The uncanny desire in American animation and film.

Kristen Hankins

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THE UNCANNY DESIRE IN AMERICAN ANIMATION AND FILM

By

Kristen Hankins
B.A., Arts Administration, 2019
M.A., Art History, 2021

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Art(c) and Art History

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
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December 2021
THE UNCANNY DESIRE IN AMERICAN ANIMATION AND FILM

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B.A., University of Kentucky, 2015

A Thesis Approved on

December 9, 2021

By the following Thesis Committee

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Christopher Reitz

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Benjamin Hufbauer

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John Gibson
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father

Mr. James Morris Hankins

who has given me memories that I will always cherish.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Christopher Reitz, for his patience and dedication to my educational experience. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Benjamin Hufbauer and Dr. John Gibson, for bestowing their knowledge and expertise on me. I would also like to thank my mother, Mrs. Gale Flowers Hankins, for helping to push me toward expanding my educational experience at the University of Louisville. I want to thank my best friend, Ms. Sarah Jackson, for giving me the best advice and always being there for me. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Christopher Fulton for sticking with me and developing my love for the arts even further these past two years.
ABSTRACT
THE UNCANNY DESIRE IN AMERICAN ANIMATION AND FILM
Kristen Hankins
December 2, 2021

Although surrealism was short lived, the impact on popular culture is ongoing. Analyzing this impact is quite interesting because it set a standard for American animation and film. In this thesis, Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis and the uncanny are investigated through the lens of the camera in American cinema and animation. This thesis looks at cartoons and films that were made after Breton’s surrealist manifestos were published. This thesis aims to show the viewer the lasting impact that Breton had on American popular culture.

This thesis is divided into three chapters with an introduction and conclusion. Chapter one discusses Fleischer Bros. impact on American cartoons and the influence of André Breton’s surrealism on the Betty Boop cartoons. Chapter two discusses Warner Bros. impact on American popular culture as well as animations. The specific cartoon short discussed is Porky in Wackyland. Chapter three discusses Alfred Hitchcock’s impact on the Hollywood film industry and the fringes of popular culture in America. Hitchcock’s influences are discussed as well as his film Spellbound.
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INTRODUCTION

André Breton is often considered one of the founders of the Surrealist movement. Breton published the first Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924. With his publication of this manifesto, he defines surrealism and what exactly surrealism is. Surrealism, as defined as a noun by André Breton, is psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner — the actual functioning of thought. Surrealism is dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.¹ Surrealism, as a philosophy in the manifesto, is based on a belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all, all other psychic mechanisms or processes that give rational explanations, and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.² Breton starts the manifesto out with a desire to turn back to his childhood state of mind as a young adult with the absence of any restrictions in life.³

Paris in 1920 was a thriving metropolitan for the arts and artists, especially for the Dadaists and Breton who chose to align himself with them for a few years.

¹ André Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme," Éditions du Sagittaire, 1924.
² André Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme," Éditions du Sagittaire, 1924.
Breton and Robert Desnos were just a couple of the many artists in the early stages of surrealism who appreciated the freedom that surrealist art and literature brought to the mind and the unconscious. A few others include Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Antonin Artaud, and Yves Tanguy. These artists and free thinkers chose to revolt against the bourgeoisie and against realism. This movement into surrealism out of Dadaism initially dealt with dreams and automatism, which is why spoken word lacks after a while. Something else needed to be created in order to fully encapsulate the aura of the surrealist ideas.

Focusing on Surrealism as defined by Breton is important in this study as Breton was a filmmaker and defined the very first version of surrealism in which film derives its tactics. Luis Buñuel is influenced very early on by Breton, and that is shown in his and Salvador Dalí’s film, *Un Chien Andalou*. One of the first, and most popular surrealist films and has often been used as a reference for other film and cartoon makers such as Warner Bros., Fleischer Bros., and Alfred Hitchcock. The stylistic approaches that *Un Chien Andalou* utilized are influential to these later film and cartoon makers in America. Although Alfred Hitchcock is from the United Kingdom, his Hollywood era is what will be referenced as the films had bigger budgets, were more popular, and had more artistic liberty that created Hitchcock as the auteur.

To start the *Manifesto of Surrealism* from 1924, Breton writes about the art of the insane, which surrealists often studied because of the lack of boundaries between reality and fiction. He then writes about the banishment of superstition in
society and his search for any truths that are not “normal” or regulated to societal standards.

He then goes on to praise the theories and findings of Sigmund Freud, arguing that they helped open the eyes of the surrealists to give them a hunger for finding the realm of the unconscious. The imagination is reclaiming its rights, according to Breton, and the surrealists are the explorers traveling through the realm of the unconscious and the imaginary. Then focusing on Freud’s work on dream interpretation and its importance to understanding one’s own self and desires, Breton writes that the differences between a dream state and a waking state are quite spectacular. A waking state is much more limiting because the person’s conscious mind has taken over. This is in comparison to the dream state where the person’s unconscious mind is in control. Breton has four concerns with this dream state of mind.

The first concern being dreams give every evidence of being continuous and show signs of organization. This is partially where the automatic writing and automatic spoken word come into play. Desnos is particularly exceptional at this, according to Breton. The dream is organized into illogical formats that the brain must comprehend and compartmentalize. When awake, the dreamer recalls a series of dreams rather than just one continuous dream itself. This is the compartmentalizing and comprehension of the conscious human brain trying to decipher the unconscious stream. Essentially, Breton states that anything is possible in the dream state, but also in the waking state if the dreamer allows it to

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4 André Breton, "Manifeste du surréalisme," Éditions du Sagittaire, 1924.
be. Breton asks when we as a society will have sleeping philosophers or sleeping logicians, which will help the dreamer interpret their dreams to get potential answers with the fundamental questions of life. This is starting to happen in the early 20th Century, as Freud has become a more popular theorist with the publication of his *Interpretation of Dreams*.

The second concern has more to do with the waking state as a phenomenon of interference. The waking state interferes with the unconscious mind by becoming aware and conscious to the thoughts and hides the true desires. The waking state rarely expresses itself, or its true desires, according to Breton, and this is the aforementioned interference. If it does express itself, it confines its mode of expression. If the waking state is reality, then is reality not limiting? Can the dream state as surreality be freeing?

However, the third concern goes back to the dream state and the mind of a man who dreams. The man who dreams is satisfied by what happens to him because he allows the desires and the unconscious mind to take over during the dream state. This is a form of release for the dreamer. The freedom of being in the dream state is marvelous to Breton as he believes that the dreamer is nameless, and the ease of everything is priceless because anything is possible.  

Breton defines the marvelous as being always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful, and that in fact only the marvelous is beautiful. The marvelous is something that the surrealists search for in all aspects of the dream state and the

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waking state. He then asks why dreams appear so natural to the mind. He believes that everyone should embrace this dream state, even when awoken.

The fourth, and last, concern of Breton’s is about the resolution of dreaming and waking states. According to Breton, dreams and reality can combine to create an absolute reality, or a surreality.⁷ Breton is determined to go on this quest to potentially find the resolution of these two states. Breton favors the collision of the two realities, the dream state and the waking state, and the surrealist spark is found in the unconscious.⁸ Being inspired by poetry and spoken word, Breton recalls a story about Saint-Pol-Roux putting a sign on the door each night as he dreams that says, “THE POET IS WORKING.” Breton decides to mark a point by noting the hate of the marvelous throughout society.

Breton describes his inspiration for the manifesto itself and the start of the surrealist movement as being an image he saw in his mind one day. This image was of a man cut in half perpendicular by a window. This marvelous image encapsulated him and inspired him to investigate why he had that image in his mind and how it came to his conscious mind. In order for Breton to recreate this process of thought, he advises that one follow Freud’s methods of examination and create a monologue spoken as rapidly as possible without any intervention on the part of critical faculties.⁹ This would prove to be much harder than just “writing from the heart,” and in order to achieve this “monologue” one must combine the two dreaming and waking states, as mentioned as Breton’s fourth

concern. Breton calls this monologue *spoken thought*, as the speed of thought is no greater than the speed of speech. This process is denoted as *thought-writing* or *automatic writing*, by Breton. Writing until one is distracted by something, when an “ebullition” can occur and the writer gets a bubbled thought out on paper. Breton states that, by definition, thought is strong and incapable of catching itself in error. Automatic writing, derived from the psychoanalytic technique of free association, was simply a means of reproducing in the medium of verbal language both the content and process of the unconscious. This was essentially what Freud said in his *Interpretation of Dreams* as well.

Breton then goes on the name and define surrealism as he sees fit. Surreality is the revolt against realism and the escape from realism. The limitless ability to not be constrained by the public world structure. The mind of a child is without limits, just like surreality, and Breton appreciates that to the fullest extent. Thus, bringing the reader back to the notion of childhood thoughts. Not only does he appreciate the child-like mindset, but he also aims at finding that mindset through surrealism. By not conforming to society or bourgeois standards, Breton has dubbed surrealism as the clearest way of expression without needing translation.

Surrealist art is often associated with poetry and painting; however, film is most appropriate to showcasing the techniques and ideas that many surrealist artists tried to achieve within their works. Surrealism started out with poetry, but

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writers quickly realized that the constraints of the verbal language limited their expressions. With the invention of cinematography in the late 1880s, this art form is relatively new to society compared to writing or painting. This new artistic medium gave surrealists a way to disrupt the constraints of verbal language, through time and space, which in turn imparted a dreamlike quality to the surrealist film. This dreamlike quality is something that is crucial to surrealist displays as they believe in the scientific study of not only the unconscious, but the uncanny.

When creating art through the lens of the uncanny, the artist must have knowledge of what the uncanny actually is. Ernst Jentsch is the first to define the uncanny; Freud simply takes that definition and expands upon it. Freud believes the uncanny is related to the castration complex in his theory of psychoanalytic development.\footnote{Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, \textit{The Uncanny}, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 149.} This is the fact that an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary, when a symbol takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolizes, and so forth.\footnote{Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, \textit{The Uncanny}, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 150.} This is perhaps an explanation of the uncanny, in Freud’s mind. However, Jentsch believes the emergence of a sense of uncanny is intellectual uncertainty.\footnote{Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, \textit{The Uncanny}, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 124.} Freud equates this to sleepwalking and around every corner is the unknown, which is creepy to most people. New ways of thinking were being
created by scientific, philosophical, and psychological discoveries of Einstein, Heisenberg, Broglie, and Freud, who were inaugurating a new conception of the world, of matter, and of man.\footnote{Maurice Nadeau, \textit{The History of Surrealism} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 79.} Surrealists often cite Sigmund Freud in his theories of the uncanny and of psychoanalytic development because his popularity and this determination to experiment in the domain discovered by Freud persisted at this time.\footnote{Maurice Nadeau, \textit{The History of Surrealism} (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 81.} It can be argued that most surrealist artists that follow Breton’s definition of surrealism can be grouped together with Freudian theory in their works.

Therefore, it is important to discuss the etymology of the actual word “uncanny” to further understand the definition. The word “uncanny” can mean mysterious, uncertain, eerie, or uneasy. In many different languages, the uncanny is often associated with night hours. In Latin, the uncanny is “intempesta nocte,” which is translated to “the dead of night.” In German, which is what Freud speaks, it is “unheimlich,” which translates to “scary” or “not homely.” For something to be uncanny, it must present a feeling within the viewer of uneasiness and unfamiliarity. This is often associated with negative feelings, but the surrealists often think that something can be uncanny and positive feeling. For instance, the German word “unheimlich” is the antonym of the word “heimlich,” which is a way for saying “familiar, something relating to comfortable.”\footnote{Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, \textit{The Uncanny}, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 132.} Freud then takes the antonym and gives it a new life when speaking on the uncanny.
Another philosopher, F. W. J. Schelling, defines the uncanny as everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open.\(^\text{18}\) This is the definition that comes closest to the surrealists’ own definition and use of the word uncanny when creating their works. Schelling and Freud’s definitions vary slightly, however the surrealists seem to take parts of each definition to create their own. For Freud, the uncanny is something familiar that has been repressed from one’s childhood and then reappears to the conscious mind in adulthood.\(^\text{19}\) For Schelling, these “secrets” might be from childhood, but also might be from adulthood; they are always hidden in the unconscious though. Both agree that whatever is uncanny, is meant to be hidden and somehow comes to the conscious mind.

The concept of the unconscious desire is one of the main thematic devices throughout surrealist art and literature. By bringing out the unconscious that was hidden away deep in the brain of the character, the uncanniness comes out when the desire does. In fact, the desire itself is uncanny, as it was meant to stay hidden in the unconscious and not brought forward to the conscious.

Surrealism blurs fiction and reality to create a new genre of the uncanny.\(^\text{20}\) This blurring is precisely what is uncanny. Freud also states that a sense of the uncanny can arise only if there is a conflict of judgement, which is found in many

surrealist films. Because many encounters and experiences that would be uncanny in real life, are not in fiction, this blurring must occur in order to create a world that engulfs the viewer and brings them along into the new realm created by the surrealists.

Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are two of the most followed theorists of the time, but especially for surrealists. Freud becomes very popular with the surrealists because of his theories of development and the uncanny. The surrealists were interested in using dreams as a means of access to their own unconscious, much like Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* describes. Using Freud’s primary and secondary processes as guides, the surrealists are able to have a map on how to try to access the unconscious and deep desires within. The images in dreams are also utilized by the surrealists and are a psychic shortcut to the satisfaction of the unknown desire. According to Freud, there are three basic features of the primary process of dreamwork: Displacement, Condensation, and Wish fulfillment. Displacement describes the process in which the unconscious mind substitutes repressed urges and ideas with insignificant or more acceptable ones for the conscious mind. This is a decentering of psychic values effected by the agency of censorship. Displacement is the most urgent wish, often obliquely or marginally represented, on the manifest level. Condensation is defined as prepared for by the work of displacement, a

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combination of several associated ideas in one single dream representation. This commonly occurs in the combination of qualities from two or more persons into one composite fixture in the dream. The Wish fulfillment feature is defined as the idea of unconscious desires that have been censored by the conscious mind, which cannot and will not be carried out in the waking state, and therefore they must be fulfilled in the unconscious dream state. This is the satisfaction of the hidden or unknown desire, but not entirely.

The aim of the primary process is to be the most direct satisfaction of desire through these features and the unconscious dream state. The primary process also includes perceptual identity. This is a process in which a subject repeats various visual perceptions that have been linked to the satisfaction of needs in the past through hallucination.24 The hallucination is a shortcut to satisfaction that fails to meet the needs of the person hallucinating.

The secondary process is that of the preconscious and conscious through the waking state of mind. This is governed by the reality principle, which teaches the person to not be fooled by the perceptual identities and features of the primary process. The secondary process has the thought identity which is the aim pursued by thought, or critical thinking, and there is no pleasure made.

