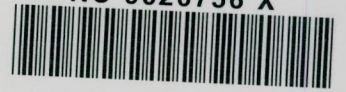


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COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHÁ
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

TABOO OR NOT TABOO?:

THE PLACE OF SEXUALITY IN SENIOR CYCLE

ART EDUCATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

BY

GEOFFREY ANTHONY O'KEEFFE

JUNE 1994

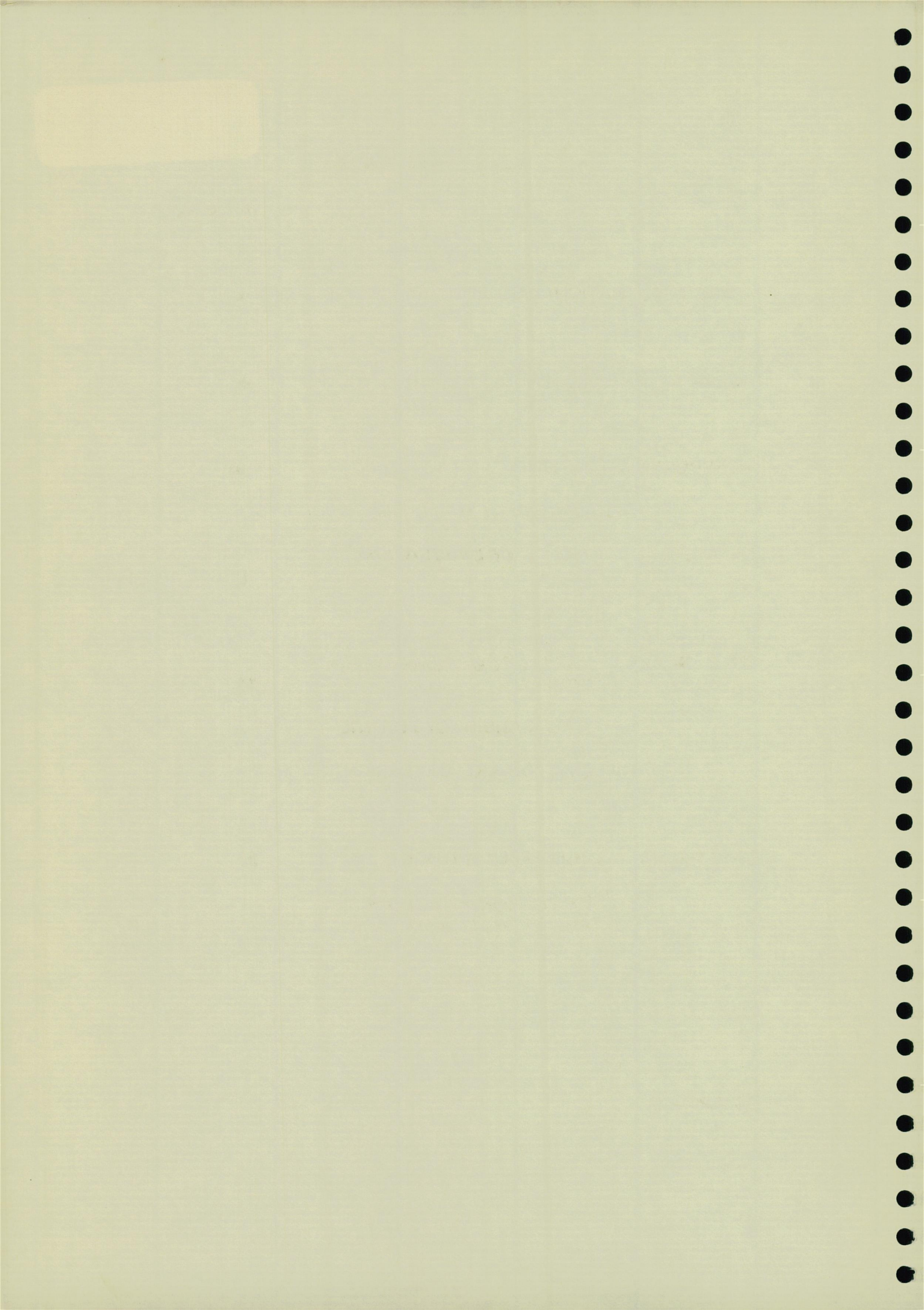
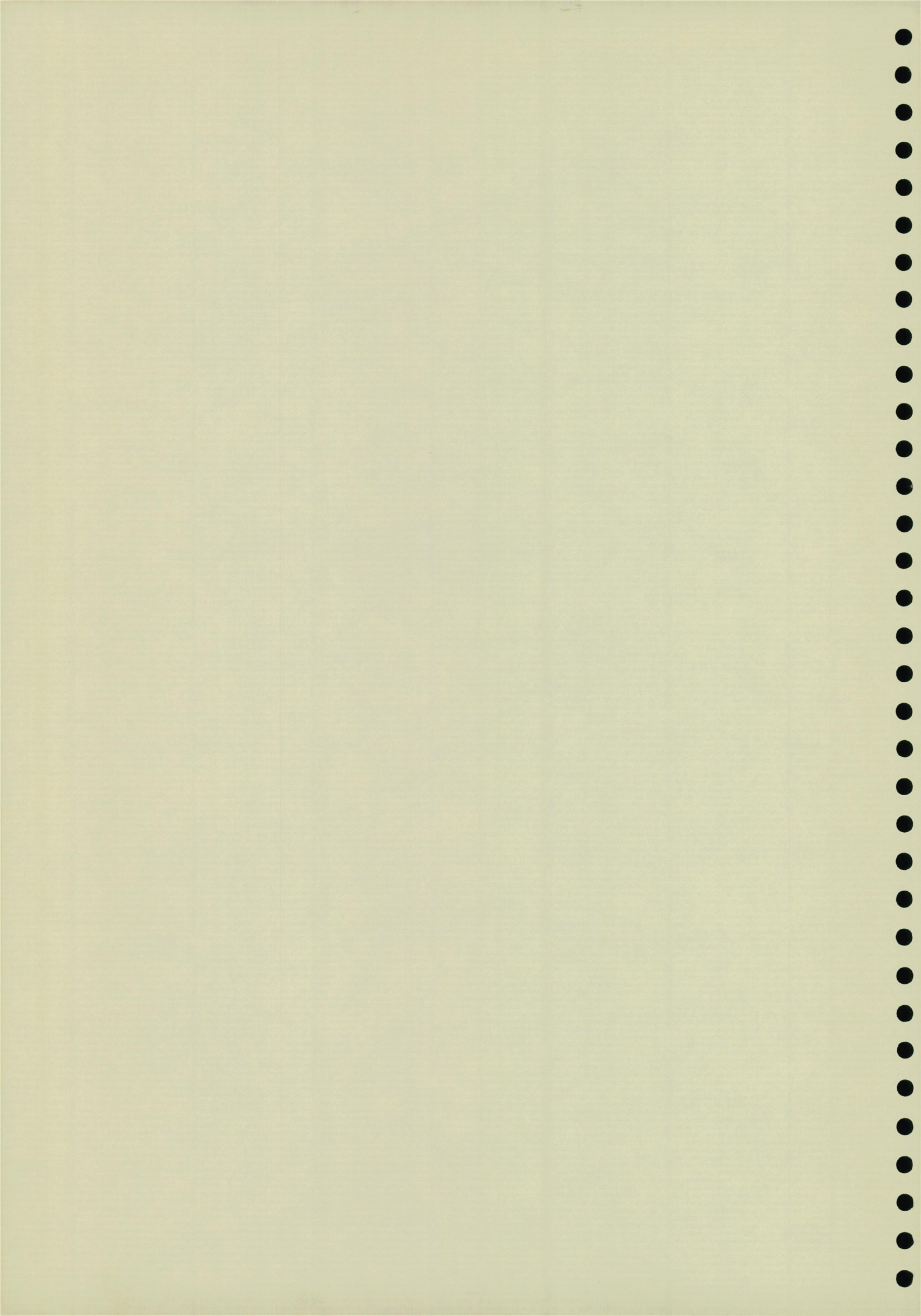


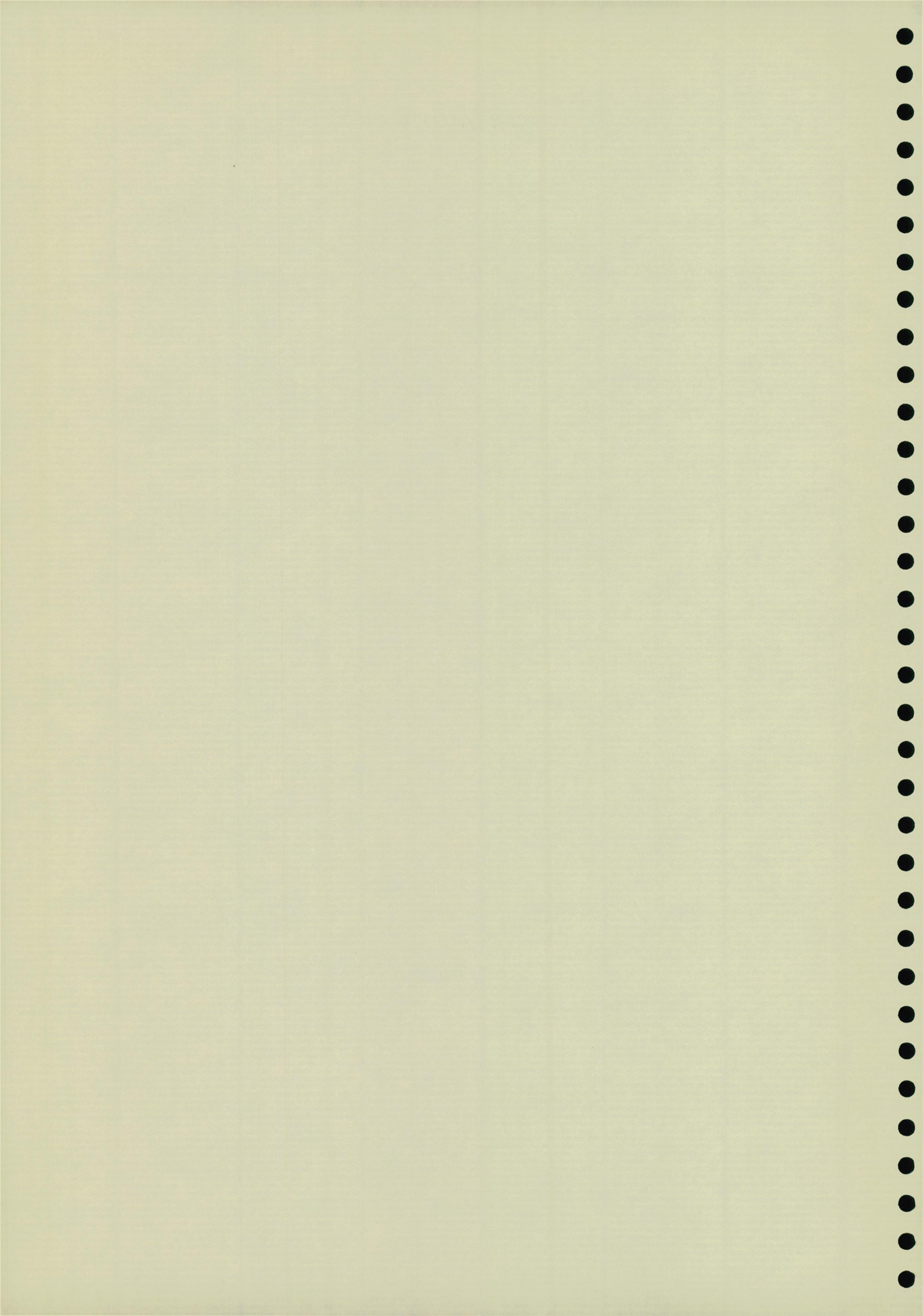
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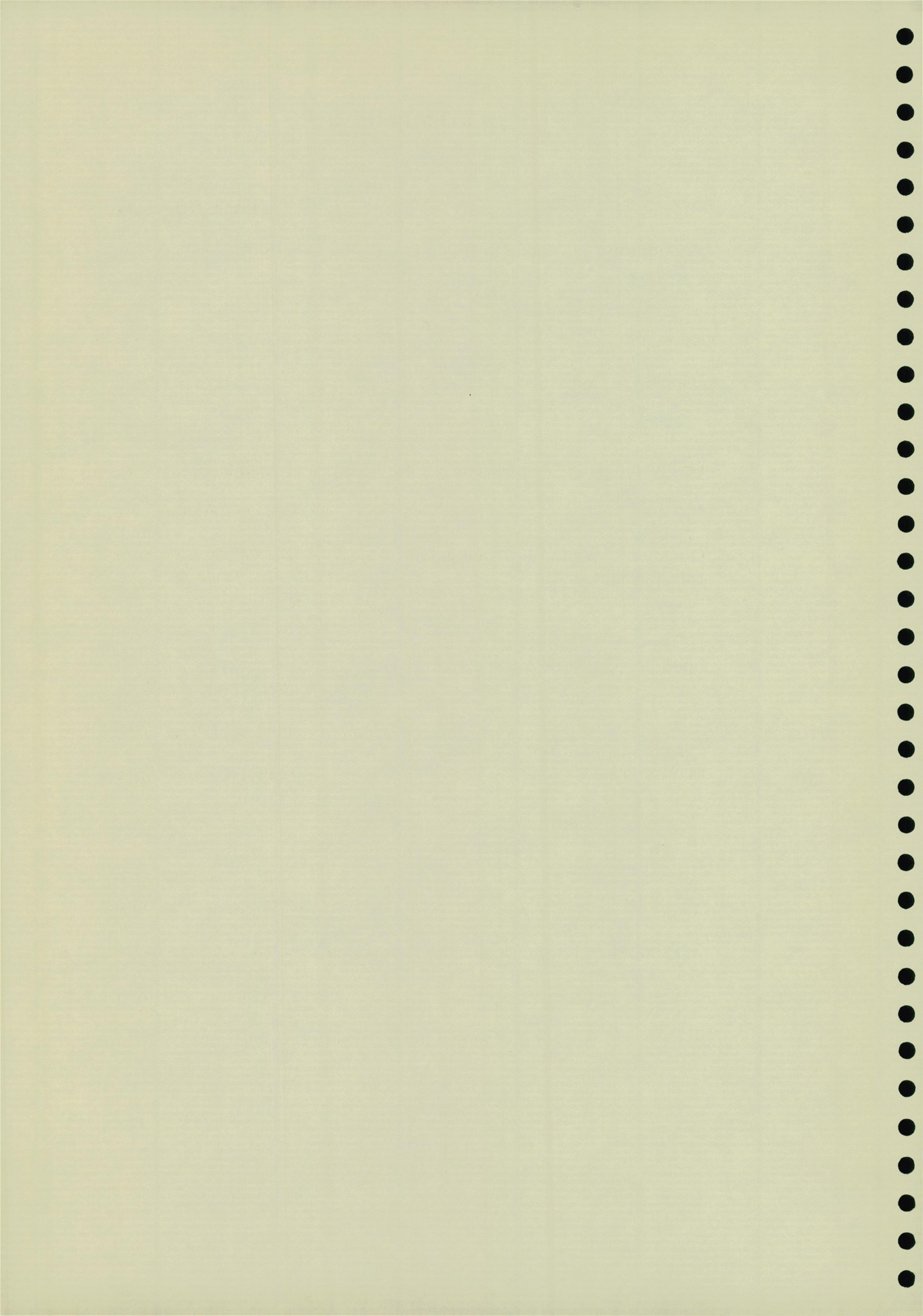
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor Iseult McCarthy for her help and advice. And to my parents for their continuing support and love.



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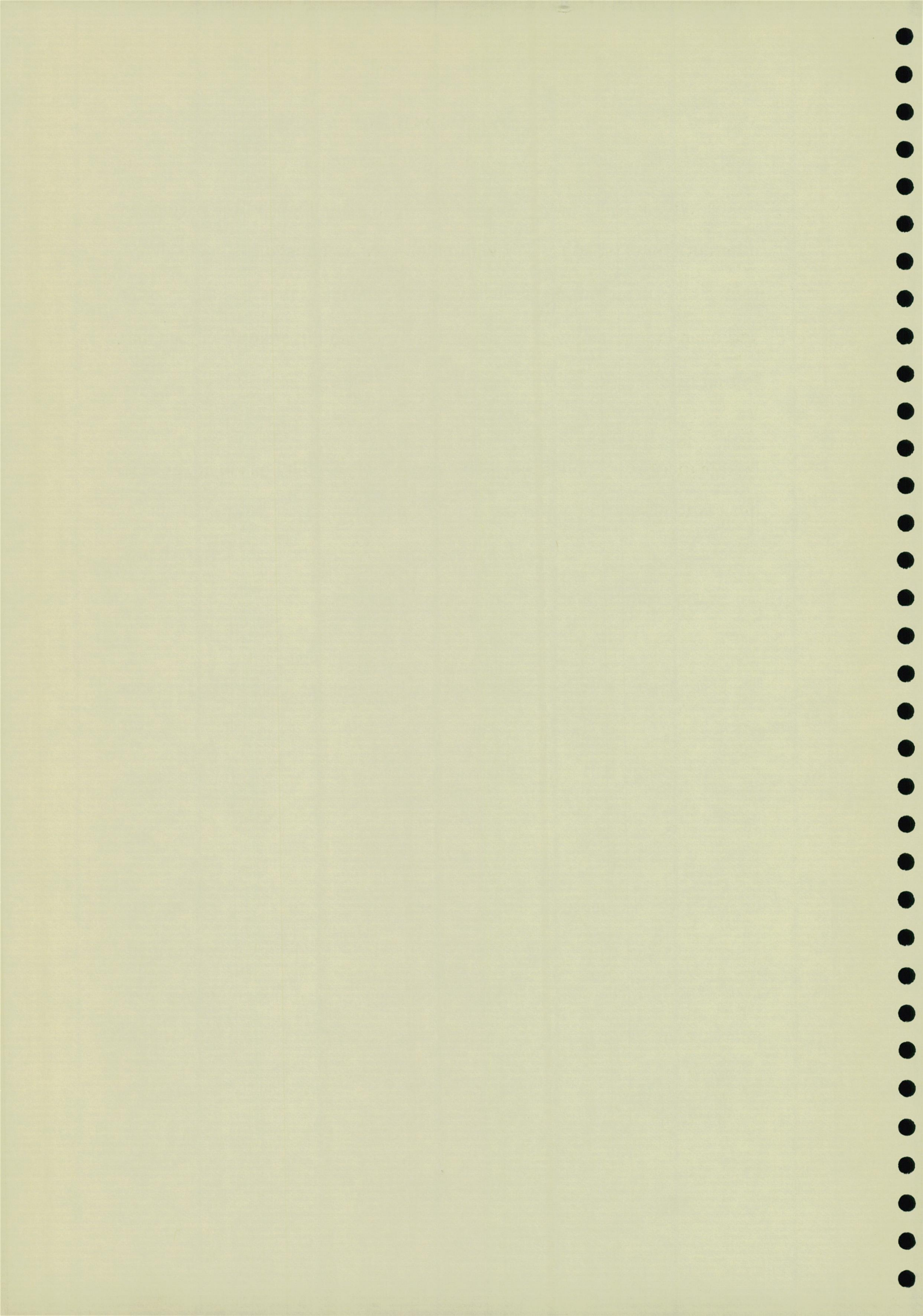
INTRODUCTION

Sexuality; perhaps no other subject has been more documented in so many different contexts. Sexuality with all its connotations is a subject deeply rooted within our psyche, while at the same time, it is a subject often shrouded in ignorance. It is, what one American historian described as a "virgin field".¹

Post-primary education is one area where I feel sexuality has been, at best, dealt with briefly and out of the pupil's context and at worst, not at all. As a would-be art teacher I wish to investigate through this dissertation how sexuality could be dealt with in senior cycle art education.

