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An Anthropomorphic View: *Adventure Time* and Children's Emotions

"Adventure Time, come on, grab your friends. We'll go to very distant lands." Pendleton Ward's seemingly whimsical cartoon, *Adventure Time*, following the protagonist, a human boy named Finn, tells the story of life in the post-apocalyptic Land of Ooo. In this land with his magical dog brother, Jake, Finn has countless adventures fighting evil while discovering who he truly is. Throughout the show, Ward uses primarily nonhuman entities to force Finn to overcome obstacles in the coming-of-age plot while reinforcing many of the coping mechanisms that children subconsciously use to overcome negative experiences. Further, Ward's use of anthropomorphism in the show explores themes of fear and anxiety, as well as personal relationships regarding romance and compatibility. The use of anthropomorphism has the effect of both creating tension and defamiliarizing common situations so that the viewer can see them anew.

Defamiliarization

The practice of defamiliarization is to take ordinary and familiar circumstances and make them eccentric and distant to spawn new perspectives. It is a technique regularly used in art and literature to provoke greater critical thinking. Concepts such as displacement and escapism can be seen as branches under the tree of defamiliarization through a psychological lens; they both involve taking well-known situations and distancing oneself from them—the primary principle of defamiliarization. Unbeknownst to the younger audiences, the shows and books they indulge

in challenge them to reflect on many of their personal conflicts, which helps to promote positive approaches to overcoming those conflicts. Victor Shklovsky's "Art as Device" further reinforces the idea that both literature and art have a remarkable ability to make their readers think.

Shklovsky states, "the purpose of imagery is to bring the significance of the image closer to our understanding, and since, without this, an image has no meaning, then, the image ought to be better known to us than that which is explained by it" (Shklovsky 1). He raises the point that art is best when it is something that is well-known to an audience, so the slight differences especially stand out. The differences draw the audience in, so they observe from an unconventional perspective and attain a newfound appreciation for the world around them by defamiliarization. Often, Ward uses familiar human situations—ones that could plausibly happen—before shifting to the ethereal realm. This catalyzes a shift in viewpoint and separates viewers from the familiar. For young watchers of *Adventure Time*, the recognizable scenarios are easy to follow, and once they are defamiliarized they gain insight on problems within the real world.

Finn, Jake the Dog, and Facing Your Fear

In season one, episode 16, Finn must conquer his fear of the ocean. He is confronted by the manifestation of his fear, Fear Feaster, a ghoulish entity that emerges from his belly button, (pictured in Figure one). Fear Feaster constantly antagonizes Finn about his inadequacy, making him very self-conscious about his capabilities. Further, the ghoulish entity acts as a defamiliarizing agent because it is not an entity that exists within our human reality, but one that can be comprehended and interacted with as a representation of Finn's fear. As a hero, Finn cannot afford to be afraid of the ocean, because he might need to rescue those in need of drowning. Immediately, he turns to Jake stating, "Jake, I think I'm afraid of the ocean... I need your help to overcome my

fear" ("Fear of the Ocean" 3:07). Here, Ward immediately uses a nonhuman character to create a conflict for Finn while also using another nonhuman character to assist Finn in besting one of his many hurdles. Jake resorts to a drastic psychological tactic, flooding, to force Finn to overcome his fear by placing him directly in the middle of the ocean while he is asleep. Panicking when he wakes up, Finn manipulates Jake's magically stretching body to fly to a nearby island for safety. In another attempt to help Finn, Jake takes him into a submarine deep underwater when a malfunction (due to Finn's panicking) causes a breach in the submarine. In another hysterical reaction to being in the ocean, Finn indirectly puts Jake in harm's way by causing him to pass out and sink toward the bottom of the ocean. When reaching the surface and taking refuge on a buoy, the manifestation of his fear emerges again: "PATHETIC! You can't even overcome your fear now that your friend is about to die" ("Fear of the Ocean" 8:30). In a last-ditch effort, Finn knocks himself out to make himself sink to the bottom of the ocean, where he can find and save Jake, ultimately overcoming his fear. Ward's anthropomorphism of Finn's fear as a visible entity forces Finn to confront his fear. The ghoul acts as a representation of human consciousness and anxiety; typically voices of self-doubt are restricted to one's own mind, whereas Fear Feaster emerges from Finn's belly button bearing a human-esque face and grimacing smile dispelling doubt on Finn.