Not only do the surrealists like Freud’s development theories of the conscious and unconscious, they also are interested in Freud’s screen memories. These are false recollections that mix with and condense a great many childhood memories. They are reformulations of actual memories, which

serve as supports for unconscious fantasies. Breton really likes this as he believes that childhood is the best time in someone’s life as there are no restrictions to the imagination.

Lacan is introduced to the surrealists when he is published in the surrealist journals *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* and *Minotaure*. Lacan takes Freud’s theories of development one step further and expands upon them by adding the mirror stage theory into the mix. The mirror stage is in between the primary and secondary processes, which Lacan renames the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The mirror stage happens when a child is between six and eighteen months old and seems to recognize its own image in the mirror. Before this moment, the child has no idea of the body being a unified object. But at this moment of primary narcissism the child overcomes fragmentation by identifying the image of the Other with itself, whether this Other is its own image or the image of the adult who holds it before the mirror. This is something the surrealists often are intrigued by because the child-like imagination is quite fascinating to them and their works. Lacan’s lesson that all human growth and development take place in opposition to the fictive unity of the mirror stage suggests a more precise understanding of what Surrealist film’s resemblance to the Imaginary is all about.

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By reinterpreting Freud, Lacan creates a system in which the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language. Lacan believes that the unconscious cannot be present without the conscious, and that the unconscious has a similar structure to language as signifier and signified. While Freud believes that the primary process and secondary process are separate from each other, Lacan believes they are not separate. This is essentially like Saussure’s the doubling of language theory and how they are connected. According to Saussure, the linguistic unit is a double entity, one formed by the associating of two terms. Surrealists often use doubling as repetition is uncanny to the human mind.

Surrealists were looking for art that was able to display the marvelous, une réalité rehaussée, or an enhanced reality, and the desires that were deep within one’s own mind. The surrealists wanted to unlock those desires within the viewers and make them question their own reality of what is real and what is not real. This was quite successful with poetry and painting, however there is a medium in which it can be argued that is much more direct and impactful to the viewer: film. Film is perhaps the best way to display the ideas and tactics of the surrealists because it is inherently surreal to begin with. A movie is an alternate reality in which the viewer becomes a part of when watching and it can be argued that even after the film is over the viewer is still able to stay in this reality. The ability to display imaginative worlds and get the audiences to become entranced is precisely what makes film an impeccable medium that is aligned within the surrealist agenda.

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Some Bretonian surrealists, such as Artaud and Gould, see film as a way to display a dream world to the audience. Artaud and Goudal stress the structural and formal resemblance between film and dream, basing their theory of Surrealist cinema on the exploitation of the film’s ability to imitate the special language of the dream. Breton’s version of surrealism is positioned into American film specifically because he inspired many of Hollywood’s big shots such as Alfred Hitchcock and many other producers of film. This gave surrealism a portal into popular American culture that would be acceptable to society as well. The goal of surrealist films is to be freed from all reason and not conform to society’s standards for a film piece. It is therefore surprising that popular film and cartoons in America adopt the surrealist outlook since surrealism is supposed to be going against the status quo and be nonconforming. However, this does seem quite natural as this is a time in between the two bloodiest wars of the world, World War I and World War II. Surrealist film almost offers an escapism that audiences seem to enjoy during this time and during present day as well.

Breton offers evidence on why surrealism should be demonstrated through not only poetry and literature, but through visual art and film. For instance, in his first manifesto he states that surrealism is psychic automatism in its pure state by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning thought. Automation is inherent in film, which makes film an excellent medium for displaying surrealism.

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If one understands the bended reality that can be created through paintings and poetry, it might be difficult to keep that understanding while viewing a film. This is because the camera, and photography in general, assumes an inherently “real” feeling. The force of movies to wrench the viewers out of their habitual realism is particularly unique to the automatism of film.32

As Breton is a poet and writer first, and a film maker later, his main concern is the written language primarily in the first manifesto. He does, however, involve visual art and later will introduce film to the surrealist realm as an exemplary medium because it can be seamless and translated in a way that written language cannot be. Similarly, the liberties which can be taken in editing and arranging, and the very same camera tricks which are used for a wholly different effect by sensory art, can now serve surrealist purposes admirably.33 Seeing an action or desire on screen is much easier to comprehend and dive into than a translated poem that might not be how the writer intended it to be after translation. Between the first and second manifestos written by Breton on surrealism, Breton slowly steps away from verbal language as it lacks in clarity, precision, and the force of visual art and film.34 Film offers a clearer and more direct passage to the viewer than translated written pieces do in the case of surrealist works. Surrealists chose to work with film to slip away from the formalities and restrictions of the spoken, verbal language. This creates a freedom to directly express desire in a visual way.

The goal of surrealist film was to be freed from all reason or reasonable thought processes; it can be argued that Breton’s definition of surrealism as a psychic automatism executes this very well. The film is a perfect medium for surrealism as it does not represent a world, but rather constructs one for the viewer. This is similar to a dream, in terms of the surreality the viewer, or dreamer, experiences. This early Bretonian style of surrealist understanding of the dream model as it applied to film is to imitate the structure of the dream rather than its content. This means that the complete automatism of the dream state must be applied to the form of communication, which written language cannot always achieve. It is important to be able to emulate the dream state in surrealist works because that unconscious desire is a main thematic device throughout the entire movement.

With film being a fairly new artistic medium, it can be swept to the side when people discuss art mediums. When the word art is said, majority of society thinks of a painted visual art piece because visual and literary art have been around for centuries. There are Neolithic cave paintings, however there are not any Neolithic films as the camera was not invented quite yet. Literature and music can be argued to be the next thought of art. Despite film being a great medium for depicting surrealist ideas, there are very few films that came directly out of the surrealist movement. Most films that have surrealist themes are inspired by the movement in a later time post World War II. Regardless of the

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time in which these films were made, the industry creates a perfect storm for surrealism to be visibly shown to viewers. Even American cartoons made as late as 2002 boast surrealist thematic structure, like *Courage the Cowardly Dog* made by Cartoon Network. The themes and ideas from the surrealist movement have stood the test of time and are still be produced in American popular culture.

It might be tempting to wonder if theatrical productions can compare to film as they are both performing art mediums. However, it can be argued that film is superior to theatrical productions as film production has the ability to disrupt the natural laws of space and time.

This is because the viewer becomes entranced in the fictitious film. They lose all sense of time and space when fixated on the silver screen. To be able to experience film in this way merges the conscious and unconscious states of mind, which is precisely what the goals of the surrealists were. The ability to disrupt the natural laws of space and time give the filmmaker the chance to blur the perception of the imaginary and the real. Thus, giving the viewer the possibility to fully encounter the desire of not only the film characters, but of themselves as well. These secret desires can be acted out in dreams, but also in films in very similar ways because of the complementary nature of both dreams and film. Antonin Artaud, a French surrealist writer, saw the importance of using the film medium to create an analog of dream language.

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film production, it can be debated that film is a perfect medium for presenting surrealist themes.

These similarities are through the language and presentation of film and dream language rather than the actual content. The content of a dream is not as important as the actual structure to the surrealists, as noted previously. Artaud attempts to rediscover the “primitive arrangement of all things,” through the immediacy of film and the ability of film to bypass the usual coded channels of language through a visual shortcut that acts almost intuitively on the brain. This is important to note because although Breton is one surrealist who wrote the manifestos and believed in the power of film, not every surrealist believed that film was a good medium, such as Desnos or even Dalí. This is especially clear by 1929, because Desnos leaves the surrealist group altogether. Dalí states that visual art is much better of a medium to express surrealism than film. However, Artaud is a supporter of film being used as a medium to produce surrealist ideas. Jean Goudal believes that film is a good medium, however it does have its differences from the dream state. For example, film is a conscious hallucination while dreams are unconscious hallucinations. This is why the similarities are between the language rather than the content, as stated earlier. In order to study further into this subject, it is important to understand semiotics and the signifier versus the signified, if dream language is to be compared to film.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was a Swiss linguist whose theories on language and structure helped lay the foundation for language theory in the 20th century. He viewed language as a structured system that exists and changes, which caused him to theorize the concept of the bilateral sign. The sign has two sides, one with the signifier and the other with the signified. The sign being the written or depicted word. The signifier is the actual word being spoken, while the signified is the concept or meaning of the word. For instance, if the word “tree” is written on a piece of paper, the written word is the signifier (as is the sound of the word), the signified is the concept in the listener’s head of a tree, and the sign is the combination of these two parts. Saussure had quite the grasp on the early surrealists, as many of them were poets and writers who utilized his language theory as a way to structure their own works. For surrealists, it is important to understand the concepts of the signifier and the signified because Lacan’s theories are based not only on Freud, but also on Saussure’s language theory. Many surrealists accept this and create surrealist works around language theory. The fictional film and the dream resemble each other insofar as they both inspire belief in what we see on the movie or the mind’s screen. Many of the surrealists degree and emphasis of this belief differ from one another. In the fictional film the viewer experiences the signified as real, whereas they always remain vaguely aware that the signifier is imaginary. In this fictional film, the signified is the characters or the animations. The signifier is the screen and camera projector. The fictional film itself is an imaginary signifier, but in the

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dream, as well as in the entire realm of the imaginary, as Freud shows again and again, it is the signifier that is first believed. The signified remains latent.\textsuperscript{44} Lacan, being a massive contributor to the surrealist movement, expands this Freudian theory through his emphasis on the primary process that he dubs the Imaginary. The surrealist film makes this Imaginary identification the entire subject of the work, which is one of the paradoxes of the medium: it provides an illusion of reality when in fact it is fiction.\textsuperscript{45} However, this is similar to dream language because dreams are a form of language where a given signifier referred not simply to a given signified, but to a multiple chain of often contradictory associations.\textsuperscript{46} The film is able to recreate these signifiers that are not singled out to one signified, which makes it a great artistic medium to visually see dream language and semiotics in play together.

Perception of the image, or the signified, is very important to the surrealists and how their work is viewed. In fact, perception in general is a big topic in all surrealist work. In a dream, the unconscious mind creates strange images that the dreamer believes and accepts. However, in the conscious and waking state, the dreamer then realizes how strange those images actually were. During the dream, the dreamer accepts the strangeness, but upon waking up the strangeness is acknowledged.\textsuperscript{47} The surrealists wanted to recreate that

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{44} Linda Williams, \textit{Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 48.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{45} Linda Williams, \textit{Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 42.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{46} Linda Williams, \textit{Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 33.}  
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{47} Linda Williams, \textit{Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 49.}
acceptance of the strange and uncanny, and film is perfect for doing that because of the effects that can be put into the finished product. Photographic distortion is one effect that is often used in films to display a dream sequence or to notify the viewer that an alternate reality is occurring. This is not used in surrealist films as the film makers do not want to create a conscious awareness of the strangeness. An example of this can be seen in the *Wizard of Oz* (1939), between the sepia tone “real” Kansas and the Technicolor land of Oz that is the dream world. The *Wizard of Oz* is a film about Dorothy, the lead female protagonist, who wished she could go to another land that was not as “boring” as Kansas. The conscious world she lives in, is depicted in sepia tone, but when she falls asleep, she enters her dream state world. This world is depicted in Technicolor and is quite literally the land of her dreams. She goes on a quest to find the Wizard of Oz to help get her and her dog Toto back home to Kansas after she was swept up in a tornado (her losing consciousness) that pulled her into the Land of Oz. This divide between the real world and the dream world can be distracting for the viewer’s mind as they consciously know what is real and what is not. If the viewer is aware of the difference between the imaginary and the “real” then the entire film is ruined as the surrealists wanted to blur these two perceptions together to create an alternate reality.

A lot of film makers, Breton included, used profilmic effects. These are effects done before shooting with the camera. One instance of this is in Buñuel and Dalí’s film, *Un Chien Andalou*. There is a scene where a woman finds a severed hand on the street and is poking it with a cane. This severed hand is an
example of a profilmic effect, it was created before the shooting began.

Surrealists like profilmic effects because the viewer does not experience any sort of distortion or difference in the most fundamental process of the film medium: in the perception of the image.\(^{48}\) What is equally important to the surrealists is the profilmic effects are paradoxically more believable as a signifier rather than the signified.\(^{49}\)

This is not to say that surrealist film makers do not use special effects, but when they are used it is in a way to not disrupt the viewer’s descent into the alternate reality. In *Un Chien Andalou*, the entire film is composed of realistic visual formulations of sexual desire and fears, which are two of the three major themes presented throughout surrealist films. The reason for not creating a distinction between the “reality” and the “surreality” in film is to recreate a dream state. One of the main goals for surrealist art is the liberation of the expressive powers of the unconscious from the inhibitory and rational powers of the conscious mind.\(^{50}\) Bretonian surrealism is striking this on the nail, as he states in *Les Vases Communicants*, that surreality is the combination and coherence of the two states: unconscious and conscious. The reason for utilizing film as the artistic medium is the power to create an alternate reality, the ability to blur the perceptions of real and fake, conscious and unconscious, and the ability to evade the natural laws of space and time.


When mentioning film as a good medium for showcasing surrealism, film theories based in Breton’s surrealism often explain the reason why. Breton favors the collision of the unconscious and the conscious, which he believes film easily depicts. This collision can be found in the unconscious mind of the viewer, which in turn bubbles up deep desires they might not have known were there. Artaud believes that the way a dream signifies is what the film must imitate if the desired effect of surreality is to be achieved.\(^5\) This is the form of the production rather than the actual content being displayed. Another surrealist that should be mentioned with discussing surrealist film theory is Robert Desnos, even though he left the group by the time Breton writes the second manifesto. Desnos seemed to favor “contained” over the “container,” meaning content over form. This is one of his main disagreements with Artaud and Goudal.\(^6\) Desnos, Goudal, and Artaud all agree that the model of the dream is essential to the development of a specifically Surrealist film practice, they disagree as the most important features of this model. Artaud and Goudal stress the structural and formal resemblance between film and dream, basing their theory of Surrealist cinema on the exploitation of the film’s ability to imitate the special language of the dream. Desnos bases his theory of Surrealist cinema on the development of a wish-fulfillment content of *l’amour fou*.\(^7\) *L’amour fou* is a concept of crazy or obsessive love, which is one of the three major themes in surrealist film theory.

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This unobtainable desire, this maddening desire creates not only an interesting storyline but also blurs together the unconscious and the conscious. The sexual desire from the unconscious mind is pulled into the conscious mind as a character finds another that they become obsessed with. These theories should be brought together to create a more well-rounded and developed surrealist film theory.

Cinema is a unique way for displaying the ideas and modes of surrealist art because it has many aspects that a static painting or poem cannot achieve. For one, the atmosphere of the cinema is something that is evocative of entering the dream state. The dark, cold room, the surrounding sound, lack of knowledge of the passage of time, and the trance that viewers often fall under when watching a film are all aspects of the atmosphere that the cinema that create the perfect storm for surrealist artistic features. Some of the early surrealist films included the aforementioned *Un Chien Andalou* by Luis Buñuel, *L’Étoile de mer* by Robert Desnos, and *L’Age D’Or* by both Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. These films helped develop and shape the surrealist aesthetic. That aesthetic was later imitated or reproduced by Europeans and Americans in the 1930s up to present day.

