

The crystal reveals the whole: medieval dreamscapes and cinematic space as virtual media

Alison Griffiths 

Abstract. This article examines the rich visual culture of the medieval period in order to better understand dreaming as a kind of visual thought experiment, one in which ideas associated with cinema, such as embodied viewing, narrative sequencing, projection, and sensory engagement, are palpable in a range of visual and literary works. The author explores the theoretical connections between the oneiric qualities of cinema and the visual culture of medieval dreams, dealing in turn with the following themes: (i) media and mediation; (ii) projection and premonition; (iii) virtual spatiality; and (iv) automata and other animated objects. The wide swath of medieval literary dream texts, with their mobile perspectives, sensory plenitude, and gnostic mission, resonate with the cinematic in the structuring of the gaze. Investigating the codes of medieval culture provides us with an unusually rich episteme for thinking about how the dreamscapes of the Middle Ages evoke media dispositifs. Opening up these thought lines across distinct eras can help us extrapolate similarities around ways of imagining objects, spaces, sensations of embodied viewing or immersion, reminding us that our contemporary cinematic and digital landscapes are not divorced from earlier ways of seeing and believing. Whether stoking religious fear and veneration or providing sensual pleasure as in *Le Roman de la Rose*, the dreamworlds of the Middle Ages have bequeathed us a number of an extraordinarily rich creative works that are the imaginative building blocks of media worlds-in-the-making, as speculative in many ways as current discourses around new media.

Keywords. Automata • dreams • embodied viewing • immersion • medieval art • precinema • *Le Roman de la Rose* • sensory media • spectatorship

The myth of Icarus had to wait on the internal combustion engine before descending from the platonic heavens. But it had dwelt in the soul of everyman since he first thought about birds. (André Bazin, 1967)



Figure 1. Frame enlargement from *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (Wallace McCutcheon, 1906).

Introduction

The subject of dreaming has long permeated the cultural construction of cinema: not only has the dream state been offered as an enduring metaphor for cinema spectatorship, but the representation of dreams has served as a structuring principle in film narratives. Early filmmakers exploited the dream as a handy narrative device and occasion for anti-realist formal strategies, a trope exemplified in Wallace McCutcheon and Edwin S Porter's *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906), in which a man who has consumed in grotesque fashion an excessive amount of Welsh rarebit (bread smothered with beer and melted cheese) washed down with copious amounts of wine starts to hallucinate, and upon climbing inebriated into bed experiences a cheese-induced nightmare. Furniture and objects in his room begin to move, imps above his head emerge from the rarebit serving dish, and his bed flies out the window, transporting him around town as he clings to the bedframe before eventually becoming entangled on a weathervane (Figure 1).

Rarebit Fiend does triple duty as a dream film: thematizing dreaming as a narrative trope; connecting dreaming and cinema as both embodied and virtual experiences; and authorizing the representation of dreaming as a space of technical virtuosity, freeing filmmakers from the 'constraints of orthodox storytelling strategies', according to Russell Merritt (1986: 69). *Rarebit Fiend* also mobilizes discourses of moral turpitude, the intoxicated fiend stumbling

down the street in an unseemly display of uncontrolled behavior that cinema warned of in such films as *The Drunkard's Reformation* (DW Griffith, 1909); like the addiction to the Welsh culinary dish, cinema is also a guilty pleasure, an induced dream that, similar to the consumption of alcohol or drugs, signals a loss of control in which we experience embodiments beyond our own.

Cinema's affiliation with dreaming is a multifaceted trope: Hollywood's status as a dream factory, the writings of film theorists on the relationships of film spectatorship to dream experience, the psychoanalytical processes of the dreamwork,¹ and the long tradition of dream sequences in popular cinema all attest to the inescapable associations between dreaming and motion pictures. The oneiric qualities of cinema preoccupied both early and contemporary film theorists, from Jean Epstein in the 1920s (2012[1920s]), to Edgar Morin (2005[1956]: 149–170) and Jean Mitry (2000[1963]), who explored the metaphor of the dream as it applied both to film signification and spectatorship (see Balázs, 1952; Chanan, 1996; Christie, 1994; Eberwein, 1984; Hobson, 2003; Metz, 1982; Metz and Guzzetti, 1976). All of these connections have been critically important in our understanding of cinema as a kind of dream, predicated on the condensation of literal and metaphoric projection. But, as the lesson of *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* makes clear, the dream frame also functions as an object lesson in the stratagems of mediation and embodiment in cinema, a reflexive laying bare of the idea of the film as a dream.

Early cinema's heralding of a new powerful and pervasive visual culture evokes a similar cultural reorientation, however, from a very distant era, the central middle to late medieval period (c. 1000–1500) when, thanks to an explosion of the visual, theories of embodied seeing, representation, devotional viewing, and corporeality were explored by religious philosophers and obsessively rendered by artists. Just as the modern cinema offers an opening onto an imaginary heterotopia, so too did medieval illustrations serve as 'openings' in the text, what medievalist Suzanne Lewis (1992: 215) sees as intrusions or 'visual ruptures' that interjected an additional semiotic system (see also Griffiths, 2011). Artistic representations and philosophical proclamations about the power of the visual were part of the lived cosmography of medieval life, with visions differentiated into corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual modalities. Whether providing divine communication, parables for spiritual uplift, or secular object lessons, dream representations in the Middle Ages provide an unlikely prospective catalog of techniques for animated, projected, and immersive images, including those offered by technologies beyond our contemporary landscape. With conventions of perspective, verisimilitude, and temporality yet to be formally established, medieval artists experimented with techniques for representing divine intervention in dreams, imagining dream space, animating inanimate objects, and recreating famous religious dreams in paintings.

Embedded within several dream fictions from the Middle Ages are reflexive reminders of dreaming as an act of seeing, most pronounced in the premonitory dream. In this regard, we might productively explore the similarities and differences across ideas of projection, or more accurately pre-projection, in the visual culture of dreams from the Middle Ages. While connections across dreaming and cinema as experiences of projection might seem straightforward, less understood and more subtle is the relationship of dreaming to the visual in the medieval period, when the word 'projection' was understood along different, markedly devotional lines. For example, the function of dreams as a transmission method for the sensory experience of information in the Middle Ages does not align with Freud's semiotic conception of dreams, which views dreams as texts shaped by the unconscious.² As the sense that 'allowed for bodily participation in the divine', in medievalist Susanna Biernoff's words, the visual was perceived to be just as potent if not more powerful in dreaming as in waking life (Biernoff, 2002: 134; see Freedberg, 1991, 1996).