People rarely tackle their problems head-on, mainly because we cannot see them. We tend to project our feelings onto something or someone else. So often, we find ourselves looking to absolve ourselves of any negative feelings of self—which leads to the displacement of emotion. In Roy F. Baumeister, Karen Dale, and Kristin L. Sommer's "Freudian Defense Mechanisms and Empirical Findings in Modern Social Psychology: Reaction Formation,

Projection, Displacement, Undoing, Isolation, Sublimation, and Denial” they describe displacement as "altering the target of an impulse... The targets of the actual aggression would be related by meaningful associations to the target of the original, inhibited impulse" (Baumeister, Dale, and Sommers, 1093). Finn displaces the reality of his fear onto the manifestation, an entity that he can converse with, making the fear a more rational objective to overcome. In doing so, the association between Finn and his fear is morphed into an identifiable entity that is confrontable and therefore more easily combatted. Finn learns that he is a more fantastic hero for learning to overcome fears through his flaw. This displacement technique is often seen in children as they struggle with confronting their issues, such as when they are ill-behaved because of how they are parented. Later in life, many of these children go on to resent authority figures because they did not have a healthy mechanism to cope with the feelings they had. Often, displacement is regarded with resentment because it leads to misdirected outward emotions. Ward put a spin on what is usually seen to be a negative technique and made it into a positive one. Through a nonhuman entity, Finn was able to overcome his hindrance. Children watching the show will be able to identify with Finn and look for ways to restructure their displaced feelings into more constructive outlets.

Adventure Time and Romantic Love

Finn's initial love interest is made very evident from the very first episode, "Slumber Party Panic." Princess Bonnibel Bubblegum, also known as PB, is an 827-year-old Gum-person, (taking the biological form of an 18-year-old) scientist and the ruler of the Candy Kingdom. While working on a serum to revive the dead, she mistakenly revives the undead, leaving her and Finn to save the townspeople from candy-deprived zombies. Sworn to secrecy by a royal

promise, Finn is troubled when Jake asks him to reveal the ongoing situation at the castle. He avoids the question altogether and begins a game of "Truth or Dare" to distract everyone from the outside terrors not yet known to exist. Never losing focus, Jake dares Finn to tell the truth about what is going on. Entirely flustered, Finn looks off and imagines what Bubblegum would say, concluding that she would say, "you promised you wouldn't frickin' tell anyone! Oh, you're cute, Finn" ("Slumber Party Panic" 5:30). Finn experienced what we know to be a Freudian slip-- when a subconscious desire comes to the forefront of a person's thoughts and is unintentionally displayed. Since this is his hidden desire, the audience is given an allusion to the intense romantic feelings the Finn holds toward Bubblegum, which is displayed through many of their encounters throughout the show. There is also a brief run where Bubblegum returns these feelings for Finn.

Following a near-death experience, Bubblegum loses a significant amount of biomass, making her regress in age to a 13-year-old. In the episode "Too Young," Bubblegum shows that she develops romantic feelings for Finn. The young love is disrupted when the Earl of Lemongrab usurps the rule of the Candy Kingdom because PB is not of legal age to be the primary ruler. In a last-ditch effort to regain power, Bonnibel proposes that she can speed up the aging process if she can generate enough biomass. The fellow candy people in the dungeon all offer pieces of their bodies to help regenerate PB, and begrudgingly, Finn helps create a bonding agent to hold it all together. Finally, Bubblegum states, "Only the heat from a whopping love-hug can catalyze the re-agifying process... I just want to say how much fun I've had hanging out with you... and I... I wish I could stay like this with you. ("Too Young" 9:08). The two begin hugging until ultimately, they share a kiss—which generates enough heat for the re-agifying process to

accelerate and make PB 18-years-old again (pictured in figure two). Once Earl of Lemongrab relinquishes his power back to an adult Bubblegum, she and Finn sit on the steps to the castle, where Finn asks, "Well, do you, uh... want to hug some more?" (10:02). This is one of the first moments where Finn is left to deal with disappointment. She replies, "Finn, you silly, that was like five years ago. You really got to move on... Such a silly boy" (10:08).

