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**Mickey’s Pathos. A ‘Single Obscurity’ in Aby Warburg’s Thought**

We have created characters and animated them in the dimension of depth, revealing through them to our perturbed world that the things we have in common far outnumber and outweigh those that divide us.

Walt Disney

...an iconological analysis that can range freely, with no fear of border guards, and can treat the ancient, medieval and modern worlds as a coherent historical unity... by taking pains to illuminate one single obscurity, can cast light on great and universal evolutionary processes in all their interconnectedness.

Aby Warburg

In the late 1920s, Walt Disney created a series of animated shorts in collaboration with head animator Ub Iwerks entitled *Plane Crazy*, *Gallopin Gaucho* (1928) and *Skeleton Dance* (1929), all featuring mechanised and malleable figures manoeuvring alongside neurotically animated objects in an equally pliable landscape. Released in the year of Aby Warburg’s death, the art-historian and cultural theorist never gave any thought to early animation. However, in their extreme externalization of emotions, animation of the inorganic and delirious commotion, these films are compelling cultural objects for thinking through Warburg’s notions of *Nachleben*, *Pathosformeln* and accessory forms in motion. If, as Warburg claims, such impulses erupt in times of deep social and psychological crisis, then 1929 is a case in point. Not to mention the social and political unrest and the worldwide economic depression, the frenzied unrest of these films is symptomatic of modernity’s struggle to come to terms with an environment increasingly animated by technology, as well as with the progressive mechanization of society itself – “the perturbed world,” as Disney describes it above – a time of
crisis if ever there was one. Moreover, as the above quotes show, both Disney and Warburg departed from an interconnected notion of creative expression through time, space and medium, lending us the perhaps superfluous license or in any case the conceptual basis to write this missing chapter, as it were – this “one single obscurity.” In so doing, rather than apply Warburg’s theories to Disney’s films, I aim to investigate the significance of relating the two, submitting both to critical consideration. This follows from the central question: what are the implications of Aby Warburg’s notions on Nachleben, Pathosformeln and Empathie in thinking about the significance of early Disney animation as a cultural object and how is this significant in understanding both the nature of the crisis of modernity and the broader psycho-anthropological ramifications of Warburg’s thought?

In pursuing this, a selection of Warburg’s texts will be central, most notably his essay entitled A Lecture on the Serpent Ritual (1923), in which his ideas on ‘pathos-formulas’ and empathy allow for an in-depth consideration of the notion of Nachleben in relation to Disney’s films and for its elucidation of these terms within a broader understanding of cultural expression, that is beyond the framework of European so-called high art. Although the Disney enterprise may arguably be perceived as both commercial and trivial because of its concessions to the market and its moralist-didactic realism, these animations were part of the radical experimental vanguard at the time and featured prominently within contemporary modernist rhetoric. Within this context, Esther Leslie’s Hollywood Flatlands and Walter Benjamin’s fragmentary writings on Mickey Mouse as a compelling locus of animadversion are central in pinpointing the significance of relating Warburg to early animation and vice versa. Leslie offers not only a very perceptive insight into the cultural significance of early Disney animation, she also builds a peculiar bridge between Warburg and animation; between the lines this publication is replete with Warburgian language, though she never mentions him explicitly. Though Leslie’s perspective is a markedly neo-Marxist one, I will reconfigure her analysis into a less political and more psycho-pathological understanding of the films. Arguably, her notions become somewhat limited within this specific, historically-determined framework and will gain greater potential if seen alongside more psychologically-determined, trans-historical lines – already, albeit only latently present.

In his later essays, Aby Warburg developed his notions of Nachleben to encompass a broader understanding of the significance of his initial, more empirically-
grounded findings, particularly by pursuing the question of what interested artists when they turned to antiquity for a model. In these later phases of his thought, the notion of Nachleben became inextricably bound to that of pathos-formulas and empathy. How may these notions help in grasping the cultural significance of Walt Disney’s very first animations? The conventions of commerce having not yet set in, these films manifest a radical play with animation – a medium that, by its very definition, not only invites an in-depth consideration of Warburg’s lifelong engagement with movement, but also allows his concern with “the most difficult problem in all art, which is that of capturing images of life in motion,” to gain new significance.