My goal in this article is to examine the rich visual culture of the medieval period in order to better understand dreaming as a kind of visual thought experiment, one in which ideas associated with cinema, including principles of embodied viewing, narrative sequencing, projection, and sensory engagement, are palpable in a range of visual and literary works. I explore the following theoretical connections between the oneiric qualities of cinema and the visual culture of medieval dreams, dealing in turn with the following themes: (i) media and mediation; (ii) projection and premonition; (iii) virtual spatiality; and (iv) automata and other animated objects. The wide swath of medieval literary dream texts, with their mobile perspectives, sense of digital plentitude, and gnostic mission, resonate with the cinematic in the structuring of the gaze (see Gunning, 1997). Opening up these intellectual thought lines across distinct eras can help us extrapolate similarities around ways of imagining the objects, spaces, and sensations of embodied viewing or immersion, reminding us that our contemporary digital landscape (and cinema before that) are not divorced from earlier ways of seeing and believing.

But the artistic conventions for representing dreams in the Middle Ages also vividly evoke technologies of vision and communication that not only co-exist with but seem to surpass the idea of cinema, including how non-present experiences (such as dreams and visions) are exported from the dreamer's mind into the space of the dreamer. For example, dreams in the form of religious visitations from God or angels offer evidence of the limits and untapped possibilities of the human, how our bodies can become vessels for divine messages (even false messages) that we think of as our own but have actually been sent to us by someone or something else. This history is relevant, urgent even, because it opens up an intellectual space for investigating how dream works from centuries ago resonate not only with our contemporary image worlds but educe technological worlds not yet invented.

If we exclude some of the obvious differences between our modern world and the Middle Ages, most notably the need for a divinely ordered space and time that was intrinsic to medieval life, there is much to be gained in undertaking what Joel Fineman (1980: 49) calls a 'vivifying archaeology' exploring the relationship between medieval dream theory and representation, and conceptions of modern media and digital technologies for replicating human interactions with simulacral worlds. Investigating the codes of medieval culture governing its 'language, its schemes of perception, its exchanges, its values, the hierarchy of its practices', to quote Foucault (1973: 126), provides us with an unusually rich episteme for thinking about how the dreamscapes of the Middle Ages evoke media dispositifs. But why is this helpful or important, and what exactly can be gained from forging connections across vastly different historic epistemes and objects?

First, the connection illuminates how the desire to represent non-real realities is transhistorical, undergoing a period of remarkable experimentation in the Middle Ages. Second, beyond this existential similarity, we see evocations of a techno-imaginary future and prototype for world building in the medieval examples discussed in this article, art objects and literary works that sensually engage the spectator, suggesting interactivity and participatory responses rather than the more passive tropes associated with cinema's projected/optical dream-as-image mode. The radical rethinking of cinematic spectatorship beyond notions of projection is vital if we are to fully understand the deep history of humans interacting with images and objects with fantasies of control, participation, knowledge, and pleasure. Third, we have the most to gain from exploring this alliance across cinema and medieval visual culture since it helps us see dream images as predicting fantasies of image construction and interaction that surpass even our current era of digital and interactive media. As generative texts par excellence, medieval dream works hold the keys to unlocking all manner of imaginative prototypes for media interaction and image projection, showing us glimpses of worlds-in-the-making that nonetheless speak to our current media moment.

I begin by parsing some of the major theories about dreams from the Middle Ages, focusing on why dreams were popular tropes in fiction and religious artworks, what clerics had to say about them, and what insights they hold for ideas of mediation, corporeality, and representation. Next, I examine ways in which artists creatively solved the problem of transforming dreams into epiphenomena that, like memories, were extricated from the mind's eye into the physical space of the dreamer, using examples from artworks of famous medieval dreams as well as an 8th-century poem. These examples help us grasp how dreams functioned as proto-media as well as how elements of spatio-temporality are recalibrated by the dream frame and how the dream can distill key elements of future events into pre-ordained narrative vignettes

that like the cells of an animated film suggest movement across time and space. The penultimate section hones in on the classic romantic poem *Le Roman de la Rose* (1230–1275), a dream fiction in which inanimate statues spring to life and other objects such as the fountain of Narcissus are invested with magical powers. Indeed, the Lover's interactions with the statues in *Le Roman de la Rose* highlight another thread within the broad tapestry of pre-projection dream representation, automata, interstitial objects that, like dreams, extend far back into the early Middle Ages as well as forward into our contemporary era of robotics and AI. A slight detour into the ontological conundra that are automata thus helps us better understand the informing contexts of the animated statues in *Le Roman de la Rose*. This exemplary dreamwork features artifacts and images at their most powerful and autonomous, anticipating contemporary scenarios of rebellious robots or AI; heuristically speaking, the medieval dreamwork's saliency for new media theory and the history of immersive environments is quite remarkable.

A world of images: dreams, divine communication, and dangerous seeing

Images mattered a great deal in the Middle Ages, when their perceived power engendered interactive and performative acts of divination, such as customizing a book of hours with additional pages pasted in, or lying prostrate and kissing the feet of a statue. As medieval visual scholar Michael Camille has argued, this was a period in art history when images were 'much more powerful, moving, and instrumental, as well as disturbing and dangerous, than later works of art' (Camille, 2000: 210). Dreams occurred frequently in medieval fiction, framing narratives between 1200–1500 at an impressive rate. Medieval oneiromancy (the interpretation of dreams to foretell the future) viewed dreams as communication channels, 'divine intelligence' (Kruger, 1991: 75) or, in more enigmatic dreams where there was some doubt as to whether God was talking, expressive of magic, paganism or derived from other sources in the waking world (Russel, 1988: 32, 30). Like hermits, dreams were sources of revelation and the task of interpreting these 'vehicles of the intimate' was a popular subject in fiction and religious artwork (Régnier Barthélemy, 1988: 320). Religious dreams functioned as allegories, engendering delusional behaviors, serving as an outlet for erotic desire, and providing metaphors for political power. Grappling with the ontological slipperiness of dreams, medieval philosophers and clergy pored over their possible meanings, assessing their truth value and bringing it to consciousness through an appropriate maieutic (a Socratic mode of instruction bringing latent ideas to full consciousness). The paradoxical idea of dreams arising from both a higher force and from the dreamer's own body and psyche dominates the discussion of medieval dream fictions, the bid for transcendent knowledge often frustrated since, 'the dream poem, even as it points toward a higher realm, often questions the dreamer's ability to reach

that realm, to move beyond the self and its psychological confines' (Kruger, 1991: 75).

In his 5th-century work *De Trinitate*, Augustine of Hippo referred to spiritual vision as 'imagination in sleep', the dreamer overcome by the veracity of the experience until the veil of sleep lifted (Augustine, *De Trinitate* IX.4.7, 400, cited in Kruger, 1992: 39); according to Augustine,

when images of bodies are formed in sleep or in ecstasy, a person does not distinguish them from bodies until he returns to the life of the bodily senses and recognizes that he was in a world of images which *he did not derive from the senses of the body*. What man on waking from sleep is not immediately aware that the objects he saw were mere images, although when he saw them in his sleep he was not able to distinguish them from corporeal objects seen in his waking hours (Augustine, 1982[404], *Book Twelve*: 179–180, emphasis added)?³

Augustine's reference to corporeality suggests a slippage across the oneiric and lived worlds, where the embodied nature of dreaming sustains the reality effect of the experience until waking; this allusion shores up the similarly embodied and sensory pleasure of narrative fiction, which also 'feels' like a dream, prompting the spectator to experience it in not entirely dissimilar ways. The 'world of images' that did not derive from the body could as easily be a description of aesthetic representation although, unlike the dreamer, the spectator of creative works, irrespective of their mimetic lure, can neither entirely forget nor shed the sensing body.