There is an overlapping quality of Bubblegum's similarities to humans as a unit of anthropomorphism and in how it functions as an agent of defamiliarization. As defamiliarization, audiences see a human-human relationship and easily understand the typical nuances of it. However, with a human-Gum-person relationship, there are nonhuman problems that resemble many of the complications people deal with, but under a new scope, which offers a refreshing perspective in approaches to solving these dilemmas. Similarly, anthropomorphism propels Ward's use of Bubblegum because she attains many of the qualities that humans have. As an adult, we can see her indulge in traits exclusive to humans primarily science, but also upright posture, clothing, instruments, and more.

A foundational difference from humans is that she can accelerate and reverse her aging at will. Ward's unique usage of the agifying quality alludes to how people look retrospectively at love interests of the past. For Finn, the love is genuine and takes place in the present moment, but for the Bubblegum, it was a petty romance that took place half a decade ago. The distance created chronologically and emotionally through anthropomorphism colludes with defamiliarization as it makes a seemingly recognizable situation in a failed love attempt blurred by the distortion of time and reality. This would not be possible if Ward used a human character in place of PB because they cannot accelerate their aging process or reverse their age.

Disheartened, Finn receives a call from Jake, who offers words of advice to keep hope alive for Finn.

Flame Princess and the Nature of Incompatibility

Throughout the rest of season three, the relationship between Finn and PB is awkward; the two do not mesh as well as they once did. In the season finale, Finn is pictured lying on the floor holding a piece of Bubblegum's hair, in front of two framed photos of her as well.

Determined to help his brother over his heartbreak, Jake goes to find a new potential love interest for Finn. He (unintentionally) brings back the heir to the Fire Kingdom, Flame Princess, also known as Phoebe and sometimes FP. At the start of season four, in the episode "Hot to the Touch," a fiery first encounter between Phoebe and Finn ends with Phoebe slapping him in the face and saying, "Don't ever mess with me again" (Hot to the Touch 0:36). This is not the typical start to a romantic relationship, and yet, we see immediately Finn turn to Jake and say, "Dude. I think I have a crush" (0:47). Jake begins to explain how the people of the Fire Kingdom are inherently evil and advises Finn that it would be best to stay away. Here, we see growth in Finn as a character because he sets out to create his own conclusions. Denying Jake, he says, "She ain't evil. She's passionate" (1:14) as he sets out after her.

The anthropomorphism at play by Ward here is significant because FP is an entity entirely made up of fire; although her physique resembles that of a young girl, her flames reflect her emotions—when she is happy, excited, or angry, her flames grow strong and bright. Contrarily, when she is sad, her flames are dim. Finally catching up to her amid the forest, Finn openly communicates how he feels with her, stating that although he does not know her well, he really likes her. This ignites several emotions in Flame Princess, and her flames grow bright and

begin to burn the grass surrounding Finn's feet. In a panic, he immediately begins to stomp out the flames, but he can see and hear the pain that Phoebe endures with each flame he extinguishes. Phoebe runs towards the Goblin Kingdom in a blazing rage, setting everything in her path ablaze. Finn, feeling overcome with emotion, begins to break down and starts to cry, saying, "Why can't I just like a girl?" (9:30). A tear falls from his eye and lands on the trail of flames left behind by FP, which prompts her to turn around and see Finn crying (figure three). Her flames subside, and she approaches him, explaining that she understands that he is her opposite as a water elemental. She goes on to say, "Finn, even if we like each other, we're going to hurt each other" (10:20). Finn refutes their biological differences and insists on trying to make things work. This is an instance where we see the resemblance to that of human-to-human romance, where although feelings may be strong, there are times where we put ourselves through pain in hopes to get past both physical and emotional pain. The two embrace until Finn pulls away because the intensity of her heat begins to burn his face. Phoebe looks at him, says goodbye, and leaves.

