treats his body as a kind of empty surface, upon which anything and everything can be projected. Postmodern theory and its influence on disability studies form a common thread throughout this thesis. Throughout my thesis I will be referring to images, taken from ‘Leave Me Alone’, these can be found in a separate attachment.

³Albrecht (2013): 705.

⁴Albrecht (2013): 706.

I

Literature Review

1.1 Past Research: On Michael Jackson Studies

Although much has been written on Jackson's other music videos, nothing has been written on 'Leave Me Alone' specifically. Scholars have, in the past particularly paid attention to 'Thriller' as well as written extensively on Jackson with regards to gender, race and sexuality. Examples include the work of Kobena Mercer, Tamara Roberts and Dawn-Elisa Fisher, who analyze Jackson's racialized, gendered and sexualized identity.⁵ While these analyses provide important insight into the role of race in the construction of Jackson's identity, they fail to consider the role of disability. They do not question, for instance, what role disability plays in relation to Jackson's Black masculinity.

1.2 Disability Studies

Disability studies is a relatively new field of study: the earliest writing was done in the 1970s and 1980s, with a second wave emerging in the 1990s.⁶ Disability studies scholars have particularly focused on the social construction of disability. Garland-Thomson, a leading figure in the field of disability studies, argues that disability must be included in any analysis of cultural constructions of bodies and identity in general, whereby disability ought to be reframed as a culture-bound difference, along with race, gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality.⁷ Disability studies focuses on the meaning, nature and consequences of disability as well as the cultural construction of bodily normality. Disability studies scholars have developed the idea that disability is not merely a medical condition but also a social construction (for example, similar to how we have come to understand the construction of gender).⁸ Important is also the work of Alison Kafer, who along with Garland-Thomson advocates for a social model of disability, meaning that they argue against a medical framework. The medical framework defines disability as something located in the body, a problem to be fixed. The social model argues that the body itself is not the problem, but exclusionary practices and inaccessibility (including, for example, buildings that are not accessible to wheelchair users). It makes a distinction between impairment (the biological, physical condition) and disability (discourse).⁹ However, more recent scholarship has focused on problematizing this distinction, arguing that the social model boils down disability to one clear category and frames it as a problem to be solved, overlooking

⁵Mercer (2000), Roberts (2011) & Fisher (2011).

⁶Davis (2006): 232.

⁷Garland-Thomson (1997): 5.

⁸Garland-Thomson (1997): 6.

⁹Davis (2006): 232.

nuanced stories and perspectives. Disability is not an easily identifiable category, rather it is culturally constructed and always in flux. Thus, to define disability is a complex issue. Garland-Thomson defines it by referring to 'bodies that violate the normative standards and expectations of bodily form and function', in an attempt to rely on definitions of disability as inferior embodiment. She also makes a distinction between people whom themselves identify as disabled, or those who are considered disabled: 'To make clear the important difference between bodies themselves and the ascribed or achieved identities attached to them in social relations and cultural representations.'¹⁰

Therefore, interdisciplinary approaches to disability, like the approach suggested by Anne Waldschmidt in *Culture – Theory – Disability*, prefer to question commonly unchallenged notions of 'normality' while investigating how (de-)normalization results in the social category that we call disability. Waldschmidt proposes the usage of the term 'dis/ability', to refer to not only disability and disabled people: 'The introduction of the slash indicates that one should no longer problematize the category of disability, but rather the interplay between 'normality' and 'disability'.'¹¹ She also argues that disability and impairment should not be seen as clear-cut categories, instead they are generated by knowledge, everyday discourse and mass media. Classifications rely on power structures and the historical situation, determined by hegemonic discourses. This means that disability is not an individual feature, but an embodied category of differentiation. Disability studies does not explicitly focus solely on the lives of disabled people but serves as a tool for analyzing those that are cast outside the space of what is considered a 'normal' and 'healthy' body. It is therefore that it is relevant to the case of 'Leave Me Alone', and the construction of Jackson's identity.

In discussing Jackson as a disabled person, particularly rumors regarding cosmetic surgery and the Elephant Man are relevant here, since both have to do with Jackson's physical appearance. From the mid-1980s (after the release of *Thriller*) Jackson's appearance began to change. Especially the changing shape of his nose lead to various speculations of extensive cosmetic surgery. Jackson has had at least four rhinoplasties and numerous smaller operations on his nose.¹² Scholars have also explored the topic of Jackson's surgeries and the ensuing cultural response. In 'Surgical Passing: Or Why Michael Jackson's Nose Makes 'Us' Uneasy', Kathy Davis analyzes Jackson's surgeries in terms of 'ethnic surgery'. She argues that some have regarded his surgeries as an attempt to 'pass' as a white man. However, Davis herself takes a bolder stance:

¹⁰Garland-Thomson (2005): 1558-1559.

¹¹Waldschmidt (2017): 26.

¹²Davis (2003): 81.

His ethereal, almost death-like demeanor makes one wonder whether he isn't attempting to transcend the material body altogether and, in this respect, his surgical antics might best be compared to the surgical performances of the body artist, Orlan.¹³

Davis explains that Jackson's surgeries have broadly been received in three distinct ways. Some see his cosmetic surgeries as a violation against nature, 'an unnatural act that entails negating his essential identity.'¹⁴ Others view his surgeries as a reflection of racist ideals of appearance, expressing an uncritical attitude towards Eurocentric definitions of beauty. More post-structuralist-oriented critics have argued that instead, Jackson ought to be seen as the 'exemplary postmodernist actor', using his own body as a text upon which he can constantly re-articulate and transform his image. They see in Jackson the possibility to overcome and transgress racial boundaries altogether.¹⁵ However, it is interesting to point out here that apparently 'transgressing racial boundaries' still effectively requires an aesthetical move towards whiteness, while also ignoring racial ambiguity altogether (including the existence of mixed-race people). To the notion of Jackson as a postmodern actor, I will return in chapter 1.4, as well as in the analysis of 'Leave Me Alone'.