The 'world of images' Aristotle speaks of stemming from outside of the dreamer's body is not the only kind of oneiric experience documented in the dreamworks of the Middle Age, since there are instances when the dreamer feels immersed in the dream while *also* remaining anchored in the body, much like the cinematic spectator who, while absorbed in the diegesis, still registers being present in the real world. This idea of 'bringing the body along' in the dream, of being a witness to one's dreaming body, finds concrete expression in the emotional and rhetorically sophisticated 750 CE poem *The Dream of the Rood*, told from the dual perspective of a dreamer and the cross upon which Christ was crucified. A moving theological treatise on the cross as living matter – as the poem continues, the cross, Christ, and the 'I' of the dreamer bleed into one another in their woundedness – the poem also speaks to the heightened sensory experience of dreaming as embodied vision, cuing the spectator in the opening line to the conditional nature of experience:

It was as though I saw a wondrous tree
Towering in the sky suffused with *light*,

*Brightest of beams . . . Many bands of angels, Fair throughout all eternity,
looked on.*

No felon's gallows that, but holy spirits, Mankind, and all this marvelous
creation,

Gazed on the glorious tree of victory.

And I with sins was stained, wounded with guilt.

I saw the tree of glory brightly *shine*

In gorgeous clothing, all bedecked with gold . . .

With gems; yet I could see beyond that gold

The ancient strife of wretched men . . . I was all moved with sorrows, and
afraid

At the fair *sight* . . .

So I lay *watching* there the Saviour's tree,

Grieving in spirit for a long, long while . . . (emphases added)

The Dream of the Rood spirals around the act of looking, a dream vision in which the dreamer sees beyond the surface opulence of the tree and reaches a state of transcendence, despite the overwhelming sense of sorrow at the poem's conclusion. The dreamer sees the tree as a virtual image bathed in light, and is a witness to his own dreaming body, a not uncommon subject splitting in medieval dream fiction when figures occupy multiple positions, shifting from the role of narrator and major character, and even waking up and falling back asleep in a different location, as the character Will does in the late 14th-century Middle English allegorical narrative dream poem *Piers Plowman* by William Langland (see Galloway and Cole, 2014; Steiner, 2013; Warner, 2011).⁴

Under the influence of Aristotelian and medical thought, changes in the understanding of dreams during the 13th and 14th centuries did not fundamentally challenge earlier dream accounts, and the belief in higher dreams connected with divine revelation alongside lower dreams persisted (Kruger, 1992: 119). Indeed, late medieval dream theory accommodated a plethora of dream types, viewing dreaming as a process through which 'mundane and transcendent dream causes would *both* operate'. The dream could function as a place where the 'power of moral or spiritualizing and somatic or naturalizing discourses, rather than being played off *against* each other, come together in mutual reinforcement' (Kruger, 1998: 11). And even though the divinational power of dreams, the idea of a divine presence seeking out an individual, was a widely shared belief, expounding the common precept that God revealed truths to humans in dreams because they were more innocent and receptive when sleeping than awake, dreams could also be understood as demonically deceptive, meaningless, and dangerous (Lull, 1965[1737]: 368, cited in Kruger, 1992: 98).

Dreaming involves the vivid invocation of sensory perception and processing that operates in similar ways to memories and, while more extensive analysis would doubtless elucidate points of overlap and departure, suffice it to say that images played crucial roles in the imaginative indices of both memory and dreaming. Another vital context for our understanding of dream imagery is the flourishing of visionary mysticism between 1100–1300, a movement led by such mystics as Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Angela of Foligno, and Hadewijch of Antwerp who experienced visions of Christ and the Trinity. The boundary separating revelatory dreams from revelatory visions is paper thin and, while space precludes explicating the finer points of overlap and divergence, suffice it to say that the virtual spaces constructed by these (mostly) women in their visions were also alive with ideas of projection and animation, similar to the oneiric-visual events in the artworks and dream frame works discussed here. The embodied experience of dream visions and devotional performances, as Jeffrey Hamburger (1998: 19) notes, ‘engaged all the senses, corporeal as well as spiritual, through speech, sight, and gesture. Dreaming shared with visionary mysticism the challenge of rendering in image form that which evaded representation or, in the case of the Trinity, was invisible (see McGinn, 2005); less opaque, however, was the status of imagery as a ‘currency of spiritual exchange’, a tool for immersing the body in the senses through devotional practice that triggered ‘weeping, selfmortification, or ecstatic revelation’ (Hamburger, 1998: 19, 14).⁵ Like dreams, Christian mystical texts contained *topoi* that were predominantly spatial, constructing a virtual yet thoroughly dimensional world. According to medievalist David Albertson, such texts constitute a ‘species of religious literature that creates, invents, or discovers exceptional, transfinite spaces’, not unlike a dreaming brain (Albertson, 2019: 349).

As Mary Carruthers has artfully shown in her work on memory in the Middle Ages, visual images carried the weight of memory, memory itself being highly dependent on the image-making power of the soul (Carruthers and Ziolkowski, 2002: 11). Memory images, the idea of the ‘eye of the mind’, begin with the stimulation of the five senses and end when this material knowledge is activated through a series of internal functions, so-called inward senses (Carruthers, 1990: 47). The ability to externalize and watch our memories projected outside our bodies, a form of prosthetic memory, might one day be possible, given that artificial intelligence can already recombine video, voice, and text culled from social media life histories to revivify the deceased. Aside from the transformation of lived experiences into visual memories, dreams sourced from divine powers constitute a form of sensory hijacking, in which the human body is transformed into a vessel for external communication.

As a conduit for useful and useless knowledge, dreaming clearly affects not just what we know but also how we know what we know; like much contemporary

popular entertainment, dreams offer artifices, illusionistic border experiences, in which thresholds such as doorways, bridges, castle walls, and windows move dreamers across spaces, forging interrelationships between 'inner and outer; visual and verbal; stasis and motion; reality and simulacra' (Marcus, 2001: 5168). The 14th-century French Benedictine translator and encyclopedist Pierre Bersuire, whose uneasiness about dreams, especially the illusory quality of dreams as false prophets, conjures up anxieties found in the perennial discussions among film scholars around representation and embodiment in the Plato's Cave allegory (see Baudry, 2016; Gunning, 1995; Leyda, 1960: 407–409; Plato, 2007[360 BCE]):

The dream is nothing other than the embracing of the *shadow for the thing, the sign for the signified, the image for the truth, the false for the true*. And for this reason, the dreamer, while he is dreaming, imagines many things, since sometimes it seems to him that he is a king . . . but when he has awakened, he finds all these things to be false. Thus truly, the opinion of evil people concerning the world and the felicity of the world is nothing other than a kind of dream: namely because they themselves embrace the shadow for the thing, the sign for the signified, the image for the truth, and the false for the true; that is to say, they embrace the good things of the world, which are nothing other than a kind of shadow, a kind of sign, a kind of image of future good things, which they consider to be true, fixed, solid, and certain. (Bersuire, 1325–1337: 77, cited in Kruger, 1992: 92, emphases added)

The repetition of the phrase 'shadow for the thing, the sign for the signified, the image for the truth, and the false for the true' suggests a slippage between dreaming as a psychic phenomenon and dreaming as a metaphor for false consciousness and greed, what Susan Buck-Morss (1992: 22) calls the 'sensory addiction to a compensatory reality'.