An Escape from a Petty Love Triangle

Adventure Time delves into the practice of escapism by introducing a traumatic experience for Finn followed by the complete absorption into a haven away from the incident. In "The Rationality of Escapism and Self-Deception," John Longeway describes the purpose for escapism as, "attempts to keep beliefs one does not like out of consciousness, then, and should they enter consciousness, to distract one from them or put them out of mind" (Longeway 2). Ward creates the scene for Finn to indulge in this distraction of negative self-thought in the off-again-on-again relationship between him and Flame Princess. Though it may have seemed like

the end of their relationship, Finn and Phoebe begin to spend more and more time together, as shown in season four, episode 16, "Burning Low." The young couple finds ways to compromise to be together, such as when they are about to hug, Jake wraps Finn's entire body with tinfoil to prevent any harm. The love story is complicated when Finn and Jake go home to their treehouse to find Princess Bubblegum inside already. After trying to keep Finn's business private, Jake admits to Bubblegum that Flame Princess and Finn are dating. Flustered, Princess Bubblegum leaves in a hurry back to her castle. She writes in her diary, "FINN + LOVE + FLAME PRINCESS," and exclaims, "Oh, Gob. I thought I'd be ready for this" ("Burning Low" 4:26). The following morning, Bonnibel goes back to the treehouse and says to Finn, "I have something important to tell you, about relationships" (4:46) as she turns to pull out her holographic diagram. She turns her back, and Finn runs out of the house, leaving Jake to listen to PB's presentation. Jake falls asleep. When PB turns around to see only Jake on the floor, she wakes him, saying, "Will you tell him why he can't see Flame Princess anymore... I cannot stress how important it is that they [do] not see each other" (5:25). When Finn gets home, Jake tells Finn that PB is jealous. Dedicated to proving his love for Flame Princess, Finn sets out to watch the sunrise and write a poem for her. While writing the poem, Bubblegum approaches him, and the two have a heated exchange:

She says, "Finn, sometimes you want someone and you want to kiss them and be with them, but you can't because responsibility demands sacrifice."

He replies, "What are you trying to say?!"

"I'm trying to say that you're a hero Finn. You're my hero. So, I'm glad you understand why you can't be with Flame Princess." Bubblegum answers.

Shouting in retaliation, Finn says, "Bubblegum, I can't do this anymore! Now you like me?!"

"Finn, what are you talking about?" she asks, confused.

"What am I talking about?! PB, I was—I was in love with you, okay?! And you didn't love me back. Now I'm ready to move on, and it's like... you're gonna build me up all over again. Well, I'm done! I'm done" (7:05-8:00).

Finn's ability to deal with confrontation at this moment shows his growth as a character. Viewers are left to believe that Bubblegum is jealous of their newfound love, but she explains to Jake that this is not a "petty love triangle." She proves to be one of the semi-omniscient entities of the show, but her knowledge is purely based on studies that she has conducted. PB further explains that Flame Princess is highly volatile, and extreme romance can lead to catastrophic results. Finn reads his poem to Phoebe, and the two begin to kiss just as Jake and PB arrive. However, due to Phoebe's elemental matrix (chemical composition), she begins to burn straight through the planet's surface toward the core. Using his magical stretching powers, Jake covers the hole—depriving her of the oxygen she would need to keep the flame burning, thus saving the planet. The episode ends with Bubblegum stating, "she stabilized. We're safe... for now" (10:50).

Having been reminded that the people of the Fire Kingdom are inherently evil, Finn begins to have second guesses about his relationship with Flame Princess. However, he is firm in his resolve that he can turn her good, so he overlooks that she may be evil for some time. People look outward to solve their problems, and this escapism is valuable in helping them come to terms with their conflicts with themselves. While some indulge in shopping, others engage in physical activities like sports, running, or weightlifting; several people look to forms of literature

to wallow in. It is not often that people actively think about what they are doing when they turn to television or novels to get away from the stressors of the world. Those who turn to cartoons or speculative fiction defamiliarize themselves with their situation to find both resolution and solace in these literary works.

This is not an element of humanity that is exclusive to real people; we see Finn use such techniques to cope with his anxiety about Flame Princess. In the episode "All the Little People" of season five, the Martian known as Magic Man eavesdrops on Finn and Jake's conversation on whether you should date someone more like you or more contrary to you. By this point, audiences understand that Magic Man and mischievous behavior go hand in hand, so it is no surprise when he secretly slips a mysterious bag into Finn's pants. Finn reaches in the bag to find miniature living versions of the people of Ooo within the bag, including himself, Jake, Princess Bubblegum, Flame Princess, and many more characters. Finn rushes home to play with the mini-figures and has mini-Ice King play on the drum set. Mini-Jake begins to play the viola with Ice King, which leads to Jake saying, "They've got good chemistry. Who would've guessed?" (All the Little People 3:25). The word chemistry resonates deeply with Finn, and rather than go to sleep he begins to experiment with the mini-people and their chemistry with one another. He starts with mini-Mr. Cupcake and mini-Lumpy Space Princess (LSP), who seem to hit it off immediately. Removing mini-LSP, Finn replaces her with the mini version of Jake's girlfriend, Lady Rainicorn. Initially, the two do not care to be in the presence of one another, but with a little push from Finn, the two begin to mingle. Finn adds mini-Jake into the mix to see how he would react, and much like the real Jake, mini-Jake gets very jealous and begins to fight Mr. Cupcake.