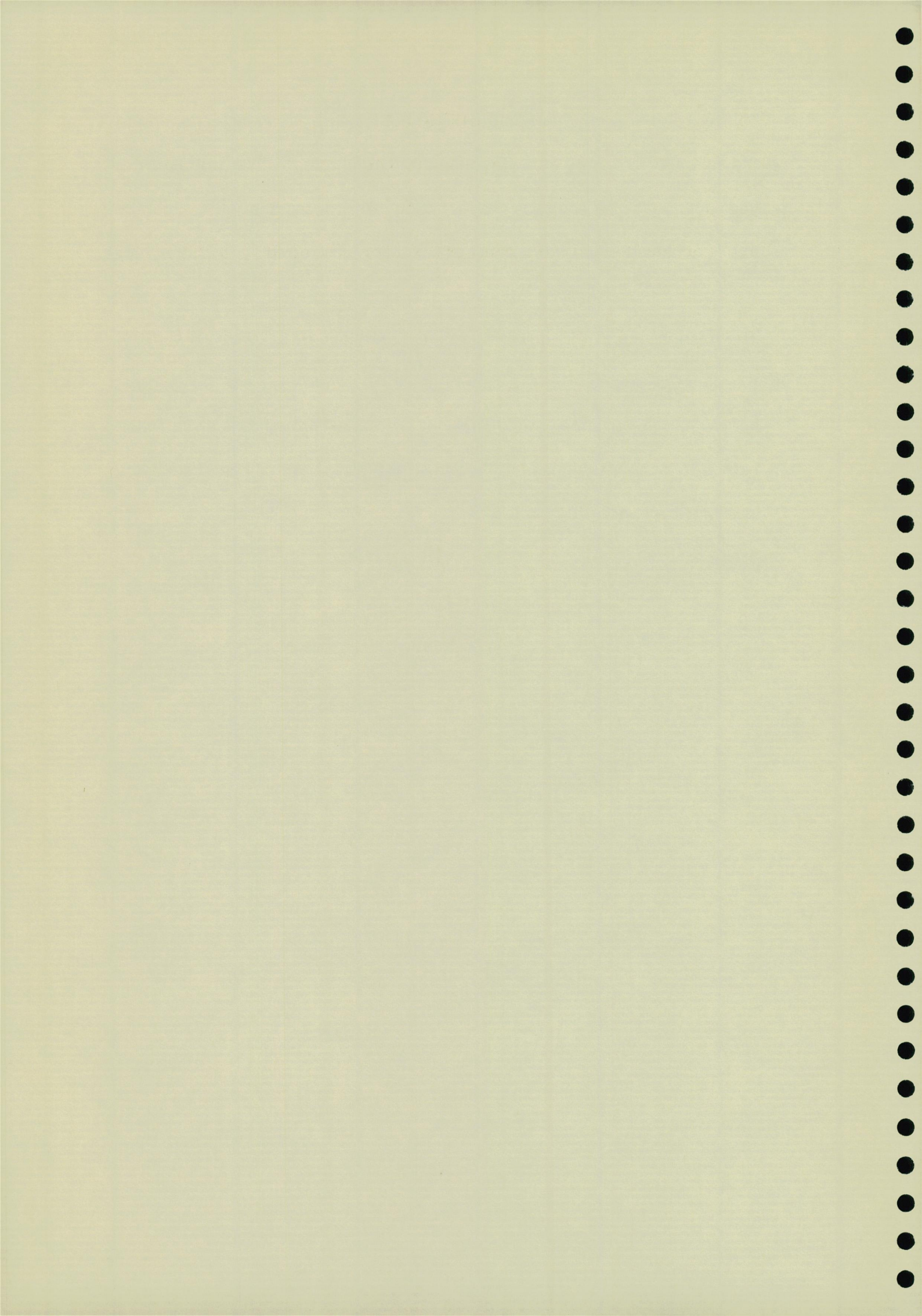
My first chapter will deal with sexuality in its universal context and the place of sexuality in Irish society. It will examine whether Ireland, which has long been associated with repressed attitudes towards sexuality, has advanced or changed enough.

In my second chapter I examine case studies and proposals for sex education in general, how it should be applied, where mistakes can be made and what results could one hope to achieve. I also document my own personal beliefs as to how a sensitive treatment of sexuality in art practice could be useful and beneficial in the history of art class.



My third and final chapter documents a sequence of lesson plans relating to the sexuality in history of art practice that I conducted with a group of fifth year pupils. It also analyses their reactions, responses and what I feel the pupils achieved when the subject of sexuality was raised.

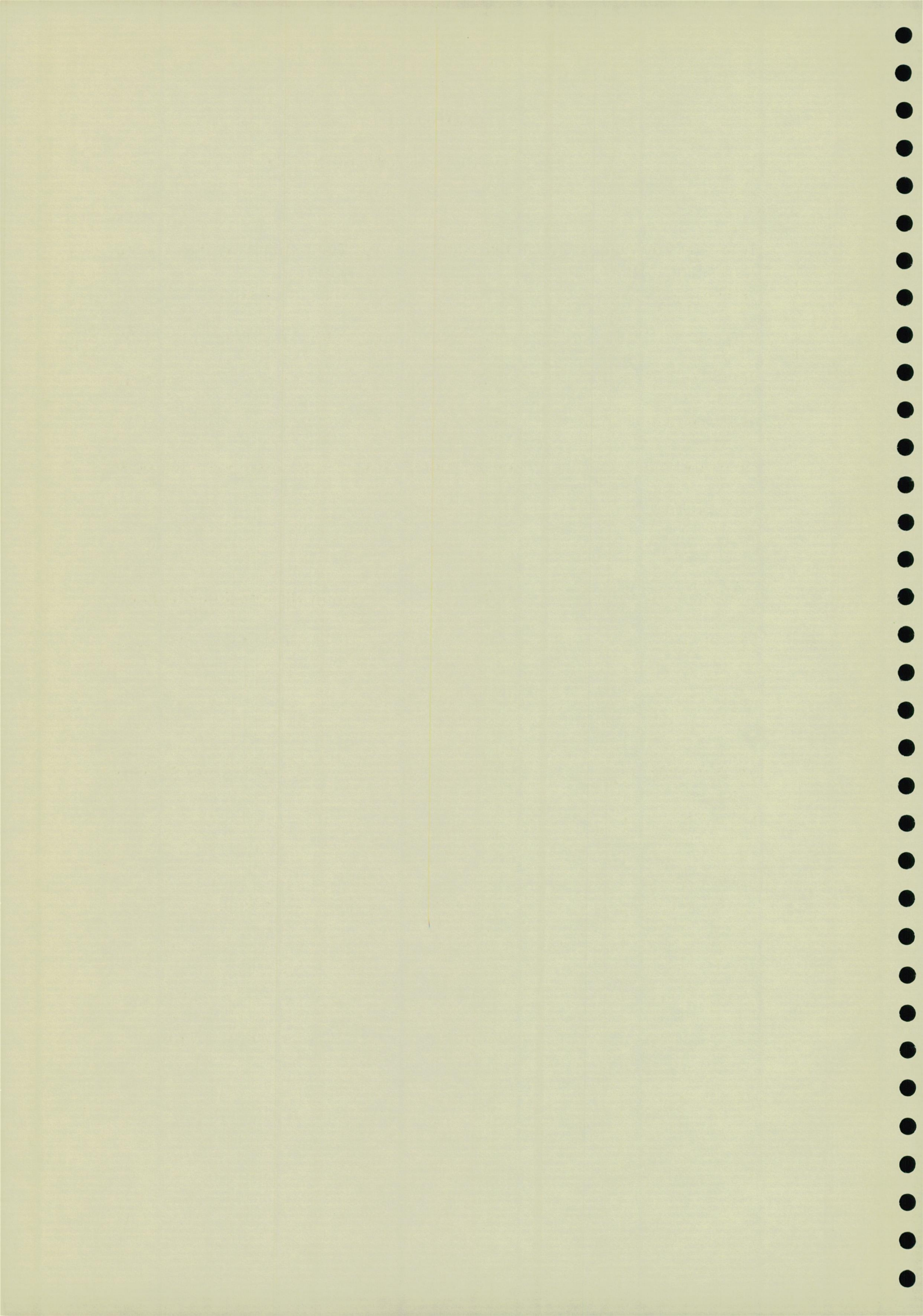
The main issues of this dissertation are: the place of sexuality in society, the place of sexuality in the school and how I believe it can be of great benefit and importance in the history of art class. Through this dissertation I strive to answer the question - taboo or not taboo?: the place of sexuality in senior cycle art education.



FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Jeffrey Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800, (London: Longman Press, 1989), p. 1.



CHAPTER I

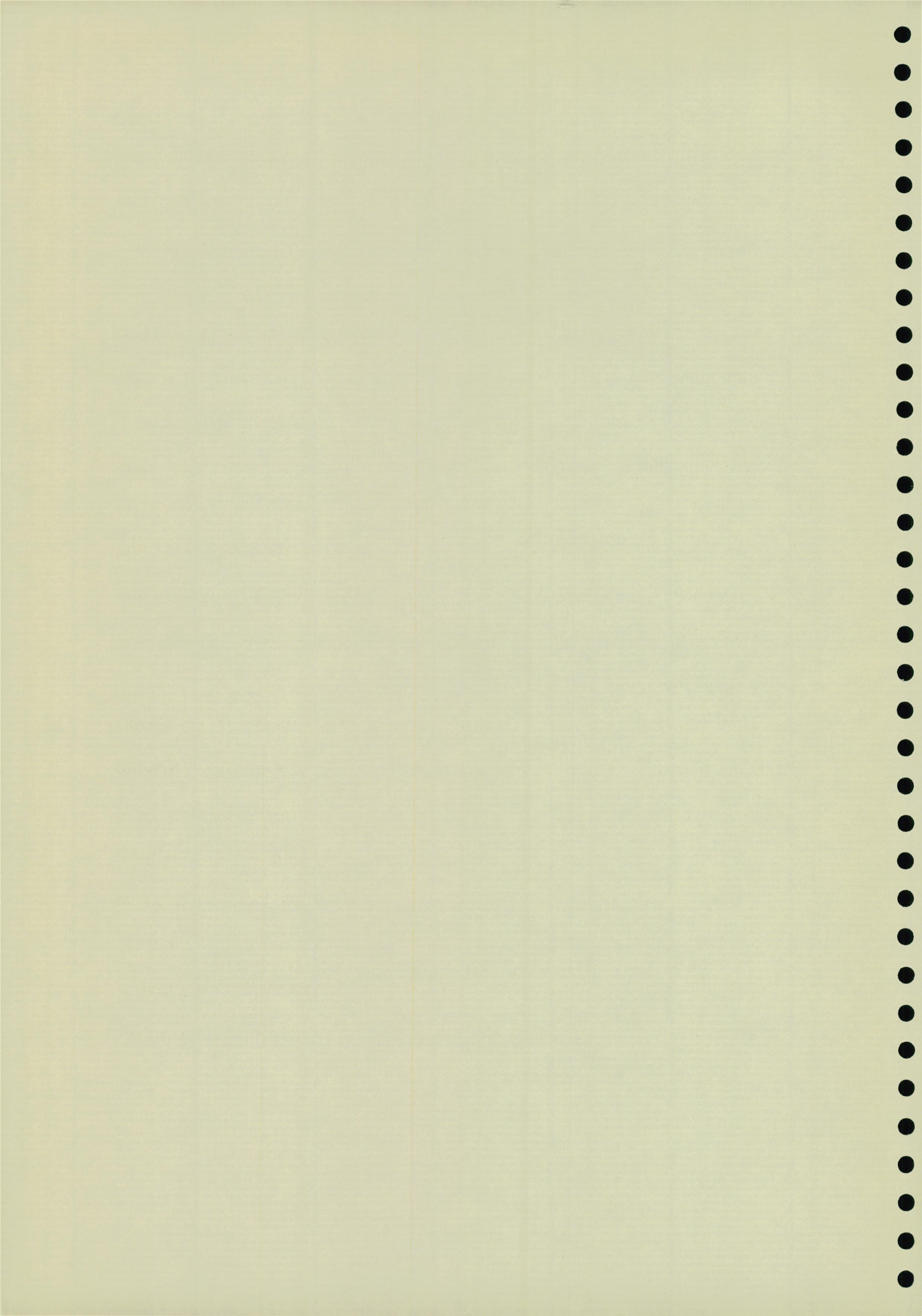
THE PLACE OF SEXUALITY IN SOCIETY

Before any investigation of sexuality is undertaken, it is fundamental to establish what we mean by, "sexuality". This in itself raises many problems because in the history of its documentation, historians have given many definitions of sexuality, the important link between them being, that they were relevant and true to their time. In other words many definitions of sexuality, due to religious, social, economic and other changes have now become invalid.

Leading thinkers and experts in the field although disagreeing on many aspects of sexuality, all seem to concede that as a concept sexuality was a social invention.

As Jeffrey Weeks in the introduction to his book Sex, Politics and Society suggests,

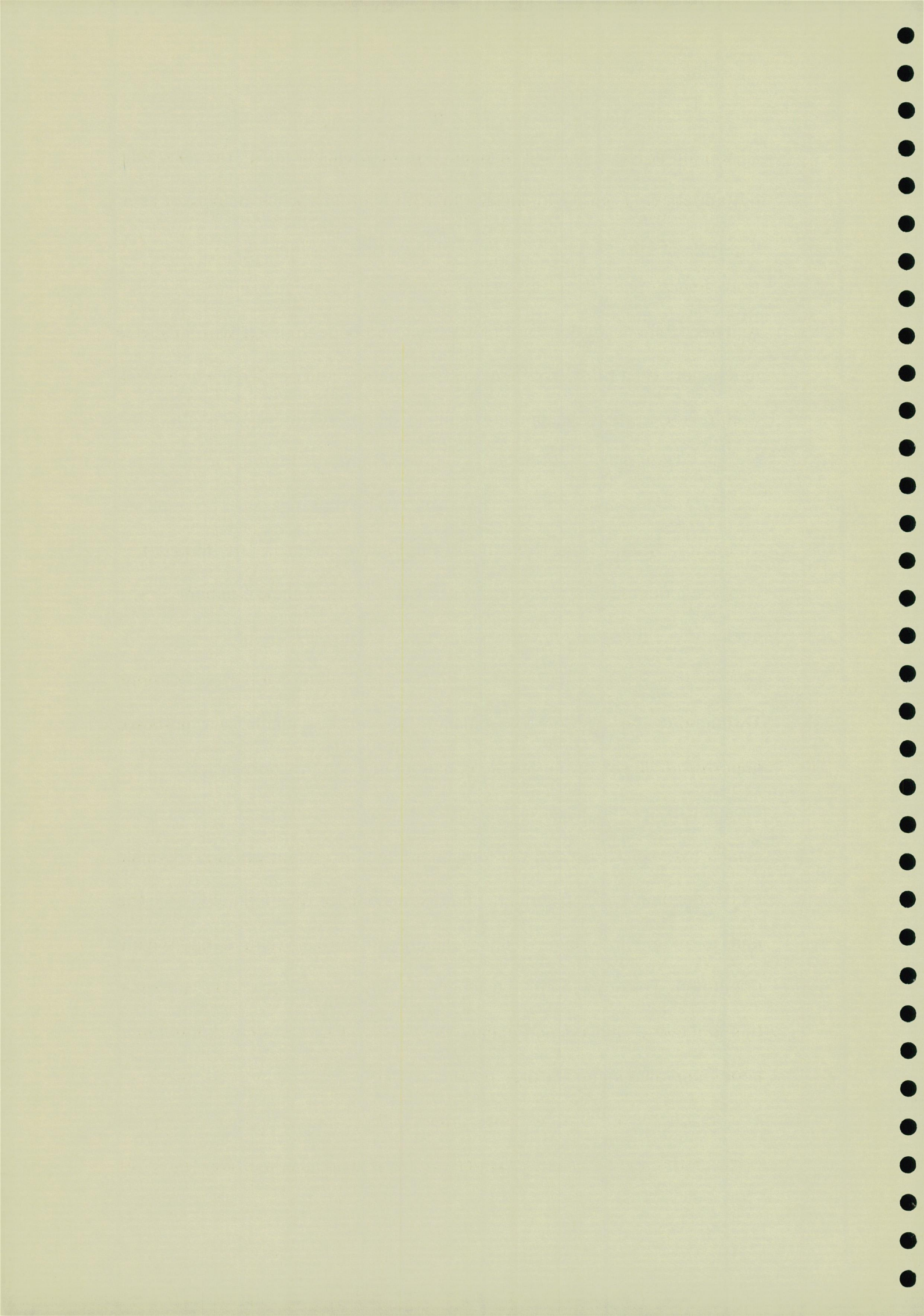
(sexuality) It is not just a series of acts, not a collection of bodies which can be eroticised, but a thing in itself with its general causations and specified effects. Sexuality has become a continent of knowledge with its own rules of exploration and its own expert geographers. And strikingly, the world of sexuality developed more or less contemporaneously with the domain of the economy and the social itself.¹



According to journalist and teacher, Don Milligan the term "sexuality" did not appear until the beginning of the 19th century, while Halpern says of it, "sexuality is not a somatic fact; it is a cultural effect".²

As I see it sexuality does not always have to concern itself with sex, it is much more than that. One's sexuality is one's identity as a male or female, it is one's drive to escape from being alone, to derive pleasure, both emotional and physical from non-solitary encounters. Inherent in this is the social, the economic and the gender-role typing that makes up "sexuality". Therefore, when I refer to sexuality I am addressing the inter-linking and interdependent facets that are the sexual, political, cultural, economic and social drives that identify us as being male or female, straight or gay.