Some early American animation studios were also in on the surrealist movement during the 1930s and 1940s, primarily Warner Bros. and Fleischer Bros. Warner Bros. are known for being the Hollywood animation empire that determined the course of American animation for the 20th century. Those beginnings are precisely what was influenced by the surrealist artistic movement.
Shows like the *Looney Tunes* often have surrealist aspects sprinkled in throughout the episodes. However, some episodes are purely surrealist. In order to know this, one must study and recognize some specific *Looney Tunes* cartoons to figure out in depth the true influence of surrealism on the animation studios of Warner Bros.

The Fleischer Brothers Studios was founded in 1929 and defunct by 1942. However, this studio was perhaps the most noticeable in their influences from surrealism. The headquarters were in New York and the “grungy animation” style was known as the New York Style of animation. Some of their more known works were *Popeye*, *Betty Boop* and the *Talkartoons*, and their *Superman* series. Fleischer Bros.’ *Betty Boop* and the *Talkartoons* often had darker themes and plots than the mostly feel-good Warner Brothers cartoons. This darker tone reflected New York’s artistic proximity to Europe in these years because of the geographic and economic factors. New York is set up structurally more like a large European city as opposed to Los Angeles. The New York School is also operating during this time through Abstract Expressionism with artists like Jackson Pollock and color field artists like Mark Rothko. New York is also the main city that European immigrants come to in America, so the European traditions and cultures all blend together in this melting pot. New York has a grungier feel as a city in general because it is purely concrete except for Central Park. There is little to no greenery within the concrete jungle and this makes it seem harsh. New York is such a big city that there are all walks of life living there, from rich bourgeoisie to the working class that surrealists were trying to
reach. This harsh class divide could be why the surrealist influences from these European immigrants and publications developed so well in New York. The animation studios were a way to spread media around without printing it out, giving animation and film a way to be accessed by the working class.

Surrealism was very popular in Europe as it started in Paris in the 1920s. Therefore, European directors and producers of film were influenced by and often subjected to surrealism before Americans. Alfred Hitchcock is perhaps the most prominent example. Not only did he have blatantly obvious surrealist films, like *Spellbound* (1945), but he often had the surrealist concept of *l’amour fou* in his other works. Hitchcock’s *Spellbound* shows Freud’s theory of the uncanny and utilize psychoanalytic theories within not only the writing, but also the method of consumption. By giving audience members a way to “turn off” their conscious minds, the unconscious has a way to come through while viewing *Spellbound*. On top of this, forbidden desire and terror are suspended throughout almost all of his films. Hitchcock can be aligned with many of the surrealist filmmakers of his time like Buñuel and Dalí, the latter being whom he worked with on *Spellbound*.

Surrealism is not contained in the few decades that it was popular. Surrealism lives on in today’s world with movies, paintings, poems, children’s cartoons, and live performances. Cartoons of the late 1990s and early 2000s have dark humor and often show the unpredictability of surrealist methods. Shows like *Rocko’s Modern Life*, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, and most noticeably,
Courage the Cowardly Dog. The surrealists often regarded black humor as liberating.54

These shows were watched by children during the crucial developmental phases the Sigmund Freud laid out in his psychoanalytical developmental theory. These shows often were influenced by features of Freud’s theories of the Uncanny and the Unconscious. This is possibly because of the lack of knowledge of the “real world” and children’s imagination blurring the lines between what is real and what is not real.

For instance, children are afraid of the “monster underneath their bed” because they believe it to be real. This, of course, is not real but a figment of their imagination. However, they are unable to identify reality as being real and imagination as being not real. The child’s imagination is what the surrealists wanted to evoke when viewing their works. That being the blurring of reality and imagination, to find an underlying desire within one’s own unconscious. To bring the unconscious forward into the conscious was often the goal of surrealist artworks. These children’s television shows often have deeper themes than the plot of each episode. For example, in Courage the Cowardly Dog, Courage and his family live in the middle of “Nowhere” and often encounters beasts, supernatural, or even paranormal forces that he, an anthropomorphic purple dog, must face in order to save his family from the impending doom.

Surrealism gets into modern and contemporary films and television both through direct and indirect ways. For instance, Hitchcock is often quoted as being

inspired by Edgar Allen Poe. The surrealists were also often inspired through Poe, giving an indirect link to both Hitchcock and the surrealists. In Spellbound, Hitchcock works directly with Dalí to create a dream sequence in the film, which shows a direct link between Hitchcock and the surrealists. The anti-fascist movement after World War II also lends a hand to an indirect link between the surrealists and many other people around the world. Warner Bros. and Fleischer Bros. have similar ideas to be non-conforming and go a different path from the Disney type of cartoons. This non-conformity is similar to what the surrealists want as stated in Breton’s Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924. Lastly, contemporary cartoons can be linked to earlier cartoons of Warner Bros. and Fleischer Bros. This inspiration is an indirect link to surrealism as the older cartoon producers were inspired by surrealists and the contemporary cartoon producers are inspired by the older producers.

Although surrealism was short lived, the impact on popular culture is ongoing. Surrealism is seen in contemporary films and television shows that all ages watch. Cartoons by Warner Bros., Fleischer Bros., as well as cartoons by more contemporary studios like Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network have surrealist influences and tendencies; especially those from the 20th Century. Filmmakers like Alfred Hitchcock have some very obvious and some not so obvious surrealist themes within his films. American and European films and animations have explored Freud’s theory of the Uncanny, Lacan’s expansion of Freud’s Psychoanalytic Development Theories, and the darker side of surrealism.
CHAPTER I

FLEISCHER BROS.

Showing short cartoons before and during intermissions of movies at the cinema started becoming popular in the 1920s, and even more so in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The Great Depression of 1929 brought about a need for escapism for the American people. Surrealist film and cartoon shorts rose to meet those demands during this time. These cartoons are made, not to be realistic, but to be imaginative with much more artistic liberty involved in the production process. In the 1930s, short cartoons now formally utilized “tableau framing” as a set principle, along with a leaning towards a limited form of naturalistic representation, personality or character based anthropomorphic animal emblems and emphasis on fluidity and the expressivity of movement. Tableau framing is where the animation scene is set like a staged picture. Every character has their specific spot, and the set design is created to make the viewer be able to “read” the scene. This mass culture phenomenon would prove to be just what audiences need, and Fleischer Bros. created new ways to indulge and immerse the audience members to an even deeper and more surreal level.

Yet surrealism in its purest form as a rejection of bourgeois ideology, and as an expression of the possibilities for life, thought, and art does seem entirely in rather than with keeping with cartoons – an art form that is born from low-brow, middle-brow, and commercial settings.\textsuperscript{57}

Fleischer Bros. are a name that is not as well-known as Warner Bros. in present day America. However, the name is still fairly well-known around Europe, even now. Fleischer Bros. display what Yiddish-American life is like through their cartoon shorts and Jewish references. During their heyday, Fleischer Bros. were as popular as Warner Bros. In fact, two of the most popular cartoons during the 1930s and 1940s were \textit{Popeye the Sailor}, created in 1933, and the \textit{Betty Boop}/\textit{Talkartoons} series, created in the early part of the 1930s. Both of these series depicted caricatured versions of a human figure, rather than realistic ones in the fashion of Disney.\textsuperscript{58} Popeye’s arms are massive, and his waist is cinched, Betty Boop’s head is giant compared to her tiny body. One of the reasons why the company does not thrive as much after World War II is because of financial hardships and creative differences. Paramount Pictures Corporation bought the company out in 1942 and made Famous Studios out of Fleischer Studios as a subsidized company.

The Fleischer family came to America in 1887 as immigrants through Ellis Island and eventually settled in Brooklyn, New York. Max Fleischer was inspired


by his father who primarily worked as a tailor, but secondarily was an inventor. Max Fleischer’s first job was being a photograph re-toucher for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* where he learned the use of lenses, optics, chemistry, composition, and photoengraving.\(^{59}\) All of these learned skills both inspire him and help him later on during his production studio days.

Max and a group of men, including John Randolf Bray, kickstarted an outdoor theater that only lasted about a year or so in Brownsville, New York.\(^{60}\) This was because of the swarms of mosquitos, which later goes on to be a motivator for him to invent a better process of indoor animation filming. Max Fleischer invented the Rotoscope at this time in 1915. The Rotoscope process creates an animation that is not as jerky as the previous animations were. The process consists of projecting an image, one frame at a time, onto a flat piece of glass, putting paper on the glass and tracing the image outline. Then the next image is projected, and the user repeats the process. Sixteen of these slides makes one second of film, causing this to be a painstakingly long process, but not as long as it usually took. Normally there are twenty four slides per second, however to lower the cost and time creating these slides, it was cut to sixteen. The artist photographs each image, one by one, and then the final result is a perfect copy of the motion that is not jerky but seamless. However, as stated before, this is a very slow process and Max Fleischer’s first animation takes


about a year to finish.\textsuperscript{61} Essentially, the animator is tracing characters over previously filmed and specifically posed “live action” figures.\textsuperscript{62} This process would be revolutionary to the animation business, but not quite yet. Paramount Pictures Distribution’s president Adolf Zukor liked the idea of the seamless animation, but the practicality of the process is too time consuming. John Randolf Bray steps in to help Max Fleischer create a faster process by using clear celluloid, known now as cels. This creates the ability to put the background on one cel and the moving image or character on another.\textsuperscript{63} Thus, letting the animator superimpose the two images together. This would prove to be exactly what surrealism needs at this time.

The technological advances between the Rotoscope and animation styles create an atmosphere readily available for surrealism to flourish. Breton’s marvelous, anything that is beautiful is marvelous, can be seen in Fleischer Bros. cartoons because they are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also are uniquely intriguing. Other animation studios were not making these cartoons that were similar to Fleischer Bros. This is because of the Rotoscope invention and the collaboration with Paramount Pictures Distribution.

The Rotoscope process would prove to be critical in the technological advancements of film processes. However, the Rotograph would prove to be an even bigger advancement in the realm of surrealist animation. The Rotograph

would allow an animated figure to be superimposed over stationary and now moving backgrounds. This also made combining cartoons with live action easier. The *Betty Boop* cartoons flourish using the Rotograph process, especially the incredibly surreal shorts like *Snow White* and *Minnie the Moocher*. The photo-realistic settings give depth and weight, as well as movement and physical correlation, with emphasis on shadows and physicality. This is not only because of the themes and use of music throughout each cartoon, but also because of the process of animation that is invented by Max Fleischer and practiced by Fleischer Bros.

Max Fleischer was the main brother and producer behind the production studios. Fleischer Bros. as a production group do not just consist of Max however; it consists of four of the Fleischer brothers: Max, Dave, Charlie, and Lou. Each one contributing their expertise to the production studio in a unique way. Dave Fleischer, the director for animations, with his visions of direction for the writing and style of animation for the studio. Charlie Fleischer, the chief mechanic engineer, specifically helped with Max’s inventions later on. Joe, the head of the electrical department, which also will eventually be working directly with Max’s inventions. Lastly, Lou ran the musical department, which is one of the most important departments for the finished product.

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While Warner Bros. left the East Coast and went to Los Angeles to get away from Thomas Edison's monopoly on film technology and projection, Fleischer Bros. stay in New York. The production studio was able to rebel against Edison's monopoly in a different way from Warner Bros. By creating these new production and animation techniques, Fleischer Bros. are able to avoid not only Edison's monopoly, but also become more advanced than Disney productions at one point. While Fleischer Bros. and Disney have the same film distributor, Margaret Winkler, Fleischer Bros. prove to be quite different from Disney. My Old Kentucky Home came out before Steamboat Willie but did not have the same commercial impact that Mickey Mouse had. This was because Max Fleischer's inventions of the Rotoscope, Rotograph, and the “follow the bouncing ball” sing-a-long slides gave the animations an advantage that Disney did not have. This rivalry proves to go on for the lifetime of Fleischer Bros. Max Fleischer creates Bimbo, who is supposed to compete with Mickey Mouse, but Bimbo does not prove himself to be a worthy competitor. Bimbo is a small dog character and was the main star of the Talkartoons shorts until Fleischer Bros. realized they needed to create an enticing love interest for him. Thus, leading Max to create Betty Boop, who was originally a dog character, but was transformed into a human woman after just a few shorts.

The key divergence of Fleischer Bros. from Disney is that the former has darker sensibilities and are more “genuine” with the European folklore and

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The Fleischer brothers are Austrian and Jewish immigrants to America, causing them to not only have a more cynical world view because of antisemitism, but also this gives them an advantage to grasping the ideas of surrealism slightly better than the Disney animators, for example. This can be seen especially during the 1930s because of Hitler's regime and the rampant antisemitism all over the world at the time. For Fleischer Bros., this was how the world was through their eyes.

Surrealism in cartoons does not become incredibly popular until around the 1930s in America. Breton came to the United States of America in 1941, to flee from World War II. However, his surrealist impact was in America before he physically was. This is because of the shared political and economic statuses after World War I of European countries like France or England and of America. The impact that World War I had on the mindset of the general public in America and in Europe was a desperate and lonely one. Existentialism is becoming more and more within popular society as World War I was the bloodiest war to date. Breton claimed to need a break from society and to turn back to one’s childhood, a time of better days and nostalgia. For Fleischer Bros. a break from society would be needed because of the rampant antisemitism they faced throughout their lives in Europe and in America.

The 1930s in America are a time when surrealism is seen throughout many exhibitions that continued into the 1940s and 1950s. These exhibitions

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were in Los Angeles, New York, and even Houston. Breton wrote his second manifesto of surrealism in 1929, and with that publication, surrealism became more popular and reachable to others besides the artists in the group. The fascism that was happening throughout Europe in the 1930s was not unheard of in America. Many Americans knew about what was going on, especially immigrants from Europe.

Modernization in the world after World War I is also a factor in how the surrealist influence gets over to American animators. The obsessions with the machine and the machine age come out as invention after invention rolls into society. In 1913, Henry Ford started the first moving assembly line for making cars. By the 1920s, the River Rouge plant was fully operational with vertical integration, and by the 1930s, this has hit an even larger level in the United States through other factories. These assembly lines could be used to mass create weapons of destruction out of raw materials. This looming existentialism of the machine and death could be another reason why the dream state sought after by the surrealists was needed. The escapism was a way in which audience members could get away from the life of potential death at any moment. Watching an animation as an adult could bring forth the uncanny feelings from childhood and create a blanket of unconsciousness that was knitted into the weave of the conscious. Not only was surrealism necessary for Fleischer Bros. but it was necessary for the American audiences while watching these cartoons to escape from the political atmosphere of the post-war and the potentiality of another war against fascist nations.
Fleischer Bros. have a ton of influence on the spreading of surrealism in America, as the company makes quite a bit of surrealist products even at the start of their production. Fleischer Bros. cartoons can be argued as embodying the ideal, as expressed in 1924 by Breton, of the dictation of thought, in the absence of all control by reason, excluding any aesthetic or moral preoccupation.\(^{69}\) The Betty Boop cartoons are more of a “genuine” style of “popular” surrealism, and in turn, are more authentic with Breton’s direct intentions of surrealism.\(^{70}\) This is seen especially in the Betty Boop short Snow White from 1933.