After staying up all night testing different combinations of potential chemistry within the mini-people, Finn finally decides to test the chemistry between mini-Finn and mini-Flame Princess. Seeing that Finn has gotten way too invested in the mini-people, Jake leaves the house. Mini-Flame Princess and mini-Finn begin to hit it off when Finn decides to drop mini-Princess Bubblegum directly in between them. He moves mini-Princess Bubblegum closer to mini-Finn, and the two begin to kiss, making mini-Flame Princess furious. The two princesses begin to fight until a cut-scene shows that 16 weeks have passed. Jake finally returns to see that Finn has not moved at all and states, "This is messed up, dude. You've crossed the line from weird curiosity into some dark, messed up stuff" (8:32). Acknowledging his wrongdoing, Finn finds a way to communicate with the little people to let them know that he was behind the heartburn he caused them, particularly speaking to PB, Phoebe, and Lady Rainicorn. Finn's exploration into being an all-powerful entity over the mini people is especially demonstrative of escapism because Finn removes himself entirely from the problems he is dealing with. He displaces his problems onto the mini-people, none more than his own mini-person. Finn looks for potential answers in the mini people's problems without recognizing that he is looking for the answers to his own problems. The mini people act as defamiliarizing units because they are not like the average toy, rather they are able to act independently and have reactions that allow Finn to engage with them more deeply. He absolves himself from any discomforting thoughts while playing with the mini people and completely removes himself from an emotionally painful reality.

Escapism to toys is an easily accessible outlet for children; another outlet, cartoons, prove to be a useful tactic for children following daunting experiences. In Julie Salamon's article "Thankful for the Escape of the Cartoon World," she discussed how Lucas, the child of her friend

Wendy Miller, witnessed the collapse of the World Trade Center from his classroom window and how cartoons provided him, and her own children, with solace. Salamon writes, “The Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon became a safe haven for my 6-year-old son, who can't comprehend why he can no longer see the twin towers when he walks out the front door” (Salamon 1-2). For her son, the distraction cartoons provided made it easier for him to cope with the gripping reality (that he had not yet come to terms with) that there was a terrorist attack a few train stops away from home. She goes on to describe her phone call with a close friend and early-childhood expert Elaine Heffner who explained how cartoons function for children. Heffner stated, “Children work out issues of deepest concern to them through good guys and bad guys. The fact that there is always a resolution in the cartoon world, and the good guy always triumphs, this becomes a form of reassurance” (2). The reassurance component reached through the medium of escapism is made easily accessible through the cartoons children watch and is exemplified by Salamon’s description of a seven-year-old’s drawing of the World Trade Center being attacked by planes and superheroes coming to protect it. Ward’s use of escapism in *Adventure Time* adds another layer to the escapism-reassurance concept, as children can see escapism taking place in the cartoon while (potentially) unknowingly indulging in the practice themselves.

The Cosmic Owl and Subconscious Manifestation

A dream that Finn has creates strain in his relationship with Flame Princess. In season five, episode 30, titled "Frost and Fire," the young couple has an encounter with Finn's longtime "enemy," the 1043-year-old Ice King—the manifestation of the crown's desires on former human archaeologist—Simon Petrikov. Ice King has proven to be a bit invasive, to say the least; he regularly goes around the Land of Ooo kidnapping princesses, trying to coerce them to be his

wife. Ice King is also very jealous of the relationships of others, so when he sees Finn and Flame Princess, he immediately makes a remark that lights the wrath within Flame Princess. The two begin to fight, and Flame Princess overwhelmingly defeats Ice King, but watching this fight elicits emotions in Finn that he does not entirely understand. That same night Finn has a dream that Phoebe is burning him alive, and he is enjoying it. He exclaims, "My body is engulfed in flames!" ("Frost & Fire" 2:10). While enjoying his flame shower, a voice whispers, "Blew it. Blew it. You blew it" (2:12). Not acknowledging this mysterious voice, Finn abruptly wakes up and concludes that the dream was inspired by the battle between Flame Princess and Ice King. Finn manipulates Flame Princess into starting a second fight with Ice King, where Ice King is the victor. Finn goes home anticipating another pleasant dream, but instead, in this dream, Ice King is excessively blasting him with ice cubes, while the Cosmic Owl is in the background hysterically laughing.