1.2.1 Static Freak/Plastic Freak

A useful framework for analyzing Jackson's public persona regarding freakishness and disability is offered by David D. Yuan in the chapter 'The Celebrity Freak: Michael Jackson's "Grotesque Glory".' in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. Yuan argues that Jackson's public persona challenges 'boundaries of gender, sexuality, and race.'¹⁶ Yuan argues that the blurring of these boundaries is 'integral to Jackson's rise to superstar status.'¹⁷ He writes:

Initially, the audience receives a vicarious thrill from Jackson's acting out of corporeal transgression(s). But eventually the audience's desire that the celebrity fulfills a particular identity (racial pioneer, sexless children's entertainer, heterosexual or homosexual erotic hero) overwhelms their tolerance for Jackson as a mercurial figure "morphing" effortlessly from role to role. The plasticity of Jackson's persona becomes a strategy for eluding the audience.¹⁸

Here Yuan introduces two distinct categories, 'static enfreakment' and 'plastic freakishness', to distinguish between the audience's perception of Jackson and the kind of enfreakment Jackson fears the audience tries to impose upon him. Yuan defines the two categories as follows:

If static curiosity is that which has been fixed, frozen stuffed, or pickled, the "plastic freak" by contrast is free to move and moves to remain free. The plastic freak seeks to

¹³Davis (2003): 82.

¹⁴Davis (2003): 83.

¹⁵Davis (2003): 83.

¹⁶Yuan (1996): 371.

¹⁷Yuan (1996): 371.

¹⁸Yuan (1996): 371.

exclude fixity and definition; his 'true' identity remains hidden as he weaves images and stories around himself to arouse curiosity.^{19\}

According to Yuan, Jackson's goal is always to remain freakish enough to attract public interest, while also not becoming 'too freakish' to not alienate or repulse fans. However, Jackson is also trying to avoid 'static enfreakment', since that would mean less controversy, ambiguity and therefore less public interest. Jackson attempted to always transform, move or evolve, which can also be seen in a common theme throughout his music videos in the form of metamorphoses: 'The pop star must be able to break rules and boundaries while somehow holding on to his wholesome image.'²⁰ These two concepts, the plastic freak and the static freak, will return in my analysis of 'Leave Me Alone', in chapter 3.3

1.3 Defining the Liminal

Yuan's understanding of static freakishness, by definition, is a liminal position. Liminality here refers to Victor Turner's understanding of the term, who defines it as: 'a movement between fixed points and [is] essentially ambiguous, unsettled, and unsettling.'²¹ This theory is based on the work of anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep, who used the concept of 'liminality' to understand rituals, known as 'rites of passage', marking life-changing events. These rites consist of three distinct stages: separation (the individual breaks free from the group), transition (the liminal stage) and aggregation (the individual gains a new identity or status). Turner explains the liminal stage with the saying 'betwixt and between'. What is noteworthy here, is the fact that since liminality is posited as a transition phase, it is therefore only temporary. However, the literary genres of fantasy and mythology show how liminality may also be the defining trait of particular characters. These are liminal beings, that are naturally ambiguous and who challenge existing social classifications. Examples include centaurs and vampires.²²

The liminal and the disabled are linked together in the form of the freak, in the sense that the freak similarly disrupts, and fascinates by the cultural inability to explain that which lies outside what is considered normal. In *Extraordinary Bodies*, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson writes about the American freak show, that flourished and then faded between about 1840 and 1920. Garland-Thomson argues that the function of the freak here was to mock boundaries and similarities: 'By exoticizing and trivializing bodies that were physically nonconformist, the freak show symbolically contained the potential threat that difference among the polity might erupt as anarchy.'²³ The existence of the freak show serves to:

¹⁹Yuan (1996): 371.

²⁰Yuan (1996): 372.

²¹Turner (1974): 273-274.

²²Nicholas (2009): 37.

²³Garland-Thomson (1997): 66.

Efface suspicions that the world might indeed be intractable, chaotic, and opaque. As the subdued token for all that is inexplicable and unpredictable, the colonized freak makes democracy safe for the world by signifying the anarchic potential of individuality contained and mastered.’²⁴

This means that the freak show makes sure that chaos is avoided, by returning to a binary opposition between the freak and the non-freak.

1.4 Postmodern Theory: The Social Construction of Identity

The postmodern strategy of ‘Leave Me Alone’ becomes visible in its use of collage art. In ‘Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts’, Gwen Raaberg argues that particularly the collage art of feminist artists is focused on deconstructing ‘dominant perspectives and discourses, and the institutions that frame and support them, to disclose the political power relations of postmodern society.’²⁵ These collages provide a mediating site suggesting new ways of connecting multiple, fluid, and open identities and perspectives allowing for a multitude of possible relationships. This idea of breaking with what Lyotard (1984) calls ‘metanarratives’ – grand, unified idea systems and ideologies determining the meaning and perceptions regarding truth and life – is quintessential to postmodernity as a phenomenon. The postmodern alternative to the disappearance of authority, unity, continuity, purpose and commitment are complexity, multiplicity, fragmentation, resistance and negation.²⁶

There is also a connection to be made between postmodern theory and the music video as a genre. Music videos, but also distribution systems like MTV have been heavily associated with postmodern theory. This is, among multiple reasons, because MTV is regarded as a typically postmodern development for its fusion of high art and popular culture. Moreover, Lyotard’s thesis regarding metanarratives is identified in the non-realist construction of music videos. The borrowing from other texts in MTV’s videos and programming may be viewed as a kind of intertextuality that is typical of postmodern culture.²⁷ Therefore, to analyze ‘Leave Me Alone’ in terms of its postmodern approach to identity means to relate my analysis to a particular tradition of postmodern theoretical analyses of the music video as a genre.