Throughout the history of sexuality, gender has been of significant importance. To be of the female gender or sex has traditionally led to a life of being a second class citizen. Throughout history gender-roles were clearly marked out leaving the female as the subservient sex and the male as the dominant one. There are various reasons for this, including physical and hormonal differences, and religion which has always been male orientated. These have left the female as the "weaker sex". Why then if this is the case did women accept this? Dr. Derek Llewelyn Jones in his book Everyman suggests that



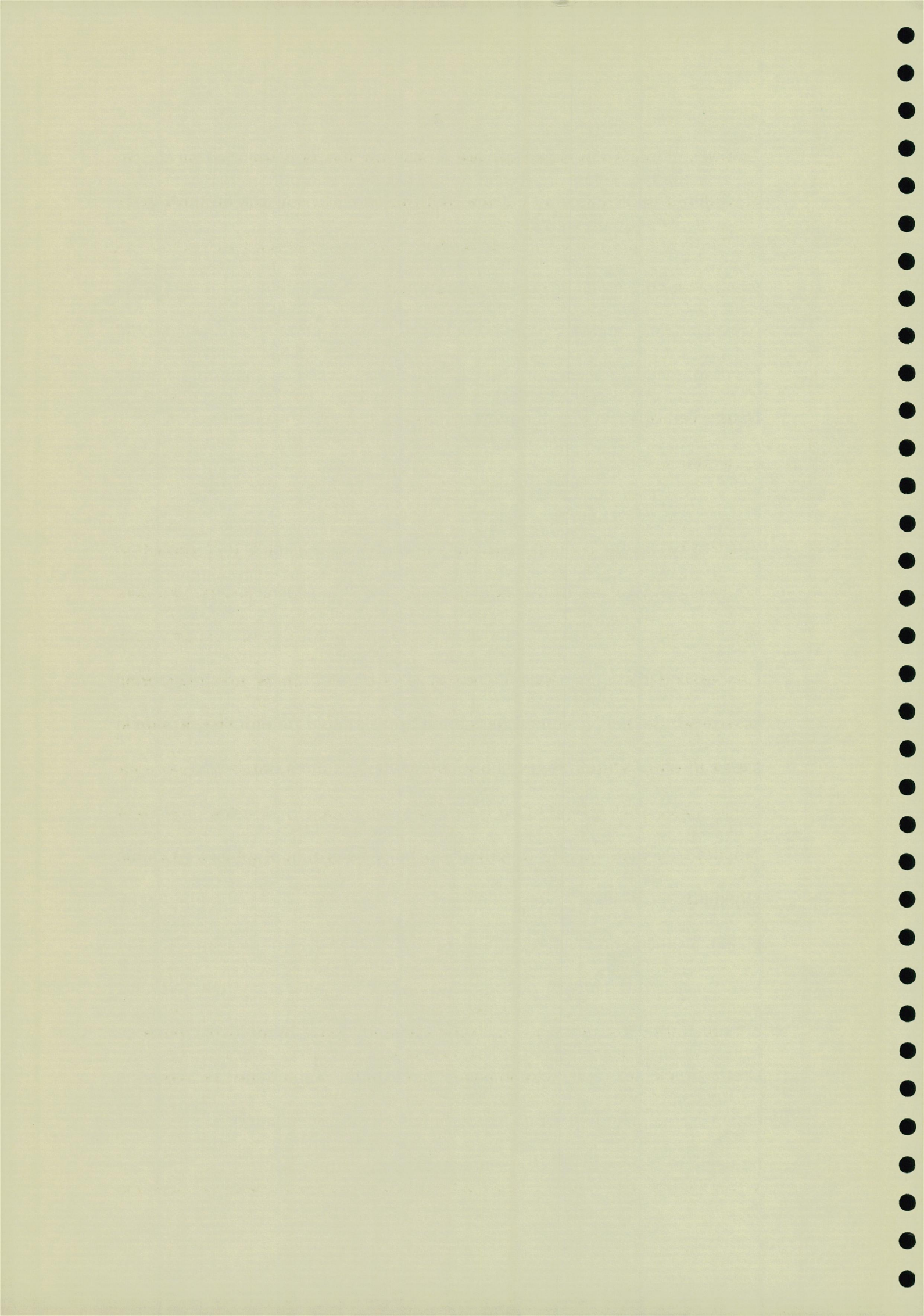
the subordinate position of women to men which is initiated by the way the two sexes are reared, tends to be self-perpetuating, women brought up in this way believe that they are inferior to men both in intelligence and ability.³

Gender identity could be concluded as what is "specifically male" and what is "specifically female". Some would say to change the status quo would inevitably lead to a loss of what is traditionally seen as male and female traits. Gayle Rubin agrees however that

Far from being an expression of natural differences exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression: in men, of whatever is the local version of 'feminine' traits; in women, of the local definitions of 'masculine' traits.⁴

Gender and the dominance of the male is paramount when considering sexuality. Sexuality with all its related areas should be pluralist, it should speak of equal status. Regrettably, in my view, it does not.

Traditionally Irish society regarded sexuality as a taboo subject. Double standards have existed where the male was the breadwinner, the female the child bearer and housewife and where sex for men was natural but "unlady like" for women. Through conditioning women and men accepted their roles but constantly it was the woman who suffered. On another level ignorance about one's sex and sexual needs persisted. Something as basic as exploring one's body through masturbation was frowned upon. Here shame comes into play with sexual awareness being seen as something "dirty" or



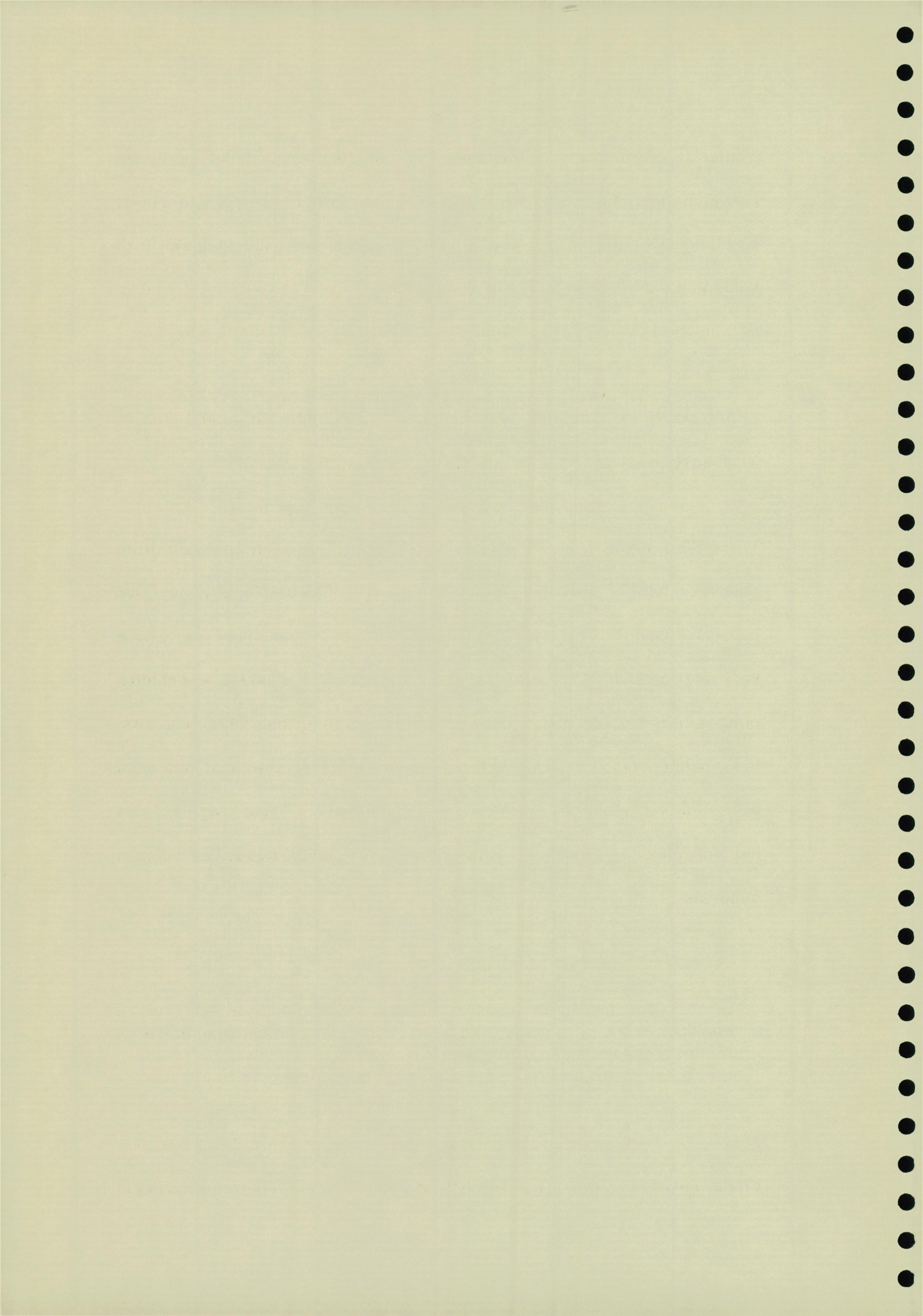
"sinful". These connotations are a slur on the normality of sex. Dr. Llewelyn Jones suggests that, if as a child, one learns of sex or one's body as being shameful then it seems likely that this will lead to feelings of inadequacy during future sexual encounters.

If parents let their children know by their behaviour that they believe the unclothed human body to be indecent, and that the genital area is scandalous and unmentionable, they may plant the seeds for later sexual disability.⁵

Therefore I feel it is largely society's attitudes to sexuality that can often determine what is seen as either acceptable or unacceptable. Any negative feelings must be dealt with or the cyclical frustrations regarding sexuality could very well continue. So much wrong has come out of peoples' fear and shame - shame in that sexual activity was in fact pleasurable. Sexual repression in Irish society has led to lack of information and misunderstanding, ignorance of the facts of life, right up to rape and child abuse. These are direct and indirect consequences of the Irish taboo that is sexuality. It is as Don Milligan suggests

Sexual conduct is often hemmed in, and desire reigned back, by economic considerations, by morality, by custom, and by law. Because of these factors it can appear that sexuality is pulled into directions and shapes that it would not otherwise assume. From this perspective sexuality is constrained, disastrously, by repression.⁶

While sexuality in Ireland has often been a taboo subject, heterosexuality is

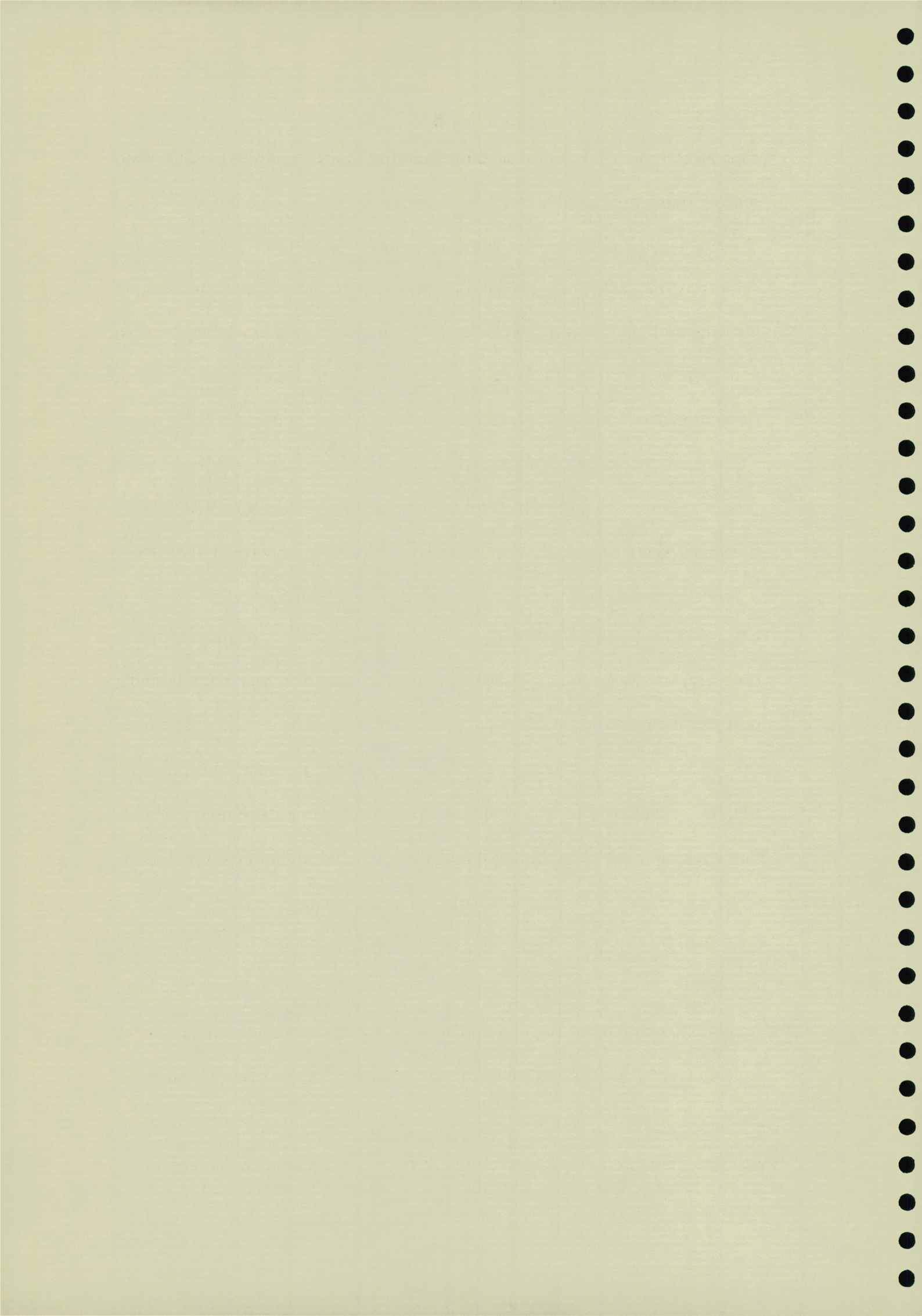


seen as the norm, not only due to the fact that it is the sole means of human reproduction, but because it concerns the majority. Homosexuality however is becoming increasingly more visible and open to an often unsuspecting Irish society. Changes in the law and evolving social acceptance has encouraged lesbians and gay men to demand their place in all levels of society.

Homosexuality has always existed and to an extent continues to do so as a repressed and oppressed form of sexuality. Homosexuals have always been ghettoised, starting with early Christian beliefs about "the sin against nature" to the AIDS era of the present day. This castigation seems to stem from the belief that homosexuality is a condition of an emotional or psychological nature. I believe that it is also seen as a threat to the machismo of the heterosexual male. Those despising homosexuality may be hiding behind a guise for their own self-despisement, their own inadequacies and self doubts. But it is the denouncement of homosexuals by strict, conservative moralists that is to be questioned. Are they in fact denying their own possible homosexuality by treating it with contempt? As Derek Llewelyn Jones observes,

Some psychologists suggests that those who demand the harshest penalties for homosexuals and who most fear homosexuality are themselves repressing their own homosexual tendencies.⁷

But also the general shame regarding sexuality comes into play. Many members of Irish society regard anything other than penile/vaginal penetration as being



highly immoral. As gay sex does not lead to the procreation of a child then it is seen as unnatural.

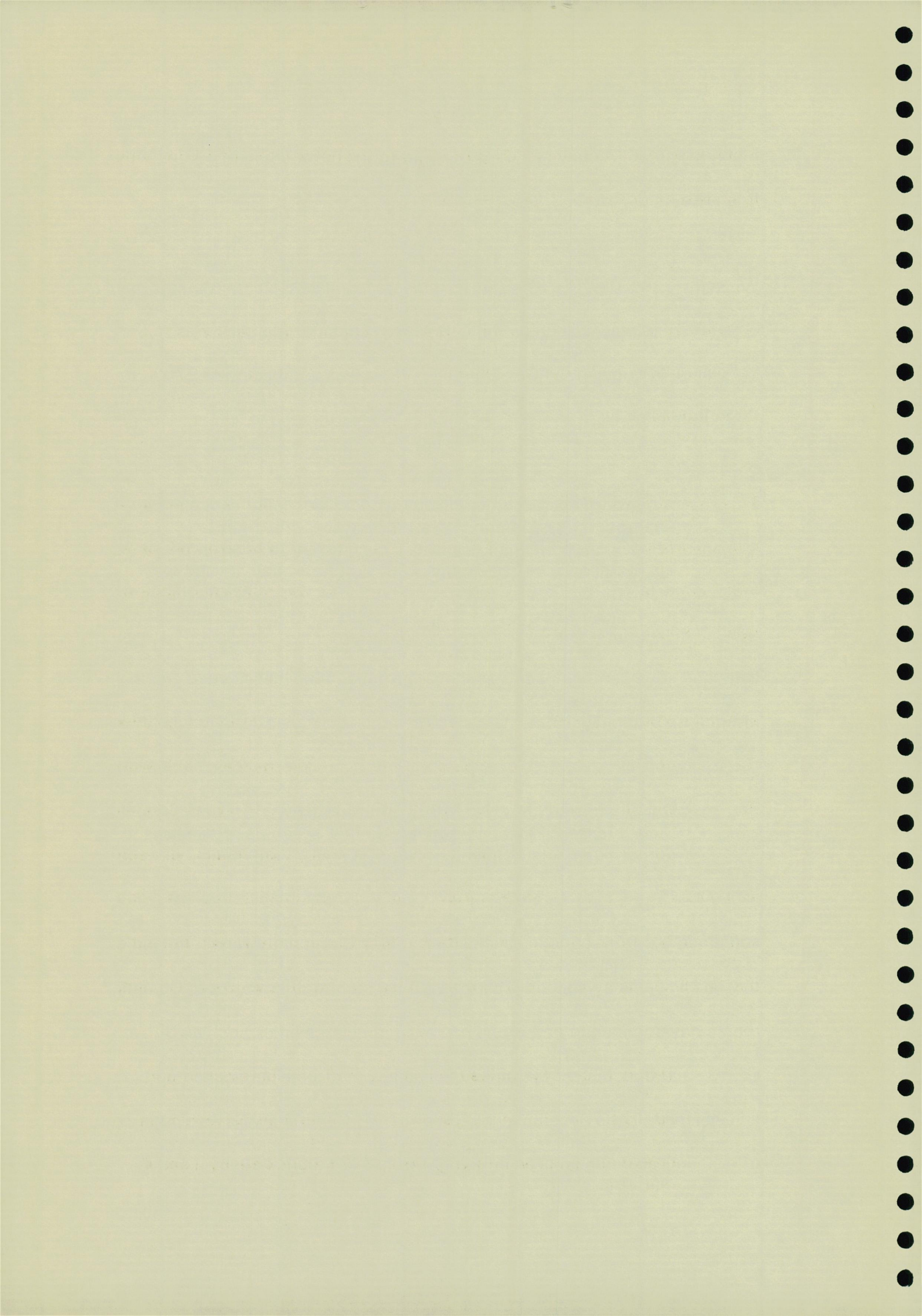
While the 1960's and 1970's saw an acceptance (albeit reluctant) of the gay community in places such as the U.S.A. and England, the case was not so in Ireland. In England the Gay Liberation Front was set up in the 1970's, its three principles were

A sense of the absolute validity of homosexuality as a sexual orientation ("gay is good"); a belief in the vital importance of being open about one's sexuality ("coming out") and an emphasis on the importance of collective endeavour, self-activity and self-help.⁸

In Ireland however, homosexuality between consenting males was a criminal offence up until July 1993.