Historically, owls have been symbolized as a figure of wisdom. In Greek tradition, the owl has been regarded as the embodiment of the Goddess of Wisdom, Athena. Ward draws on this tradition to create a character that not only represents wisdom, but also a character that is knowledgeable of circumstances to come but chooses not to interfere—much like the Homeric gods in *The Iliad*.¹

The Cosmic Owl is a deity that exists in the subconscious of every living and dead entity, and his presence signifies when characters are having a premonition dream. Finn tells Jake that

¹ Other shows such as Disney's *Winnie the Pooh* and Nickelodeon's *Avatar the Last Airbender* have also used anthropomorphized owl characters to represent figures of wisdom.

the Cosmic Owl was in his dream, and in utter dismay, Jake frantically tells Finn that he needs to finish the original dream to find out what the Cosmic Owl was saying because Finn could not remember. Finn schemes up a plot by writing fake letters to each party to get Flame Princess vs. Ice King III on the way, which works to perfection. Shortly after Finn delivers them each their fake letter, the two meet up for an epic showdown, once again on Ice Kingdom grounds. In a fit of bursting rage, Flame Princess emits so much radiance from her body in a devastating attack on Ice King that Finn cannot withstand all the heat and smoke produced from the melting snow and passes out. While unconscious, Finn dreams that Flame Princess is burning his body; he enjoys this until entirely makes his body burn in flames, and he turns into an incoherent baby. Enlarged and up close, the Cosmic Owl appears before Finn and clearly states, "You blew it" (9:26). He regains consciousness and is determined to fix things, so he saves Ice King and begins to carry him out of an ice tower. Only seeing Ice King's back, FP attacks again, but she is deeply concerned when Finn turns around to reveal he had been carrying Ice King. Finn narrowly evades the attack and attempts to explain the situation with the Cosmic Owl being in his dream and the complexities of that, but in smoldering fury, Flame Princess no longer hears any of Finn's explanations. She cuts off his confession saying, "...I-I need some time alone," and the episode ends with Ice King on the floor looking at Finn, saying, "You blew it, man" (11:10).

This episode uses the Cosmic Owl quite sparingly, but incorporating the deity proves to be especially useful in how its presence created the premonition that it spoke of. In a Ted Chiang novella called "Anxiety Is the Dizziness of Freedom," the theme of endless alternatives and how they relate to living with anxiety is explored. Chiang presents a universe where the characters can see the potential outcomes of making changes in their decisions. People who are aware of

how every decision could potentially change their day, week, or even life, live in a constant state of anxiety as they continuously ponder what choices they should make. The persistent doubt in one's mind is enough to skew them toward making life-changing decisions that they would usually never make. This phenomenon is at hand for Finn once the Cosmic Owl tells him, "You blew it." The Cosmic Owl is a semi-omniscient deity, so the phrasing of his statement is significant. It said, "blew," meaning past tense—suggesting that Finn has already ruined his relationship with Flame Princess. The phrasing also suggests that the Cosmic Owl transcends time, as he can be in the present moment speaking of events that are yet to come as though they have already taken place. In the first dream, the Cosmic Owl plants a seed of doubt in Finn's subconscious plane, making him eager to experience the pleasure of the dream again. By the second dream, the doubt is brought to the foreground of Finn's mind, and Jake creates the panic surrounding the uncertainty of what was said much more urgently.

Ward's use of the deity proves to have been inextricably useful in complicating Finn's agency over his desires. A deity that can enter the subconscious and the dreams of humans is an agent of anthropomorphism because no human can willingly enter that plane to manipulate one's thoughts. The presence of the Cosmic Owl led to Finn's attempt to try to reach the point of pleasure that he had experienced in the dream. While on the surface the motive appeared to be finding out what premonition the Cosmic Owl was alluding to, Finn's ulterior motive was to feel the pleasurable sensation of Flame Princess' heat blast in his dream. Often, people turn to their dreams to find the answers to their problems, or to imaginatively explore the things they could not experience in the physical world. The Cosmic Owl's appearance creates tension for Finn as it gives him justification for his own selfish actions of making Ice King and Flame princess fight

again. In this, children are shown how feeding into selfishness can have adverse effects that are far more troublesome than it is worth.