Warburg himself was not in the least interested in animation and was indeed quite unimpressed by what he described as logical, technologized modern man, who, as opposed to magical man (situated on the opposite pole) had “acquired the sense of technical security of the European who awaits the future event as something bound to occur according to an organic or mechanical law.” Here Warburg was mistaken, as he apparently failed to grasp the dramatic consequences of technology for modern man who by no means felt secure, but rather intensely struggled to come to grips with a drastically altered environment and his own mechanized motions within it. Indeed, Plane Crazy “mustered all the lunacy of technologized modernity” and none of its alleged logic or technological security. Of course, as with his rather conventional attitude towards the more innovative styles of modern art and the fact that he overlooked the immense cultural significance of animation and cinema, these blind-spots can easily be excused as a difference in interest and a rather innocent instance of what, on a jovial note, could be characterized as ‘old-man’s blinkers’. More importantly however, Warburg failed to grasp the value of his own ideas for understanding animation as a cultural object, that is, as an object that permitted a negotiation of anxieties and, as I will show, functioned not unlike the antelope-masks or serpents for the Hopi, one of the Native American tribes visited by Warburg in 1895. Very probably, though speculatively, should Warburg have acknowledged that modern man was by no means tranquil, secure, or logical, but rather distressed and restless, he might have recognised the fruitfulness of considering animation as a locus of negotiation and indeed a support to his claims about the function of art and the broader creation of images as necessary to human survival.
As Warburg’s essay on Albrecht Dürer makes clear and as could already be discerned in his Botticelli essay, the notion of Nachleben involves “an unresolved composite, joining a realistic observation of nature with an idealizing reliance on familiar antique sources.”¹³ Within the very different context of the Hopi Indians, a similar claim is found in his assertion that, in view of the scarcity of water – an environmentally-determined crisis – these people developed rituals to gain agency in their situation, such as the Indians of San Ildefonso, who designed masks to resemble their prey (in this case, antelope). It is through “mimic transformation” into that which he wished to command, that the Indian would “transform his own self and so wrest from nature by magic means something which he feels he cannot attain so long as his personality remains unchanged and unextended.”¹⁴ It is this act of mimicry that Warburg identifies as empathy.¹⁵ In viewing Disney’s animations through this lens, it could be argued that in the case of modernity, the crisis is to be allocated, not in what would conventionally be classified as a ‘natural’ source, but in the increasingly technologized and urbanized world and in its mechanization and Taylorization of labour, public transport, infrastructure and all other processes of bodily regulation. ‘Nature’ or the environment of habitation, is no longer that of plants, animals, fire, wind and water, but a technologically determined one.

In this sense, I propose that to look at early animation in Warburgian terms implies firstly that the ‘unresolved composite’ is a joining of an observation of ‘nature’ – now to be reconfigured as the industrialized, urban environment – with an idealizing reliance on familiar sources, be they antique or not. Secondly, the mimic transformation into that which one aims to command should be understood in technological terms. Hence, in his struggle to exert agency, modern man struggles to somehow regulate or dominate this uncontrollably manic environment, seemingly in possession of a life and will of its own, echoing the way that forces of nature are often characterized. As Jay P. Telotte puts it, Disney’s films “present us with gags built around the very unavoidability of the natural world and the inevitable links between nature and culture at a time when we were, through a variety of technology and techniques, struggling to separate those realms.”¹⁶
It is in fact unsurprising that in the newly technologized world, the pathos of anguish should be expressed in technological terms. After all, the anxiety expressed in art from antiquity until roughly the mid-19th century was of a very different, far more physical kind. Now, faced with the fear for the machine, live figures take on mechanical forms, functioning as transitional objects, comparable to how the Hopi imitated the life-cycle of the serpents in an empathetic gesture to work through their fears and neutralize the snakes’ agency (in the hopes of thereby inverting the direction of the agency).