On Wednesday July 7th, 1993, the President of Ireland, Mrs Mary Robinson, signed into law, the bill which decriminalises homosexual acts between adults of 17 years and over⁹

screamed the front page headline story of Gay Community News, Ireland's gay and lesbian newspaper. This was a huge step for Irish society. Up until then a gay community and scene had existed in large cities such as Dublin, Galway and Cork but always under the shadow of discrimination, homophobia and violence. In the December '93 edition of Gay Community News a number of incidents were again brought to light from the National Lesbian and Gay



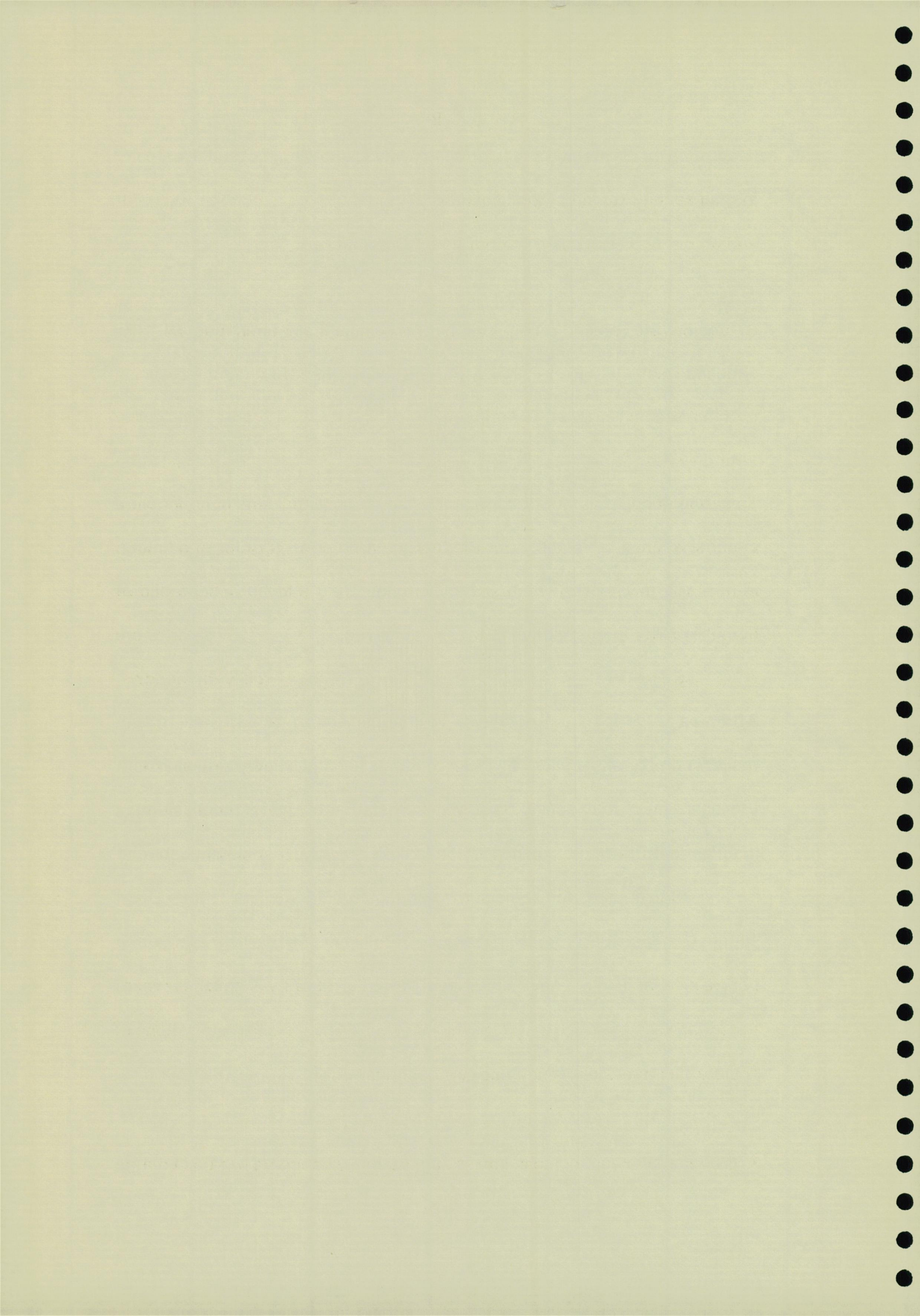
Federation media archive which go a long way in showing the stance of many in Irish society towards homosexuality.

December 15th 1983 - University College Dublin's Lesbian and Gay Society are refused recognition by the college's academic council.
December 1 1989 - A Dublin man who was part of a gang that in 1982 killed Declan Flynn in Fairview Park, Dublin, when they went "queer bashing", was sentenced to ten years in prison for raping a woman who was seven months pregnant.¹⁰

This then suggests that although practising homosexual acts is no longer a criminal offence in Ireland, a lot of work must be done in order to educate, inform and to challenge Irish society in general so that an acceptance of homosexuality in every day life can be achieved.

Attitudes towards sexual morality have changed considerably in Ireland over the last number of decades. In 1993 condoms became widely available with the legalizing of their sale in bars, shops, restaurants etc. A recent Sunday Independent/I.M.S. opinion poll which looked at young Irish adults between 16 and 29 years showed some surprising results. Journalist Stephen Dodd suggests that sexual repression is a thing of the past and the view that young people in Ireland do not have a high level of sexual maturity is no longer valid.

The results of the Sunday Independent/I.M.S. survey on young Irish adults and sex demonstrate that traditional perceptions of Ireland are now outdated. It seems that whatever sexual repression existed has now largely gone, and Ireland's young people have grown up quickly into a generation of considerably sexual maturity.¹¹



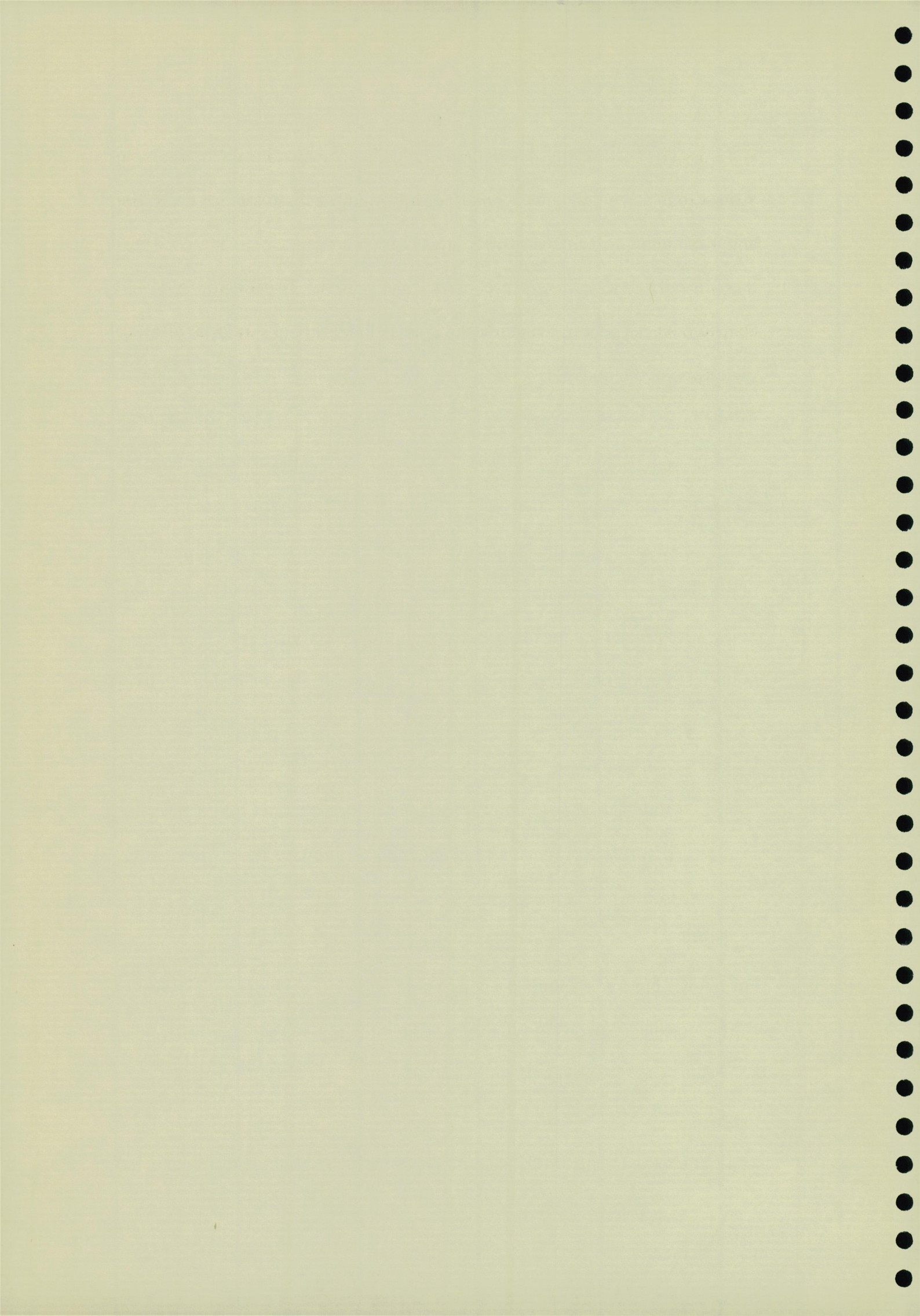
Yet surveys and indeed media coverage in general seem to change and differ and a common consensus cannot always be reached.

Only two weeks prior to the above the Sunday Independent published an article which posed the question - "Have attitudes to sexuality sufficiently changed for the better in the ten years since Granard teenager Ann Lovett died shortly after giving birth to her baby (who also died)?" The Independent suggested that while some progress had been made i.e. in that local convent pupils were being told about issues such as AIDS and boy/girl relationships and "much of the social taboos attached to open discussion of sexuality have been chipped away", there is still a lot of work to be done, the surveys they refer to are quite distressing and posit the question - have attitudes really changed?

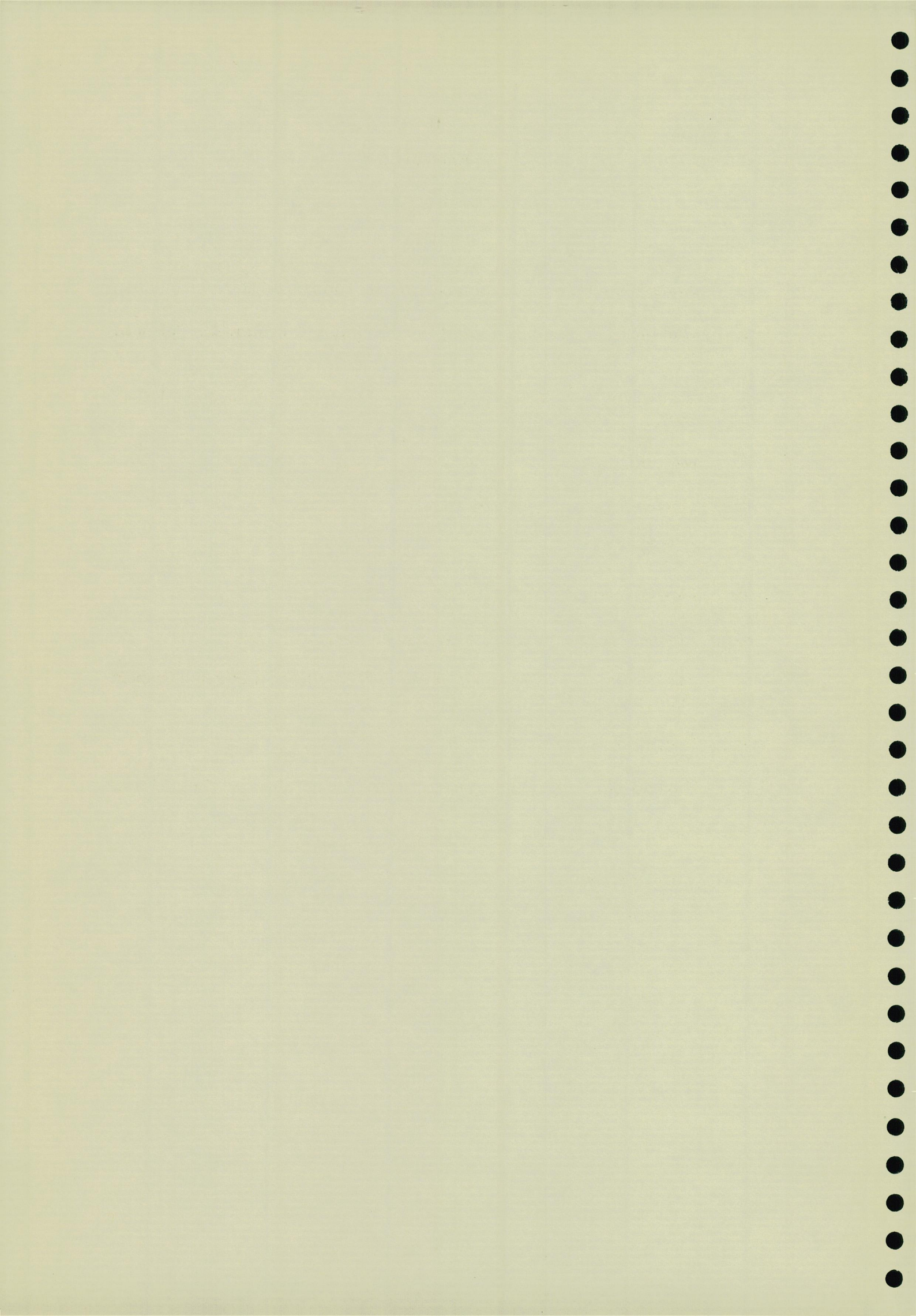
Ten years after Ann Lovett died, however, surveys continue to highlight the ignorance of young people about their own sexuality. Just last month it was reported in this newspaper that a straw poll, conducted over three years among college students, found that only 3% received sex education in primary school and just 60% at second-level. Twelve girls, aged 15 and under gave birth in the first three months alone of 1993.¹³

For many pupils sex education begins and ends in the science class where the biological facts alone are all that is dealt with. But in a constantly changing society this in my opinion is not good enough.

Attitudes to sexuality in Irish society are certainly changing but this change



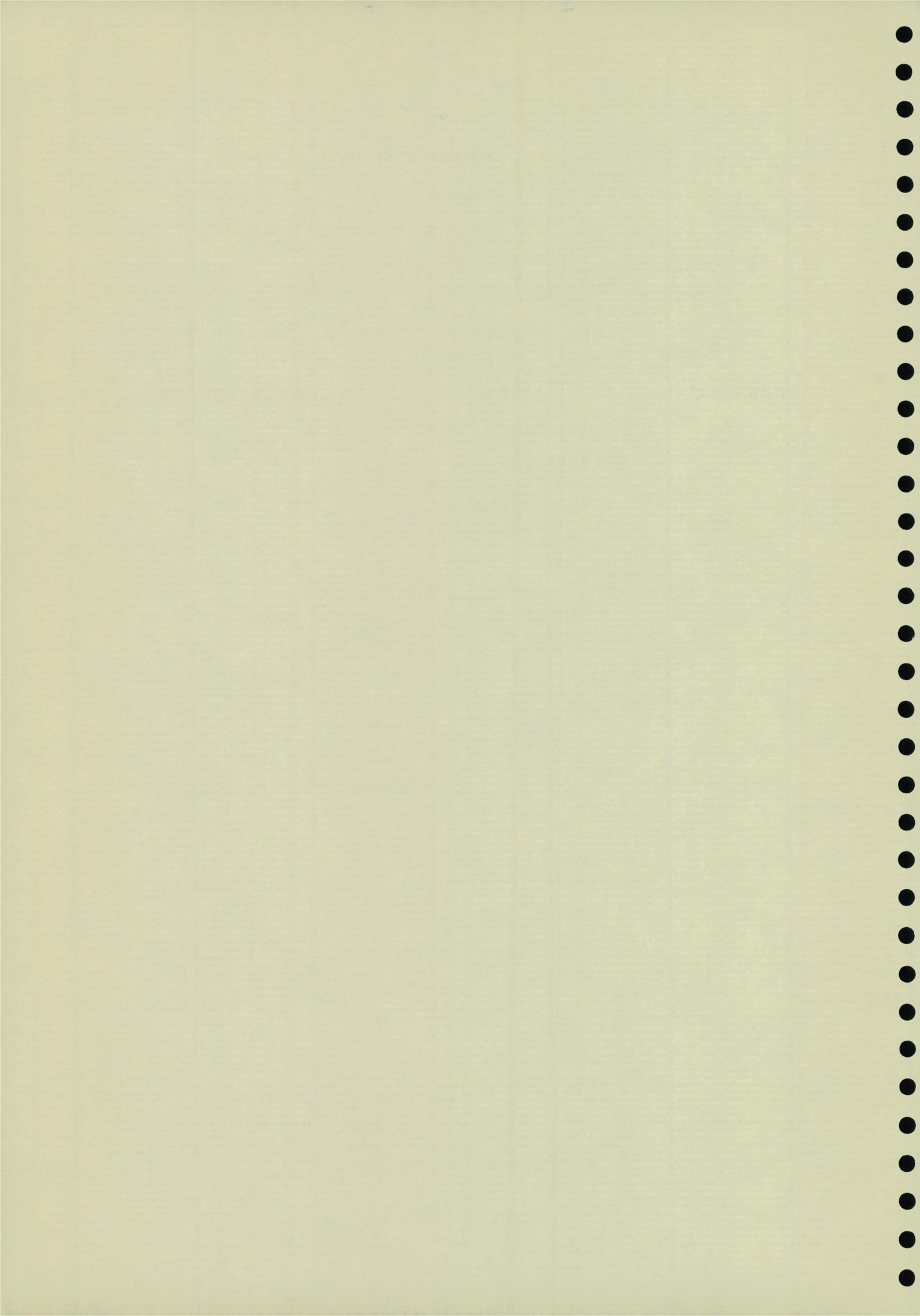
is a slow and painful one. When Ann Lovett died at the age of 15 years, in childbirth, the then Minister for Women's Affairs described her town as "the valley of the squinting windows". In 1994, exactly ten years later another teenage girl met the same fate, changing and advancing Ireland had not been able to help her and perhaps a lot of Irish society still live in "the valley of the squinting windows".