Bersuire was not alone in his anxiety about the danger of the reality-bending nature of dreams for people tainted by the forces of evil and predisposed to committing evil deeds: 9th-century writer Rhabanus Maurus and 14th-century French abbot and Benedictine reformer Bernard of Clairvaux accused dreams of coddling fools who 'attend to shadows' or 'grab at shadows' (cited in Russell, 1988: 68–69) evoking Maxim Gorky's (1896) famous description of early film-going as entering an uncanny kingdom of shadows as well as Marx's use of the term phantasmagoria to describe the world of commodities that 'veil the production process, and like mood pictures encourage their beholders to identify them with subjective fantasies and dreams' (Buck-Morss, 1992: 25). Dreams were not alone in generating anxiety about their propensity to influence; Bynum (2011) has shown that all manner of holy artifacts such as statues, wafers, cloths, and relics were capable of miraculous transformation or metamorphosis, objects that in Bynum's words could 'change color, weep, bleed, or walk in order to rekindle devotion or protest neglect' (p. 22). Not



Figure 2. Joseph dreaming in bed (left); recounting dream to his father (right). Psalter, use of Metz, fol. 013v, parchment, c.1375. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

surprisingly, those fearful of the power of such artifacts were often dream skeptics, Bynum (2011: 24) noting that the objects under attack were the ‘most tactile, friable, and materially insistent’. But how were these dreams rendered as aesthetic representation, static or elliptical images that the viewer could immediately understand were of the dreamer’s body but not necessarily *derived* from it?

Bodily engagement in the divine: projecting dream space

Dream representation in the Middle Ages was highly codified (as was much medieval artwork), and typically consisted of three components: first, a reclining or sleeping figure signifying the dreamer; second, in an act of monstration, an angel to provoke the externalization process (see Figure 4); and third, the subject matter of the dream represented in an adjacent space, sometimes above the dreamer. The haptic gesture, typically an angel touching or pointing at the sleeper, is key, since it suggests that some kind of supernatural power is necessary to make the dream appear. Medieval artists overcame the challenge of transforming the dream from a private psychic experience into a viewable spectacle – literalizing the idea of the ‘twoness’ of dream representation, the temporary splitting of the mind of the dreaming body from the sleeper – by making the dream a communication medium that, when prompted by (typically) an angel, could be made to appear outside the body, kind of like a video feed of the REM period of sleep.



Figure 3. 'Adoration of the Magi and their Dream', Manuscript, fol. 003v, c. 1315-25, from *Apocryphal Childhood of Christ*, written in French. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. English, Romanesque, Art History Survey Collection.

Whether depicting the sleeping subject or dream activity beneath a decorative banner, in a *tondo* (a round frame), or in a series of floating optical cells, figural exteriorizations of dreams in the medieval period transform the dream experience into a proto-medium, in which information from the dream floats in the space next to the dreamer's head and body, as seen in the 14th-century *Psalter of Joseph* dreaming in bed, framed as a *tondo* (also called a *desco da parto*, or painting on a platter) (Figure 2). The round shape is common in dream representation, signifying mobility, belonging 'everywhere and nowhere' in Rudolf Arnheim's (1988: 72, 87) words, and evincing a completeness and stability. The sheaves of corn, sun, moon, and stars, appear in the center of the image, filling in the rectangular space created by the 90-degree angle formed by the dreamer's body. The walls of Joseph's bedroom serve as a kind of canvas for the externalization and projection of his dream, a space that has been normalized in the adjacent *tondo* when Joseph recounts the dream to his father. The temporal ellipses between the *tondo* underscore the dream's ephemerality, since Joseph points to the exact space in his bedroom where the dream occurred, a gesture mirrored by his father. Joseph's pointed finger to the space of the dream vision suggests a slippage between the dream as the product of his subconscious and its summoning as reconstructed media. Given the impossibility of re-creating Joseph's dream as seen by Joseph's 'dreaming eye' (how can we see inside his brain?), the artist depicts the dream occurring *outside* the sleeper's body; Joseph's pointing and upward gaze



Figure 4. 'Adoration of the Magi; Dream of the Magi', Oscott Psalter, illuminated ms, 13th century, British Library, Art History Survey Collection. © The British Library Board PF ADD MS 50000 f009v.



Figure 5. 'Jacob's Dream of Angels Ascending a Ladder to Heaven', MS. Illumination, 12th century, English, Romanesque. Used with permission of the Lambeth Palace Library, LPL MS3f.br.

toward the space where the dream appeared in the right-hand circle suggests an after trace of the dream, or a sense of it still lingering in the atmosphere of the room.



Figure 6. 'Joseph Interprets the Pharaoh's Dream', Workshop of Raphael, including Giovanni da Udine, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni Francesco Penni, fresco, c. 1518–19, Loggia di Raffaello, Vatican Palace, Vatican City, Rome. SCALA Florence/Art Resource NY.

The 1315–1325 parchment of the *Adoration of the Magi and their Dream* (Figure 3) offers a spatial and temporal collapse between the dream and its fulfillment, with the magi represented both as asleep in bed and adoring the Christ child. Moreover, while the red and blue painted backdrops demarcate each scene as spatially distinct, the magi in the center of the image seem to occupy both spaces, kneeling half in the bedroom and half in the manger. The dream serves as the narrative stimulant for two subsequent events: the magi seeing the star in the sky, signified by the pointed fingers and upward gazes of the two magi in the center of the image, and the dénouement of the dream as the magi honor the baby Jesus. The narrative and spatial ellipses prime this representation for animation, suggesting that viewers were capable of reading the image from left to right (a spatial order corresponding to a temporal order) as a visual depiction of both the dream and of what the magi did in response to the dream, an example of an 'encadrement' sequence that is the prototype for modern strip cartoons (Fleming, 1969: 40).