As with the Hopi Indians’ mimetic, transformational rituals, Disney’s figures in *Plane Crazy* repeatedly become mechanized in an empathic gesture to reconcile themselves with their estranged environment. In servitude of Mickey’s needs, a dog transforms into a staircase (Fig.1) and later into a wind-up motor to start-up the plane (Fig.2). Likewise, in *Gallopin Gaucho*, Mickey solves all practical problems by turning mechanical. So when he is unable to open the door to the tower where Minnie is kept captive, he simply extends his tail into a lasso, connects a turning-handle to a hole with which he now appears to be equipped, and winds himself up to the top window (Fig.3-4). And when he and Minnie struggle to kiss on a bumpy ostrich-ride (Fig.5), they simply coil up their tails to facilitate a well-levelled embrace (Fig.6). Though we are now well acquainted with and thereby perhaps unimpressed by such metamorphoses, in the 1920s, as aptly put in Leslie’s eloquent prose: “Modernist theorists and artists were fascinated by cartoons”, particularly “…proponents of a demotic modernism that was… ever curious about the shadow side, the mass market of industrialized culture. For the modernists, cartoons – which rebuff so ferociously painterly realism and filmic naturalism – are set inside a universe of transformation, overturning and provisionality.”

Walter Benjamin, for instance, did not fail to see the significance of early animation and wrote extensively on it. Clearly demonstrating Warburg’s influence, in his essay *Zu Mickey-Maus* (1931) he writes that “in these films humanity prepares to survive civilization.”
Viewed from this angle, animation not only can be but was singled out as the ideal medium of socio-cultural transformation, in its potential to literally redraw society in its newly industrialized habitat. Mickey and his friends’ mimic transfigurations into mechanical forms parallel the Hopi’s mutations into their prey – both transform into that which they aim to command. According to Warburg, it is in this midway between logic and magic that man “interposes symbols between himself and the world” in order to “coerce the hostile forces of nature.” In fact, Leslie quite literally echoes this thought: “Through a grim and mimetic humour, Disney provides a safe haven from daily collective experience – the threats of urban life, the mad and lively and overwhelming machines, the cars, the steel foundries, the punch-ups.” Of course, by no means did Warburg understand such mimetic transformations as ‘safe,’ let alone capable of offering any kind of ‘haven’ and on this specific point Leslie shows an overly optimistic understanding of the films’ workings. It is, in fact, often claimed that such cyborg-like hybridity as that which is embodied in Disney’s figures is “... a product of cultural fears and desires that run deep within our psychic unconscious.” Regardless, Leslie’s statement does indicate that such animations offered a certain distance, a Denkraum – thereby becoming negotiating symbols between man and his environment. Such symbols, Warburg writes, become “a hieroglyph... something to be read - an intermediary stage between image and sign, between realistic representation and script,” or put differently: a “fairy-tale-like way of thinking.”

In order to grasp exactly how this should bring about such a coercion of hostile forces, a deeper understanding of the notions of pathos-formulas and Denkraum is called for. As Gertrud Bing formulates it, pathos-formulas are “to be considered as visible expressions of psychic states that had become fossilized, so to speak, in the images.” Georges Didi-Huberman insists that this should not be understood in semiotic terms, but rather as a psychic symptomatology and goes on to offer an elaborate explanation of the symptom – that which links Warburg to Sigmund Freud. Briefly, the symptom accounts...
“simultaneously for repression and the return of the repressed,” hence its dialectic nature as grounded in Freud’s polar theory of culture. \footnote{25} Pathos-formulas, then, are “corporeal crystallizations” of this dialectic. \footnote{26} It is here that it becomes clear how Nachleben is related to pathos-formulas, the latter being the expression, in times of crisis, of the afterlife of trauma, thereby seeking to find some sort of arbitration between magical defence and rational control-mechanisms Nietzsche’s Dionysian-Apollonian dialectic. Moreover, the distance resulting from the creation of a symbol can result in the formation of a Denkraum – as produced by art and culture – a space for the mediation of this dialectic. Art-history hereby shifts from what Warburg disdainfully called an “aestheticizing” discipline, to one that views man as an “organ” of culture, regardless of time and place. \footnote{27} Consequently, art takes on a quasi-religious function in its potential to reconcile trauma and beauty in sublimation.