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Jeffrey Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800, (London: Longman Press, 1989), p. 12.
2. Don Milligan, Sex Life, (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 8. Ref. also to Halpern (see Milligan).
3. Derek Llewelyn Jones, Everyman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 39.
4. Milligan, Sex Life, p. 6.
5. Llewelyn Jones, Everyman, p. 43.
6. Milligan, p. 91.
7. Llewelyn Jones, Everyman, p. 216.
8. Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society, p. 285.
9. Taken from Gay Community News, (Dublin: National Gay and Lesbian Federation, August 1993), p.1.
10. Ibid., (December, 1993).
11. Taken from Sunday Independent newspaper, February 13th, 1994.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., Jan 24th, 1994.



CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF SEXUALITY IN THE SCHOOL

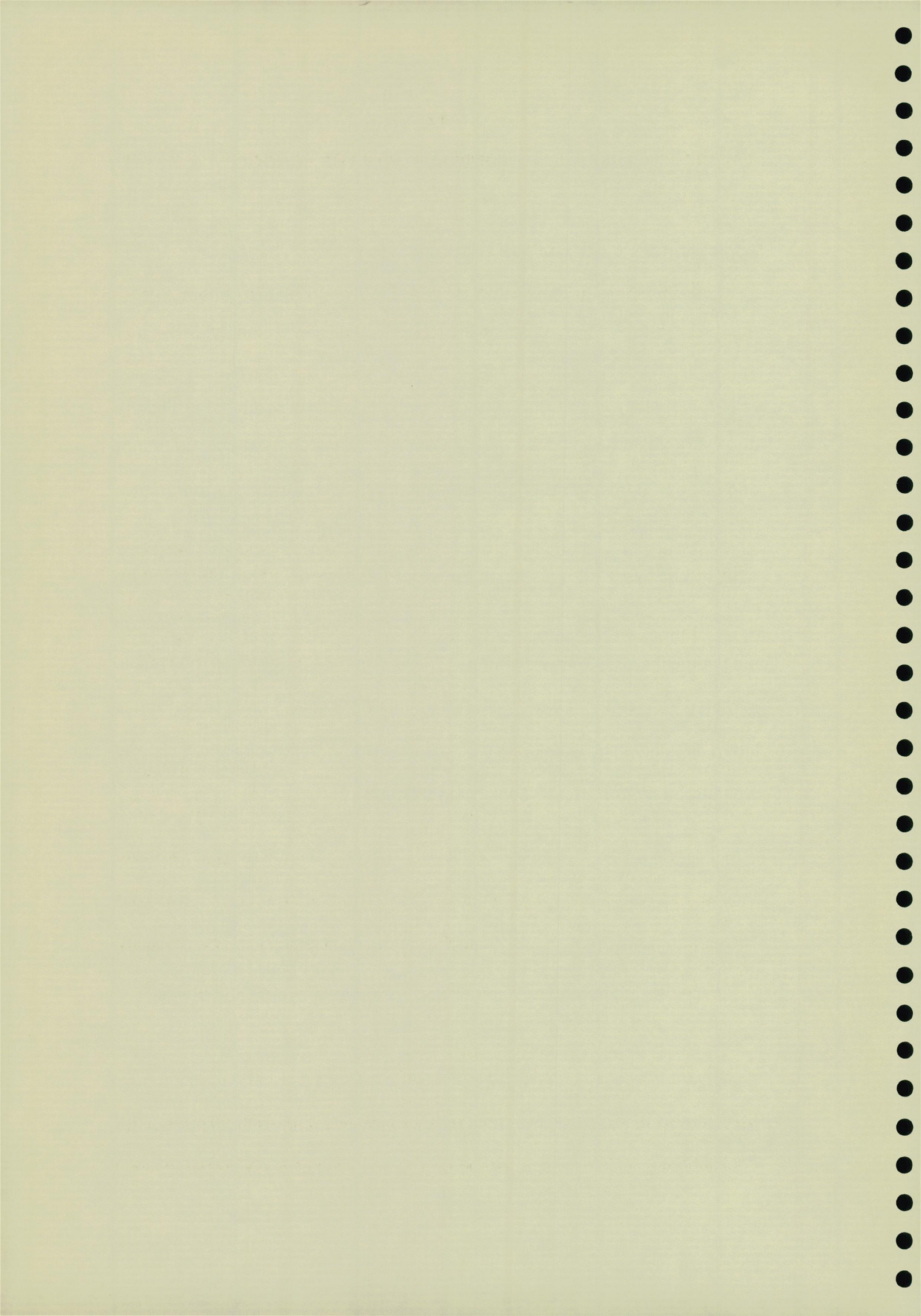
Adolescent Sexuality and Sex Education

Sexuality does not remain outside the school gates. It is a constituent of life in schools as it is of any other part of social life.¹

Thus comments Lesley Holly, editor of the book, Girls and Sexuality, Teaching and Learning, in which she strives to assess how sexuality should be taught and discussed in schools. She also examines case studies of programmes dealing with sexuality in four schools in Britain. She found in general that a lot of positive work was being done but this was being counteracted by various problems. Teachers who are convinced that sex education is essential are finding themselves in a dilemma. The information they give to their pupils can be previewed and withdrawn by governing bodies. Conservatism has led to a rekindled insistence on the importance of family values, which may well be removed from the adolescent's sexuality.

Most young people in sex education classes already experience themselves as sexual beings in the widest sense. Locating sex education in the context of the family and safe sex will not necessarily provide space for understanding personal issues about sexuality and desire.²

Secondly, the British governments passing of Clause 28 - the local government act which disallows local authorities from intentionally promoting homosexuality,



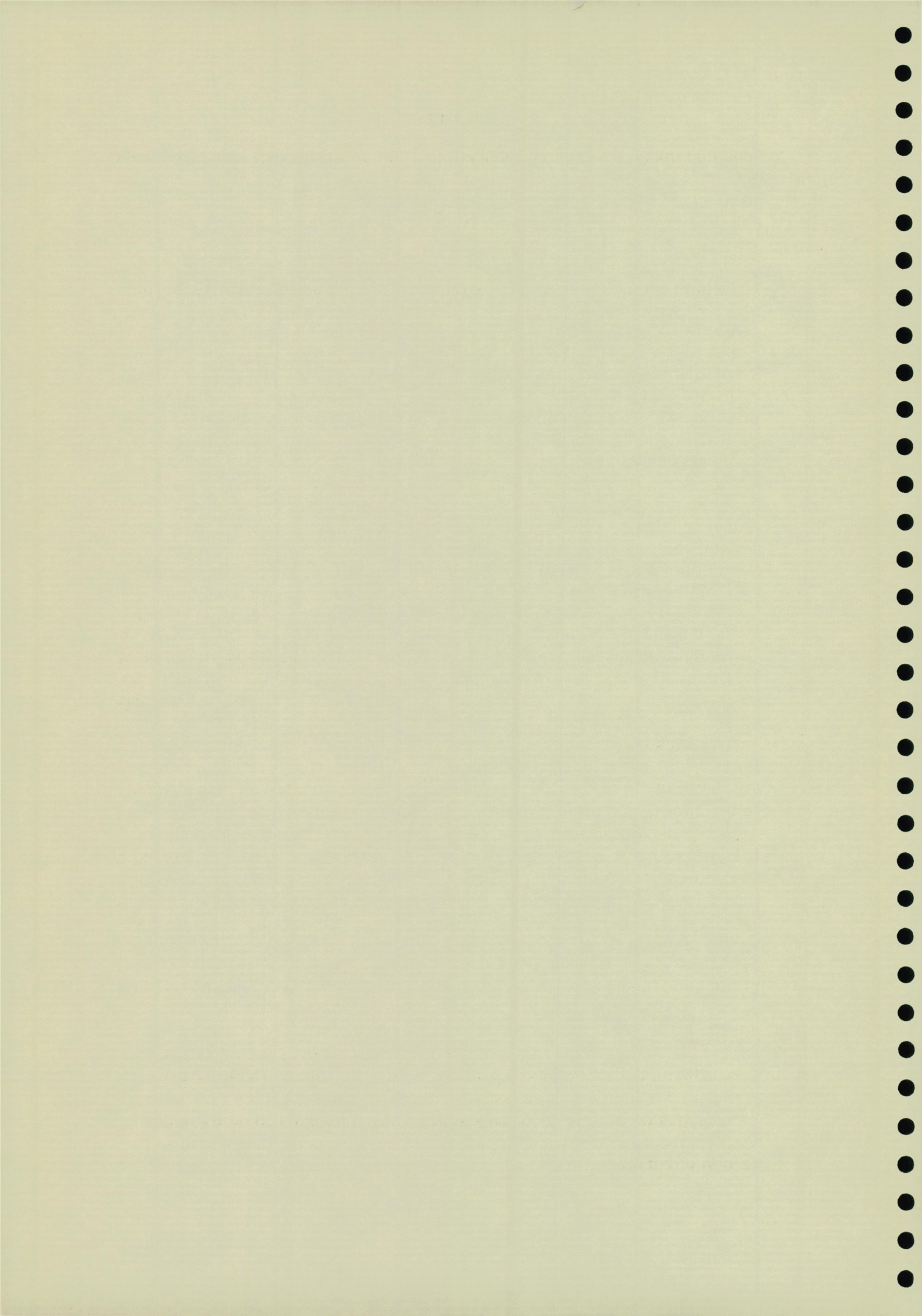
may now mean that even factual information on the subject may be difficult to give, let alone a positive presentation of it.

Holly later goes on to suggest that these are not the only problems. She puts forward the argument that even teachers discussing sexuality with good intentions are, in fact, reflecting on their own sexuality and not that of the adolescents. To bridge this gap should be of major concern. I want to claim, suggests Holly,

that the gap between the lessons and the adolescents sexual world is enormous These teachers failed to address many of the issues most central to the pupils' concerns. Instead the sex education they provided was derived from their own culture, and from their adult status It is not surprising therefore that sex education is not child centred, or, more accurately, adolescent centred. It is not informed by, nor does it take its cues from, the world of adolescent sexuality.³

From this it seems obvious that many problems need to be tackled in regard to the information offered to the pupil. The information must be of concern to pupils rather than their teachers, it must have relevance to their lives and their sexuality. It must not be derived from an adult world of heterosexist values and it must offer pupils information on their sexuality, the sexuality of the opposite gender and those whose sexuality is not considered as "the norm".

Stereotypes of what is considered normal sexuality can often be damaging. Their inherent sexism leads to women suffering most in society and as teachers



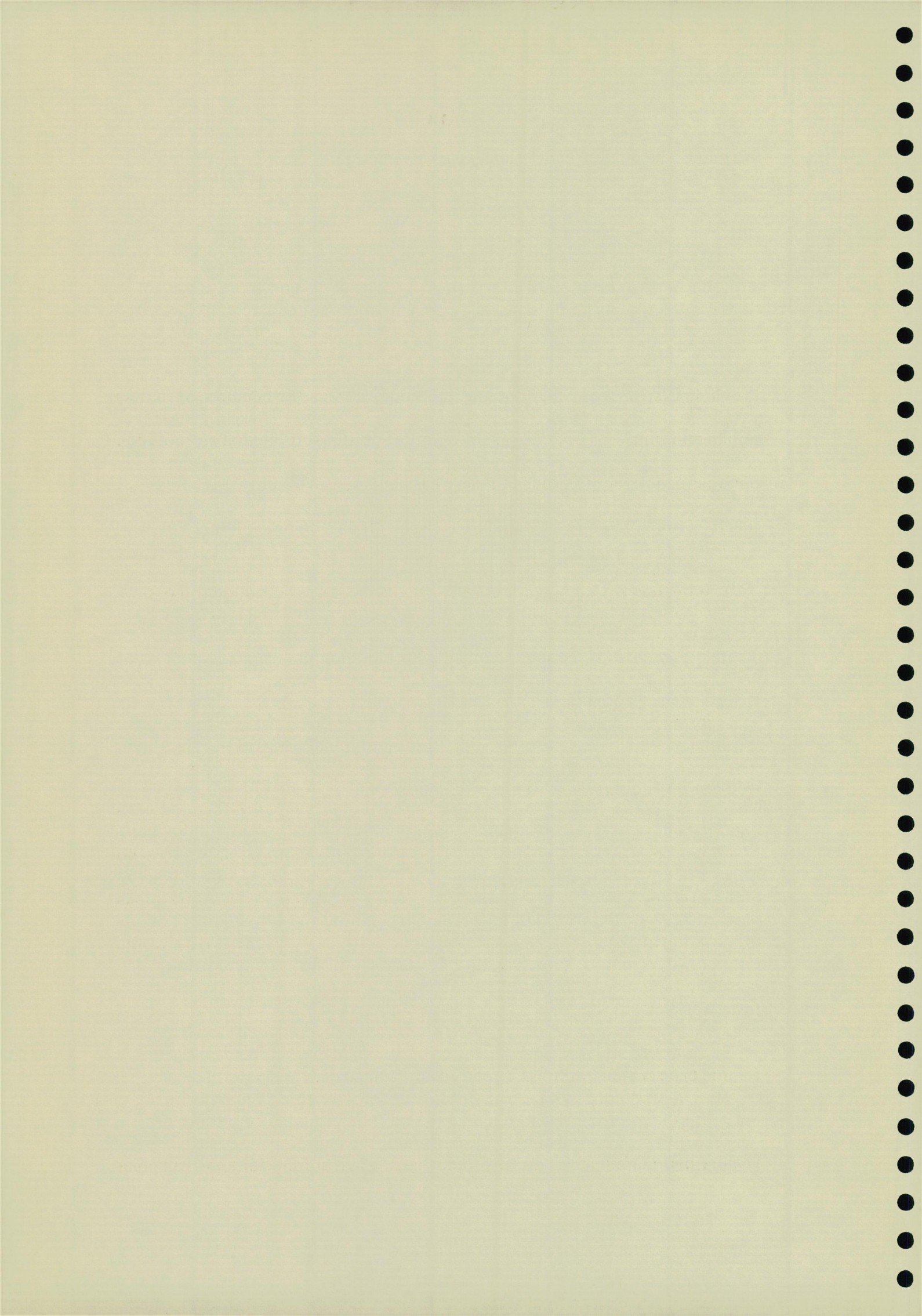
we must take on the responsibility of challenging and questioning definitions of

What it is to be a man or a woman in the world and must work to diminish the suffering caused by sexism and heterosexism.⁴

Problems also arrive in situations where sexual harassment occurs, of female pupils and pupils of both sexes who do not conform to sexual stereotypes becoming victims of verbal and physical abuse. More alarming still, is that this type of abuse can be ignored and passed off as a common feature of every day school life.

There are ways of re-educating and diminishing preconceived ideas of what is seen as male and female identities. The materials used in classes, the language we employ should not reinforce negative stereotypical views of men, women, lesbians and gays. To avoid this, changes should be made whereby sexuality can be dealt with under its many different contexts. The choice of subjects pupils are offered should not be based on gender stereotypes. And, it is my view, that as an extension of this it should be stressed, that sexual relations between two men or two women are normal and not deviant. Holly also proposes that

Students should also be given the opportunity to develop a sociological and historical understanding of the nature of sexism and heterosexism. They have a right to know why the truths of women's lives have been kept hidden or altered to male sexist stereotypes and why there are such levels of hatred and ignorance about the experiences of lesbians and gay men.⁵



In her book, Lesley Holly raised many issues that are important when examining sexuality in a learning situation. The fact that her information is drawn from schools in Britain should not suggest that these findings have no relevance to our own education system.