An overlap between disability studies and postmodern theory also exists – and I will also highlight this in my analysis. The intersection of these two fields is discussed by some disability studies scholars specifically with regards to the question of identity and essentialism. The framework proposed by Waldschmidt stems from this debate within disability studies. Some, like Tom Shakespeare and Nicholas Watson, argue that:

²⁴Garland-Thomson (1997): 66.

²⁵Raaberg (1998): 169.

²⁶Fuat Firat & Dholakia & Venkatesh (1993): 228.

²⁷Goodwin (2000): 37.

... disability is the quintessential post-modern concept, because it is so complex, so variable, so contingent, so situated. It sits at the intersection of biology and society and of agency and structure. Disability cannot be reduced to a singular identity: it is a multiplicity, a plurality.²⁸

Similarly, Lennard J. Davis writes about the role of identity in postmodern theory, explaining that postmodern theory discusses the social construction of identity while trying to avoid essentialism. He discusses identity in terms of 'performativity': 'If all identities are socially constructed or performative, is there a core identity there? Is there a there?'²⁹ Davis argues that as with race, gender, and sexual orientation, disability is undergoing a 'grand reexamination'. Postmodernity, along with recent scientific improvement has offered 'the solvent to dissolve many of these categories'³⁰, categories here referring to social identity constructions. For example, we now know that there is no genetic basis to the idea that race exists (race cannot be traced back through DNA analysis). Thus, race does not exist in physiological terms.³¹ Thus, essentialist views of the human body are actively being challenged, and disability as a stable category also ought to be challenged. Within a postmodernist-oriented framework, disability becomes not only another category to deconstruct but also the category through which to deconstruct all other categories.³²

In *In The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era*, Davis argues: 'It seems clear that postmodern identities are less bound to an embodied, fixed, assigned self and more to a socially constructed, technologically intervened body ...'³³. However, while identity then appears to be chosen and constructed, disability and disabled bodies are still constructed as fixed identities. According to Davis, this is because disability is not seen as an identity, like race, gender, and other identities. Instead, disability is perceived as a medical problem, which the social model of disability aims to change. Disability then disrupts the postmodern notion of identity as choice.

²⁸Shakespeare & Watson (2002): 19.

²⁹Davis (2006): 233.

³⁰Davis (2006): 233.

³¹Davis (2006): 234.

³²Davis (2006): 237.

³³Davis (2013): 6.

II

Methodology

Disability Studies scholars have written on the uses of critical disability studies not only as theory but using these theories as a methodology. Doing so enables one to not only write about disabled people but also on how disability intersects with other parts of their identity as well as the role that disability may play in the lives of non-disabled subjects. As Sami Schalk writes: 'Critical disability studies as a methodology, therefore, can assess how (dis)ability as a social system worked in concert with systems of race during this period in a way that impacted all black people, both disabled and nondisabled.'³⁴ Schalk's article responds to an article by Julie Avril Minich, 'Enabling Whom? Critical Disability Studies Now', whose argument runs parallel to work in crip theory. Crip theory considers disability to be a viable identity variable to be recognized, acknowledged and celebrated. Crip theory also recognizes the importance of the intersectionality of one's disability identity with all other identity variables. Thus, to use Disability Studies as a methodology means to focus on disability as having a similar contestatory relationship to identity, as queer theory has to LGBT+ studies and identity. Using such a methodology in my thesis means that it allows me to focus not only on the role of disability in 'Leave Me Alone', but also the role of normality and social conditions.

I am incorporating this approach to Disability Studies in a visual analysis of 'Leave Me Alone.' A visual analysis here refers to the approach proposed by Goodwin in *Dancing in the Distraction Factory* (1992). This approach is particularly useful because of Goodwin's focus on 'star-texts' and the ways in which these intersect with video clips. This notion of star text is based on the work of Richard Dyer, particularly his work *Stars*, in which he combines semiotics and sociology in order to analyze the star image as intertextually constructed. This star image is produced across a variety of media and cultural practices and is able to intervene in the workings of particular films and music videos but can also be analyzed as a text in its own right. Star-text thus posits the star as a construction and not a real person. Furthermore, it allows for an analysis that pays attention to the construction of the star/stardom through music videos, media outlets, advertising, etc. Goodwin argues for the acknowledgement of the importance of stardom in music analysis: '... characterization, fiction, and perhaps even narrative itself exist in popular music at the point of narration, outside the diegesis of individual songs, live performances, or video clips, through the persona of the pop star.'³⁵ Goodwin calls this 'popular auteurism.'³⁶ Furthermore, Goodwin explains how the creation of a star identity is central to the

³⁴Schalk (2017).

³⁵Goodwin (1993): 103.

³⁶Goodwin (1993): 98.

economics of the music industry. Career longevity can be achieved only by those 'artists whose identities guarantee massive sales, or at least the media exposure that makes this a possibility.'³⁷ It is important for artists to create a metanarrative (not to be misunderstood with Lyotard's use of the term), to create their own background story.

Goodwin's approach is useful in the context of 'Leave Me Alone' because, as I will show, the music video posits Jackson as the auteur reclaiming or making sense of his own media narrative. Combined with the methodology of critical Disability Studies proposed by Minich and Schalk, this would allow for an approach centered on the construction of identity, the role of stardom and the functioning of disability and normality. This approach means that I have composed a shotlist that I shall refer to throughout my analysis, to make clear which part of the music video I am discussing and to avoid having to describe what exactly happens in each shot. The shotlist treats each cut as a separate shot, and every verse/chorus is numbered. I will be looking particularly at the visual style of the music video, and how it represents rumors about Jackson (specifically those related to his physical appearance) through a visual analysis. This means that I have paid attention to images that reference extradiegetic material (press coverage) as well as images that reference freakishness and liminality in order to bring to light Jackson's employment of star text. Due to the length of this thesis, I will focus on the visuals, rather than the lyrics of 'Leave Me Alone'.