The plot is quite well known, as this is a story that has been told for generations by many different production companies, including Disney and Warner Bros. Fleischer Bros. tell the story of Snow White in such a way that it has the skeletal structure of the original story but is not quite like any other telling of it. Disney takes one hour and twenty-three minutes to tell this story, while Fleischer Bros. telling takes about eight minutes. Disney has doctored the story up a bit to make it more of the romantic style of storytelling for families, while Fleischer Bros. take it to a darker level, like the European style of storytelling in the vein of the brothers Grimm. While Disney uses brighter colors and sings happy songs in the telling of Snow White, Fleischer Bros. animation is completely in black and white. The style of the animation is that of the post-war style in


America. Betty Boop is modeled after the “perfect Jewish woman,” and is incredibly childlike in both the cartoons and in her voice by Mae Questel. Her voice actor happened to look just like the animation of Betty Boop, displaying that her style was the popular Jazz Age flapper kind of girl. Betty Boop has her short cut hair in perfect curls, is wearing glamorous make up, and has jewelry on to accent her little black dress and garter. This style of animation is not something that would entice children as much because it is grittier and screened in black and white. There are no bright colors, and the songs that are sung are in minor keys, giving the feeling of depth and darkness throughout the short.

The Betty Boop animation of *Snow White* has references to alcohol and gambling. Not quite Disney approved themes, nor is it something that would be seen in many children's cartoons. There is also attempted murder as the queen, Betty Boop’s “step mama,” tries to kill her for vanity’s sake. Unsuccessful with getting Bimbo and Ko-Ko to kill her, she murders them and turns them into frozen ghosts. These darker themes are something that Disney would not approve of in their telling of *Snow White*, but the surrealists might enjoy watching this animated short for many reasons. The theme of death and dying is often thought of as uncanny, according to Freud. Many people associate spirits and dead bodies with the feeling of the uncanny as it was most likely a fear in their childhood that comes back up when viewing films about death.

For Breton, viewing *Snow White* in Fleischer Bros. version could be similar to viewing *Un Chien Andalou*. Both are black and white stories about female lead

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roles who are completely sexualized by both the audience members and by male characters. Both have serious themes of death, corpses, and female sexuality while also shocking the viewers. The viewers of Un Chien Andalou are shocked at the rampant grotesque imagery that is displayed every few minutes, while the viewers of Fleischer Bros. Snow White are shocked that Betty Boop is in a dangerous situation and could possibly die.

Another way that Fleischer Bros. alter the telling of Snow White is the production itself of the cartoon short. Usually, cartoons are voiced and then animated, however, Fleischer Bros. oftentimes animate then add a “post-sync” voiceover to the track. This further adds to the strange quality to the cartoon. Doing this both with the characters’ dialogue and with Cab Calloway’s lyrics is not only innovative, but also perfect for the surrealist style of the cartoon. Calloway is the perfect candidate for being the guest musician in this short because the viewers would understand who he was. This fits with Betty Boop’s Jazz Age stylistic concerns as Calloway was a major jazz musician of the 1930s. Calloway is rendered as the phallic ghost that Ko-Ko turns into in the Mystery Cave.

Fleischer Bros. cartoons use “dream logic” within their plots. This was defined by Breton in his first surrealist manifesto from 1924 as a type of logic where “it’s quite possible” that anything can happen. Such as in the Snow White

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short, produced by Max Fleischer and Paramount Pictures. It is directed by Dave Fleischer and the lead animator is Roland C. Crandall. Lou Fleischer is able to get Cab Calloway to sing *Saint James Infirmary Blues* for this short as well, which is a huge accomplishment. Not only because Cab Calloway’s vocals are a great complement to the film, but because Betty Boop is the epitome of the Jazz Age style. Calloway’s vocals are the sound of Betty Boop and would be recognizable to any viewer.

The short opens on a queen powdering her face and holding a handheld mirror. The mirror comes to life and sings a duet with her about how she is the fairest of “them all.” Betty Boop is introduced by singing about wanting to visit her “step mama.” When she gets to the entrance of the queen’s castle, the icicles that adorn the castle’s doorway curl upwards into pretzel-like knots as she rings an alarm clock doorbell (Figure 1). Once she rings the alarm clock doorbell, two knight’s armors come to life and reveal Bimbo and Ko-Ko, the two original *Talkartoons* characters, and the icicles roll back down. Bimbo being a dog character and Ko-Ko being a clown who was resembled after David dancing in a clown costume and being sketched out during the early days of the Rotoscope production. The spiraling motion is used quite a bit throughout this short, as well as throughout many surrealist artworks.

Surrealist artists such as Max Ernst and Man Ray (Figures 2 and 3) have shown obsession with the spiral as well as Dalí. Max Ernst’s *Untitled (Dada)* (1922 – 1923) has a figure standing in front of a giant spiral, while a smaller spiral is shown towards the right of the figure. These spiralized shapes are
indicative of a trance state or dream state. The act of going into the realm of the unconscious. Man Ray’s *Rayograph* from the portfolio *Champs Délicieux* in 1922 is a spiral that is much more abstract. This is a gelatin silver print of what appears to be multiple spirals in the one image superimposed over each other. This is reminiscent of the Rotograph process used by Fleischer Bros.

The rotating image background is now introduced to viewers as Betty Boop is walking down the hallway with Bimbo and Ko-Ko. The Rotograph process truly is seamless, and this is noticeable when viewing this scene. Betty Boop walks up to the queen and the queen’s face turns into a frying pan with eggs. This metamorphosis can be denoted as a surrealist influence as the queen will continue to morph throughout the entire rest of the cartoon short. The queen’s unobtainable desire throughout the entirety of the story is to be unequivocally beautiful, however as long as Betty Boop is in the world, she will never obtain that desire. In fact, she morphs further and further away from that desire as the cartoon short goes on.

That being said, Betty Boop also has an unobtainable desire: to have a good maternal relationship with her “step mama.” The story of *Snow White* continues as Bimbo and Ko-Ko are ordered to kill Betty Boop by the queen, which they pretend to do while Betty Boop is tied to a tree. The tree then helps her escape when it is suddenly made animate. Unfortunately, Betty Boop then trips and falls into a giant snowball that rolls her down a hill, perpetuating the damsel in distress trope that is often seen in such cartoons. This giant snowball
turns into a snow casket, then an ice casket where she will remain for most of the rest of the short.

She slides into the Mystery Cave, which is where the “natural” world ends and the surrealist world starts (Figure 4). This transition is similar to how one falls asleep and then cast off into the dream realm. At this point, the queen metamorphosizes again into a witch, and Cab Calloway is heard starting to sing *Saint James Infirmary Blues*. The Mystery Cave is the second time in which a rolling background is displayed for the viewer. This time the background is rendered in the more photo-realistic drawing style for which the Rotograph is famous. If looking closely and listening to Calloway’s wails, the rolling background image is essentially the lyrics to the song. Calloway sings:

Now, when I die, bury me in my straight-leg britches
Put on a box-back coat and a Stetson hat
Put a twenty-dollar gold piece on my watch chain
So you can let all the boys know I died standing pat

An' give me six crap shooting pall bearers
Let a chorus girl sing me a song
Put a red hot jazz band at the top of my head
So we can raise Hallelujah as we go along

Folks, now that you have heard my story
Say, boy, hand me over another shot of that hooch;
If anyone should ask you
You just tell 'em I've got those St. James Infirmary blues.

(Figures 5, 6, and 7). Not only did Max Fleischer invent the Rotograph, he also played with the images that it could produce, making *Snow White*'s style uniquely Fleischer Bros. It is not very common to see lyrics transformed into actual pictures, especially in the way the pictures are drawn. The bubbly-drawn
characters are so completely opposite of the nightmarish background pictures that roll through the continuous scene. Fleischer Bros. cartoons often create discomfort and dislocation, which can be directly felt when viewing the background imagery of *Snow White*. Along with the background imagery, the minor key of the music really adds to the uncanny feeling of the viewers. This is precisely why film is a great medium for displaying surrealism. The combination of the imagery and the music creates a complete and total work of art.

The short ends with the queen turning into her final form as a reptile-type creature and chasing Ko-Ko (who is now a live clown again instead of a phallic ghost), Bimbo, and Betty Boop out of the cave. Before the reptile creature eats them, Bimbo pulls her tongue and turns her inside out to reveal her skeleton before she scrambles back into the cave. This is not something that would have been shown in Disney's version of *Snow White* because of how dark it is. Bimbo essentially kills the "queen," or at the very least, gets rid of her existence.

The retreat to a dark cave arrives as a common symbolic movement in several key works as a "place associated with sexuality" from *Minnie the Moocher* through to *Snow White*. This is very common in surrealist works, to show sexual desire that cannot or will not be satisfied. Betty Boop in her phallic ice casket is completely vulnerable to whatever might happen to her as she enters the Mystery Cave. She is a damsel in distress, which is an inherently

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sexual trope. Women's sexuality was often treated as a dark other by the surrealists, much like the art of the insane or the dream state, that they wanted to explore. Dalí was obsessed with paranoia, the insane, and psychoanalysis. Buñuel was obsessed with pushing the limits, like he did in *Un Chien Andalou* with Dalí. These explorations like *Un Chien Andalou* and Dalí’s *The Phenomenon of Ecstasy*, from 1933 (Figure 8), ventured into the dark other of the female sexuality. *The Phenomenon of Ecstasy* shows female figures both alive and Baroque sculptures in a state of ecstasy while venturing through a dream state. The formatting of the collage of photographs is interesting because it is in what appears to be a sort of spiral shape. Spirals can often be associated with hallucinations or trances, which the surrealists often were put in by their selves. The surrealists’ interest in the spiral and the dark other often mingle. Their explorations for the dark other, be that female sexuality, paranoia, the art of the insane, or even dream states, caused this fixation on spirals.

Betty Boop is a sexual desire that cannot be satisfied because she is an animation on a screen. This is quite different from Warner Bros. cartoons or from Disney’s films because of the rawness shown through the themes in the short. It should be observed that Fleischer Bros. use of dark surrealism is very much ingrained in the *Betty Boop* series. Betty Boop is often placed in urban, dirty, complicated, and dangerous situations that no other female cartoon character has ever been placed in at this time.\(^7^6\) This is not a world that Mickey Mouse or

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Minnie Mouse would ever have to live in. The utopia given to the Disney characters is idealistic and not at all diving into the unconscious. When viewing the *Betty Boop* cartoons and understanding that the series blurred the lines between the conscious and the unconscious, the viewer can begin to see the start of the Breton surrealist influence on Fleischer Bros.’ animation style. Just like Dalí’s *The Phenomenon of Ecstasy*, which has no beginning, middle, end, or even a focus point, generally the Betty Boop cartoons have no linear plot or even resolution.\(^{77}\) This is not including *Snow White*, as the fairytale has an ending and moral to the story such as with many other fairytales told by the brothers Grimm. However, many of the Fleischer cartoons share obvious narrative similarities. They often detail a protagonist, or multiple protagonists, thrust into a cumulative irrational situation beyond her/his/their control. They also feature at the heart of their individual stories a procession of seemingly random and incongruous images and visual puns (often related to metamorphosis and with attendant sexual overtones).\(^{78}\) Betty Boop, for instance, is an extremely sexualized character before there was a reformation to her appearance after backlash. Her typical wardrobe is a short dress that showed off her tiny waist, is cut incredibly low in the back, and has a sweetheart neckline. She typically wears a garter and has her makeup done up to the nines. Her hair is a short flapper style cut with little curls sticking out (Figure 9). She is often set in disastrous situations as a


damsel in distress narrative trope, that pairs very well with the figure of desire narrative of surrealism. The cartoons, especially the Betty Boop and the Popeye series, show internal projections of the “id,” the male psyche, and a manifestation of unconscious and subconscious desires. Betty Boop’s character is not only created for the traditional male gaze, but to attract unconscious desires by others as well. This is one aspect of the surrealism within the characteristics of Betty Boop.

Metamorphosis is a common central theme in Fleischer Bros. cartoons as a comic device. This can be seen in Snow White when inanimate objects come to life, such as the handheld mirror or the tree Betty Boop gets tied to (Figures 10 and 11). This gives a layer of uncertainty, adds anxiety, and creates a very uncanny feeling for the viewers because any object in the entire realm of the cartoon world can come to life at any given moment. This behavior could be led by the desire to capture Betty Boop, as seen by the tree she is tied to in Snow White. This metamorphosis can also be seen literally as Cab Calloway is metamorphosized into Ko-Ko the clown, and then into Ko-Ko’s ghostly, phallic figure (Figures 12 and 13). The Fleischer trademark of surrealism and morphing

is very much in evidence in all of the cartoons. This answers the question of in what sense does surrealism use the model of the dream in its film theory and practice.

The model of the dream can be used to incorporate and encourage the viewers’ unconscious to bring forth hidden desires. The point of blurring the lines between real and surreal is to also blur the lines between the unconscious and the conscious. This gives the viewer absolutely no “real” standing ground and creates a surreal and uncanny experience for the length of the film, or in Fleischer Bros.’ case, the cartoon. To involve the viewer in the process and create an almost back and forth between the protagonist and the audience is something that is unique to surrealism, but more specifically surrealist film. Betty Boop is not only a figure of the collective gaze, but a figure of collective desire. She is the “dream girl” in the sense of a sexual icon for some men and women. She is proportionately also a “dream girl” because her head is giant compared to her tiny body, potentially dubbing her as a nightmarish and eerie. Meeting a real live Betty Boop would definitely be something out of the unconscious nightmare. Despite this, Betty Boop is sold as a sex symbol because of her proportions. Fleischer Bros. push the boundaries of sexual desire and surrealism with every aspect of the production of their animations.

Fleischer Bros. want to express possibilities, technically and formally, within a celluloid animation and they are, unlike Warner Bros. or Disney, also concerned with the immersion of their protagonist into a markedly “surreal”

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world. By placing the protagonists in hardships, the cartoon gets a grittier name for itself and creates darker themes that can be expressed through the animation style. With Fleischer Bros., the surrealist ideas are less constrained expressions while with Warner Bros., there is merely a colorful exploration of possibilities within the form and a profound lack of confidence in expressing a true surrealist dialogue. With Fleischer Bros., surrealism is abundant throughout the production and animation processes. Not only is the imagery surreal on its own, but the dialogue and music also help immerse the viewer into a surreal world that they can then get lost in. The world of Fleischer Bros. is one that is dreamlike and uncanny by Freud’s standards, to say the least.