I feel that one of the most important points she makes is the distinction between adult and adolescent sexuality. Information on sex and sexuality should not have its roots in the "Adult World" and, for Holly,

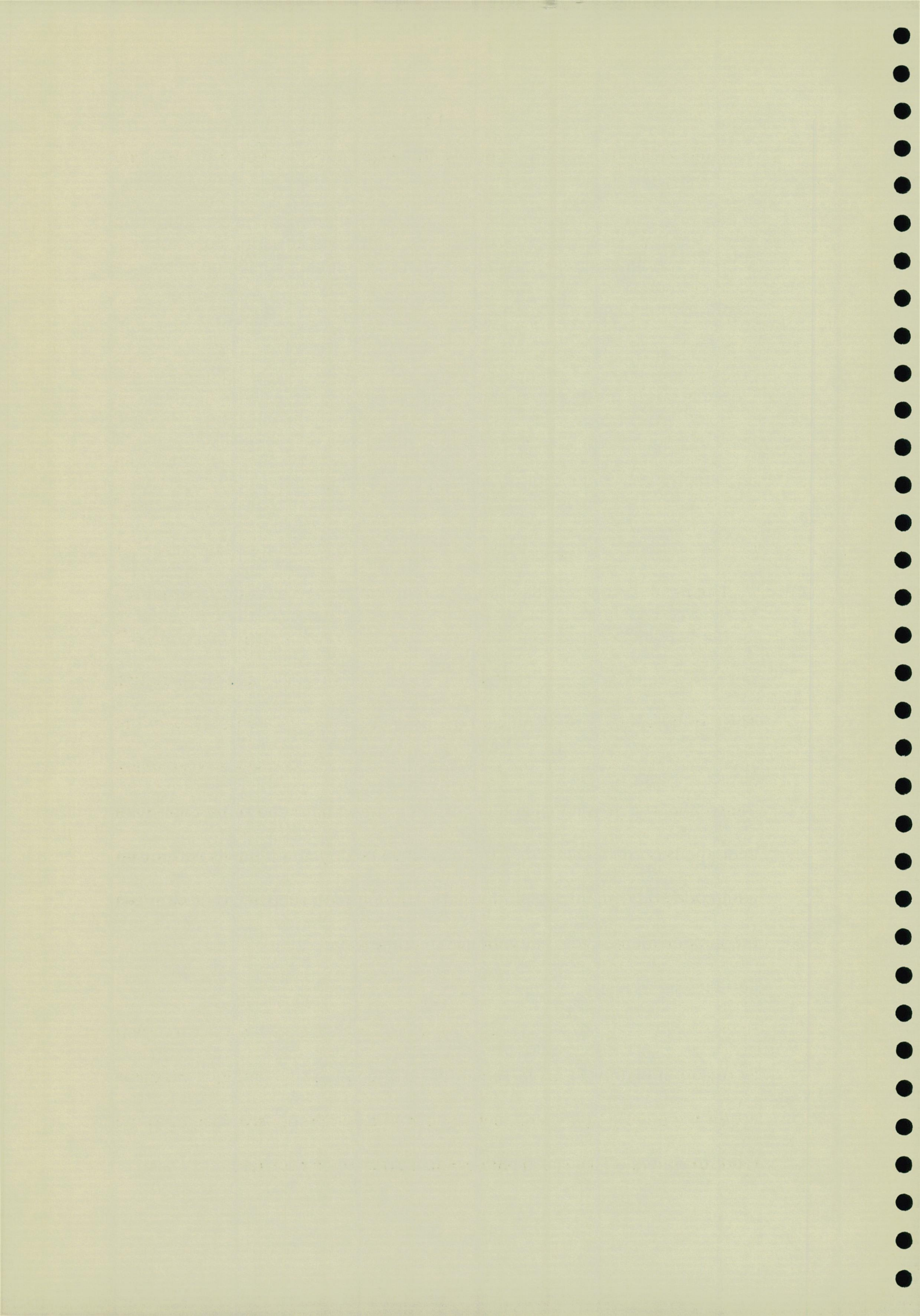
The need is for a middle ground, a range of tactics to bridge the gap between adult and adolescent worlds, so that both sides can meet in the middle.⁶

This, in my view, is of significant importance.

These I believe are all real and important issues, that need to be dealt with in our post-primary schools. After all we are talking about pupils verging on adulthood and to deny pupils information during adolescence will deny pupils preparation for the lives they will live after they leave school. To do this would certainly be unjust.

Sexuality in history of art in second-level education

History of art should be seen very much as an integral important part of senior

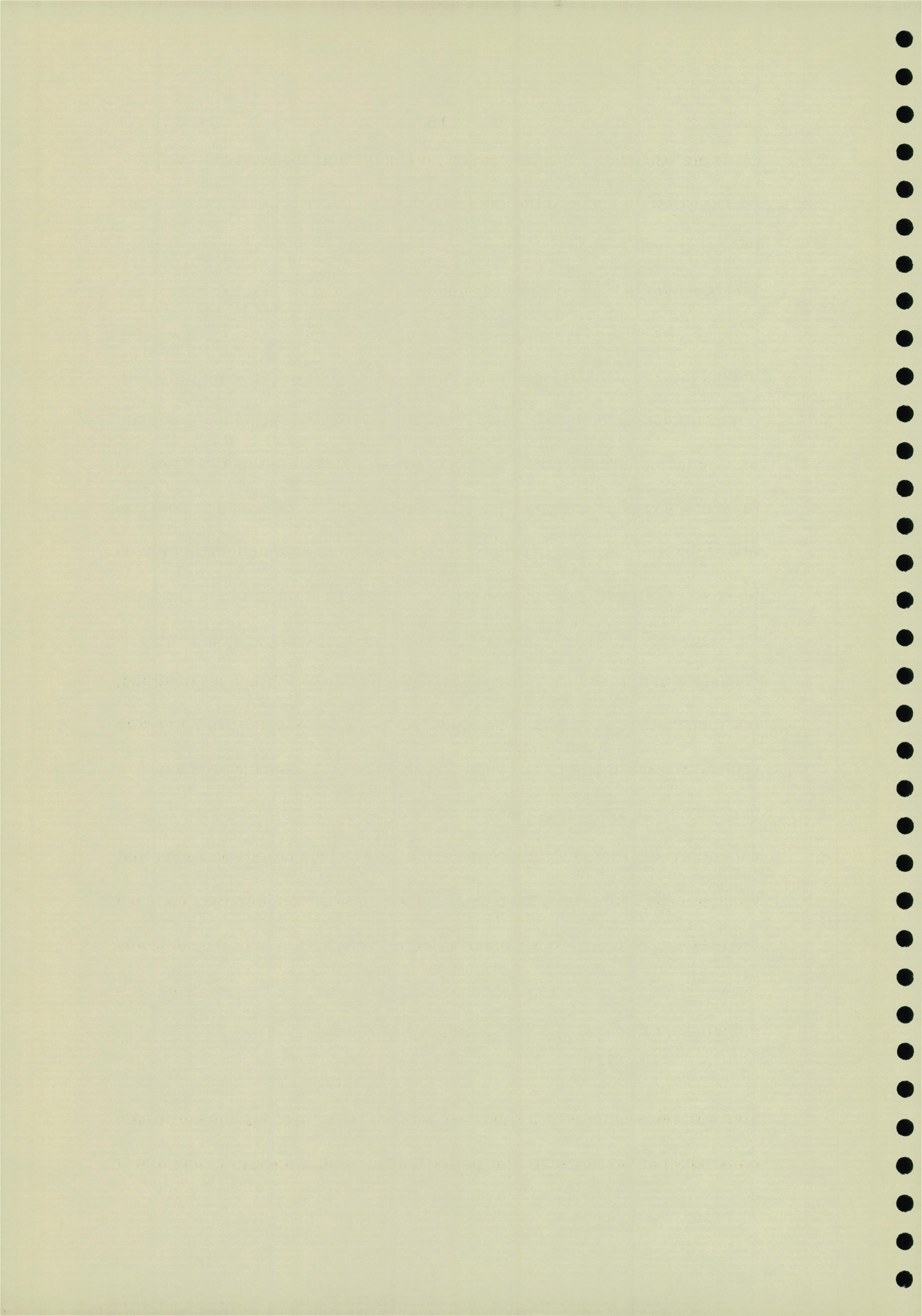


cycle art education. It offers pupils an insight into the works of past and contemporary artists and designers, the techniques, materials and methods of work they employed and in itself offers pupils a source or point of reference for their own practical work.

Indeed thoughts and arguments on this issue came from many quarters with not everyone agreeing on its relevance. Marion Richardson a pioneer of child art in England argued that exposing the work of artists to children was an excellent way of broadening their appreciation and understanding of both their own work and the work of others. Therefore she surrounded her pupils "as far as possible, with reproductions of great pictures of all sorts. In this good company taste will have had the opportunity of developing unconsciously."⁷

While Herbert Read believed that although children should see art (although not reproductions), it should be their own work from which they begin to appreciate creativity, as he suggests, "appreciation is not acquired by passive contemplation, we only appreciate beauty on the basis of our own creative aspirations, abortive though these be."⁸ While Sybil Marshall argues that when pupils can appreciate and glean knowledge from art then they can "tap the inexhaustible well of past human experience."⁹

Personally, I feel that pupils should be exposed to past art works. As with all history they should learn from it and use it to their advantage. Practical art for the pupil should go hand in hand with a comprehensive insight to the work of others. This is argued by Rod Taylor when he says,



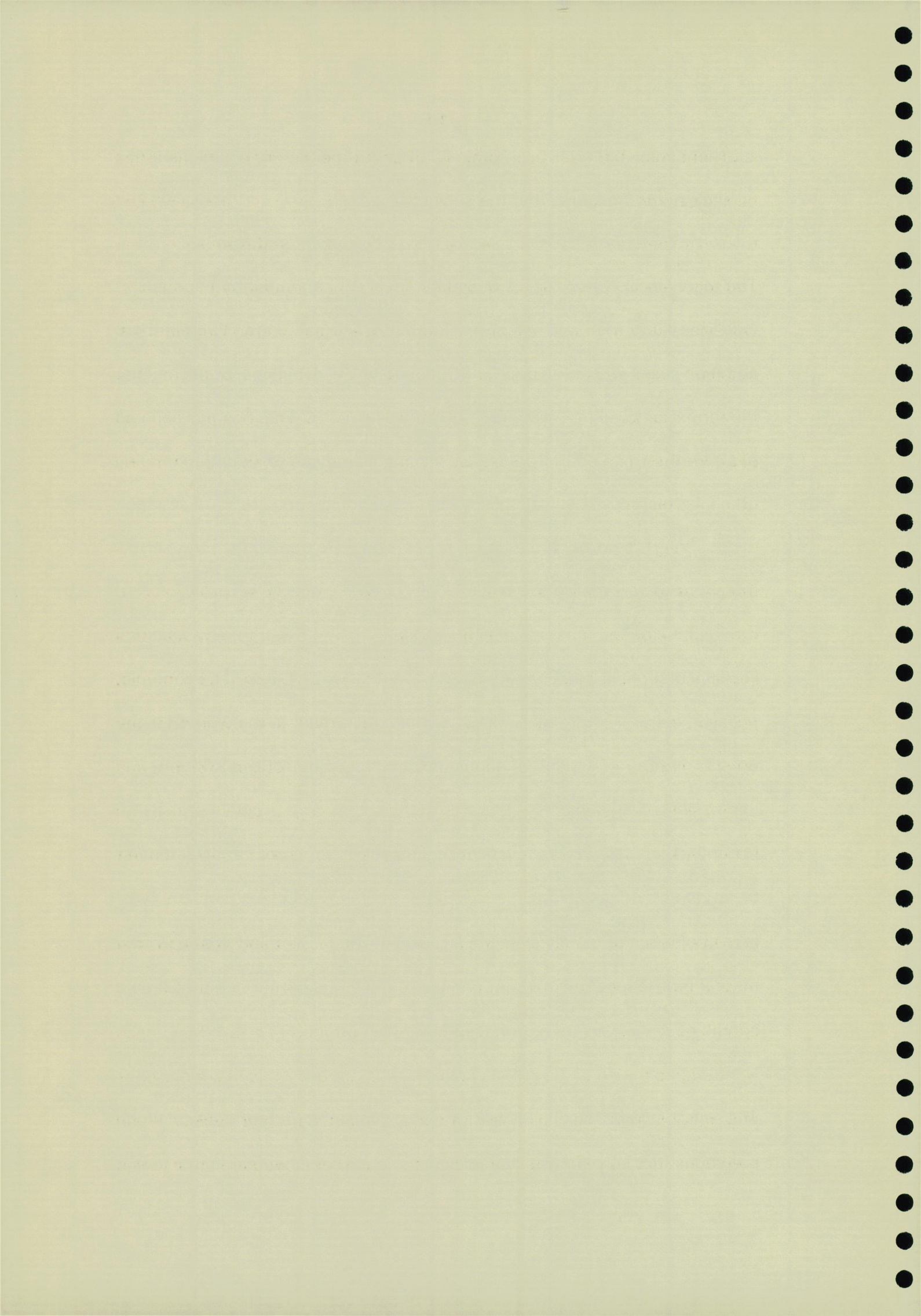
There were the analytical, critical, historical and cultural domains as well as the presently pervasive expressive practical domain; all had their rightful place within the subject.¹⁰

The teaching of history of art at second-level education, in my experience, was little more than a series of names, dates and paintings. Even in more common cases where the pupil is introduced to a wider insight, it seems that the formal art qualities are more frequently dealt with. These formal aspects of art works are of course beneficial, leading as they do to an understanding of media, techniques and elements. Yet this should not be the sole function of observing art works. If the formal aspects only are treated then this serves merely to depersonalise the work.

I believe that pupils must have access to information on the social, economic, political, cultural and sexual influences that are intrinsic in the work of many artists. History of art can or should not be taught out of this context.

Naturally the history of art course at senior cycle is very broad and what must be covered is quite limiting in terms of depth. Many teachers feel they have little choice but to merely skim the surface. With this in mind, it seems only natural that teachers would not choose to cover areas that could well be a source of embarrassment or indeed class disruptions.

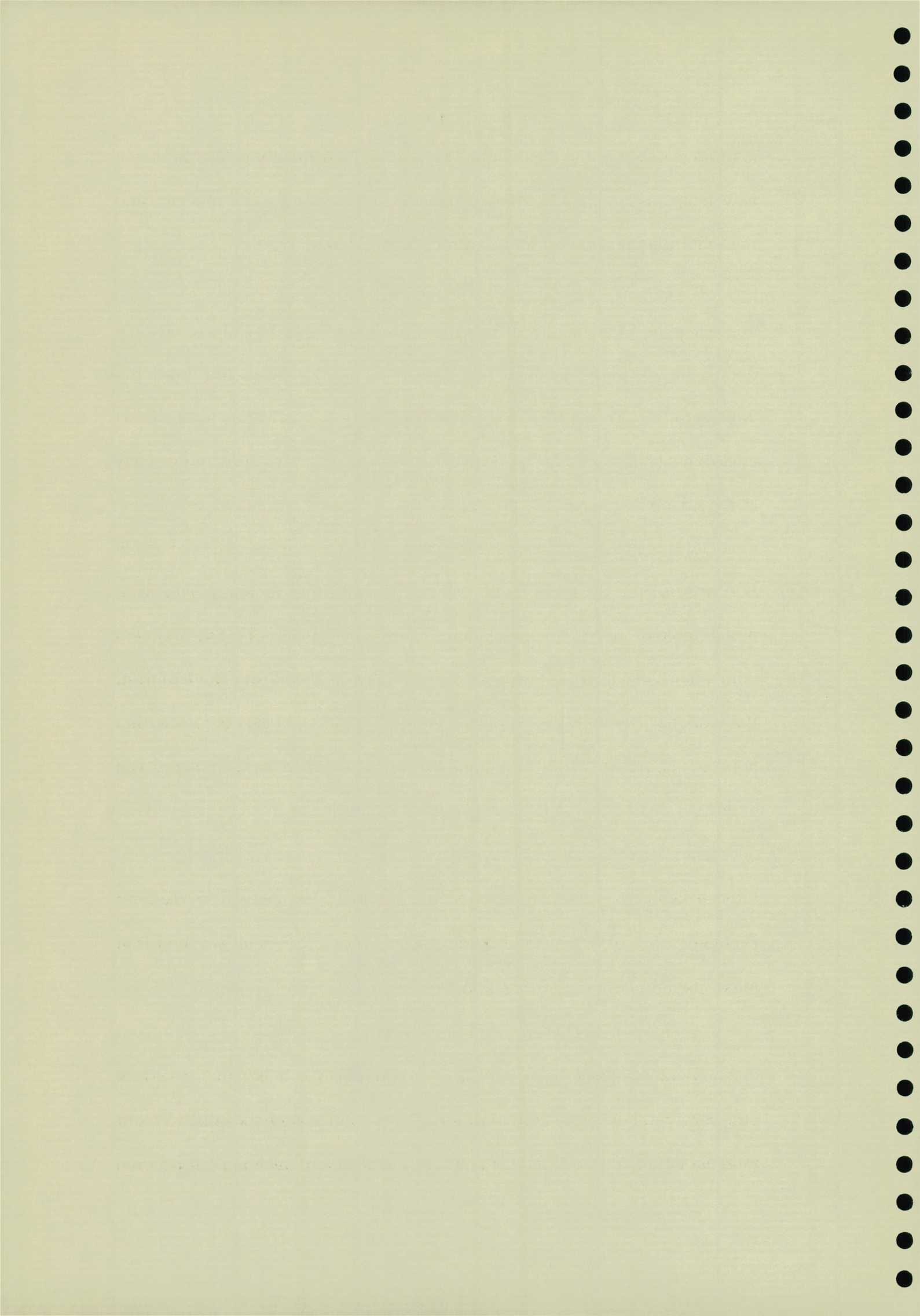
The link between sexuality and art is a subject that has caused much consternation, so much so that perhaps it is almost understandable that it



is often avoided in the classroom. Throughout the history of art there has been a general avoidance of the relationship between an artist's sexuality and the work they make. Art and sexuality have often strayed from each other and this I feel is due to formalist art teachings which argued that "art is art" and "life is life". This in turn led to a situation where personal and biographical details have not alone been excluded from art practices but from the interpretation of art. Thus if the sexuality/art relationship has not been an easy one then it comes as no surprise that it is not dealt with comprehensively in the art history class.

But what of the art work itself, discussing work that is sexually explicit, provocative or just suggestive in a situation where I expect many teachers would feel some degree of reservation and unease? Let us take, for example, the work of Egon Schiele. Schiele's work on a formal basis could offer the pupil an important insight to the quality of draughtsmanship and clarity and expression of line that the artist employed. Equally it could lead to an understanding of how artists can influence each others work i.e. Schiele/Klimt.