It is important to note that I am analyzing Jackson not so much as a person but rather as a media construction, meaning that I am not aiming to diagnose Jackson with any (mental) illnesses. A useful text on analyzing Jackson in such a fashion is 'Presenting Michael Jackson™' by Seth Clark Silberman, who argues: 'The Michael I know is a marketed Michael Jackson™ product. Presenting that Michael Jackson™ prevails as a tactic attendant both to audience needs and to a career that has exacted a series of stratagems incorporating some degree of disarray...'³⁸ Hence, according to Silberman, Jackson ought to be regarded as the author of his own image and must be analyzed accordingly, which is exactly what I am doing here.

³⁷Goodwin (1993): 103.

³⁸Silberman (2007): 418.

III

Analysis

3.1: Narrative Structure of 'Leave Me Alone'

'Leave Me Alone' could essentially be read as Jackson's response to various allegations concerning his private life, his family and friends, and Neverland Ranch.³⁹ Before I delve deeper into these themes, I will first offer a short summary of the narrative content of the music video and its aesthetics; a more detailed shotlist can be found as an attachment. The video shows an amusement park consisting of images based around Jackson's successful career since 1982's *Thriller*, with an emphasis on the tabloid view of Jackson's public image and personal life. Visually, the music video can be defined as an example of collage art, making use of mixed media. Seemingly random images are shown, particularly animals and animals wearing suits (fig. 3), as well as a long hallway with lizard-statues and moving teeth functioning as a gate (fig. 4). Some of these images are repeated throughout the video. Notable is also the use of circus and freak show imagery in 'Leave Me Alone', relating Jackson to a long tradition of looking at bodily deviance as a form of entertainment and fascination.

The video, broadly speaking, consists of two main separate parts. The distinction between those two is made based on location. The first half takes place inside a dark space, which looks like an amusement ride. It features Jackson himself seated inside a sort of amusement park ride, moving through dark tunnels. The music video opens by showing various newspaper with headlines such as 'Michael's Space-Age Diet', 'Bubbles the Chimp Bares All About Michael', and 'Michael Proposes to Liz' (shot 1.2) (fig. 5). These reference some of Jackson's various public scandals. Fig. 5 shows the gate through which Jackson enters, which appears to reference Peter Pan's Neverland. There are two other important references here, for an analysis focusing on Jackson physical appearance; a nose and scalpel floating through the air (shot 5.1) (fig. 3) and a shrine to Elizabeth Taylor inside the amusement ride (shot 7.2) (fig. 6).

After these scenes, Jackson exits the amusement ride and it is revealed that the ride took place inside a giant version of his own body (fig. 8). While Jackson in the cart flies through the air, the camera zooms out and reveals the body of another, larger version of Jackson himself (shot 8.2). This is where we move on to the second part. The giant Jackson is part of an amusement park/circus, various rides and attractions are located around and on his body. For example, his arm is part of a big slide and his other arm extends into a rollercoaster. He is also tied down with ropes. Another reference to the press is made here when Jackson is shown in a stop motion sequence dancing with the bones of 'Elephant Man' (shot 11.1) (fig. 9). The final

³⁹ This was Jackson's home and private amusement park from 1989 to 2006, located in Santa Barbara County, California.

important sequence happens when the giant Jackson breaks free from the ropes, rises and destroys the amusement park in the process, referencing *Gulliver's Travels* (fig. 10).

3.2: Media Narratives in 'Leave Me Alone'

Now, I will make sense of these references to the media by offering a short explanation of the history and origin of said rumors, thus linking diegetic elements (the images in the music video) with non-diegetic elements (the stories going around in the media). By doing so, I follow Goodwin's methodological approach in establishing the centrality of understanding the star's persona as an element in reading video clips, thus paying attention to the so-called 'meta-narratives' at play here.

The main references in the music video are the following: Jackson's unusual relationship with his monkey Bubbles, the nose and scalpel referencing Jackson's cosmetic surgeries, rumors concerning the 'unusual' relationship between Jackson and Elizabeth Taylor, and rumors concerning Jackson's 'obsession' with Joseph Merrick (known as the 'Elephant Man'). The filmic location itself references Jackson's Neverland Ranch, named after the fantasy island in the story of Peter Pan, the boy who never grows up. It does so by showing Jackson in an amusement park, much like his own estate on which he had built a Ferris wheel, roller coaster, pirate ship, bumper cars, and much more. He even goes on to show his own body as part of an entertainment park (fig. 8). Jackson has effectively taken an amusement park as his place of residence, leading to rumors that he suffers from 'Peter Pan syndrome', and is thus unwilling and unable to grow up. Jackson has long been associated with freakishness both regarding his own appearance, actions, and his residence. 'Leave Me Alone' references these speculations by briefly showing a nose and scalpel (shot 5.1) (fig. 3). As explained in chapter 1.2, Kathy Davis argues that Jackson's cosmetic surgeries and the subset rumors, have been analyzed by scholars in a variety of ways, and she argues that Jackson could be seen as 'post-human', attempting to overcome mortality.