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CHAPTER II
WARNER BROS., PICTURES INC.

Warner Bros. are a household name in modern day America. However, that was not always the case. In fact, in the beginning Warner Bros. had a rough start getting their name out. Thomas Edison had a monopoly on film technology and projection at the time of their beginnings, in 1903 when they started acquiring movie theatres, which made it nearly impossible to flourish as a production company in New York.\(^\text{86}\) Thus, they moved around until they found Los Angeles and decided to set their studios there. The headquarters are located now in Burbank, just a few blocks from the original spot of the studios. The four Warner brothers, Henry, Sam, Albert, and Jack officially incorporated Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. on April 4, 1923.\(^\text{87}\) This solidified Warner Bros. Studio as a prominent movie studio; however, their animated short cartoons are particularly primed for a surrealist reading.

The Warner brothers came to America from Krasnosielc, a village in modern day Poland, as Jewish immigrants after the climate in Poland, and in Europe, began to grow more antisemitic in the late 19\(^\text{th}\) and early 20\(^\text{th}\) Century. Coming to America, they started out living in New York and moved around the

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country for a bit until they settled in California. The road to California was a long and winding one with a lot of pitfalls and obstacles. The four brothers found a love for films while in New York and tried to get into the film presentation business. However, this would prove to be incredibly challenging as Thomas Edison’s monopoly over the film technology industry, a company named The Trust, gave them much grief. They were to pay royalties to The Trust every week just for using the technology to project the films onto the screen. This would be enough to run the brothers out of town to try and get away from The Trust, in order to have freedom to both produce and show films. On March 30, 1918, Thomas Edison sold the company, and his monopoly was finally over in the film industry.88

By moving the studios from the East Coast to the West Coast, Warner Bros. were able to take advantage of the low cost of land in Los Angeles versus the high cost of building in New York City. The West Coast was desirable for film studios to move to for many reasons such as the warm climate and little number of rainy days. This was perfect for year-round filming. The response of the city of Los Angeles to the 1918 flu epidemic was also a reason to move from New York City. There were lower amounts of cases and faster recoveries compared to New York City. Los Angeles’ growth was another factor that drew in film studios as the city could stand in for other cities in films. In addition, within a two-hour drive from

around Los Angeles, there were mountains, forests, the Pacific Ocean, deserts, and other cities. The benefit to filming on America’s West Coast as opposed to in Europe was that World War I had damaged the infrastructure to many of Europe’s cities. However, the new rival on the West Coast was Walt Disney Studios.

The difference between the animation styles of Warner Bros. and Walt Disney is very noticeable. For instance, Walt Disney animations are very digestible and plugged into reality with classic Romantic tropes of love and happy endings. Warner Bros. are more culturally savvy and incorporate popular culture into their cartoons much more than Disney ever does. Chuck Jones, director and animator of many Warner Bros. productions like *Tom and Jerry* and the *Looney Tunes* cartoons, has a way of incorporating elements of popular culture into the cartoons that society will understand immediately upon seeing. This is something that can add to the humorous aspect of the animations, but also makes the audience feel as if they are witty enough to understand an inside joke. Walt Disney animations favored the Romantic style of Renaissance art over the surrealist shocking art that other animation studios favored. With Warner Bros. animation styles, they created “randomized collages of popular culture.”

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The *Looney Tunes* shorts are made for families to watch together as a pastime. Be that as it may, some of the themes in the early episodes are quite surreal. The first episodes of the *Looney Tunes* aired in 1930, just as surrealism was hitting the United States of America. During the course of the decade Dalí’s works were exhibited in important galleries in New York and in major exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He also lent his talent to other media, collaborating with Alfred Hitchcock and Walt Disney on film and animation projects. Many other artists such as André Breton, Max Ernst, and Yves Tanguy came to America from Europe to escape the Second World War and aftermath. This caused a direct link from Bretonian surrealism to American popular culture because they put out works in New York and California where many animation studios were operating as well.

Despite the fact that many *Looney Tunes* shorts have surrealist influences, the one in particular that is quite evident is *Porky in Wackyland* from 1938. The first wave of cartoon shorts which are known for being less than ten minutes long and are mainly with characters from the *Looney Tunes*. The first wave of Warner Bros. animations starts in 1930 and ends in 1949. *Porky in Wackyland* lands right in the middle of this. The landscapes are very much inspired by Salvador Dalí and create a dream-like quality to the animation. The audience members are transported to another reality, or disreality. Dalí creates

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works that are triumphant in displaying the “bizarre,” and Robert Clampett has understood how to utilize this style of Dali. *Porky in Wackyland* is produced by Leon Schlesinger and utilizes Vitaphone technology. The supervision and direction were upheld by Robert Clampett, animation by Norman McCabe and I. Ellis. The Musical direction is by Carl W. Stalling, who often composed soundtracks that incorporated classical music within them. These musical accompaniments to shorts like *Porky in Wackyland* were critical to the surrealist suggestion in the cartoons because of the way music can take a listener out of the waking state and into the dream state.

Animated cartoon shorts like *Porky in Wackyland* often came on before main features in the cinema along with newsreels. These cartoons were often made to be more imaginative than the main features. There is a reality, or universe, that Porky is able to depart from and go to a space that he can safely enter and leave.\(^4\) A surrealist world must be entered through a portal or a dream, according to Clampett when arguing that *Porky in Wackyland* is not wholly surreal. Rather, Clampett wishes to overwhelm the audience with figures and movement, similar to a Dalí painting.\(^5\) However, *Porky in Wackyland* does not have an aim to go and shock or disturb the viewer. Clampett has now created a boundary for the viewer to not become totally immersed and have true

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revelations while viewing the animation.\textsuperscript{96} In spite of this boundary, Clampett has created an animation that hits most of the qualifications to be considered surrealist.

\textit{Porky in Wackyland} has many surrealist features within its 7:53 running time. The animation style, plot, themes of desire, and the music all contribute to its surrealist elements. For example, the rotating image was fairly new to the animation world at the time and was very useful for making the transitions seamless and realistic. The rotating image is a technique that creates the background to appear as one long strip without having to create many transition breaks within the cartoon. This helps lure the audience members into the une réalité rehaussée and forget about their own surroundings in the real world because of the unencumbered viewing of the animation. The black and white animation style might seem like it would inhibit the viewer from becoming totally entranced in the animated short, but it does not really bother viewers. In fact, this could be argued that it enhances the surrealist aspect. In the case of \textit{The Wizard of Oz}, the Kansas reality is filmed in sepia tone, while the Land of Oz realm is filmed in Technicolor. This difference between the two worlds creates a boundary between the reality and une réalité rehaussée. However, in \textit{Porky in Wackyland}, the entirety is animated in black and white, so as not to let the viewer identify the reality from une réalité rehaussée.

The plot of the cartoon is one of the biggest indicators of surrealism, as it is quite literally following a script of surrealist ideas. Porky is in the United States of America and goes through a portal, the map scene, to enter the “Darkest Africa”, or the Wackyland. Thus, putting him in a different reality that the audience member cannot differentiate from his original reality. The opening scene depicts a paperboy, who is actually an anthropomorphic dog, yelling, “Extra! Extra! Read all about it!” The newspaper he is holding is then shown to the audience with the headline “PORKY HUNTS RARE DO-DO BIRD WOTH 4000,000,000,000!!” (Figure 1). This scene has exotic sounding music, as the Do-Do bird is supposedly in the darkest, most unknown, most mysterious part of Africa. The classic Warner Bros. fade transition happens and the audience then watches Porky flying in a plane through “Dark Africa,” then through “Darker Africa,” until he reaches “Darkest Africa.” While doing this, he breaks the fourth wall by showing a picture of the mysterious Do-Do bird and saying, “Hi folks! Here’s his photogra- photogra- picture!”

Once in the “Darkest Africa,” Porky lands and sees a sign stating, “Welcome to Wackyland. ‘It Can Happen Here’ Population: 100 nuts and a squirrel,” (Figure 2). With the vocal emphasis on “It Can Happen Here,” this is implying that anything is possible as Porky is out of mundane society and is in Wackyland, a place of une réalité rehaussée. Porky ventures past the sign and is now in a giant mushroom forest with multiple crescent moons, giving off a dreamlike quality to the world he occupies. The audience can hear a ferocious beast roaring very loudly then running up to Porky. Looking like it will attack the
fear stricken Porky, it politely says, “Boo!” in a small, childlike voice. Prancing away singing to itself, the beast is gone, and the viewer is now just as relieved as Porky is. Clampett is more concerned with pop culture than with art, so the humorous aspect and relief of this cartoon short is very much associated with pop culture. The music in this cartoon short is also very much associated with pop culture, as Stalling incorporates songs that society would know instantly when hearing the first few notes. The next scene is a flower blooming and playing Edvard Grieg’s *Morning Mood*, and then going into a big band drum solo. With this crazy music playing, all out pandemonium happens with weird and absurd imagery rotating and anthropomorphic creatures being “wacky.”

This rotating imagery is a new way to animate that starts getting used in cartoons in the 1930s. Warner Bros. give it a chance with many of their *Looney Tunes* cartoon shorts, and successfully implement it into their designs. These anthropomorphic figures are extremely strange to the viewer as they are unsettling to look at and the viewer cannot tell quite exactly what they are. They could be resembling repressed fears of the monster under the bed from their childhood. The resemblances are slender to anything the viewer has ever seen physically, but the figures do look as if they could be out of a nightmare. They are upsetting but intriguing to the viewers, giving the viewers a sense of curiosity to uncover where they have seen anything like this before. The next “scene,” or the next part of the constant rotating background, is incredibly surrealist to its

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absolute core. There is an upside down “Hello,” sign and a clock with wacky hands (Figures 3 and 4). This is potentially an ode to Dalí’s *The Persistence of Memory*, from 1931 (Figure 5). What will stick out to many contemporary viewers is the figure that comes next. A creature that is half cat and half dog, being combined in the middle (Figure 6). This is perhaps an inspiration for the late 1990s cartoon *CatDog* (Figure 7), thus giving surrealism a lasting impression on popular culture even after the creation date. This is similar to Breton’s vision of a man being cut in half by a window in his first manifesto of surrealism. A dog and cat being cut in half and combined to create something worthy of being created from the unconscious. The creatures seem to be something that someone would dream about but would not be seen in the natural world or the waking state.

A new scene arrives that also gives viewers a glimpse into surrealism’s impact on popular culture. There is an igloo with a sign saying, “30° cooler inside,” and a three headed figure is behind the igloo which is acting and looks like the Three Stooges (Figure 8). This is an ode to the creator of those characters, Ted Healy. Popular culture has been strongly influenced by surrealism, even if the 1920s movement was short. Conversely, surrealist art is influenced by popular culture as well; making a constant cycle of influence.

Take for instance, Dalí’s *The Poetry of America* (Figure 9), painted in 1943. This painting was done while Dalí is in exile in America with his wife during World War II and displays a coke bottle with four figures. There is a clock tower

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that has a dripping Africa shape and a vignette of sketched Renaissance type figures. Dalí appears to be showcasing figures of American popular culture, such as sports and a coca cola bottle with a phallic shape dripping out of the bottom of it. Dalí created an image using a coke bottle before Warhol did. By being physically in America, Dalí creates a direct link on the influence of American art and culture.

The final scene is preparing the viewer to see the “real, live Do-Do bird,” and gives a theatrical entrance for the bird. Then a chase ensues by Porky trying to catch the Do-Do bird, or his unattainable desire. Up until this point, Porky has been fearful of the “wacky” and tried to fight against it. Now Porky is accepting it and becoming one with the wackiness of Wackyland. Porky finally catches this “last” Do-Do, but then is surrounded by hundreds of them (Figure 10). This is the last view the audience gets and then the end credits roll.

Many surrealist films have a major theme of desire or unattainable desire. This is usually a sexual route that is taken, but Porky in Wackyland is a family animated short by Warner Bros., so the unattainable desire is there but the sexual regard is left out. The Do-Do-bird is the unattainable desire of Porky because he is constantly searching for the last Do-Do bird. At the end of the animation, Porky does indeed catch what he believes is the last Do-Do bird. Both Porky and the audience soon find out that there are hundreds of Do-Do birds in “Darkest Africa” and this is in fact not the last Do-Do bird through dialogue at the very end.

Porky: Oh boy! I really caught the last of the Do-Dos!
Do-Do: Yes I’m really the last of the Do-Dos… ain’t I fellas?!
100s of Do-Dos: Yeah! Wooo!

Porky has acquired a Do-Do bird but not the last one as he first set out to do. Therefore, he is still left with a desire to catch something that is elusive and almost extinct which now happens to not be the Do-Do bird.

Music was a big factor in Buñuel’s films, so the music in Porky is important to understand as well from a surrealist aspect.\(^9^9\) Film is different from any other form of visual art because it has the addition of sound and movement to it. A painting can have what appears to be movement within its brushstrokes, or a photograph can show movement through the blurred imaging of something moving. However, this does not show movement in “real time,” and therefore is lacking a realistic component compared to film. The music in films and cartoons is one of the biggest components of the entire operation as it helps guide the viewer’s senses and thoughts. What is meant by that is the music in film can speed up the heartrate of a viewer if it is a suspenseful scene, or in the case of *Porky in Wackyland*, to overwhelm the viewer and cause a blockage in the brain from reality. The music not only adds an aesthetic element to the animation but also helps incorporate the viewer into the uncanny realm into which Porky has physically descended. This is what Buñuel likes about film, the incorporation and le dépaysement, or disorientation, of the audience’s perception of reality.

The setting in which *Porky in Wackyland* takes place is problematic when thinking about it from a contemporary point of view. Africa is symbolizing the mysterious and uncanny in it, which can be taken a couple different ways. The

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first being Africa had been colonized, but the impact was not too large on people outside of the continent of Africa. The Europeans who colonized it were impacted, but more importantly, the Africans who were displaced and exploited were impacted to the greatest degree. That being said, Americans were not too familiar with Africa at the time, or even in contemporary times. This made it an area of mystery and fantasy. Therefore, this use of Africa as the setting was out of curiosity and fear of the unknown. The second use of Africa is as a representation of the dream state celebrated by the surrealisists. Africa is a continent of a different reality than that of the animators for Warner Bros. at that time. This is problematic as it implies a racist undertone that African people are not real people, but uncanny and mysterious figures. It is important to note this while viewing anything from the past, and keep in mind that society and popular culture changes over time.

