

## Abstract

### THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE WIGMORE CHART

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This paper is a sort of case study in the problem of interpreting visual representations. Examining the iconography of the “chart method” developed by Wigmore in his famous 1913 article, I suggest that the method encodes a set of concerns rather distinct from efficiently organizing information. In the Wigmore system, concern for representational form merges with fears about social order and gender relations. A skeptic with a psychoanalytic bent might argue that the charts, far from transparently conveying information, are displaced representations of anxiety and aggression; far from laying bare the process of thought, as they are advertised, they function as screen representations of repressed thoughts. The point of the paper is that understanding the use of visual representation requires attention to multiple layers of meaning. I try to enrich the argument by linking the analysis of Wigmore charts to the analysis of a few artworks.