In one of his biographies (*Michael Jackson - The Magic, The Madness*, written by J. Randy Taraborrelli) Jackson has stated that he himself sees his identity transformations as a kind of celebrity stunt. The bottom line is, that the audience should remain in the dark about who Jackson truly is, as he said himself: 'the bottom line is they don't *know* and everyone is going to continue searching to find out whether I'm gay, straight, or whatever ... And the longer it takes to discover this, the more famous I will be.'⁴⁰ Even after his death, an obsession with Jackson's appearance remained. When a TV documentary aired on Channel 5 about Jackson's cosmetic surgeries in 2015, *Daily Mail* used the following headline: 'Revealed: Scalpel by scalpel, how Michael Jackson destroyed his looks in 100 operations... and how he'd have looked without

⁴⁰Taraborrelli (1991): 371.

surgery.⁴¹ This headline shows the lingering cultural obsession with trying to ‘figure out’ what exactly happened to Jackson’s face, and why it happened. This also shows how concerns for Jackson’s physical appearance have led to stories about his mental health and possible childhood trauma. It also gave Jackson the nickname ‘Wacko Jacko’, hinting at the fact that his appearance was intertwined with a general questioning of his sanity.⁴²

This media obsession with Jackson’s ever-changing appearance was said to ‘haunt’ Jackson and therefore, he felt related to the ‘Elephant Man’. Three months before the release of *Bad*, news outlets reported that Jackson had submitted a bid to buy the preserved body of John Merrick, the Elephant Man. Merrick was an Englishman, who died from neurofibromatosis in 1900 and whose remains had since been kept at the London Hospital Medical Center. The press report proved to be true after the media contacted the hospital, after which Jackson doubled his bid. Jackson was said to identify with Merrick, who saw in him another famous disabled performer. In his time, Merrick was part of a freak show, exhibited as a medical ‘wonder’. In ‘Leave Me Alone’, Jackson is dancing with Merrick’s bones in a circus/freak show setting.

This story also shows that while ‘Leave Me Alone’ may imply that Jackson was a helpless victim of the press, he was occasionally also involved himself in spreading these stories. Silberman argues: ‘However fake or marketed Michael’s injuries may be, they build upon a longstanding technique of stardom rooted in verisimilar deception.’⁴³ Silberman thus implies here that Jackson, to an extent was involved himself in creating these rumors. Jackson thereby proves that he was able to up until some point, use the media to his own benefit. The image of ‘Michael getting harassed by the media’ was actually a part of his media strategy. This he could then respond to in his own music video by reproducing the media discourse while taking control of the narrative himself (and thus also controlling which rumors were left out). To use Goodwin’s terms, Jackson created his own star text through associating himself with certain cultural figures and imagery –the freak.

Notably, the music video makes no reference to other rumors concerning changes in his physical appearance. Most importantly, the fact that his skin tone began to change is not mentioned or referenced in the music video. Jackson was diagnosed with the skin disorder vitiligo. It was suggested, however, that his lighter skin tone was also partly due to skin bleaching, which led to rumors that Jackson wanted to be a white man. Moreover, no references are made to rumors concerning his sexuality, his gender identity (including rumors about a sex-change operation), rumors about castration and supposed drugs to preserve his high-pitched boyish voice. This may be because these rumors are effectively ‘too freakish’ and would distance

⁴¹Daily Mail (6 May 2016).

⁴²Davies (2012): 189.

⁴³Silberman (2007): 427.

the viewer rather than spark an interest. The goal is then to simultaneously uphold the star text of Jackson as a freak, while also not becoming too much of a freak which would alienate fans.

3.3: The Static Freak/Plastic Freak in 'Leave Me Alone'

In chapter 1.2.1 I discussed Yuan's theoretical concepts, the plastic freak versus the static freak. He argues that Jackson is trying to avoid static enfreakment, by remaining free to move and transform. Yuan argues that this can be seen in Jackson's music videos in the use of metamorphosis. An iconic example is Jackson transforming into a werewolf in the music video for 'Thriller', yet a similar transformation takes place in 'Leave Me Alone'. However, this transformation is less obvious and takes place more on the level of an embracing of freakery through the association with other freaks and 'freaky' or unusual images. Multiple shots, including 4.4, show dogs wearing suits. Shot 11.1 shows a raccoon dressed in a striped circus outfit, a two-headed goat, and a two-headed lion with the body of a lizard. However, the transformation is also made visible by showing Jackson's body as part of an amusement park. Essentially, Jackson 'transforms' into the plastic freak that he has always desired to be, through transforming his body into a freak show and giving himself a stage to portray his own freakishness.

In 'Leave Me Alone', Jackson responds to rumors and myths, not by denying their existence or denying their truthfulness. Instead, Jackson's response is more playful, perhaps even mocking. While denying the stories that went around concerning his nose would likely lead to the kind of static enfreakment that Yuan argues Jackson is trying to avoid, the music video handles the topic in quite a clever and ambiguous manner. The nose and scalpel are shown flying around in the air, after having come out of a big floating brain (shot 5.1) (fig. 3). The reference might be easy to miss when watching the video for the first time. However, by showing these images the rumors are acknowledged. Yet no context is given, and neither does Jackson explain why exactly he had these cosmetic surgeries done.

The video shows Jackson aware of his public image as a freak. Jackson is seen enjoying the amusement park and freak show that is his own public life. Take for example shot 7.1 and 7.2, in which Jackson gleefully explores his shrine to Elizabeth Taylor, which he was rumored to have at his own Neverland Ranch. Jackson knows that negative press is still press. By refusing to deny his own freakishness, yet also not explaining particular cases and myths, Jackson remains a plastic freak. For example, the sequence of him dancing with the bones of Merrick likewise does not give any explanation for the story that went around the news and the allegations that Jackson attempted to buy Merrick's bones. Jackson keeps the viewer guessing, thereby allowing multiple interpretations, allowing him to stay relevant and always present in the press. This is exactly the kind of plastic freakishness Yuan defines, Jackson offers no definition, no 'reason'. As

shown in his biography, the intent here is to keep the audience guessing and in doing so, becoming more famous.

Puzzling in this regard, however, is the final scene (shot 13.1 to 13.5) showing Jackson breaking free and destroying the rollercoaster obstructing his movement and destroying the entertainment park altogether, referencing *Gulliver's Travels*. This could be interpreted in a variety of ways, as Jackson 'freeing' himself from the media, rising above the rumors. It could also be Jackson destroying his current public image as a freak, making room for another image to arise and again create confusion, in order to generate public interest and remain relevant. This as Goodwin explains, is always important as a star persona in order to keep up sales. Plastic freakishness becomes a tactic used by Jackson to ensure sales, as well as to put forward a certain ambiguity that keeps the audience guessing, ensuring media attention.