Although this piece is not made from someone who claims to be a surrealist, this is precisely a surrealist piece of animated work. *Porky in Wackyland* is quite wacky and is much different from Breton’s original intent in surrealism to shock and disturb the viewers through sexually explicit images. However, Warner Bros. use humor as a response to a “cultural automatism” and still shock the viewers, in a different way than that of sexual encounters. Comedy is just one of the aspects and genres of surrealism as is terror and l’amour fou. Humor is a byproduct of surrealism; this is because of the close links

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maintained by surrealism and humor, and because the human brain is trying to process the nature of surrealism.\textsuperscript{101} Thus, categorizing it into the humorous side of the mind. These images are funny to the viewers because they seem rather weird to be in the conscious waking state. If these images and characters were seen through an unconscious mind in a dream state, one would not question its credibility. The conscious mind tries to categorize the unconscious during this and is a constant struggle for the viewer.

*Porky in Wackyland* is a great example of Bretonian surrealism. Breton’s manifestos call for the rejection of societal norms and the bourgeois. This cartoon short is something that is out of place, and rather wacky for the time because of its creativity. Compared to Disney’s Mickey Mouse cartoons that are being put out, this is something that throws off the viewer into an alternate reality. Precisely the aim of Bretonian surrealism. To combine the unconscious with the conscious states is what this cartoon displays. Not only does this specific cartoon short demonstrate Breton’s ideas for surrealism, but the entire Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. is a great example of rejection from tyrannous western society. Warner Bros. moving to Los Angeles to get away from Thomas Edison’s reign on New York’s cinema is a rejection of and refusal to stick with the status quo.

It is important to note that a surrealist film such as *Un Chien Andalou* could potentially be an inspiration for *Porky in Wackyland*. In terms of plot, these two films are nothing alike. However, in terms of thematic devices, these two

films are very similar. In *Un Chien Andalou*, there is an underlying theme of sexual desire and fear. In *Porky in Wackyland*, there is no sexual desire but there is desire. Both have a desire to obtain or catch a prey; in *Un Chien Andalou* it is the man as a predator wanting to catch the woman as the prey. In Porky in Wackyland, the predator is Porky while the prey is the Do-Do bird. While there are no severed hands or razors cutting eyeballs in *Porky in Wackyland*, there are some very irrational objects and Dalí-esque type background images. Porky’s unobtainable desire mixed with his confusion of what is real and what is fake makes for a great example of a Bretonian surrealist cartoon short.

In the sense of Breton describing marvelous, Wackyland is quite marvelous. Wackyland consists of bizarre creatures and fascinating animation techniques. In Breton’s first manifesto he states that the marvelous is “always beautiful.” Robert Desnos, another surrealist during the mid 1920s, defines the marvelous as an admirable passport for access to those regions where heart and mind liberate themselves at last from the critical and descriptive spirit that pins them down to the ground. Something that is marvelous is freeing to the mind and the heart, it liberates the viewer. A cartoon short like *Porky in Wackyland* is marvelous because it is eye catching and attention grabbing. People want to keep watching because of the marvelous aspect of it alone. The plot is second to the design aspect of the entire cartoon animation. The viewer is experiencing this weird world that Porky has been plopped into with Porky in real time. The fact that the viewer loses themselves in this other world, is quite beautiful indeed.

This neglection of space, time, and reality is precisely marvelous. Buñuel denotes a fascination with the mysteries of erotic love, but in Porky’s case it is not erotic love but rather compulsive love. Compulsive relationships are often seen in Luis Buñuel’s films meaning lovers drawn to each other by irresistible forces leading to fraught relationships between incompatible individuals unable to overcome the imperatives of a compulsive desire.  

This relationship between Porky and the Do-Do bird is humorous but also continuous as the driving force for the entire cartoon. This l’amour fou is prevalent throughout the entire animated short. Buñuel on the unconscious states, “The element of mystery, essential to all works of art, is generally lacking in films. Authors, directors and producers take great pains not to trouble our peace of mind by closing the marvelous window of the screen to the liberating world of poetry.” However, it can be argued that film is particularly marvelous compared to poetry. For instance, Porky in Wackyland would not be nearly as marvelous in writing as it is on screen. This is because the animators have given just enough to make the animation have depth but still give the viewer room to imagine what it would be like to be in both Porky and the Do-Do bird’s shoes. This unattainable desire, this chase creates a hold on the viewer that is quite beautiful because of the freeing aspect. The viewer is transported with Porky to another realm, one where everything is scary and wonderful, uncanny and enticing at the same time.

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CHAPTER III

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) was known as the “master of suspense.” His suspenseful aesthetic hints at something else much more surreal and uncanny. Hitchcock was born in 1899 in Leytonstone, East London.\textsuperscript{106} He went to boarding schools and eventually went on to study film production as a young adult. In the late 1930s, Hitchcock took up a contract with Hollywood producer David O. Selznick, and took his family to the United States in 1939.\textsuperscript{107} This move offered him access to a larger production budget and more artistic liberty. In turn, he came into contact with bigger movie stars and artists. By meeting more people, his influences grew.

Hitchcock’s influences range all over in art and literature from Edgar Allen Poe to the surrealists of Breton and Dalí to Sigmund Freud. Not only is this noticeable in his works, but it is known from interviews and accounts that Hitchcock was in direct contact with some of these influences. Breton and the early surrealists influenced Hitchcock, appealing to his revolutionary artistic


sensibilities. Hitchcock once remarked that “television has done much for psychiatry by spreading information about it, as well as contributing to the need for it.” During much of Hitchcock’s career, Freud’s ideas were dominant, and although Hitchcock was skeptical of psychoanalysis (as he was of other explanations for human behavior), Freudian concepts and motifs recur in many of his films. Hitchcock often uses Freudian concepts, such as repression and dream interpretation. According to Freud, the essence of repression lies in prohibition. Thoughts and behaviors that are unpalatable (socially, developmentally, etc.) are locked away from the conscious mind, and this is the cause of neurosis. This is seen in Hitchcock’s films, but specifically in Spellbound (1945). This film employs Freudian concepts in the entirety of it, from the plot to the dialogue. Freud believed that traumatic memories, usually of childhood events, are repressed by the conscious mind; this is a defense mechanism which keeps the ego free of conflict and tension. These memories remain hidden in the unconscious and manifest themselves in the neuroses and psychoses of the individual when something induces the momentary retrieval of a repressed memory, triggering a neurotic or psychotic episode. One aim of Freudian psychoanalysis is the retrieval of these repressed memories from the subconscious, in the hope that confronting them will cure the patient’s

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neuroses. What is unique to Hitchcock in this instance is that he is one of the first directors in America to portray psychological processes, like Freud’s psychoanalysis and interpretation of dreams, in films. Freud dies in 1939, the same year Hitchcock comes to America, his influence on Hitchcock is still very much apparent in his 1940s films. Although these influences can be seen and felt throughout many of his films, there is one film that uniquely displays the influences of Edgar Allen Poe, the surrealist ideas of Breton and Dalí, and Sigmund Freud.

Hitchcock himself has said that his intentions are purely sinister and that to create a good suspenseful film espionage must be forgotten, and one must rediscover more personal sorts of menace. Hitchcock creates not only a suspenseful ambience within the film itself, but for the audience members as well. His thrilling films are full of paradoxes. He knew that the imagination was far more powerful than any image he could render on the screen, and this knowledge was key to his remarkable ability to manipulate his audience. Graphic violence was rarely featured in Hitchcock’s films; the audience instead used their imagination to ‘fill the gaps’.

Hitchcock requires a situation of normality, however dull it may seem on the surface, to emphasize the evil abnormality that lurks beneath the surface. Hitchcock gives us suspense in normal areas like a

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clean motel bathroom or a quiet psychiatric inpatient facility, which is what is most unnerving and uncanny about his works. This is because the audience can dive into and be a part of the film without “removing” themselves from it. “Removing” here means that the audience is never placed in situation that is so unfamiliar that it becomes unbelievable and merely fantasy. A haunted house is not “real” and therefore audiences watching a film about a haunted house would have to work hard to suspend disbelief. However, many people have spent the night in a motel, and so a film about a motel blurs lines between real world life and the cinema life. This is precisely what the Bretonian surrealists that Hitchcock admired were trying to accomplish. Hitchcock told François Truffaut, a French film director, that he practiced absurdism religiously. It can be seen throughout his works that absurdism and Bretonian surrealism are influential to Hitchcock.

In Spellbound, Alfred Hitchcock is the exact director that is needed to visually tell this story. Hitchcock reported to David O. Selznick, his producer who was inspired to film Spellbound from an adaptation of The Home of Dr. Edwardes, a thrilling novel by John Palmer and Hilary A. Saunders under the pseudonym Francis Beeding. Selznick was seeing a Freudian psychoanalyst which helped him with the idea to incorporate that into the film. Selznick produced, edited the final cut, and worked on the script for Spellbound.

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Selznick also was seeing a psychoanalyst at the time, May Romm. She was a
doctor who had a practice in Beverly Hills. She received the screen credit of
direction by Miklós Rózsa helps create an atmosphere of illusion for the audience
members through the orchestral sounds and the silences utilized in the film. The
camera direction and cinematography by the famous George Barnes, who uses
specific techniques such as montage, extreme close-up shots, and different lens
filters to set the scene visually. The artistic director is James Basevi, and
Salvador Dalí is part of the art department under him. This is a direct connection
between Hitchcock and surrealist ideas by not only Dalí, but Breton as well.
However, Hitchcock and Dalí created a dream sequence that was too long
according to Selznick and was cut tremendously by Selznick.

\textit{Spellbound} is about a female psychoanalyst, Dr. Constance Peterson, at
Green Manors, a psychiatric hospital in Vermont. Played by Ingrid Bergman, this
character is the female lead role of the film \textit{Spellbound}. Hitchcock has taken
special care to make audience members have sympathy for her due to the
danger she is being put through. Characters involved in danger often gain
audience’s sympathy due to the unconscious desire to project oneself unto the
characters one sees on the screen.\footnote{Alfred Hitchcock, “Why ‘Thrillers' Thrive,” in \textit{Hitchcock on Hitchcock : Selected Writings and
Interviews}, Edited by Sidney Gottlieb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 110.} The hospital director is retiring and a new
hospital director, Dr. Anthony Edwardes, is taking over. However, Dr. Peterson is
not quite sure that Dr. Edwardes, played by Gregory Peck, is who he says he

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really is. Dr. Peterson’s suspicions are realized when she discovers Dr. Edwardes to be a suspicious imposter. The real Dr. Edwardes has been killed and the imposter, masquerading as him, is actually a man named John Ballantyne. In a narrative twist John Ballantyne is unsure of whether he himself killed the original Dr. Edwardes due to his mysterious amnesia. With the use of psychoanalysis, Dr. Peterson intends on finding out the reason why Ballantyne cannot remember anything and how the real Dr. Edwardes has mysteriously died. This psychological thriller is about guilt and romance that is interlaced with images and the atmosphere of being in a dream state.\textsuperscript{119} Between the trances that Ballantyne goes through multiple times throughout the film, talks throughout the film of dreams, and a literal dream sequence, the atmosphere of being in a dream state can be felt as a viewer. The entire film seems like a dream. John Ballantyne’s guilt felt can be seen as suspicious activity going on in his unconscious while coming forth to his conscious mind. The audience and most characters in the film are made to believe that he is guilty of murder, and if he has committed murder once he will most likely commit it again. The unknown nature of John Ballantyne gives the audience members and the characters reason to be anxious when he is on screen.

\textit{Spellbound} starts out with a five-minute overture by Miklós Rózsa, the musical director. Then proceeds with slides, like those of silent films in which Hitchcock was used to working on, stating:

\begin{quote}
Our story deals with psychoanalysis, the method by which modern science treats the emotional problems of the sane. The analyst seeks only to induce the patient to talk about his hidden problems,
\end{quote}

to open the locked doors of his mind. Once the complexes that have been disturbing the patient are uncovered and interpreted, the illness and confusion disappear…and the evils of unreason are driven from the human soul.

The opening scene depicts the mental hospital, named Green Manors, in which the female protagonist, Dr. Peterson is seeing patients and talking with her colleagues about why she refuses to fall in love. A communal dinner is had between all the doctors and administrative staff of Green Manors and the new head director of the hospital is announced. A Dr. Edwardes is brought out and immediately Dr. Peterson is interested in him as he seems somewhat off.

Dr. Peterson begins to unravel why Dr. Edwardes is seemingly “off.” She notices small actions at first, like Ballantyne’s aversion to milk, and his obsession with parallel lines. Then, one night, Dr. Peterson goes to talk with Dr. Edwardes about his new book on psychology. As she is going up the stairs, the orchestral music flares and she is at his door. Once she is inside his room, she notices that he is asleep. Overcome by desire, she is at his bed, obsessively staring at his sleeping body. He wakes up, and they begin to have a conversation about his book where he answers in quite a vague manner. Dr. Peterson notices that his signature is different from the signature in the book. She figures out that he is not the real Dr. Edwardes, but rather a man named John Ballantyne who believes to have killed Dr. Edwardes for an unknown reason. However, this does not stop her hidden desire for love as they lean into each other and share a passionate kiss.

Then Dr. Peterson and John Ballantyne begin their quest on figuring out if he is innocent and if so, who is the murderer? She takes him to her old mentor, a
Dr. Alex Brulov, who warns her of the danger she is in, as she is the only character who truly believes Ballantyne is innocent. While hiding out at Dr. Brulov’s house, Ballantyne begins to sleepwalk in the middle of the night. He is in a trance and this suspenseful scene goes into motion. He is carrying a straight razor and goes into the parlor where Dr. Brulov is, while Dr. Peterson is asleep in another room. He unconsciously tries to murder Dr. Brulov and the commotion wakes up Dr. Peterson, who rushes downstairs. However, she is greeted by Ballantyne’s sleeping body and Dr. Brulov holding the straight razor. He suggests that Dr. Peterson be careful and that she better find out the answer to the question of Ballantyne’s innocence quickly before something bad happens.

A dream sequence begins at the 1:26:00 mark in the film. This was the result of a collaboration between Hitchcock and Salvador Dalí—it offers Dalí’s interpretation of the unconscious mind coming forth into the dream state. The viewer is shown a surrealist adaptation of dreams where there are at first glance eyeballs floating in space, a man with large scissors cutting an eye in half, and an almost naked girl kissing everyone in the area who looks like Dr. Peterson. The eye being cut in half could be a reference to Breton’s original idea that came to him that inspired him to create the Surrealist Manifesto of a man being cut in half by a window, t also is a reference to Freud’s uncanny as the eyes are often used throughout his psychoanalytic studies, and to Un Chien Andalou’s opening scene of a woman’s eye being cut in half by a razor. Then the dream fades into a room where people are playing cards with giant cards all around them. The cards held in Ballantyne’s own hands are blank and they are playing Blackjack.
specifically. The next part of the dream sequence appears to be influenced by Rene Magritte, as there is a proprietor wearing a panty hose mask with no face yelling about cheating on a very slanted roof. Then one of the men that were playing cards commits suicide off the roof. The proprietor is hiding behind the chimney and is holding a wheel now, but then proceeds to drop it. The final part of the dream sequence is John Ballantyne running down a hill with a pair of giant wings following the card man who committed suicide.