However what of Schiele's erotic art pieces - nude men and women often masturbating, genitals exposed and inviting contact? How would they be perceived by pupils? Let us first assume that a group of pupils have been discouraged from looking at the unclothed human form in books, magazines etc. and told that every picture of a naked person is pornographic. Where then does that leave us? It leaves us with adolescents who are not allowed

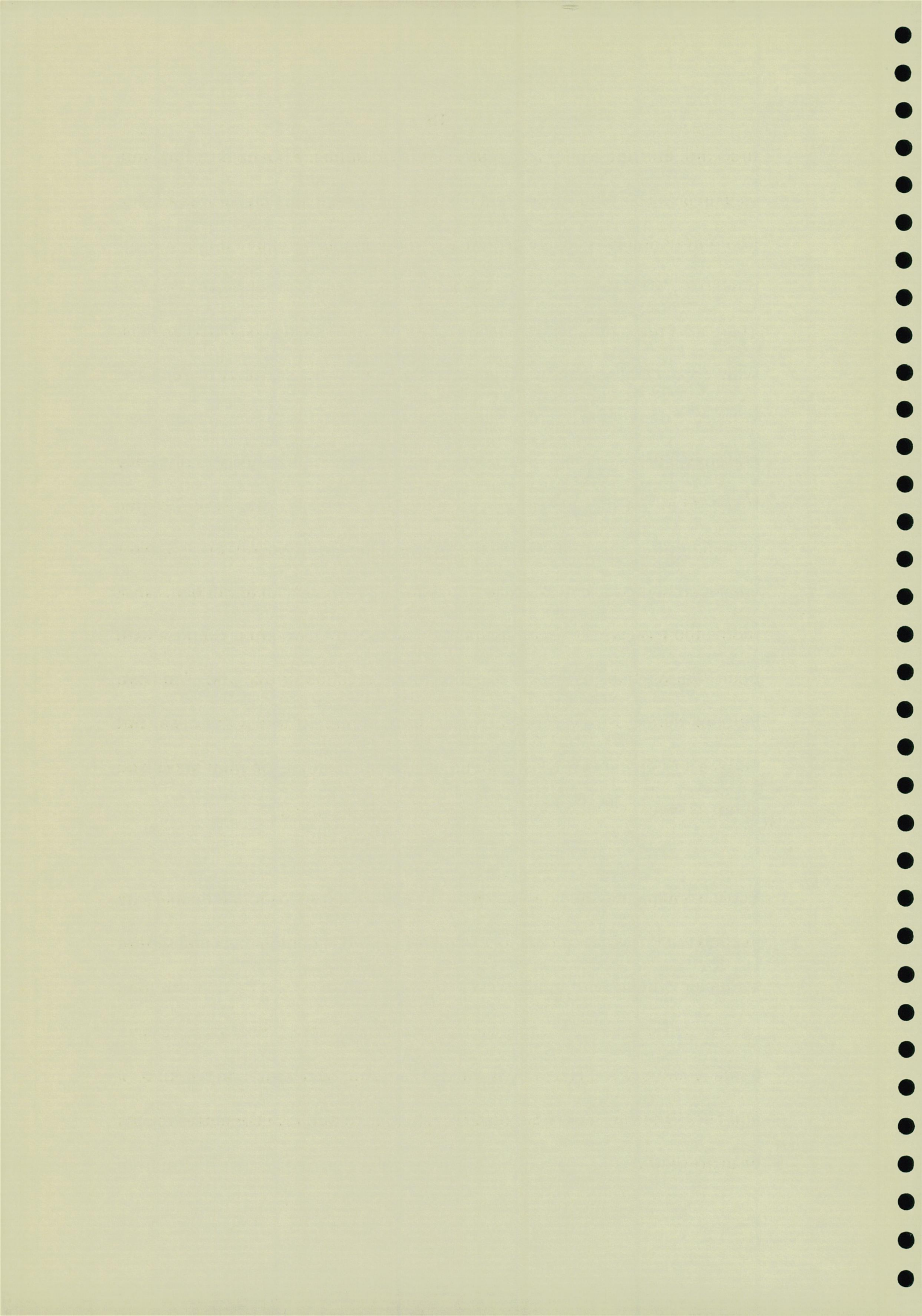


to appreciate the human, contextual side of art, who are not given a complete view of art. This would be a great mistake. In my opinion Schiele was a major figure in twentieth century art, not a pornographer.

There are I feel a number of reasons why this work could and should be dealt with. Firstly and perhaps most importantly, to deny the sexuality of Schiele's work is to deny his art, it only serves to invalidate it. Secondly, although art and sexuality have not always been harmoniously joined, they are intrinsically linked. Many artists equate the creative urge to the sexual urge. Art is reflective of society: it is also reflective of the artist. In the erotic work of Egon Schiele we are presented a view of his private world. We learn a lot about him, what motivated him, where his interests lie. The fact that we are presented with nude bodies makes it no less valid than an angry landscape or a bowl of fruit. Perhaps that it is truly personal makes it more real. If this is the case, as I believe it is, then his work should be used as an example of what art can be about.

Schiele's work, however problematic, is based in the sexuality of the majority in society. But what of the work of an artist who is homosexual and whose sexuality is dealt with in his work?

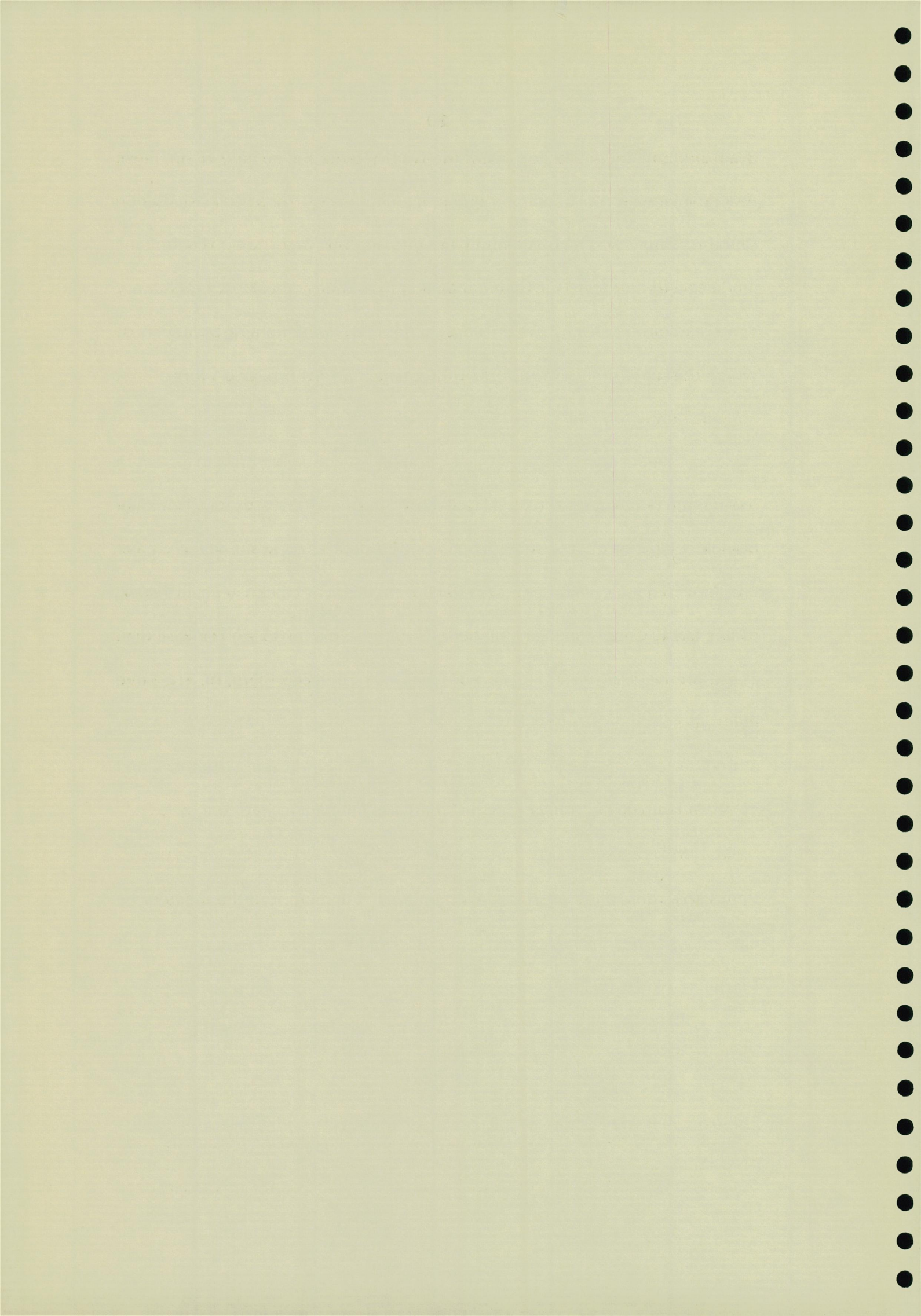
In many ways David Hockney is the quintessential gay artist. In the 1960's and 1970's at the height of sexual re-evaluation and change the public sought an artist who would fit into their stereotypical image of gay men. Being from



Bradford, England made him "real", he was identifiable, he caused no harm. At a time when it was becoming almost fashionable to accept homosexuality, David Hockney was also accepted and in doing this he became the "token" gay artist. Therefore Hockney became safe and now most general history of art texts refer to his American work, particularly his swimming pool scenes, which are more ambiguous in their intention than his previous work.

Hockney's most powerful work, I feel, comes from the time prior to his move to America. His time at the Royal College of Art and afterwards saw Hockney complete a series of "coming out" paintings where he presents to the viewer images of what his sexuality meant to him. In this way Hockney could visually rather than verbally explain for himself what it meant to be homosexual. Therefore we find titles such as We Two Boys Together Clinging, The Love Painting series and Adhesiveness. These semi-realistic paintings are not altogether obvious in their meaning. To the uninitiated the metaphors and symbols Hockney employs may be of little significance.

Pupils should be allowed information on why Hockney used the imagery he did and what this imagery means, they should be encouraged to realise that for the gay artist this may have been the only way of asserting or presenting his sexuality. I feel the often, self-imposed role of the gay artist is to give a public identity to his sexuality whether in a suggestive or confrontational manner. When an artist's sexuality is denied then his art becomes his means of expression.



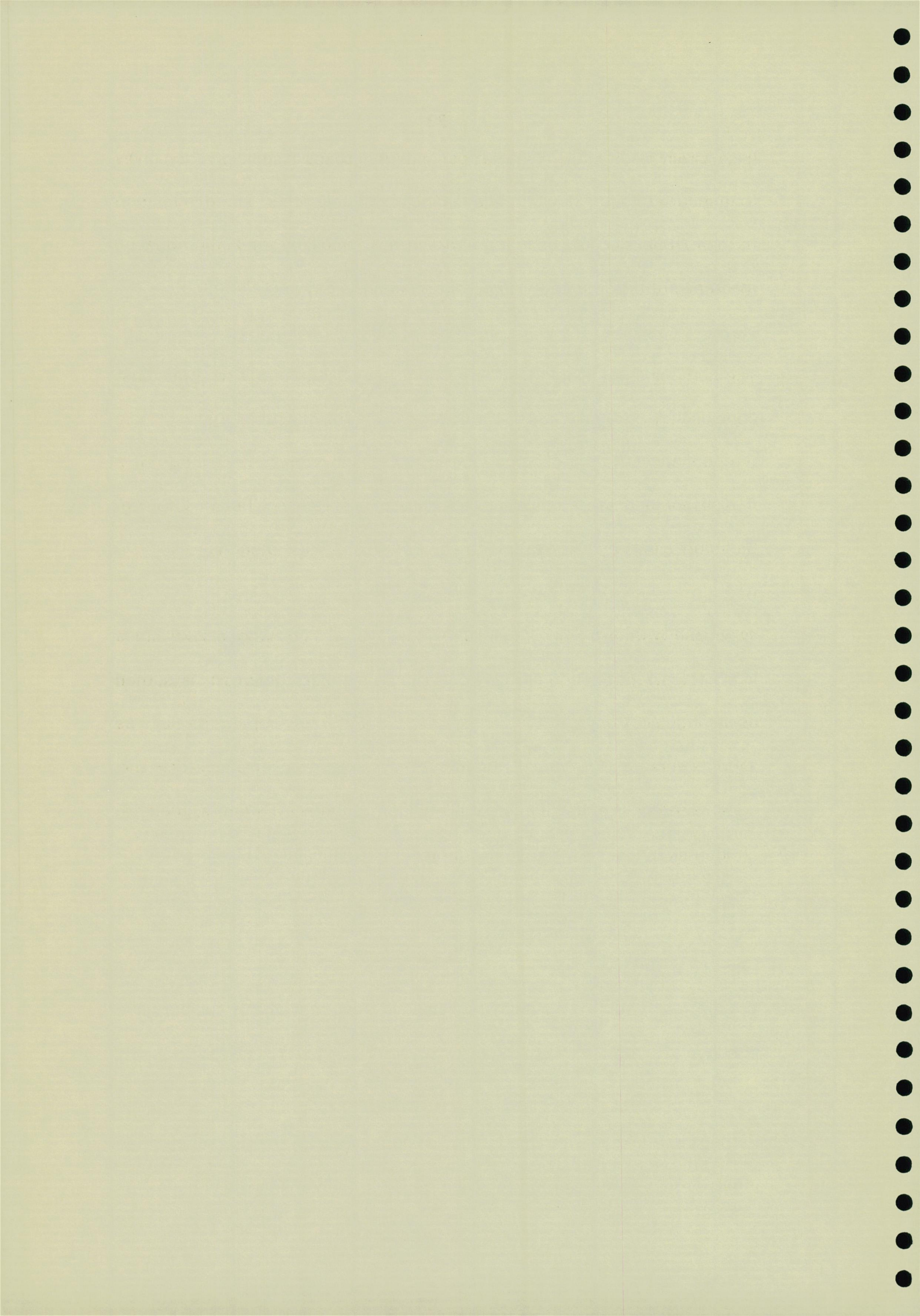
It is a direct result of the placement of minority groups in society which gives them cause to address where they stand and where others stand in relation to them. Pupils should be made aware of this. Similarly the pupil should be made aware that the knowledge that an artist is gay should not colour the viewer's opinion of the work. In essence there should be a re-assessing of work, this in turn would lead to a more honest interpretation and, most conclusively, it would lead to an understanding of gay art.

If pupils are taught that artists such as Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Botticelli, Simeon Solomon, Hockney and Warhol were or are "great artists" then they also have the right to know they were homosexual. They also have a right to know, as Emmanuel Cooper argues, that there has long been a homosexual involvement in art. In the introduction to his book The Sexual Perspective, he is quoted as saying

An awareness of the 'homosexual tradition' whether in literature, poetry or film has been a means for homosexual artists to begin to create an identity in a society dominated by heterosexual values. Likewise the growth of the lesbian and gay sub-cultures have given rise to various diverse representations of homosexuality. All have found a place in art.¹¹

What effects would a positive and sensitive treatment of this subject have in schools?

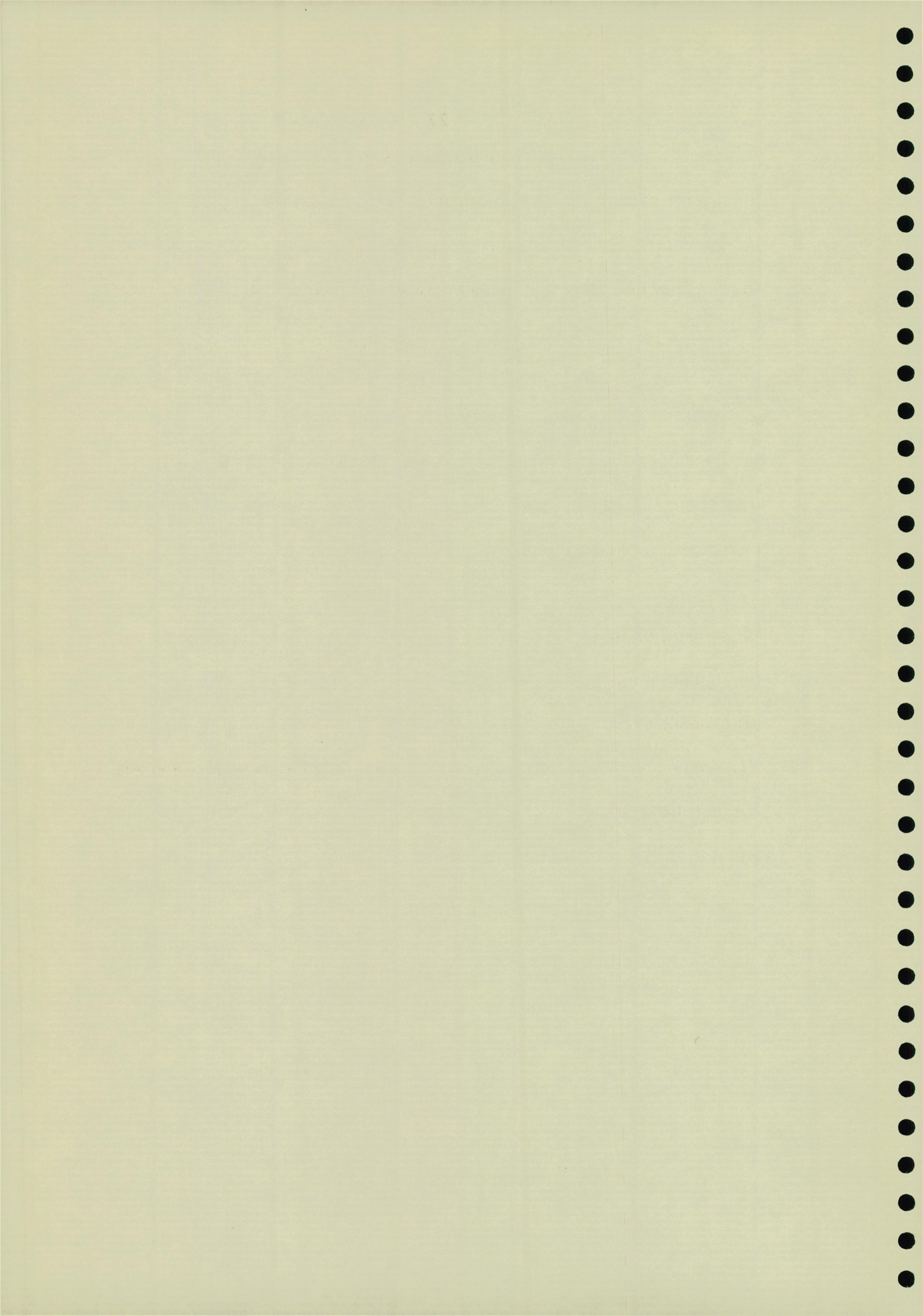
Perhaps with a greater understanding of homosexuality in art practice, then pupils would be less prone to make negative judgements or behave less



aggressively to their peers who do not conform to sexual stereotypes. Secondly, it may offer much needed information to those pupils identifying with homosexuality, it could show them that they are not alone, and perhaps lessen the sense of alienation that many homosexuals feel.

The purpose of teaching art should not merely be about how one creates or develops the pupil's creative ability. Art, like any other subject, should help the pupil develop as a person in the fullest possible fashion. Sexuality is a part of our lives like any other and as teachers we have a responsibility to help pupils to come to terms with and deal with their sexuality.

