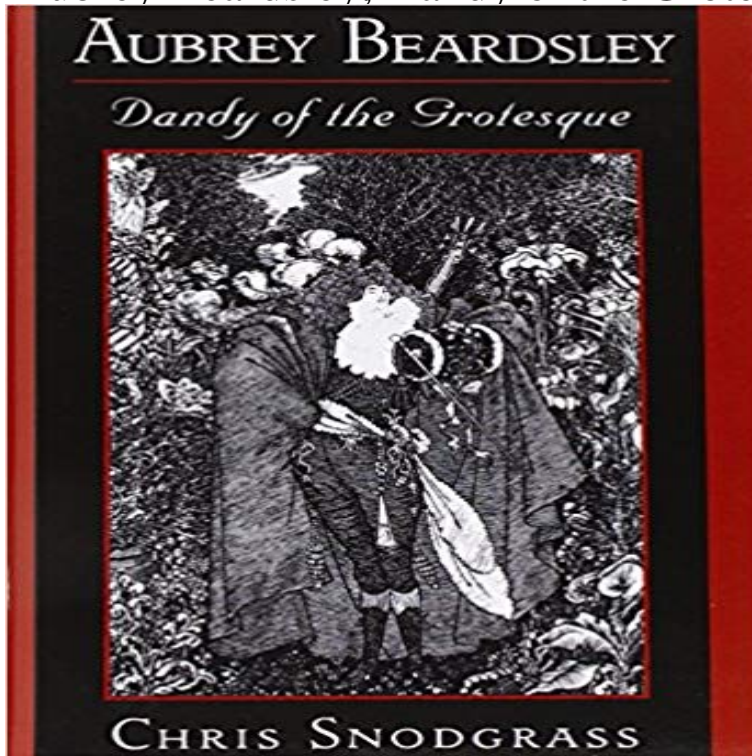


Aubrey Beardsley, Dandy of the Grotesque



This book analyzes a wide range of Beardsley's most characteristic work. It establishes his assumptions about the underlying nature of his world, and clarifies why so many observers have considered Beardsley's art indispensable to understanding fin-de-siècle Victorian culture. Beardsley's pictures present a dialogue between seemingly polarized impulses: a desire to scandalize and destabilize the old order, and, equally strong, a need to affirm traditional authority. Beardsley depicted various grotesque shapes, caricatures, and mutated figures, including foetus/old man, dwarf, Clown, Harlequin, Pierrot, and dandy (the icon of the Decadent Religion of Art). Incarnating the fearful contradictions of decadence, these images served as objective correlatives of some monstrous metaphysical contortion. His grotesques suggest the impossibility of resolving these contradictions, even as his elegant designs try formalistically to control and recuperate the disfiguration. As a canonical style, Beardsley's dandy sensibility and grotesque caricatures become his means of realigning canonical meaning. Thus, he effects what might be termed a caricature of traditional signification. An aesthete devoted to the Religion of Art, Beardsley, nonetheless, creates a world inescapably de-formed. He is a Dandy of the Grotesque.

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- **Aubrey Beardsley, Dandy of the Grotesque - Chris** Many scholars have considered Aubrey Beardsley's art indispensable to understanding fin-de-siècle Victorian culture. Beardsley depicted various grotesque **Aubrey Beardsley,**