This sequence holds all three of Freud’s principles of dream interpretation: Condensation, Displacement, and Wish Fulfillment. The condensation can be interpreted at the symbols being shown in the dream, like the eyes watching Ballantyne, or the cards being played. The displacement comes in the form of the proprietor and the man who was playing cards with Ballantyne but commits suicide, as Ballantyne wishes he would have died instead of his brother and has a desire to commit suicide. The Wish Fulfillment is the almost naked Dr. Peterson giving sexual gratification to everyone as she kisses them. She can be seen as an unobtainable desire because she has made it very clear that love is not in her idea of living a happy life.

The audience then is able to listen in on Dr. Brulov and Dr. Peterson talk with Ballantyne and psychoanalyze his dream. It is then found out that Ballantyne is a man who just happened to be at a ski resort at the same time as the real Dr. Edwardes and the assistant director. The assistant director knows that Ballantyne is a patient of Dr. Edwardes and suffers from a guilt complex from when he was a child. It is then found out that Ballantyne feels guilty about being
the cause of his brother being killed when they were children and playing on an iron fence and stone banister. He believes that he is the reason why his brother was impaled on the fence. Hitchcock shows this scene to the viewer, however he conveniently leaves out the actual impalement of the child. In classic Hitchcock style he leaves this to the imagination of the audience members. The audience now figures out that Ballantyne is innocent of both murders, Dr. Edwardes and his younger brother’s. The assistant director is guilty of Dr. Edwardes’ murder and while at the ski resort with him and Ballantyne, hit Ballantyne on the top of the head causing a concussion and amnesia.

A montage is then seen as Dr. Peterson and John Ballantyne run from the authorities and collect evidence of Ballantyne’s innocence. Once they have enough evidence, they go to the assistant director and confront him. He has a gun, and a fight breaks out. At the very end of the scene the gun is pointed directly at the camera and breaks the fourth wall. The viewers are essentially the ones being shot with the assistant director as he commits suicide in order to absolve his guilt. This is showing an influence from Breton as he once declared in the *Manifestoes of Surrealism* that the simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd. The film ends on a scene with Dr. Peterson and Ballantyne on their honeymoon.

Can someone enjoy fear and suspense? Hitchcock and the surrealists like Breton and Dalí intend to find out the answer to this. Cinema is the best way for vicariously seeking fear as the price of injury or death is not actually paid by the
viewers, but by the subjects. Visual art can display this as well, but cinema displays it in real time which adds a more realistic aspect to the fear being felt by the viewer. Hitchcock makes it a point to create suspenseful films rather than terrifying films. He states that terror and suspense cannot coexist, but a director must only employ one at a time. Terror is felt by surprise, while suspense is felt with foreshadowing. This is much more enjoyable than terror. For instance, the gun pointing directly at the audience is the climax of the suspense in the scene because the audience has been waiting for the firing of the shot throughout the scene. This desire of wanting to hear the gun go off corresponds to a surrealist desire felt within the audience members by the film. This desire is surrealist because it is shocking and marvelous at the same time. The shock of the sound from the gun chamber as well as the shock of the action combined with the glory of potential ecstasy from death.

In Alfred Hitchcock’s Spellbound, psychoanalysis and dream symbolism are methods of displaying anxiety and fear. Hitchcock not only creates an environment in which the characters have anxiety but creates a suspenseful and uneasy feeling in the audience members as well. By utilizing specific camera techniques and sounds throughout the film, Hitchcock is able to create a successful suspension of the audience clinging onto the story in addition to the edge of their seats. With a music score written by Miklós Rózsa and the cinematographer, George Barnes, the script is not the only mode of suspense. Much of the film is loaded with special audio and camera effects, but perhaps the
most intriguing scenes that have these effects are the first kissing scene, the
dream sequence, and the montages used throughout the film.

Ingrid Bergman, who plays the lead female role of the psychoanalyst, Dr.
Constance Petersen, gives the audience a feeling of relief in many of her scenes.
The tension created by Hitchcock is palpable. The audience is made to feel like they need to keep Dr. Peterson safe no matter what situation she is in. For example, Dr. Peterson is a career woman and often laughs at her colleagues for entertaining love. She considers love dangerous and is fine with being alone or viewing relationships from afar.\textsuperscript{120} Even when she is being pursued by a fellow colleague, the audience is made to feel like they are her “guards.” Hitchcock often creates an atmosphere for the audience to be made as the protectors or guardians of the protagonists.\textsuperscript{121} This was achieved though the soft feminine dynamic created by Ingrid Bergman’s performance and the audience’s empathy towards her character. Her comforting presence is juxtaposed with Gregory Peck, who plays the lead male role of “Dr. Edwardes”/ John Ballantine, who causes the audience members to distrust and question his motives because of the way he acts. Bergman’s character is displayed as a woman who is intelligent and married to her career as a psychoanalyst in a mental hospital, which gives her credibility to the audience because of her intelligence and beauty. This is achieved by the camera techniques used while she is in the shot. There is often a soft filter when she is seen in close-up, almost making her appear like an angel


in a dream. Hitchcock often creates this soft dream-like aura for his female leads to create a beautiful and trustworthy character. If the audience cannot trust the female protagonist, then how are they supposed to feel the suspense and experience the feeling of the uncanny throughout the film?

The audience feels like the motherly figure of Ingrid Bergman created by Hitchcock is safe and warm. Hitchcock evokes the Oedipus complex from Freud’s analysis. Bergman’s character is both material and sexually attractive. These repressed childhood feelings of the Oedipus complex are uncanny to feel for most of the viewers as they have repressed them for a reason, according to Freud.

However, Peck’s character’s close ups are often of his eyes looking around quickly or his facial expressions showing an internal anguish and struggle. The use of close-up shots in this film are incredibly powerful for audience members. This is because it gives the audience members an insightful view into the body language of “Dr. Edwardes.” Humans know the world operates in consistent patterns of cause and effect; the reason why something happens is easy to decipher after some thinking, the reasons can be known. The trick in Hitchcock’s suspense movies, much like in Spellbound, is to engage and undermine these general epistemological assumptions. To make the audience members think they have a grasp on the world that Hitchcock has created gives them extra confidence in knowing when the suspenseful moments will happen. In

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Spellbound, this is shown to be false and keeps the audience on their toes, causing them to become more and more anxious. The fear in these types of movies is that the viewers cannot tell real danger from seemingly dangerous situations. In the case of Spellbound, Dr. Peterson could die if John Ballantine really is a murderer. Hitchcock’s ability to create and ease tension within the same close up shot is essential towards this particular film.

In the first kissing scene, Dr. Petersen is walking through the halls of Green Manors and up the staircase, the camera displays the set through panning upwards and acting as her eyes. Perhaps the most influential and impactful series of close-up shots is in this scene. Dr. Petersen walks into Dr. Edwardes’ office to discuss his newest book with him. As Dr. Edwardes gets up and is walking closer to Dr. Petersen, the camera continually gets closer and closer to their faces. So much so, that right before the passionate kiss takes place, the camera is at an extreme close-up of just their eyes. This creates tension within the audience members as they are anticipating either a romantic embrace or a struggle between these two characters. The restrained passion and charged feelings of hesitation are followed by a montage of opening doors, as if releasing the tension through an explosion of passion. The feeling of tension finally being released, both visually and musically, makes Hitchcock’s uniting of camera movement with montage in this film incredibly effective. The swelling of violins gets the viewers’ heartbeats pumping faster and faster, which is how Dr. Peterson must be feeling as she is feeling her first love. Rozsa’s musical score

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combined with Barne’s camera techniques of montage and extreme close-ups help get the audience in a tense state of not only mind but body as well. This helps to encapsulate the viewer entirely and get them more into a dream state rather than a waking state. The single patient room doors that are opening add to the effect of a dream state. It is as if the viewer is going on a journey with Dr. Peterson, and the doors are allowing them to. The doors could symbolize going deeper into the mind and feelings of Dr. Peterson, but they could also be interpreted as a psychoanalytic device. The doors can be interpreted as both condensation and displacement devices in this scene. The repressed desire for Dr. Peterson of being loved by a man is symbolized as the door itself. However, the doors are symbolizing many associations, per condensation. These associations could be the repressed desire of being loved, the open mouths of their first kiss, sexual tension being released for the first time, or even Dr. Peterson having an orgasm. The displacement, or decentering of the dream thought, in this case is the doors opening. Being able to interpret the dream thought is up to the audience.

The montage of opening doors suggests the release of a long-repressed love. The close-up shots of each character before the kiss and release show subjective-objective transference. Hitchcock wants to create an atmosphere for the audience members to be able to feel the dual reactions of the characters. The doors opening could symbolize the repressed desire finally being satisfied as the sexual tension is released between Dr. Peterson and “Dr. Edwardes.”

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Peterson has had this unknown or restrained desire to be loved by a man.

Aristotle is often mentioned throughout this film, and for good reason. Freud often relied on Aristotle to form his many theories. One theory of Aristotle’s that can be used in this case is that humans are habitual, and their behavior often tends to follow patterns of good or bad actions.¹²⁶ Dr. Peterson is seen as a morally good character, whose actions are that of truth seeking and innocence. “Dr. Edwardes,” is displayed as an unknown moral character. The audience cannot tell if he is a morally good or an evil character. The suspense is held through the physical closeness of the two characters and the closeness of the camera to them. Hitchcock’s movement of the camera is essential for the audience to feel the dual reactions of both Dr. Petersen and Dr. Edwardes, while also internally reacting from the view of the spectator.¹²⁷ By using extreme close-up shots, it keeps the audience on their toes, and glued to the screen. Without using the progressively closer shots, this scene could not have had the great impact on the psyche of the audience members as it did. The scene would not have been as effective or emotional.

Not only do the close-up shots influence audience members’ mental behavior, but the music used generates physical reactions as well. Miklós Rózsa produces a dramatic score for the film. For instance, the music begins to swell and become louder as Dr. Petersen is walking up the stairs. This creates a faster heartbeat and physical anxious tics from the audience members. Perhaps one

might sit up straighter or clench their jaw; all noticeable signs of tension, suspense, and anxiety manifesting physically within the viewer. These musical spells cast on the audience help them to feel what the characters might be feeling in that moment.\textsuperscript{128} Hitchcock’s developed relationship between the musical score and the audience members’ feelings are perfectly in tune with the situations unfolding on the screen. Entrusted music could bring life to ideas and submerged passions that dialogue or the camera might not be able to on their own.\textsuperscript{129} Hitchcock specifically uses music that creates complex psychological and moral states in \textit{Spellbound} in order to help guide the viewers into a surreal world of unknown reality. The psychological use of music delivers a revelation of the subconscious rather than purely just “setting the mood.”\textsuperscript{130} This is seen directly when viewing the scene with the doors opening up for Dr. Peterson’s repressed desires.

Rozsa’s opulent orchestral music is booming and commanding; it is impossible to ignore while viewing the film. Hitchcock links music to drama of disturbing psychological and moral ambiguity of each scene.\textsuperscript{131} For example, the music is incredibly ambiguous during scenes where the audience is led to think there is a possibility of danger. The musical score has no lyrics, which is pretty common in this era of film. However, the orchestral grasp on the audience is very

overwhelming at times. This is a conscious decision made by Hitchcock and Rozsa to envelope the audience into the scene. This causes the audience to lose even more sense of reality and pulls them into the surreal film world that is unfolding right before their eyes. The ambiguity goes back to the audience not knowing the difference between real danger and the possibility of danger potentially happening at that moment. The silence between musical instances is also very important for Hitchcock’s films. He uses silence as tool for suspense to a powerful effect on the audience members. Not only does Hitchcock successfully incorporate music, but the absence of sound is important as well. This creates just as much tension between the characters and audience members as the swelling dramatic musical numbers.

The musical score is a way for the audience to understand what is going on without having to hear dialogue or read the set design closely. By taking out the dialogue as the narrator, and putting in music as the more reliable narrator, the audience’s anxiety and fear can swell or deflate. This can also be seen by the use of the theremin, an instrument made popular in Hollywood movies because of the electronic sound it delivers. This became synonymous with psychoanalysis and dream symbolism, in addition to the “unknown”. The sound of the theremin creates an atmosphere that is surreal. It creates an augmented sounding reality that displaces the viewer from the real world into the film’s surreal world. After Spellbound came out, many Hollywood movies started embracing the theremin for many genres such as science fiction and horror. The

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theremin became the official Hollywood psychosis instrument after being used in these types of films.\textsuperscript{133}

While Dr. Petersen usually emits a soft, dreamy aura while on screen, some of her later close-up shots produce anxiety and fear for her character from the audience members. The significance of these later close-up shots reveals fear within Dr. Petersen; as can be seen when she glances down or to her side.\textsuperscript{134} If Hitchcock had not used a close-up shot, these vital and minute eye movements might be overlooked and unnoticed by audience members. By not seeing these crucial facial cues, the scenes lose the fear factor and do not uphold the aspect of suspense. Both the close-up shots of Dr. Petersen and “Dr. Edwardes” maintain one of the themes of the film: guilt and romance.

The dream sequence is no doubt one of the most recognized scenes from the film, as it was designed by surrealist artist Salvador Dalí. Because Bretonian surrealism is based around the unconscious and Freudian theories, Hitchcock employed both Breton and Dalí’s surrealism into the film. In Dalí’s case, he employed figures of the unconscious in a visual aspect. Repetition, for example, is very evident in the dream sequence of \textit{Spellbound}. There are multiple eyeballs, multiple cards, and multiple shadows in straight lines. This is something that Freud distinctly says is part of the uncanny. Repetition is uncanny when the person is subjected to the helplessness of dream states.\textsuperscript{135} In this dream state,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Donald Spoto, \textit{The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of his Motion Pictures} (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), 140.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the familiar is being brought back into the conscious waking state, which in turn tries to make sense of it. This not only gives the audience an interesting scene to view, but it also helps further the discussion of psychoanalysis used through dream symbolism. This is helpful for audience members who might not quite understand Freudian theories of interpretation of dreams or psychoanalysis because it gives a visual representation of how seemingly random yet significant the language of dreams are.

