Dream work: the art and science of Fin de Siècle fantasy imagery


ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I argue that the fantasy imagery of turn-of-the-century British illustrators Arthur Rackham, Aubrey Beardsley, and Sidney Sime, and French filmmakers Georges Méliès and Emile Cohl functions as visual rhetorical "texts" that explicate contemporaneous ideas about the self. At the fin de siècle, models of the self were shaped, in part, by scientific thought that interrogated themes of materiality and immateriality, visibility and invisibility, univalence and multivalence, permanence and impermanence. Dream Work grapples with these oppositions, the questions they brought up, and the provisional answers they elicited. I argue that both the science and the design considered in this study dealt with these oppositions, and the models of the self they elaborated, through a shared visual rhetoric of literal representation or hazy abstraction. I reveal this shared visual rhetoric through analysis of the form of the design considered in this study and its relationship to visual aspects of contemporaneous scientific discourse. I first show how Rackham's imagery, which echoes the visual vocabulary of physiognomical diagrams, deals with material aspects of self and mind. But Rackham's work likewise positions the mind as part of a grand continuum with the natural world. I describe the ways that Beardsley's imagery fluctuates between expression of material and ethereal elaborations of the self manifested in contemporaneous dream theory. And I show how Sime's imagery - which mirrors late nineteenth-century notions of the realms of other dimensions - probes abstract qualities of the self in strangely material forms. Finally, I discuss the ways that the mystifying abstraction that characterizes turn-of-the-century ideas about time, space, and motion marks the mutable selves expressed in Méliès and Cohl's work.

In this dissertation, I likewise challenge the hegemony of the written word and of verbal analytical methods for interpreting visual entities. My goal, however, is not to dispense with the verbal analysis of visual artifacts. Rather, my intention is to foreground visual rhetorical analysis as a powerful method for understanding the visuality of both visual and verbal entities.

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thought that interrogated themes of materiality and immateriality, visibility and invisibility, univalence and multivalence, permanence and impermanence. Dream Work grapples with these oppositions, the questions they brought up, and the provisional answers they elicited. I argue that both the science and the design considered in this study dealt with these oppositions, and the models of the self they elaborated, through a shared visual rhetoric of literal representation or hazy abstraction. I reveal this shared visual European Fantasy Art of the Fin-de-Siècle Publisher: PIE International Year: 2017 Language: Japanese/English Pages: 400 Size: 25,7 x 18,6 cm Format: Paperback ISBN: 978-4-7562-4841-1 Condition of my book: New Personal rating: 5/5 Where to buy it online: Buy in Amazon.com Buy in Ebay.com. Some images from inside the book. I am a grumpy girl from Latin America who has a serious crush with books, specially books of art and illustration. Some of my favorite art movements and periods are: The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Academic Art, Symbolism, Art Nouveau, 15th and 16th Century Art, The Golden Age of Illustration, Ukiyo-e, Nihonga, to name a few. Another of my passions must be Historical costume.