It must be stressed that Warburg most probably would not have condoned associating these ideas with anything technological, as he bemoaned the fact that contemporary American society “no longer worships the rattle-snake,” and took a radically sceptical position towards his own age, whose society is “electricity enslaved, the lightning held captive in the wire” and in which the forces of nature are “obedient to the touch of a man’s hand.” \footnote{28} In fact, he specifically mentions flight – the main theme of Plane Crazy – in the closing lines of his serpent-lecture, protesting that: “[t]he modern Prometheus and Icarus, Franklin and the Wright Brothers who invented the aeroplane, are those fateful destroyers of distance who threaten to lead the world back into chaos”, whereas “myths and symbols, in attempting to establish spiritual bonds between man and the outside world, create space for devotion and scope for reason which are destroyed by the instantaneous electrical contact.” \footnote{29} What he overlooked, however, as picked up by Benjamin and paraphrased by Leslie, is that the cartoons strongly expose the fact that “what parades as civilization is in fact barbarism.” \footnote{30} Moreover, it is precisely flight that so aptly embraces both myth and distance, even in modernity. Charles Lindbergh – Mickey’s iconic hero – expressed this “detached, mechanically-absorbed, and speed-fascinated spirit,” and flight itself has often been described as “the secular religion of technology.” \footnote{31} Indeed, Telotte aptly describes how technologically-driven
culture comprised a “double distance... as we embraced the flights of fancy, enjoyed the dream of distance our films offered us, yet also reached for a distance from that same dream, looked for strategies that might keep its realization, along with its attendant problems, always on the horizon.”

In *Plane Crazy*, this troublesome relationship is made manifest. Mickey dreams of flying and pursues this dream ardently throughout the film, but struggles to control the apparatus when the opportunity of flying presents itself, especially as it seems to be decidedly disobedient to his touch (Fig.7). Whereas both the main characters, the animals and even the environment itself seem malleable to whatever situation – the cow’s tail is extended into its neck to allow Mickey to hop onto the plane (Fig.8) and even the church-tower automatically contracts to allow the crazed plane to fly over (Fig.9) – in Disney’s world the sole element that fully defies control is the plane itself. Technology is portrayed as something to be desired, but feared. It retains the mythical qualities of old, and manifests itself as an uncontrollable force to be approached with caution – as it turns out, with good reason. Reconsidered now, it becomes clear that technology and especially flight were particularly apt thematic embodiments of the tension between myth and reason, distance and devotion.

Maria H. Loh has described the very medium of film or animation – the moving image – as pathological. Placing it in line with the *Laocoön* in its ability to effectuate “the visceral intensity that rips through the body of the spectator in the moment of confrontation,” the uncanniness of film can be located in “the body synchrony and empathetic mirroring that occurs in the spectator.” With Disney, not only is empathy to be found in the figures’ mimetic transformation into that which they need to regulate, but the viewer himself is set in an empathetic relationship to the cultural object. If Disney was dealing with the contemporary anxiety about technology, then this was the ideal medium in which to do so.

Until this point, I have limited my discussion of how Disney approached technology anxiety to a consideration of the figures’ mechanization, understood as an
empathetic gesture to command unruly machines. But in his command of the pencil and with the new possibilities that animation offered, Disney was able to go a few steps further. Firstly, not only do the figures imitate their technological environment, but their environment and its objects themselves imitate organic life. This was briefly mentioned above with the example of the church-tower contracting as if sensing that it would otherwise be hit (Fig.9). But examples abound: in Skeleton Dance, the trees’ branches are animated as bony, ghoulish claws (Fig.10). And during Mickey’s sword-fight in Gallopin Gaucho, his sword temporarily adopts the form of a tentacle in order to rob his opponent of his weapon (Fig.11) though later, for no apparent reason, it ‘decides’ to become limp (Fig.12), as if, exhausted, throwing in the towel.

In Warburgian terms, this would be the equivalent of putting human masks on the antelope – a reversal of the mimetic transformation. Again, Leslie elucidates circumstances like these in political terms, stating that “in the absence of political progress, European citizens become mystical... The coming to life of inanimate objects... is an illusion. But it seems, to reified consciousness, that the things themselves propel their own movement... as if sign-things acquire an occult power over producers and consumers.” This animation of the inorganic, however, can also be understood in more psycho-pathological terms and here Warburg’s notion of empathy is consequential. In the final chapters of the serpent-essay, he explains how in the serpent rituals (the purer form of the antelope-dance), the Moki move beyond mimetic empathy, as the animals themselves now join in the ritual, “not to be sacrificed, but... to join in the petition for rain.” Hence, the snakes, resembling the form of lightning-bolts, are thrown onto graphically depicted lightning-bolts in the sand “so that the drawing is obliterated and the snake itself covered in sand.”