3.4: Liminal Identity: Temporary Phase/Permanent Place

Yuan's plastic/static freak dichotomy is, as I explain in chapter 1.3 related to the idea of liminality, which here refers to a state of being 'betwixt and between' or 'on the threshold.' While theories like those of Van Gennep and Turner have taken liminality as a concept to refer to a temporary phase within a ritual, 'Leave Me Alone' challenges this understanding of liminality. Looking at Jackson's public image and 'Leave Me Alone', it is as though Jackson aims to take up the space of liminality as a permanent place of residence.⁴⁴ Liminality then becomes a concept we can use in a broader sense, with regards to identity. It then means something more akin to occupying a position between boundaries, to be on the threshold.⁴⁵ For Jackson, it means an attempt to move between familiar and static categories: male/female, gay/straight, adult/child, etc., to remain a plastic freak. To refuse to give explanations or reasons is part of this strategy then.

Furthermore, the visual style of the video clip and its circus-aesthetics also relate to the topic of transgression and liminality. Circuses and freak shows are transgressive in nature. Bodily abnormality becomes the thing to gaze at, and the position of disabled people existing quite literally outside of society and living within their own communities becomes something to capitalize upon. Relevant here is also the images of two-headed animals and animals that are in themselves a combination of other animals, like the fantasy creatures and mythological animals. These animals are neither one or the other (shot 11.1), for example, as can be seen on fig. 11, an

⁴⁴Whether he has been successful in that regard, is of course highly questionable. It would be possible to make the argument that at the moment when rumors of child abuse starting circling around, Jackson was unable to remain the liminal, transgressive plastic freak that he aimed to be. Instead, the rumors put Jackson, and all his 'unusual' behaviors in a box: child rapist. It is precisely the act of being given a particular definition or identity that Jackson aimed to avoid.

⁴⁵Examples of said liminal beings include centaurs, or the minotaur.

animal that is both a lizard and a two-headed lion. They can essentially be read as a visual representation of the liminality that Jackson is attempting to portray.

As explained in chapter 1.3, Garland-Thomson argues that the freak show served to contain the potential threat that the freak forms to 'normality', thus freakishness had to be contained in order to not threaten the social order. It establishes a binary opposition between the freak and the non-freak. The freak thus attracts attention and fascination while viewers, in contrast, through positioning themselves as opposed to the freak are rendered safely standard and comfortably common. However, by choosing to portray himself as part of a freakshow, Jackson grants himself agency by not being an object to be gazed at (as in the tradition of the freak show). Instead of making viewers feel comfortable in their own normality, the freak show is used precisely to create chaos through destruction, but also through the embracing of and identification with known freaks (Merrick), transforming the freak from an unwanted, monstrous entity into a profitable marketing technique to preserve his own star status.

3.5: Postmodern Subjects: The Aesthetics of the Collage

Now I would like to further delve into the aesthetics of the music video and analyze the function of the 'collage' in relation to Jackson's liminal identity. 'Leave Me Alone' is a combination of a wide variety of diverse images, combined to create a collage. As I have established, 'Leave Me Alone' is an example of 'collage art', a technique of art production where an artwork is made from an assemblage of different forms in order to create a new whole. The collage may include elements such as magazine and newspaper clippings, paint, portions of other artworks or texts, photographs, and other various found objects. 'Leave Me Alone' uses animated images, existing photographs, and magazine and newspaper clippings. The deconstructed and fragmented nature of collage art means that it lends itself to a postmodern analysis. The video echoes this through the combining of various (seemingly random) elements much like Jackson himself attempts to remain the auteur of his own identity by mixing together various (often contrasting) identities. This has led some to label Jackson as 'posthuman', as shown in Kathy Davis' analysis. Similarly, Mercer refers to Jackson as a 'social hieroglyph': demanding yet defying coding.⁴⁶

To analyze 'Leave Me Alone' and Jackson's liminal identity it is essential to recognize this strategy as deeply rooted in postmodernity since his insistence on remaining a fluid and plastic freak are related to postmodern questions concerning the construction of identity in general. This desire to remain free from any one 'label' or identity category is then mirrored in the music video's collage aesthetics which weaves together various images and references in order to, as Raaberg explains (chapter 1.3), challenge current discourses. References to rumors are made and even celebrated, as Jackson in 'Leave Me Alone' happily moves through the entertainment

⁴⁶Mercer (2000): 81.

park-like representation of his own life, for example, shot 9.1 in which Jackson takes a ride in a rollercoaster that is partly his own arm. Jackson follows Goodwin's understanding of the star persona in the sense that his characterization does not solely rely on the lyrical message of 'Leave Me Alone'. Instead, it is deeply influenced by what Goodwin calls 'popular auteurism'; meaning is created outside the diegesis of individual songs but, as is the case here, in tabloid presence and newspaper headlines.

3.6: Identity and Postmodernism: The Problem With Disability Studies

If, as I have argued, Jackson is indeed successful in establishing himself as a quintessentially postmodern and fluid character, then this makes an insightful analysis with regards to the social construction of identity as a plastic freak. In a broader sense, through defying conventions around how a body is supposed to look, but also how it is supposed to age and change (or rather, not change) Jackson shows the instability of categories like gender, ethnicity/race, and sexuality. However, what about the instability of 'disability' as a category, mentioned in chapter 1.4? As explained in the literature review, Davis argues that as with race, gender, and sexual orientation, disability is amid a 'grand reexamination'. Later, he has argued that disability, unlike ethnicity/race, sexuality, and gender, is not seen as an identity but as a medical problem.⁴⁷ According to him, disability disrupts the postmodern notion of choice. However, I would argue that 'Leave Me Alone' challenges this idea.