The dream banner functions as a message from God in the *Adoration of Magi, Dream of the Magi* 13th-century folio from the Olcott Psalter (Figure 4), a

miniature from an illuminated manuscript in which one of the magi has arisen from bed and gestures toward an angel performing a benediction with one hand while holding the dream banner in the other. Somewhat unusually, the rondels represent the dream and fulfillment in reverse order, with the dream in the lower circle and the adoration above it (the repeated circles eliding differences between the nonreality of the dream and the referentiality of the adoration). But whether the angel visited the magi and woke one of them up or appeared in a dream is really of little consequence, since the truth-value of both would have gone unquestioned. And yet the artist's decision to show one of the magi awake complicates the image's status as a dream, for the simple reason that the magi does not appear to be asleep. Our understanding of the image's ontological status as dream therefore has to override our inclination to read the image as 'I was asleep and awoke to find an angel next to me', which would technically be a vision not a dream, rather than 'I had a dream in which I was asleep and an angel appeared and woke me up'.

The representation of dreams as a series of discrete image elements within the painting as opposed to a single image echoes a similar breakdown of stories from the Scriptures into narrative vignettes, what St Gregory called the Bible of the laity, exemplified in the Twelve Stations of the Cross. Artworks in the Middle Ages served a predominantly didactic function in the life of the laity: sermons were transformed into stone; stained glass and altarpieces celebrated a 'divinely ordained and revealed world order'; and illuminated manuscripts fused image with written word to enhance the devotional experience (Fleming, 1969: 11–12). The representation of reality was predominantly visual and aural, with Christendom assuming its myriad form from what Benedict Anderson (1983: 23) calls a 'myriad of specificities and particularities: this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, that morality play, that relic', and, we might add, 'that dream'.

Jacob's Dream of Angels Ascending a Ladder to Heaven (Figure 5) a 12th-century manuscript illumination is even more visually chaotic, representing the dream activation and its content in an array of emblematic pictures. Divided obliquely by the ladder at the literal and figural center of Jacob's dream, the image represents several iconic motifs, including showing Jacob asleep, the triggering of his dream by what appears to be a shower of water, angels climbing the ladder, a ram in a bush, and an angel visiting a man who holds his wife by the back of her hair. Once again, the hyperkineticism of the image with its multiple vertically organized planes of action evokes both the cartoon comic strip and the cells of an animated film. Jacob's dream is also rendered in textual form, written on a scroll that God has unfurled toward the top of the image; as a conduit for transmitting Joseph's dream, the banner shares a resemblance to the telegraph message (or today's text message), becoming a medium for dream delivery and a communication directly from God.



Figure 7. Personification on walled garden, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, Jean Pucelle, MS 101 Tournai, c. 1230/1275, Municipal Library, Tournai, France. Reproduced with permission.

The elliptical structure of scriptural tableaux or scenes from the Passion is mirrored in the figurative choices made by artists of dream representation who conveyed narrative events on individual panels combined in small or large

diptychs, triptychs, and polyptychs (Kieckhefer, 1987: 64, 79). For example, in the early 16th-century fresco from the Workshop of Raphael in Vatican City depicting Joseph interpreting the Pharaoh's dream, we see the major visual components of the Pharaoh's dream in two circular images floating either side of the Pharaoh's head (Figure 6) (see Dacos, 2008; Gombrich, 1976; Hall, 2005). As told in Genesis, Chapter 41, the Pharaoh experienced a recurring dream involving seven ears of corn and seven cattle, and, 'being struck with fear, he sent for all the interpreters of Egypt, and to all the wise men' but none could make sense of the dream. Joseph was summoned and explained to the Pharaoh that the dream of the corn and cattle indicated God's plan to bring seven years of plenty, and that the recurrence of the dream was a 'token of certainty . . . that the word of God cometh to pass, and is fulfilled speedily'. Joseph's pointed finger bifurcates the image into two planes of action: on the right side, the Pharaoh's advisors point and chatter in amazement at Joseph's interpretive skills (one has even turned his back toward the viewer) while the dream itself is replayed in two circular decals either side of Joseph's bowed head as he sits pensively, finger pressed against his lips. On a literal level, the dreams are recreated in the image decals so that Joseph, the Pharaoh, and the bystanders can bear witness to Joseph's ability to decode them.

Conceptually, the fresco makes possible the idea of moving images *playing out* on a surface. Moreover, the location of the dreams above arched windows framing distant mountains as scenic views, discursively and figuratively links dreams and windows as portals into imaginative as well as real horizons.

***Le Roman de la Rose*: the vivifying power of the dreamworld**

Guillaume de Lorris's 13th-century poem and dream vision *Le Roman de la Rose* (De Lorris and De Meun (1995[c.1500]: 34–35) is a masterpiece of chivalry and romantic courtly literature set in an idyllic garden that was widely read and inspired a wave of medieval dream fictions. In the 13th century, it was opulently produced and illustrated, and a great deal of 14th- and 15th-century dream vision output can be traced to *Le Roman de la Rose*, thus making it a superlative example of the dream frame genre. The poem was written in two stages: the first, by Guillaume de Lorris, draws upon several generic traditions including that of the didactic, mythologic, and courtly romance and is the one with the greatest influence on future poetic tradition. Jean de Meun Clopinel wrote the continuation of the poem 40 years after Guillaume's death. There are more than 300 extant manuscripts of *Le Roman de la Rose* versus 75 versions of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400). The poem's description of the protagonist's first sight of the painted personifications of the 10 vices on the wall of the *Jardin de Déduit* (Figure 7) within a few pages of the dream's commencement introduces us to the idea of inanimate objects coming to life. Here's how the Lover recalls the encounter:



Figure 8. Alexandre-Nicolas Thérouté's African Flute Player (ca. 1869–1877). Composed of textiles, European oak and pine, steel, iron, brass, papier-maché, leather, glass, mohair, and oil-paint, the 'Flute Player' is part of the Murtoogh D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata, Morris Museum, Morristown, New Jersey, on loan to the Met Breuer for the duration of the show. Reproduced with permission.

When I had gone ahead thus for a little, I saw a large and roomy garden, entirely enclosed by a high crenelated wall, sculptured outside and laid out with many fine inscriptions. I willingly admired the images and paintings, and I shall recount to you and tell you the appearance of these images as they occur to my memory.

According to Stephen G Nichols (1992: 150), the portraits establish a

representational system by which personification and a redeployment of classical subtexts inaugurate the allegorical matrix that generates the work . . . In aggregate, the ekphrastic portraits open the text to a free play of image production and image reception at two levels: in the verbal text itself and in the manuscript illumination.



Figure 9. Narcissus kneeling by pool with Eco standing praying, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, fol.012v Parchment, 1390. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

It is precisely this free play that opens up the discursive space for thinking about the statues as possessing powers that defy their ontological limitations.

