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Space and Aesthetic Action: Examples from Surrealism

With examples from French Surrealism, both literary and cinematic, my lecture will discuss how empirical and imaginary space becomes a framework not only for special kinds of dynamic aesthetic creativity, but for ideological and political activism as well. The examples will be taken from André Breton's urban prose (Nadja and L'Amour fou) and from Luis Buñuel's and Salvador Dali's classical movies Le Chien Andalou and L'Age d'or. From a theoretical perspective, my aim is to indicate how the rather static idea of textual and aesthetic action implied in traditional speech act theory (Austin and Searle) can be replaced by approaches that are better adjusted to the realities of art and literature.