Yet, while disability is indeed seen as a medical problem and therefore not commonly thought of as subject to the same possibilities of ambiguity and fluidity as other identity categories, it is at the same time not a stable category either. The question of what counts as disability and what does not, does not allow for a clear and straightforward answer and the category of 'disabled people' is highly diverse. I would argue that Jackson shows that disability in itself is an unstable category, partly because the question of whether Jackson actually is disabled or not becomes blurred by all other unstable parts of his identity. The disability (possible mental health problems, a skin disease, and various other health problems) can no longer be separated from the ambiguous nature of his gender, sexuality, and ethnicity/race. All these categories appear to feed off each other, one myth/story leading to another, for example the rumors concerning Jackson's cosmetic surgeries and subsequent rumors about his mental health. What Jackson then proves, is the instability of identity categories altogether. We cannot separate one identity category from another. Instead, what he then celebrates is the possibility of wearing an ever-changing mask. Jackson becomes the ultimate postmodern anti-essentialist because for him, identity is indeed not located within the body, rather it is an artifice to be

⁴⁷Davis (2013): 6.

celebrated and exploited, following Yuan's analysis of Jackson as the plastic freak. Because the freak sells.

IV

Conclusion

*'A star can never die. It just turns into a smile
and melts back into the cosmic music,
the dance of life.'*⁴⁸

* * *

Returning to Shakespeare and Watson's theory on the nature of disability – disability as a quintessential postmodern concept due to its plural identity – it follows from my analysis that Jackson does indeed not reduce disability to a singular identity. Instead, he uses the stories of freakishness that follow him in the media to create what Yuan calls a 'plastic freak': 'free to move and moves to remain free.'⁴⁹ In doing so, Jackson constructs identity by occupying a liminal space: neither this or that, on the threshold. Jackson does not give explanations for the stories that go around, neither does he offer an alternative narrative. The creation of his fluid identity relies on the celebration of these stories, refusing to give his audience a 'reason' for his behavior (the shrine, the nose and scalpel, the Elephant Man), instead they become part of the universe of freaks in which he places himself through the identification with freak show and circus imagery. The role of dis/ability then, is to further blur other identity categories. By doing so, Jackson appears to be able to overcome Davis' interpretation of disability as the sole identity category that is not regarded as socially constructed. This is largely because with Jackson, it is unclear where disability begins and ends since it is so intertwined with other parts of his identity that remain ambiguous (sexuality, race/ethnicity, gender, adulthood). The subversion of norms around dis/ability, is thus essentially done through the celebration of freakishness and the refusal to fit into a singular clear-cut category. Ultimately, his claim to dis/ability only serves to strengthen his claim to plastic freakishness. Doing so, Jackson creates a star persona that is 'built to last', that will forever fascinate, that can never die.

However, an interesting contrast with this celebration of freakishness is the music video's ending. Showing Jackson freeing himself and thereby destroying the entire amusement park we are left to wonder: what remains in these ruins? In her analysis, Kathy Davis calls Jackson the 'exemplary postmodernist actor', able to use his body upon which he can constantly re-articulate and transform his image, similarly, Mercer uses the term 'social hieroglyph' who describes a similar process. Jackson treats the body as surface upon which any text or category can be placed. Yet, Jackson in the final shot destroys even that process. What cannot remain unmentioned here, are the 1993 accusations of sexually abusing children. The allegations came from multiple children, who claim these events took place during the *Bad* tour, and thus in the

⁴⁸Jackson (1992).

⁴⁹Yuan (1996): 371.

period of making 'Leave Me Alone'. Today in 2019, these rumors resurfaced again due to the influential documentary, *Leaving Neverland*. Jackson associated himself with childlike innocence and behavior, which now becomes suspicious in light of the allegations that *Leaving Neverland* explores. His liminal identity with regards to age was in line with his refusal to identify with any specific sexuality. Yet, it is through these stories and allegations that Jackson obtains his final label: pedophile. What was previously read as ambiguous, fluid, and interesting now become just the telling signs of a monster in the making. And so, even stars who once claimed 'posthumanity', must come to die. When watching 'Leave Me Alone', we are left to wonder whether Jackson knew what would be coming, which stories would reach the surface. Perhaps it is exactly that final scene that symbolizes the end of his claim to the plastic freak. Perhaps the postmodern king of identity did not die in 2009, he died on that very day.

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Attachment 1: Images



Figure 1: Dave Hogan. Michael Jackson in 1983. Rolling Stone. Getty Images. www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/inside-michael-jacksons-iconic-first-moonwalk-onstage-56650/.



Figure 2: Annie Leibovitz. Michael Jackson for Vanity Fair. Vanity Fair, December 1989. www.vanityfair.com/culture/2014/08/throwback-thursday-michael-jackson-december-1989.



Figure 3: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 4: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 5: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 6: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.

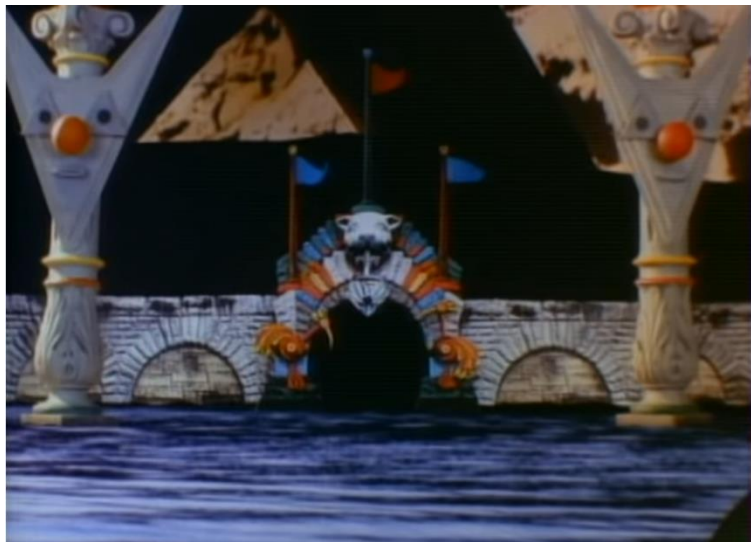


Figure 7: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 8: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 9: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 10: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.