Eschewing the medieval convention of representing vices such as Avarice or Hunger as a lifeless statue or flat painting, Guillaume de Lorris describes Avarice as hiding her purse, Envy closing one of her eyes with disdain, and Sorrow scratching her own face, all gestures redolent with life. The ‘special vividness’ of ekphrasis, the imparting of dramatic action and sensuality to

images (Fineman, 1981: 4, cited in Nichols, 1992: 135) – what Nichols calls ‘the drama of the body in the word’ – has an unmistakable animated quality (p. 139). While this uncanny imagination of image technologies could be seen merely as an instance of the ‘bizarre intrusions’ typical of the dream state, what Edward Casey (1979: 36–37) calls images of ‘pure possibility’, there is something tantalizingly modern about the Lover’s encounter with the vivified portraits.

The Lover’s description of the painted personifications of vices is defined by a semantic indeterminacy since he refers to some of them as images, others as paintings, a third group as ‘portrayed’, and one, Pope-Holiness, as ‘traced’. The vices were among the most frequently illustrated subjects of medieval book painting; as John Fleming (1969: 32–35) notes, during the two centuries of the poem’s illustrations, the representation of these figures has varied tremendously, from ‘wash designs, niched statues, sepulchral effigies, seated figures, figures in a garden, [and] figures in *tableaux vivants*. In short, they are, at one time or another, practically anything within the range of the illustrators’ imaginations and technical abilities’. Paradoxically, the vivification process complicates the personifications since some of the women act out as the Lover looks upon them, resisting their roles as allegories of the seven deadly sins and showing glimpses of defiance through a latent characterization.

The vivified personifications in *Le Roman de la Rose* share something of the mimetic potency and wonder-inducing qualities of the automaton, Greek for ‘acting of one’s own will’, and a popular entertainment device since at least 3rd-century Greece, China and, by the mid-8th century, the Islamic world. Exemplifying the ‘machine as virtuoso’, automata yoked the technologically wondrous to the uncanny, bringing humans, animals, birds, and other objects to life via complex air or water-powered mechanisms with the net result of a magical reality-effect (Stafford, 1994: 121; see Bynum, 1997). The closest approximation to imagining the Lover’s experience in the *Jardin de Déduit* is the early 17th-century Helbrunn Palace outside Salzburg in Austria that is still open to visitors. Built by Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg Markus Sittikus von Hohenems as a pleasure palace, a ‘therapy of diversion’ against melancholy, Helbrunn used water-powered automata to alternately bewitch and drench its unsuspecting visitors as they walked around the grottos of his Baroque villa. Governed by an idiosyncratic vision of transcendence, ‘the utterly different way in which everyday life could be experienced, the unusualness of what was visible, and the game of surprise, fright, and release through laughter’ made the entire space synonymous with the world of dreams, although unlike dreams where the body is shielded by the veil of sleep, the physical sensation of the soaking made a walk around Helbrunn a distinctly embodied experience for its visitor (Schaber, 2013: 5, 15).

It is life-size human automata, however, those invested with the mimetic powers of the statues encountered by the Lover, that command our greatest

attention, examples of which were on display at the *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body* show at the Met Breuer in New York in spring 2018 (see Schjeldahl, 2018; Smith, 2018; Syson et al, 2018). Perhaps closest to the conceit of Guillaume de Lorris's seven deadly sins was Alexandre-Nicolas Théroude's *African Flute Player* (ca. 1869–1877) (Figure 8), who was wound up and activated once each afternoon for Met visitors. Slowly turning his head and batting his eyelids provocatively at the audience, the courtly-dressed flautist is an example of a so-called blackamoor sculpture that exemplified prevailing European conceptions of nonwhite figures as both uncivilized (he wears no shoes) and entertaining (he is coded as a buffoon). Exploiting both the exoticization and fetishization of the African body via the trope of performance, the automaton's theatricality and illusionism nonetheless open up a space of resistance, making us not quite sure how to assimilate its ontological status. As verisimilar mechanical *trompe l'oeil*, human automata are fascinating curiosity pieces that entrance spectators in similar ways to the mimetic statues in *Le Roman de la Rose*; in both, 'the magical work appear[s] to be composing itself from out of its own material substance', although the Lover in *Le Roman de la Rose* does not control the animated personifications, as the 'sly conjuror' or *méchanicien* does in the case of the automaton, surrounding himself, as Barbara Maria Stafford (1994: 121) argues, with ingenious clockwork that is just as 'self-motivated and autodirected' as the machines.

As moving sculptures, the statues in *Le Roman de la Rose* might be considered examples of extraordinary technologies that, bracketed by the dream, can be imagined into existence. Their association with automata, as Truitt (2015: 14) argues in *Medieval Robots*, would have doubled the otherness of the sudden animation, since 'until the fifteenth century, automata in the Western imagination most often came from foreign lands or the strange geography of the past'. If the animated personifications on the garden wall evoked the automaton for *Le Roman de la Rose* readers, this does not adequately explain what causes the personifications to misbehave as 2D images or 3D statues, since it is the dreamer's imagination, the force of the dream itself, rather than the mechanical *trompe l'oeil* of the automaton that seems to mobilize the experience.

The dream frame of *Le Roman de la Rose* (see Figure 9) engenders other kinds of possible and impossible media worlds and technologies beyond the idea of vivification. For example, two large crystals located at the bottom of the fountain of Narcissus assume magical powers capable of reflecting, with uncanny verisimilitude, every tiny detail of the garden (see Bann, 1989: 115–117; on mirrors, see Grabes, 1982; Kruger, 1991: 74–95); according to the Lover:

The crystals are so wonderful and have such power that the entire place – trees, flowers, and whatever adorns the garden – appears there [in the fountain] *all in order* . . . Just as the mirror shows things that are in front of it, without cover, in their true colors and shapes, just so, I tell you truly, do

the crystals reveal the whole condition of the garden, *without deception*, to those who gaze in the water, for always, wherever they are, they see one half of the garden, and if they turn, then they may see the rest. There is nothing so small, however hidden or shut up, that is not shown there in the crystal as if it were painted in detail. (De Lorris and De Meun, 1995 (ca. 1230/1275): 51, emphases added)

The crystals' ability to represent the garden all in order suggests a commanding panoptic and mimetic power, the phrase 'without deception' referring either to the lack of distortion that might otherwise be caused by the water or a heightened verisimilitude. As a metaphor for cinema itself, the figure of the reflective crystal medium evokes the *seeming* quality of the dream as well as an interactive model of cinema; not only do the crystals function as premonitory media, but their ability to respond to the spectator's head movements, 'if they turn, they may see the rest', suggests a model of vision closer in design to the (relative) autonomy of virtual reality's head-mounted display than cinema's rectangular aspect ratio.

The amatory dream-parable form, with its esoteric tropes of gardens, walls, and the rose, allows objects such as crystals and statues to behave in revelatory ways; cued by the Lover's gaze, elements of the garden enact a technological imaginary in which objects are invested with powers beyond their ostensible aesthetic function. *Le Roman de la Rose* serves as a provocative example of the dream frame's imaginative potency beyond how we think about embodiment, mediation, and representation, for here we see human beings interacting with, and possibly even triggering, object behaviors reminiscent of our post-cinematic era of digital visual culture. The dreamer encounters objects of vision that do not fit easily into cinematic regimes of vision but seem to juggle both old devices of revelation such as automata, crystal balls, and magical mirrors, as well as hinting at how some of their functions and uses (think automata and robotics, for example) have been transubstantiated for a 21st-century world.