Anthropomorphism proves to be more than just the application of human appearance, thoughts, and emotions onto non-human entities. Anthropomorphism is a technique used to present difficult material to different audiences in a way that is more attainable. Through many different techniques, the defamiliarizing of animals, elements, objects, and emotions in *Adventure Time* helps to communicate coping mechanisms and comfort to children who do not fully grasp how or why they feel the way they do. Further, in conjunction with anthropomorphism, Ward can translate many of the disparities of romantic relationships to younger audiences who can relate the complexities to that of their friendships. *Adventure Time* acts as a medium mobilized through its anthropomorphized characters and defamiliarized concepts to provide an escape for children into the Land of Ooo where they subconsciously learn how to cope with their feelings.

Figure one. Fear Feaster antagonizes Finn.



Figure two. Princess Bubblegum and Finn just before they hug for re-agifying her.

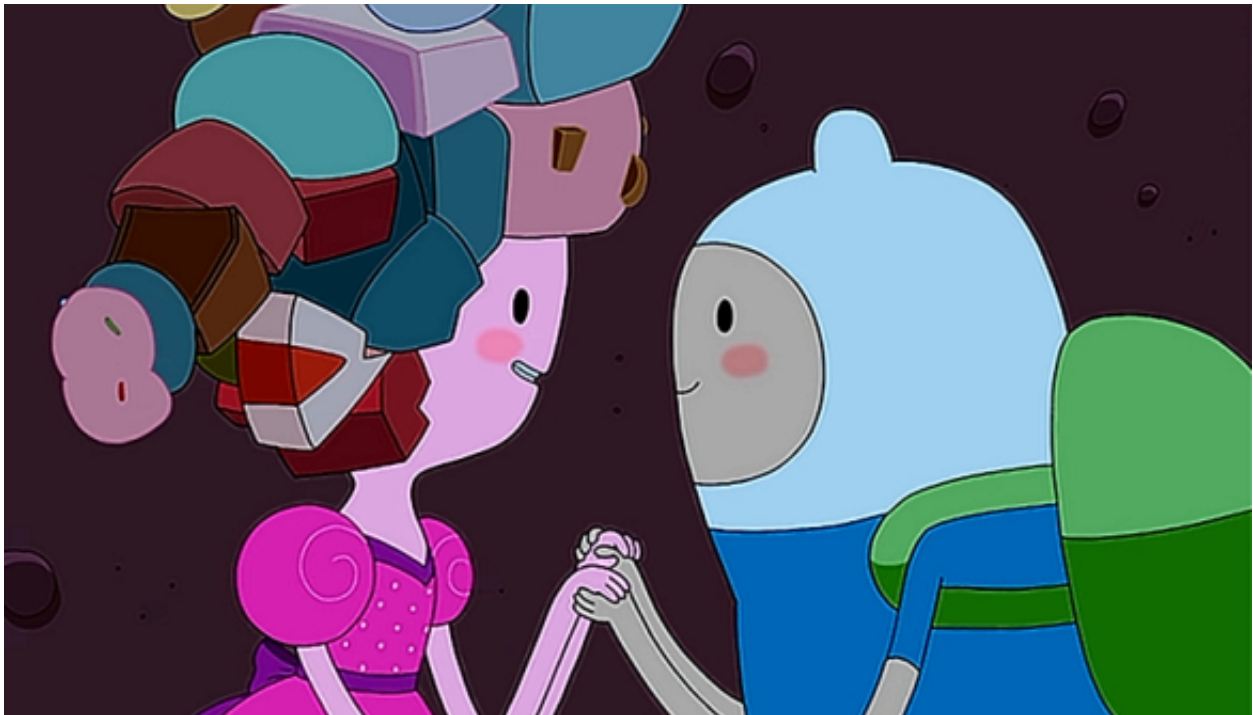


Figure three: The moment after Finn's fear falls on Flame Princess' flame.



Figure four. Cosmic Owl telling Finn, "You blew it."



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