One concept of Freud’s that is part of the uncanny is material reality versus psychic reality. Where the uncanny stems from childhood complexes, the question of material reality does not arise, its place being taken by psychic reality. Here one is dealing with the actual repression of a particular content and the return of what has been repressed, not with the suspension of belief in its reality. One could say that in the one case a certain ideational content was repressed, in the other the belief in its material reality. The conclusion could then be stated as follows: the uncanny element one knows from experience arises either when repressed childhood complexes are revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs that have been surmounted appear to be once again confirmed.136 This stating that material reality is about natural scientific evidence. The material can be explained, whereas the psychic is more of an idea or a concept.137 Psychic reality could be one believing the number two is very important because they see it every time they look at the clock, or because their

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address is 222 Main Street. The repetition is what makes their superstitions in the psychic reality believable to them. In the case of *Spellbound*, the mix of material and psychic realities are what makes this such an interesting film influenced by Freudian psychology and surrealism.

One might look at the dream sequence and think that the playing cards do not mean anything, or the slope of the roof is meant to be just a slope of a roof. However, by applying Freudian psychoanalytic theories of dream interpretation, Dr. Peterson and her old mentor Dr. Brulov can accurately understand John Ballantine’s unconscious mind and the reason why he has a guilt complex from his childhood traumas. The Oedipus complex is another theme that runs throughout the film; Bergman’s character represents a mother figure, with whom Ballantine falls in love.138

The montages used in this film both create a sense of time being frozen and time flying by in the scenes. For instance, the montage of the opening doors is one that stops time for the two characters and for the audience members. One might hold their breath while watching the scene leading up to it, and then during the montage let out a sigh of relief or release. This is a perfect example of anxiety and excited energy being released in a euphoric dream state of mind. Anxiety usually has negative connotations; however, it is normal and could be considered good to have a small bit of anxiety. The “jitters” or “butterflies” in Dr. Petersen’s body are physically felt by the viewers through the silver screen.

montage that appears in front of the audience in addition to the music playing. The swelling of the grand orchestral music also helps heighten the emotional eruption felt by both the characters and by the audience members. In contrast, the montage near the end of the film is meant to speed up time while Dr. Petersen and John Ballantine try to find evidence to prove his innocence. This is a tactic used in many films to display time passing in reel time versus real time.¹³⁹ This creates the opportunity for the film to be about two hours in real time but can create the illusion of many days and nights, or possibly months, in reel time. Not only is this technique vital for movies to keep viewers entertained and involved in the plot; it is also vital in this film specifically for another reason. When someone is dealing with anxiety and fear, time becomes an enigma. Time is not linear nor rational, as can be seen in Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*. A minute is technically still sixty seconds long, however, to someone experiencing anxiety those sixty seconds could feel anywhere between five seconds to five months. For dreams, it feels like the dream state only lasts a few seconds or minutes. However, it takes hours for the person within that dream state to go through the principles of Condensation, Displacement, and Wish Fulfillment. The last being the satisfaction to anxiety caused by dreams or even nightmares that can relieve anxiety. Thus, Hitchcock’s use of montage and the musical swells help with the satisfaction of the anxiety felt by the audience members.

The montage close to the end of the film displays this almost perfectly. The viewers have no way of knowing how much time is passing through this

montage. Without this montage, the film would still be interesting to the audience, but it was a vital timepiece for the unconscious minds of the audience members. Not only does that express the feeling of anxious time passing, but also involves Freud's theories mentioned throughout the film. This was a perfect example of subliminal messaging to the unconscious mind. Essentially, the audience was being psychically manipulated by Hitchcock indirectly.

Hitchcock implemented special camera techniques paired with sound effects to display the anxiety and fear felt by the characters and instill those feelings within each audience member. Without his guidance and expertise, the film would probably have been successful but not as impactful as it would have been. The production team that was employed, was quite resourceful and was able to achieve more than what was expected. With the musical expertise of Miklós Rózsa and the cunning camera techniques by George Barnes, this film was able to bring physical reactions within the audience that embodied anxiety and fear. Not only were Hitchcock, Rozsa, and Barnes incredible at creating the atmosphere that provoked those reactions, but Salvador Dalí and his surrealist dream sequence really drove home the ideology of Sigmund Freud’s unconscious mind and psychoanalytic dream theories.

The movie is similar to *Un Chien Andalou* in aesthetic concerns as the slides with text are helping the viewer understand what is going on within the film in the beginning. *Un Chien Andalou* is a silent film by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, and the scenes are set with slides that have text on them. This is something that many silent films have in order to create an atmosphere that is easily
interpreted by audience members. Hitchcock initially started out making silent films and this technique is adapted over into his films with sound.

*Un Chien Andalou* is a film that is made to disorient the viewer. Many surrealist films do create a le dépaysement atmosphere, but *Un Chien Andalou* has a sur-dépaysement atmosphere. This means that it is super disorienting as opposed to slightly disorienting.\(^{140}\) It can be argued that one reason why *Un Chien Andalou* has son pouvoir de dépaysement is because there is no concept of time within the film. One scene goes to another not in linear progression but in a sporadic manner that keeps the viewer trying to comprehend when and where the scenes are taking place. Not only does this disorient the viewer, but it liberates the image from reason. *Un Chien Andalou* has the ability to arrange concrete images in an order alien to that of spatial and temporal reality.\(^{141}\) The unexpected visual juxtapositions cause the viewer disorientation, but also give a way for the viewer to have free association after a while of being subjected to these images. The slicing of one eye with a pair of scissors during Dalí’s dream sequence can be considered a dedication to Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou*. Not only is the disorientation through the imagery itself, but also through the refusal to separate desires from the “real” in the film. Causing the viewer to wonder if anything in the film is actually “real” or if it is all just a dream. Man’s sensitivity to what is real is deeply influenced by his own desires, realized or not.\(^{142}\)

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While *Spellbound* is much more linear in the plot progression, it can still be very disorienting. Especially towards the end of the film when Dr. Peterson and Ballantyne are fleeing from the authorities. The viewer has no clue how much time has passed. Has it been a day, a month, a year even? The progression of time is not the only aspect that is disorienting to the viewer. The use of specific images over and over is something that triggers free association within the viewer as well.

For instance, there is a glass of milk that is constantly seen throughout Spellbound. It serves as a sinister object used to remind John Ballantyne of the grief of the loss of his brother. The constant reminder is hurting Ballantyne for unknown reasons to him and to audience members until Dr. Peterson uses psychoanalysis techniques to trigger those harmful memories. Hitchcock repeatedly creates invasions of everyday life, such as the glass of milk.\footnote{Andrew Sarris, “Alfred Hitchcock,” in *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1968), 56-61.} A common object that creates an uncommon and unknown response. These objects embody the feelings and fears of characters as object and character interact with each other in dramas within dramas.\footnote{Andrew Sarris, “Alfred Hitchcock,” in *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1968), 56-61.} The obsessions of Hitchcock’s characters display desire at its finest state.

Parallel lines also seem to really upset Ballantyne throughout the film. This is something that is common in the real world to see through architecture and handwriting but can be overlooked by the unconscious mind. It might appear to the viewer often, however without actively looking for these parallel lines, the
viewer might overlook them. Ballantyne, however, cannot overlook them as this uncanny effect is creeping out of his unconscious mind. The repetition of these parallel lines is reminding him of something that his conscious mind has hidden deep from childhood and even his adult mind has tried to black out. The parallel lines represent the iron bars that killed his brother, whom he thinks is dead on his part. The parallel lines can also represent the skis that he was riding out in the ski resort when the real Dr. Edwardes was murdered. The the parallel lines of the skis brought forth his childhood memories of his brother dying—this is the return of the repressed experience from his childhood—and this is how he became the perfect target to be the fall guy for Dr. Edwardes’ murder. Anything that can remind someone of this inner compulsion to repeat is perceived as uncanny.\textsuperscript{145} This uncanniness is why \textit{Spellbound} is so enticing to the viewers.

Hitchcock was undoubtably influenced by the surrealists. There are accounts from Hitchcock of him and Dalí conversing and working together. The most notable collaboration between the two is Hitchcock’s \textit{Spellbound}. Dalí designed the infamous dream sequence. This is very important because Hitchcock often emphasizes images rather than words. Meaning, he will write an action into the script that will be vital to the understanding of the plot, but an actor will not necessarily say what they are doing. The viewer must be completely entranced and actively watching the film in order to not miss these types of clues given.

Hitchcock also displays themes of surrealism throughout almost all of his films. The three main themes that can be noticed in surrealist films or works in general are: the pursuit of love, terror, and comedy. Hitchcock manages to encapsulate all three of these themes in his films. The unobtainable desire of a man’s love for a woman, the terror that the audience feels when a character is surprised by another, and the comedic relief given in between the suspenseful scenes. This is just one example of how his works can be argued to be surrealist to the core. However, surrealist thinkers were not the only influence on his works.

Edgar Allen Poe was one of Hitchcock’s influences too, indirectly of course. In Hitchcock’s essay Why I am Afraid of the Dark, he states, “Was I influenced by Edgar Allen Poe? To be frank, I couldn’t affirm it with certainty. Of course, subconsciously we are always influenced by the books we have read. The novels, the painting, the music, and all the works of art, in general, form our intellectual culture from which we can’t get away. Even if we want to!” He claims that he was sixteen when he discovered Poe, and that Poe is the reason he started making suspense films. Edgar Allen Poe is often cited as one of the inspirations for the surrealists and for Breton. Hitchcock states,

"And surrealism? Wasn’t it born as much from the work of Poe as from that of Lautréamont? This literary school certainly had a great influence on cinema, especially around 1925-30 when surrealism was transposed onto the screen by Buñuel with L’Age d’or and Un Chien Andalou, by René Clair with Entr’acte, by Jean Epstein with The Fall of the House of Usher, and by your French academian"

Jean Cocteau with The Blood of a Poet. An influence that I experienced myself, if only in dream sequences and the sequences of the unreal in a certain number of my films.

However, Hitchcock might believe that the influence is only through his dream sequences, but it can be noted that the main themes of his works are purely surrealist. Themes of love, terror, and comedy. Hitchcock often chooses suspense over terror because it is more enjoyable for the viewer to be in a suspended state rather than a terrified state.

In terms of terror versus suspense, Poe creates a suspenseful environment for the reader. In *The Tell-Tale Heart*, Poe uses the constant beating of the heart to become mimicked in the reader’s own body. Hitchcock often does this through music and through the body movements of the characters in peril. Hitchcock states, "I try to put in my films with what Poe put in his stories: a perfectly unbelievable story recounted to readers with such a hallucinatory logic that one has the impression that this same story can happen to you tomorrow."\(^{149}\) This is precisely what surrealist artists do when they recount their works. Hallucinatory logic can be argued that it is illogical and lacks reasoning.

Hitchcock himself has stated that for a film to become successful in grabbing hold of the audience’s attention with suspense, the audience members must have a character or multiple characters that are relatable. The audience members must be able to project themselves onto the characters and try to put themselves in their shoes. Watching a film, audience members are not just

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spectators, but rather participants. In theatre, the viewer is limited to the physical stage and set design, and this can be restrictive to the full immersion of the audience member into the surreality of the production. Whereas with film, the audience is shown everything about the scene and through camera techniques and editing. This causes the audience members to become fully immersed into the surreality. Being an audience member of a theatre production one hears about the danger, but in film the audience can actually see the danger.

Another reason why film is superior to theatre productions for the audience members is because of the power to disorient, or son pouvoir de dépaysement. The cinema has the power to take a viewer out of their natural surroundings once they walk through the doors. It is as if they are transferring over into the dream realm when going through the cinema doors. This is particularly interesting because the cinema can adapt easily to surrealism’s needs and to Hitchcock’s needs.

Perhaps this is because cinema caresses the viewer into a state of belief and surreality. The viewer becomes open to anything and everything being possible. The cinema helps the viewer no differentiate between what “is” and what “is not.” Meaning they accept the irrational as rational and dismiss the notion of anything being irrational. It is also a wonder of why people love

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Hitchcock and surrealist's films so much, and that can be answered with a few explanations.

Hitchcock believes that it is the nature of the viewer to need a “shake-up,” or over time the viewer grows sluggish and jellified. Thus, by not having a very dramatic reality, one must create and experience them artificially.\textsuperscript{155} The silver screen is a wonderful medium for this as it gives the absolute power of surreality to grasp the viewer until the literal end. The cinema gives the viewer a feeling of safety, yet it can surprise the imagination into playing tricks on them.\textsuperscript{156}


CONCLUSION

Surrealism and Freud’s uncanny theories influenced the American animation and film industries in the way they were produced. Cinema is a great medium for showcasing surrealism because of its ability to involve the viewer into the dream state of the unconscious while watching. This brings their unconscious desires up into the conscious mind and creates uncanny feelings potentially. While poetry and other forms of visual art can be successful in developing surrealist concerns, animations and film create a direct way for the viewer to become entranced in the concerns.

Fleischer Bros. cartoons of Betty Boop and the Talkartoons have visible examples of surrealism. For example, Betty Boop enters a mystery cave in a phallic ice casket and the unconscious sexual desire felt by the characters and audience members comes to light. Warner Bros. cartoons like Porky in Wackylund were influenced by surrealism as a shared cultural concept. Alfred Hitchcock had direct surrealist influences of Dalí and worked with Dr. May Romm, a psychoanalyst, on the set of Spellbound. The popularization of surrealism and psychoanalysis was seen in magazines, exhibitions, and when many of the surrealists were exiled to the United States of America during and after World War II.

By exploring filmic advantages, the cinema was studied and used to showcase surrealism in a different kind of light. Breton’s surrealism was able to
be creatively free in film and the explorations became more developed over the next few decades after his manifestos were published. Society in America was thus influenced on the fringes of popular culture through the exploration and development of surrealism in animation and film.

This exploration is still utilized in contemporary cartoons and thriller films such as *Courage the Cowardly Dog* (1996-2002) and David Lynch’s *Inland Empire* (2006). With audiences that are quite different from one another, thriller films and children’s cartoons both give an incredible environment for the dive into a dream state and Freudian slips. In addition to this, psychoanalysts in Beverly Hills and New York gave a hand in popularizing Freudian psychoanalysis in the cinematic universe. Film is a great medium for displaying the concepts outlined in Breton’s surrealist manifestos.
Figure 1


https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_1.
Figure 2


[https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc)
Figure 3

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_1.
Figure 4


[https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1).
Figure 5

Figure 6


[https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_1).
Figure 7

Figure 8


https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unkc_1_1.
Figure 9

Dalí Theatre-Museum, Figueres, Spain.

Figure 10


[https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unko](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0011FU8GO/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unko)
Figure 11

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 12

Ernst, Max. *Untitled (Dada)*. 1922-1923. Oil on canvas, 43.2 x 31.5 cm, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain.
Figure 13

Figure 14

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 15

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 16

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc).
Figure 17

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 18

Figure 19

*Original drawing of Betty Boop*, 1930s, Fleischer Studios.
Figure 20

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc).
Figure 21

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 22

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
Figure 23

Roland C. Crandall, *Snow White*, David Fleischer and Max Fleischer, Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1933, animated short still, 7:07,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKOSJ5AAwfc.
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