Conclusion

Returning to *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend*, Wallace McCutcheon solves the problem of how to signal the intrusion of dream space into cinematic space much like the artists of the Middle Ages, showing the dreamer and the dream content occurring in the same frame. The film is a 'how-to' in the architectonics of dream space as well as a multifaceted treatise on cinema's relationship to the oneiric. Swedish film director Maurice Stiller designed a similar dream sequence in his 1927 silent American war drama *Hotel Imperial*. Set in Austria-Hungary, the film starred Pola Negri as a hotel chambermaid working in a frontier town occupied by Russians. Lieut. Paul Almsy, one of six Hungarian Hussars exhausted from battle, falls from his horse and drags

himself to the porter's lodge of the Hotel Imperial where Negri works, and quickly falls into a deep sleep. Stiller represents Almasi's dream by inserting a superimposed image directly above his head, the footage in the dream bubble virtually identical to the dramatic night-time chase scene of Russian soldiers storming the Hungarian village, suggesting the brain's archiving of visual memory as an indexing process and instant recall in the post-traumatic sleep following an injury. Whether what we are seeing is a dream or memory formation is less significant than the formal similarities in dream representation across centuries of image-making. The idea of the dream as a virtual image not simply experienced inside the sleeper's head but projected outside the body serves as an age-old problem-solving device for transmuting brain activity into figurative representation.

Writers in the Middle Ages describing and trying to explain dreaming through recourse to the divine would surely have had a hard time depicting the experience of dreams projected outside the body in earthly terms. And yet, on the possibility of data storage, the medieval fantasy of encyclopedic memory and shaping the mind as an enormous memory theater comes tantalizingly close to fruition with the computer and the internet (see Marcus, 2000: 18–19; Orgel, 2000: 57–60). There is much to be gained from disaggregating the cinematic dream sequence and parsing its specific signifying practices not with sweeping brush strokes but with a more nuanced understanding of its historicity. Whether stoking religious fear and veneration or providing sensual pleasure as in *Le Roman de la Rose*, the dreamworlds of the Middle Ages have bequeathed us a number of extraordinary rich creative works that are the imaginative building blocks of media worlds-in-the-making, as speculative in many ways as current discourses around new media. It behooves us to step outside our historical moment of dystopic visions of ever-technologized media worlds and bodies since we may find there, in proprioceptive fashion, vital clues as to how we got to here or where we might be headed.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Steve F. Kruger, Brooke Belisle, Maggie Hennefeld, Henry Jenkins, Dana Polan, William Boddy, and Jason Potel for their incisive feedback on earlier versions of this article. I would also like to thank the anonymous readers at *Journal of Visual Culture*.

ORCID iD

Alison Griffiths  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4208-3962>

Notes

1. Notions of dreams have fundamentally shaped film theory, with Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and psychoanalysis having a profound impact on strategies of close reading used by apparatus and feminist film theorists. Freud identified two ways of interpreting dreams: (i) symbolic dream interpretation, aka content replacement; and (ii) the 'cipher' method, which treats the dream as a kind of 'secret code, in which every sign is translated into another sign

- of known meaning, according to an established key'. Freud was critical of both methods, arguing that 'the symbolic method is limited in its application and is capable of no general demonstration [whereas] in the cypher method everything depends upon whether the key, the dream book, is reliable, and for that all guarantees are lacking' (pp. 81–83). Freud ultimately favored the cipher method, calling it an 'interpretation in detail, not *en masse* . . . [since] it treats the dream from the beginning as something put together – as a conglomeration of psychic images' (p. 87). While Freud offered the photographic superimposition as an analogy for the dreamwork of condensation, he showed little interest in motion pictures as metaphors for understanding dreams, lumping cinema with other types of so-called 'auxiliary apparatus' invented for the 'improvement or intensification of our sensory functions [and] built like the sensory organs themselves or portions of them: for instance, spectacles, photographic cameras, ear-trumpets'. Freud was more taken with the Mystic Writing Pad as dream analogy, a tablet in which a celluloid sheet covering a wax slab provides 'both an-ever-ready receptive surface and permanent traces of the notes that have been made upon it', with one hand recording perception through scribbling on the pad and the other hand periodically raising the sheet and sending the text into consciousness (Freud, 1925; see Elsaesser, 2009).
2. This is a significant break from Freud's approaches to dream theory in which a slippage between dreaming as a mimetic illusion, especially in the *dorveille*, the liminal state between sleep and wakefulness, is of far less interest than the idea of dreams representing the unconscious breaking through the conscious barrier. For Freud, a dream's horizontality, its syntactical chains of meaning, are suppressed, since different dreams can share the same meaning, while the dreamwork follows the nonlinear psychic processes of condensation, association, and displacement (Freud, 1913[1900]). For a discussion of the absence of cinema in Freud's theoretical work, see Marcus (2001).
 3. Augustine underscored a crucial difference between images perceived in the waking world versus the dream state, namely the sensory source of the real-world image, although dream content was often linked to waking-life events or, as many believed in Augustine's time, by the dreamer's consumption of specific food or drink (see Marcus, 2000: 52–55; Parsons, 2013).
 4. Will has several dream-within-a-dream experiences, reflexively calling attention to the fictionality of both the waking and dreaming parts of the poem. The dream in *Piers Plowman* plays into the Aristotelian notion of dreams as sources of divination, with Will thrown into a transcendent position where the dream renders both a more authoritative vision and, through the ensuing arguments between Will and Reason, paradoxically questions that very same authority.
 5. For an overview of visionary mysticism, see McGinn (2006), Hamburger (1998), and Hamburger and Bouché (2006); on visionary mysticism as virtual space and practices of spatial projection, see Albertson (2019); on theories of visual imagination, see Karnes (2011) and Newman (2005).

