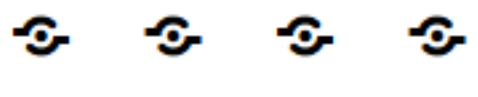


Final Portfolio

Rhetorical Analysis: Road to Redemption

Materiality Analysis

Research Paper



DECEMBER 2015

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Materiality Analysis



Pucelle, Jean. "The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France." 1324. The Collection. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Web. 19 Oct. 2015. <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/470309?=&imgno=13&tabname=label>>.

This elaborately illustrated manuscript was made in France, circa 1324, for the queen of France, Jeanne d'Evreux. A Book of Hours was used for the individual as a devotional object to the saints or particular Biblical stories that he or she felt connected to. According to the site, this book of hours was used by the queen for her daily prayers. The book was made in Paris by Jean Pucelle, a French artist. The book itself is small in size, meaning that the queen could have it on her person. All 209 folios would have been made as extravagant as possible, given the status of the patron. The

"figures are rendered... [with] amazingly sculptural quality," accented by vibrant colors across the spectrum, making illustrations grand and ostentatious. Although there are 25 full page illustrations, many of which are vivid, there are also numerous margin illustrations that create intricate borders and inform the reading of the prayers. The vellum pages also depict scenes from everyday Parisian life and fantastical creatures. The illustrations are numerous and exquisite. Such a manuscript shows quite clearly how image and text can be utilized together in order to portray deeper emotion and create a more intimate connection with the meaning of the text.

Upon examining the materials of the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, one may notice all of the aforementioned details and intricacies of the manuscript. It is evident how illustrious this personal prayer book was. It is clear that the owner, without any context of provenance, was an individual of substantial means. However, what is not clear, but rather inferable, is the deep connection a patron would have to this book. The ornate design of the book allows a reader to experience more than just words, but formulates specific images for her to associate with. The artists and calligrapher use the combination of beauty to reveal the sentiment of prayer. Material, therefore, is paramount in forming deep connection to a text. The eyes become enthralled by a myriad of colors and shapes and fixated on the curls of the letters. The physicality of the manuscript allows the reader to ground a spiritual message in the beauty of the folios.

Most people of the Middle Ages would not have had access to such an ornate manuscript, making do with the unexceptional and bland folios that were easier and cheaper to craft. These unadorned manuscripts still have the power of the text, but lack the intimacy that ornate craftsmanship requires. The value of the book itself—the inks, parchment, binding, and labor all added—endow the patron with a singular sense of ownership, meaning that this manuscript becomes more than just words. Its physical materials make a person claim it and its contents more vigorously, due to pride and awe in its crafting. Such a connection is lost when the ornate does not occur.

This manuscript displays a vibrant connection between materiality and spirituality, binding a physical object to the emotions of the patron. Looking at the illustrations included in the post, one can see evidence of vibrant colors and images. This vibrancy draws on the emotions of something sacred making the owner proud to own such a manuscript. This pride is not only in the beauty of the book but also in the way that the imagery lauds Christianity itself. The care and precision that such detail would require in a small book exemplifies dedication to the prayers. The pride in this dedication further cements the connection between the book and the patron. Ownership and endowment lead people to cherish mundane objects; a book as illustrious as this Book of Hours would have been a possession to prize. Physicality and materiality should not be looked at just as a fact of our three dimensional world. The example of the queen's manuscript shows that materials link to emotions and spirituality, endowing an object with more than its physical greatness.

The point of having such a folio is to enrich the experience of prayer. For example, the illustrations of the Infancy, the Passion of Christ, and of Saint Louis, were all included in the manuscript. Whilst meditating and praying upon Jesus Christ or Saint Louis, the queen would have been drawn to the images. For example, the illustration of the entombment of Christ shown below, solicits somberness and awe. The illustration depicts the dead Christ in the center, surrounded by disciples in despair. Small angels hover over the scene. The disciples' sadness is marked by their gray color. However, Jesus has a reddish hue and is laid in the center, atop a blue tomb. This image invokes mourning as well as hope; mourning the death of Jesus Christ, but also hope in the light and vibrancy he can now bring to humanity. Such an illustration attempts to connect prayers to the feelings that images convey. It provides a template for ways a prayer should be carried out: somber, uplifted, or hopeful. The ownership of such a manuscript allows a patron to connect more fully to prayer. Monotonous readings of prayers are avoided by embedding emotion into the pages of the book of hours.



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The connection between emotion and prayer that illustrations induce, provides more than just a vibrant, emotional session of prayer. These illustrations provide an intimate emotional connection to Christ, his disciples, and the various saints. The illustrations, being some of the only readily available visual representations of Biblical scenes, are like windows into these scenes. They provide a visual learning aid of sorts to the patron. The patron can connect to each individual by understanding the emotions of the scenes depicted. It is almost as if the

patron is looking back at these events and understanding the sacrifices Christ and the saints made in order to protect and save humankind. Looking back onto these private and turbulent moments of religious history adds to the sentimental value of the book. The pride of ownership is more than just in the physical beauty. The pride of ownership comes in the form of emotional connection and being privileged enough to glimpse at these important religious events. It fosters a deep interpersonal connection between the patron and religious figures.



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Reflection

In writing the material analysis, I originally wanted to explore the endowment effect that could occur from owning an elaborately illustrated manuscript. The endowment effect in its simplest meaning states that once an object is owned, the owner becomes exponentially more proud to own the object. However, my first submission of the paper did not fully explain how the emotional connection to the material was solidified. During peer review, I was told to make my claim more explicit in order to better develop this idea of endowment. However, I did not change my claim. Instead, I added an extra paragraph without changing my claim. The extra paragraph, and a few clarifying sentences, allowed me to keep the flow and tone of the paper while going into detail about the emotional connections images make possible. However, the peer review response also pointed out some grammar errors and sentences which needed to be clarified.