Figure 11: Jackson, Michael & Jim Blashfield. 'Leave Me Alone', 1989. Los Angeles, California.

Attachment 2: Shotlist 'Leave Me Alone'

Structure:

1. Intro
2. Verse 1
3. Pre-chorus
4. Chorus
5. Verse 2
6. Pre-Chorus
7. Chorus
8. Pre-Chorus
9. Instrumental break
10. Pre-Chorus
11. Chorus
12. Chorus
13. Outro

Lyrics and shots for 'Leave Me Alone' break down as outlines below. POV refers to the camera's point of view, and C/U, M/S, and L/S refer to close-ups, mid-shots, and long-shots, respectively.

<i>Sound</i>	<i>Vision</i>
1. [Instrumental introduction]	1.1 M/S silver campervan in a surrealist landscape (camera zooms in). Door opens Michael propels from chair up in the air (camera tilts upward)
	1.2 C/U various newspaper headlines about Michael.
	1.3 M/S Michael floating in the air, surrounded by chairs.
	1.4 C/U various newspaper headlines about Michael.
2. I don't care what you talking 'bout baby I don't care what you say Don't you come walking begging back mama I don't care anyway Time after time I gave you all of my money No excuses to make Ain't no mountain that I can't climb baby All is going my way	2.1 M/S Newspaper with a moving image of Michael singing (camera pans to the right). Various random objects (camera pans to the right and movement speeds up). M/S Newspaper with a moving image of Michael singing (camera tilts upward). M/S Hand holding a dollar bill with a moving image of Michael singing on it (camera pans to the right). M/S Newspaper with a moving image of Michael singing.
3. 'Cause there's a time when you're right And you know you must fight Who's laughing baby? Don't you know And there's the choice that we make And this choice you will take Who's laughing, baby?	3.1 M/S Door opens, surrealist gate behind water appears. Michael falls from the sky, in the water below (camera zooms in). Gate opens. Michael appears, seated in a cart.
4. So just leave me alone, girl (leave me	4.1 M/S Michael enters a building

alone, leave me alone)	
Leave me alone Leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone-stop it!	4.2 M/S Cave with lizards on both sides, a gate of teeth opening and closing (camera zooms in). Michael in his cart appear on screen, filmed from the back.
Just stop dogging me around (just stop dogging me)	4.3 M/S Michael in cart.
	4.4 M/S Dog wearing a suit (camera pans to the right).
	4.5 M/S Michael in cart, large hand holding a phone appears.
	4.6 Teeth, large phone and large hand holding a photo camera appear. Camera moves forward through gate
5. There was a time I used to say "Girl, I need you" But who is sorry now? You really hurt, you used to take and deceive me Now who is sorry now?	5.1 L/S Michael moving through a dark tunnel (camera pans to the right). Michael exists frame, large brain appears. Brain opens, a white nose and scalpel appear. Michael enters frame again.
6. You got a way of making me feel so sorry I found out right away Don't you come walking, begging, I ain't loving you Don't you get in my way	5.2 Gate opens, Michael enters a different cave (camera pans to the right). Random objects appear. Another gate opens, Michael exists. Behind the gate is a large arm, tied down.
7. (Cause there's a time when you're right And you know you must fight Who's laughing baby? Don't you know	7.1 L/S shrine inside cave, newspaper reads 'Michael builds shrine to Liz.' Michael appears
And there's the choice that we make And this choice you will take Who's laughing, baby?	7.2 M/S Michael moving through tunnel, images of Elizabeth Taylor.
8. So just leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone	8.1 M/S Michael in tunnel, stop motion images of Elizabeth Taylor moving. Michael exists frame.
Leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone-stop it! Just stop dogging me around	8.2 M/S Michael in cart exists indoors, it is revealed that previous scenes took place inside giant Michael's body (camera zooms out). Giant Michael's body is revealed, circus attractions around his body. Michael in cart exists frame. M/S giant Michael's body.
9. [Instrumental break]	9.1 M/S Rollercoaster and giant Michael's hand (camera pans to the right). Dogs in cart (camera pans to the left left). Michael in cart (camera pans to the right)
	9.2 M/S Dog in cart.
	9.3 M/S Dogs in cart.
	9.3 M/S Rollercoaster and circus (camera tilts down).

10. (Cause there's a time when you're right And you know you must fight Who's laughing baby? Don't you know And there's the choice that we make And this choice you will take Who's laughing, baby?	10.1 M/S Dog reading newspaper (camera pans to the right). L/S Various circus animals.
11. So just leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone Leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone-stop it! Just stop dogging me around	11.1 L/S Various circus animals (camera pans to the right). Michael dancing with the 'Elephant Man'. Michael in cart enters frame and picks up a monkey, exists frame.
12. So just leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone Leave me alone, girl (leave me alone, leave me alone, leave me alone) Leave me alone-stop it! Just stop dogging me around	12.1 L/S Circus scene, Michael in cart. Michael exists frame (camera tilts up). Giant Michael singing.
13. [Outro]	13.1 C/U Giant Michael's hand.
Don't come begging me Don't come begging	13.2 M/S Giant Michael breaks free from constraints.
Don't come begging me Don't come loving me Don't coming begging I love you.	13.3 C/U Giant Michael breaks free, circus falls apart.
I don't want it I don't, I don't, I don't	13.4 M/S Giant Michael destroys circus.
	13.5 L/S Giant Michael destroys circus, stands up. Cart flies by.