References

- Albertson D (2019) Cataphasis, visualization, and mystical space. In: Howells E and McIntosh M (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 347–368.
- Anderson B (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Arnheim R (1988) *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Augustine (400) *De Trinitate* IX: 4.7.
- Augustine (1982[404]) Book Twelve The Paradise or Third Heaven Seen by St. Paul. *St. Augustine The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. and annotated by J Hammond Taylor, SJ. Vol. II Books 7–12. New York, NY: Newman Press, 179–180.
- Balázs B (1952) *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth*. London: Dennis Dobson Press.
- Bann S (1989) *The True Vine: On Visual Representation and the Western Tradition*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Baudry JL (2016) The apparatus: Metapsychological approaches to the impression of reality. In: Braudy L and Cohen M (eds) *Film Theory and Criticism*, 8th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 217–227.
- Bazin A (1967) The myth of total cinema. In: *What Is Cinema*, 2 vols, trans./ed. H Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 23–27.
- Bersuire P (1325–1337) *Reductorium morale, De proprietatibus rerum*, Book 4, ch. 20.
- Biernoff S (2002) *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages*. New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Buck-Morss S (1992) Aesthetics and anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's artwork essay reconsidered. *October* 62, Autumn: 3–41.
- Bynum C (1997) Wonder. *American Historical Review* 102(1): 1–26.
- Bynum C (2011) *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Camille M (2000) Before the gaze: The internal senses and Late Medieval practices of seeing. In: Nelson RS (ed.) *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carruthers M (1990) *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Cultures*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Carruthers M and Ziolkowski J (2002) (eds) General Introduction. In: *An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Casey E (1979) *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Chanan M (1996) *The Dream that Kicks: The Prehistory and Early Years of Cinema in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Christie I (1994) *The Last Machine: Early Cinema and the Birth of the Modern World*. London: BFI.
- Dacos N (2008) *The Loggia of Raphael: A Vatican Art Treasure*. New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers.
- De Lorris G and De Meun J (1995[ca. 1230/1275]) *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. C Dahlberg. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- The Dream of the Rood* (ca. 8th–10th century) Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry Project. Available at: <https://anglosaxonpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/dream-of-the-rood/> (accessed 2 March 2021).
- Eberwein R (1984) *Film and the Dream Screen: A Sleep and a Forgetting*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Elsaesser T (2009) Freud as media theorist: Mystic writing pads and the matter of memory. *Screen* 50(1): 100–113.
- Epstein J (2012) *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. S Keller. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Fineman J (1980) The structure of allegorical desire. *October* 12: 44–66.
- Fleming J (1969) *Le Roman de la Rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Foucault M (1973) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Freedberg D (1991) *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Freedberg D (1996) *Art in History/History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art.
- Freud S (1913[1900]) *The Interpretation of Dreams*. London: Macmillan.
- Freud S (1925) A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad first published simultaneously as 'Notiz Über Den "Wunderblock"'. In: *Gesammelte Schriften* VI, S. 415–420, and *Intentionale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* XI, S: 1–5.
- Galloway A and Cole A (2014) *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gombrich E (1976) *Means and Ends: Reflections on the History of Fresco Painting*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Gorky M (1896) *Nizhegorodski listok*, 4 July.

- Grabes H (1982) *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*, trans. G Collier. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Griffiths A (2011) Magic, wonder, and the fantastical margins: Medieval visual culture and cinematic special effects. *Journal of Visual Culture* 9(3): 271–292.
- Gunning T (1995) Animated pictures: Tales of cinema's forgotten future. *Michigan Quarterly Review* 34(4): 465–485.
- Gunning T (1997) In your face: Physiognomy, photography, and the gnostic impulse. *Modernism/modernity* 4(1): 1–29.
- Hall M (ed.) (2005) *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hamburger J (1998) *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany*. New York: Zone Books.
- Hamburger J and Bouché A-M (eds) (2006) *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hobson J (2003) The neurodynamics of dreaming. In: *The Dream Drugstore: Chemically Altered States of Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 69–84.
- Karnes M (2011) *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kieckhefer R (1987) Major currents in Late Medieval devotion. In: Raitt J (ed.) *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*. New York: Crossroad.
- Kruger S (1991) Mirrors and the trajectory of vision in *Piers Plowman*. *Speculum* 66(1): 74–95.
- Kruger S (1992) *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kruger S (1998) Dream space and masculinity. *Word and Image* 14(1/2), Jan–June: 11–16.
- Lewis S (1992) Images of opening, penetration, and closure in *Le Roman de la Rose*. *Word and Image* 8(3): 215–242.
- Leyda J (1960) *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Lull R [Raymondus Lullus] (1965[1737]) *Liber proverbiorum*, Opera, VI. Mainz: Minerva.
- Marcus L (2000) The silence of the archive and the noise of cyberspace. In: Sawley J and Rhodes N (eds) *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*. New York, NY: Routledge, 17–26.
- Marcus L (2001) Dreaming and the cinematographic consciousness. *Psychoanalysis and History* 3(1): 51–68.
- Maurus H (1150–1180) *Commentarium*, PL 109, col. 1005.
- McGinn B (2006) Theologians as Trinitarian iconographers. In: Hamburger JF and Bouché A-M (eds) *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 186–207.
- Merritt R (1986) Dream visions in pre-Hollywood film. In: Leyda J and Musser C (eds) *Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century Film from American Archives*. New York, NY: American Federation of Arts, 69–72.
- Metz C (1982) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Metz C and Guzzetti A (1976) The fiction film and its spectator: A metapsychological study. *New Literary History* 8(1): 75.
- Mitry J (2000[1963]) *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Morin E (1956/2005) *The Cinema, or The Imaginary Man*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Newman B (2005) What does it mean to say 'I Saw'? The clash between theory and practice in Medieval visual culture. *Speculum* 80(1): 1–43.
- Nichols S (1992) Ekphrasis, iconoclasm, and desire. In: Brownlee K and Huot S (eds) *Rethinking The Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 133–166.
- Orgel S (2000) Textual icons: Reading Early Modern illustrations. In: Sawley J and Rhodes N (eds) *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*. New York, NY: Routledge, 57–67.

- Parsons W (2013) *Freud and Augustine in Dialogue: Psychoanalysis, Mysticism, and the Culture of Modern Spirituality*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Plato (2007[360 BCE]) The allegory of the cave. *The Republic*, trans. T Sheehan. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 514–517.
- Régnier-Barthélemy D (1988) Imagining the Self. In: Duby G (ed.) *A History of Private Life, Vol. II: Revelations of the Medieval World*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Russell S (1988) *The English Dream: Anatomy of a Form*. Athens: Ohio State University Press.
- Schaber W (2013) *Hellbrunn: Palace, Park, and Trick Fountains*. Salzburg: Hellbrunn Palace.
- Schjeldahl P (2018) 'Like life' shows seven hundred years of the body. *The New Yorker*, 2 April. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/02/like-life-shows-seven-hundred-yearsof-the-body> (accessed 2 March 2021).
- Smith R (2018) Real, or too real? A dazzling show goes the way of all flesh. *New York Times*, 22 March. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/arts/design/like-life-sculpturereview-met-breuer.html> (accessed 2 March 2021).
- Stafford B (1994) *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Steiner E (2013) *Reading Piers Plowman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Syson L, et al. (2018) *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Truitt E (2015) *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Nature, and Art*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Warner L (2011) *The Lost History of Piers Plowman*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Alison Griffiths is a Distinguished Professor of Film and Media Studies at Baruch College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York. The author of three monographs on ethnographic cinema, immersion, and non-theatrical exhibition, she is currently finishing two books, one on expedition film that is forthcoming from Columbia University Press, and another on media imaginaries in medieval art and sculpture.

Address: Department of Communication Studies, Baruch College, The City University of New York, 55 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA. [email: alison.griffiths@baruch.cuny.edu]