This ritual’s most notable peculiarity and that which so interested Warburg is its indiscriminate arousal of all matter, as man, animals and environment all merge in their common goal to exert agency over reality. This is, of course, perversely congruent with what occurs through the medium of animation, as “Everything in the
drawn world is of the same stuff." Again, Benjamin offers a key in noting that this impulse “to awaken life in petrified things was the impulse of children, and so of anthropological value”. Through such dreamlike play, they “…bring together materials of widely differing kinds in a new volatile relationship.” In this sense, by the play and distance involved in merging disparate objects, animation becomes particularly ideal in permitting this conflation of symbols, man and nature, perhaps with even more facility than the Hopi.

Furthermore, not only is the body itself mechanized, but ‘accessorization’ invades the body itself as its parts become fully detachable. Mickey’s ears jump from his head when he is frightened (Fig.13), his teeth jump out to catch a cigarette (Fig.14) and he snatches his opponents’ bellybutton – now a ring – to slap it back on after play (Fig.15). According to Leslie, nature and life are reduced to accessories in what Benjamin understood to be a loss of self: “the cartoons make clear that even our bodies do not belong to us” and are thereby “…object lessons in the actuality of alienation… impoverished experience” and dehumanization.

However, Disney and Benjamin were not so melancholic (in the case of Benjamin, not yet) or nostalgic in the face of technology. Both saw the need to rework and influence rather than to oppose new developments. Benjamin formulates the mood of cartoons best in remarking that “the laughter that these films provoke hovers over an abyss of horror.” In this sense, the films are not so much a passive complaint, but rather a cathartic impulse in acting out fears and may therefore alternatively be understood as transitional cultural objects in negotiating man’s new relationship to a dominating technologized environment. And though Warburg asserts that the “comical… obstructs the insight into the tragic element,” I would propose that the tragicomic nature of Disney’s earliest animations are precisely what characterized the inter-war period’s struggle with technology.

Perhaps Warburg was right in his warning that technology would bring back chaos. Though, as I have demonstrated, the films are replete with anxiety, albeit a humorously-tinted one, the overall frenzy may perhaps be too overly Dionysian to be fruitful in negotiating modernity’s fears and indeed, there is much pleasure to be
found in their letting things get completely out of hand. Ultimately, Disney soon went on to kneel to the commercial demands for happy-go-lucky blockbusters, dictated by cheap moralism and realistic laws of physics. In fact, as critical theorists disappointedly acknowledged, all of cinema failed by failing “to escape the grip of tradition.” But in those brief early years of experimentation with the new medium of animation, Disney created a few films that were geared to rework, negotiate and allow modern man to gain agency in his problematic relationship to a rapidly changing, animated, mechanized world. As such, they can be deemed radically innovative transitional cultural objects, in many ways comparable to those of the Hopi as described by Warburg. Indeed, animation was an ideal medium, one that “effectively invited our own ‘vicarious participation in the ritual of incarnation,’ in endowing something with life – literally animating it.”

It may be peculiar that Warburg did not recognize this, but his theories are rich in concepts that are strikingly fruitful when thinking about the significance of animation as a cultural object. As Michaud rightly remarks, Warburg’s aesthetic of movement emerged in sync with the nascent cinema and he “opened art-history to the observation of bodies in motion at the very moment the first images capable of representing them became diffused.” Despite his obliviousness to the importance of moving image technologies, this may not have been a coincidence.

Within the present attempt to further an understanding of early animation as a cultural object, the path which proved to be most insightful was a consideration of the concepts of pathos-formulas and empathy within a psycho-pathological, rather than a strict visual-genealogical inferred line of enquiry. They have done so in a way that elucidates both why and how contemporary critical thinkers found it so full of potential and extending understanding from a more common politically-contextualised reading into a more trans-historical, psychological framework. Conversely, Disney’s animation has demanded a reconfiguration of Warburg’s concepts, which, despite his own recalcitrance, have proven sufficiently malleable to extend their relevance into this a context. The crisis of modernity being fundamentally different to that of earlier
ages, it features a more tragicomic attitude towards its fate and manifests a more extreme fusion of substances and their behaviour. In it, man, machine, environment and nature all empathize with and behave like one another a quality made possible by the very medium of animation. Hence, it is through technological means that man’s relationship to technology is negotiated, in the same way that the symptom is simultaneously repression and the return of the repressed.

Evidently, many issues remain unanswered or have been insufficiently addressed in this endeavour, most notably Benjamin’s Warburgian ventriloquism and the relation between Warburg’s ideas on accessory-forms in motion and their invasion of the body in modernist animation. What is evident, however, is that animation – endowing images with movement Warburg’s primary concern – summons his ideas to bear on it perhaps even more than other media. Unwilling as he may have been to engage with cinematic media and modern man in his own time, Warburg succeeded in creating a historical psychology that has led to, perhaps more than he would have wanted, an extended after-life of his thought. Concrete, yet flexible, Warburg’s ideas remain fertile ground.

Footnotes


3 The list is ordered chronologically according to date of production, though the films were all released in 1929. Steamboat Willie (1928) and The Barn Dance (1929) are not included, due to their more conventional, realistic style.


5 These ‘essays’ are in fact mostly lectures, but will be referenced as essays here, as this is the form in which they survive today.

6 This may very well be accountable on the grounds of Warburg’s influence on Benjamin, who has deeply preoccupied Leslie in the past – hence the latent
influence of Warburg on Leslie, however conscious she may or may not be of this – in itself a topic very deserving of future research.

7 This is not only evident in the text, but was also insistently asserted during her lecture, titled ‘Petrified Unrest’, Leiden University, 19-06-2013.

8 Warburg quoted in: Aby Warburg. The Renewal, 89. For an insightful enquiry into the applicability of Warburg’s iconological approach to cinema, see: Edwin Carels, “From the Ossuary: animation and the dance macabre”, *TMG – Tijdschrift voor mediageschiedenis*, Vol.15, No.1 (2012): 25-42. Carels’ concern is altogether different nature from that under consideration here, in that it focuses on Nachleben as “the migration of motifs” (p. 26), i.e. Warburg’s earlier, more empirical and iconological understanding of the concept. The current enquiry focuses on Warburg’s later concern with Nachleben, as he begins to question why artists so strongly reverted to forms from the past. It is in this later period that his treatment of Nachleben overrides iconology and transgresses into psycho-pathology and anthropology, leading it to become strongly connected to his ideas on pathos-formula’s and empathy.

9 Idem, 555.

10 Idem, 141.


15 Idem, 286.


Benjamin quoted in: Leslie, *Hollywood Flatlands*, 82. Sergei Eisenstein’s far more extensive preoccupation with Disney has not been included for consideration here, for two reasons. Firstly, his writings on Disney are mostly from 1941 – more than a decade after the first animations were released and thus largely shaped by hindsight, most notably regarding Disney’s incorporation into Hollywood and the capitalist culture industry. Secondly, his perspective, like Leslie’s, is a markedly political and historical, which would lead the current enquiry away from its stated aim, that of articulating the broader psycho-anthropological ramifications of Warburg’s thought, i.e. to reconfigure what is often understood as a historically-determined development into more trans-historical terms. Having said that, a critical comparison between Eisenstein’s writings on Disney and Warburg’s essay on the serpent ritual is very deserving of future research, specifically regarding Eisenstein’s notions on totemism and animism. For a complete collection of these writings, see: Sergei Eisenstein, *Eisenstein on Disney*, ed. Jay Leyda (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1986). (Trans. Alan Upchurch).


This quote is rather misleading, however, in terms of her general posture towards these films throughout the book, where she continuously manifests a thoroughly critical attitude towards their success. This particular fragment should therefore be seen as a temporary lapse of flair or enthusiasm for a subject that clearly entices the author.


26 Idem.


29 Idem


32 Idem, 71.


36 Idem, 287.

37 Leslie, Hollywood Flatlands, 23.

38 As paraphrased in Leslie, Hollywood Flatlands, 91.


40 Leslie, Hollywood Flatlands, 83.


42 Leslie, Hollywood Flatlands, 40.

43 Telotte, “Disney’s Cows,” 222.

44 Philippe-Alain Michaud, “Introduction” in Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 39. In this introduction, Michaud sets forth his influential, though by no means uncontested insights into what he claims is Warburg’s montage-like way of thinking. Perhaps needless to explicate, Michaud’s notions have not been treated further here, because his concern is with the
cinematic and specifically the montage-like qualities of Warburg’s methods. The current enquiry, by contrast, focusses on animation, which, as I hope to have shown, is significantly distinct from cinematography in that it consists of drawn, rather than recorded images, subsequently set in motion. It is precisely by virtue of this element, which is specific and unique to animation, that Warburg’s notions as treated above become so compelling.