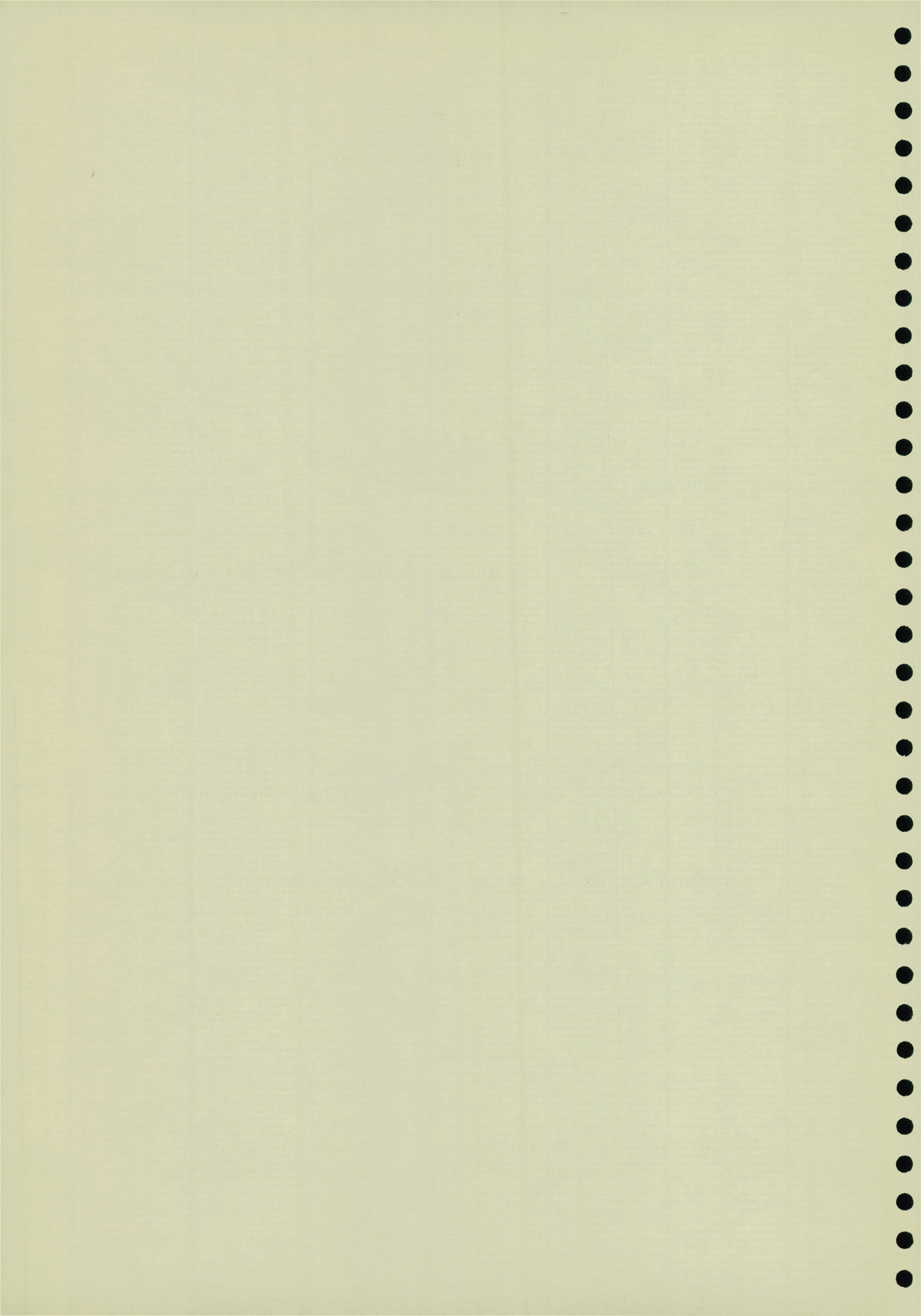
When the work of an artist whose imagery is sexual, or whose sexuality is not that of the majority in society, is discussed in the history of art class, then art as a subject is succeeding in its broader aim of developing the pupil as a whole person. While the history of art teacher is not a sex educator in this context, he or she does have the opportunity to present what is, after all, an intrinsic and common part of our lives.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

1. Lesley Holly, Girls and Sexuality, Teaching and Learning, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989), p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 38.
4. Ibid., p. 116.
5. Ibid., p. 120.
6. Ibid., p. 1.
7. Rod Taylor, Visual Arts in Education, (London: Falmer Press, 1992), p. 23.
8. Ibid., p. 24.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 25.
11. Emmanuel Cooper, The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), unpaginated.



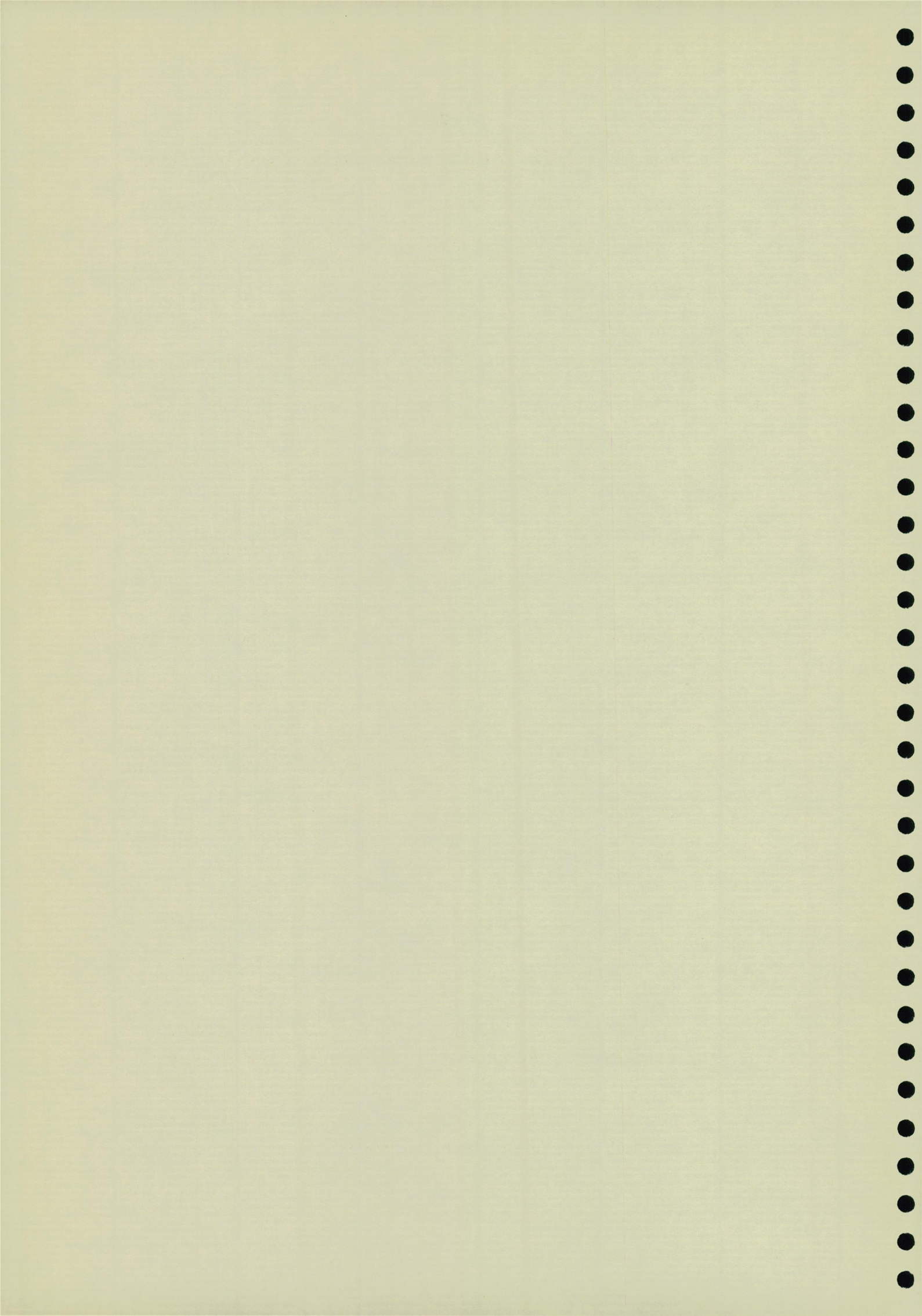
CHAPTER III
PRACTICAL RESEARCH

Lesson Sequence in Action

In order for me to back up my opinions and feelings and to investigate the place of sexuality in art education, I felt it was necessary for me to undertake some practical research. In many ways it is very easy and perhaps slightly naive of me, with relatively little teaching experience to say that, we as teachers "must do this" and "should do that". For me the sequence of classes which I later outline has helped me to reach more informed conclusions and indeed the putting into practice of these lessons serve as my most important backup/evidence as to why sexuality in history of art should be dealt with.

During my second term of teaching practice I carried out this sequence of classes with a group of eighteen fifth years in an all girls school. Margaret Alyward Community College in Whitehall was run by a religious community of Sisters up until the late 1970's. In many ways a strong moral ethos still prevails in the school, where the pupils are encouraged to act like "young ladies", and indeed they are sheltered and well cared for under the umbrella of the school's "family-like" structure. There are two males on the teaching staff, one full-time the other part-time. They both have been employed by the school in the last couple of years.

My fifth year class are in the eyes of many of the staff, the model class. They

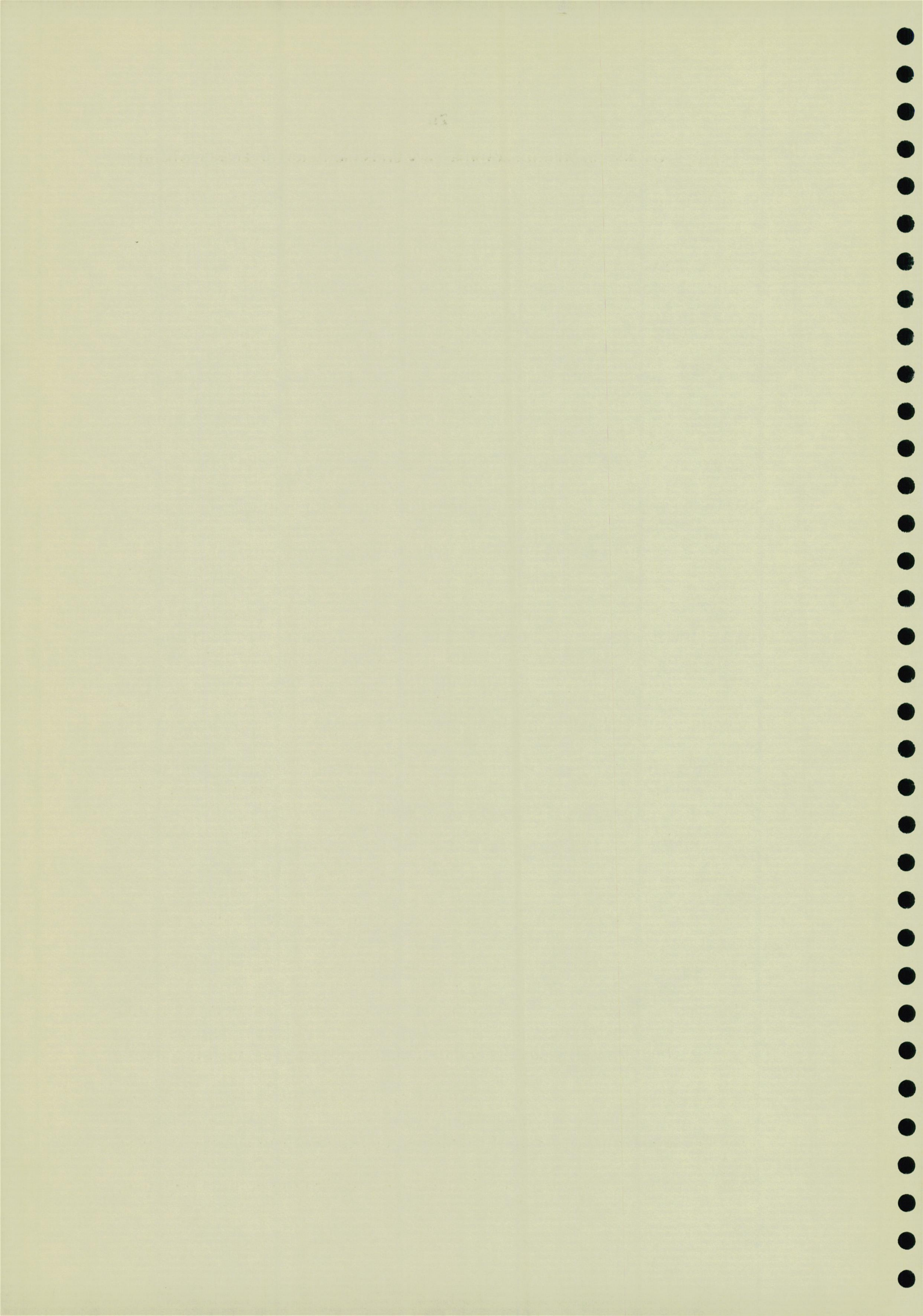


are courteous, hardworking and extremely well mannered and always offered thanks to me at the end of every class. Yet it seemed to me that this "model group" were no less inhibited, passive, unmotivated and lacking in self-confidence than other classes with whom I had contact. For this reason, I decided that the sequence I undertook with them would perhaps encourage and draw interest from them. I must say that I did fear that the nature of the subject would keep "their heads buried in the sand". The exact opposite however occurred. The pupils who up until now, only spoke when spoken to, offered opinions, answered questions with considerable intelligence, worked well as a coherent group and most importantly showed interest.

Two of the four classes were devoted to looking at, discussing and analysing artists work, while the remaining two classes dealt with practical drawing/painting based on the theme of "The Self". The following text documents the structure of the sequence and the information given to the pupils. It also documents my analysis of their reactions, their comments and the work they produced.

Overall Aims for Sequence

- To develop the pupils understanding of how artists dealt with the formal art elements and to transfer and use this understanding in their own practical work.
- To develop the pupils understanding of the contextual and ideological aspects of the artists work.



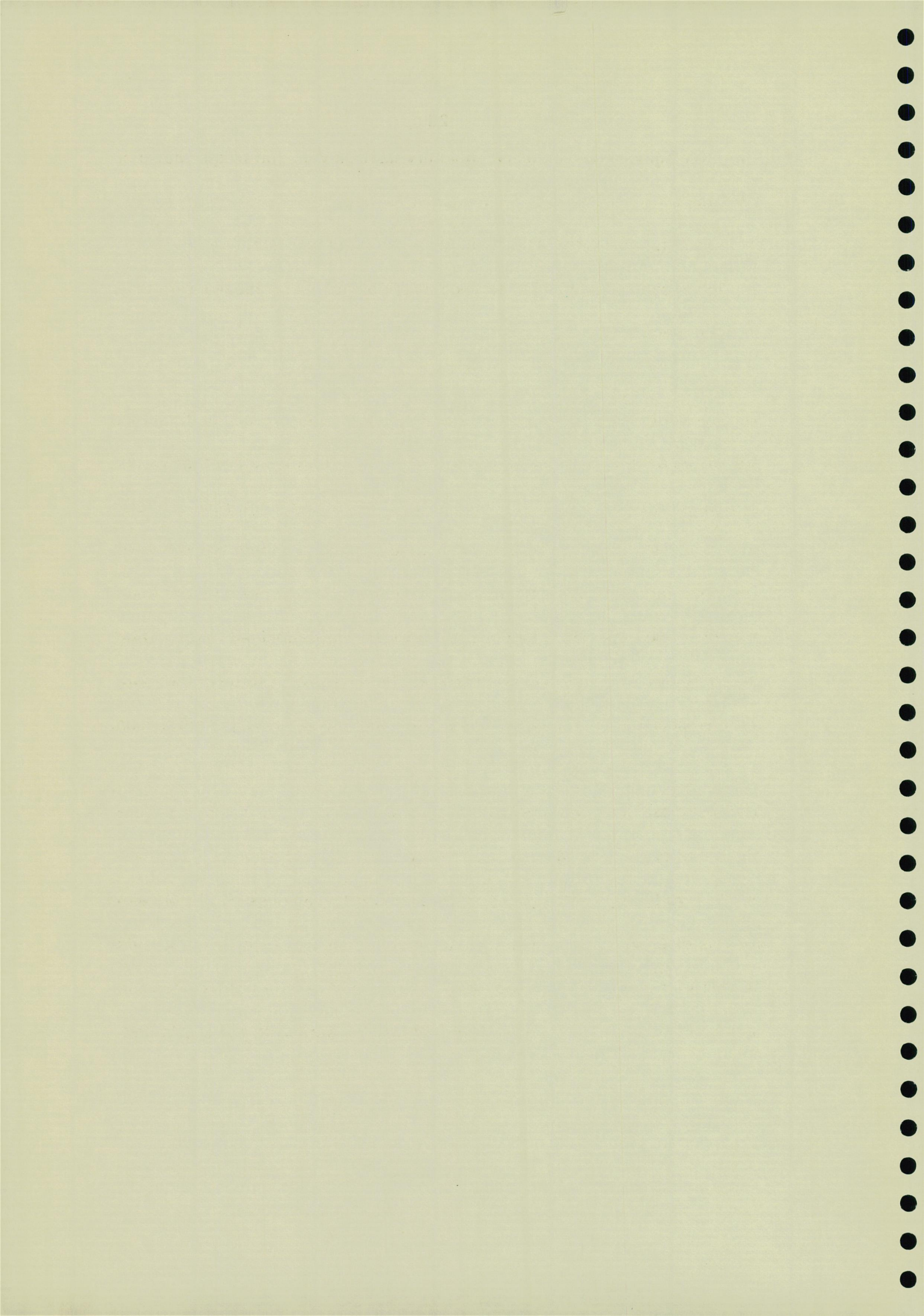
- To open up debate, commentary and discussion on artists whose work is informed by sexuality.

Artists and work that the sequence covered:

David Hockney:	(1)	We Two Boys Together Clinging
	(2)	Adhesiveness
Egon Schiele:	(1)	The Family
	(2)	The Embrace.

Prior to this sequence the pupils had been analysing the work of various artists through layout, linear construction, tonal analysis and positive/negative breakdown. With this background, the pupils were equipped to make drawings from Hockney and Schiele's work in order to understand the formal art aspects.

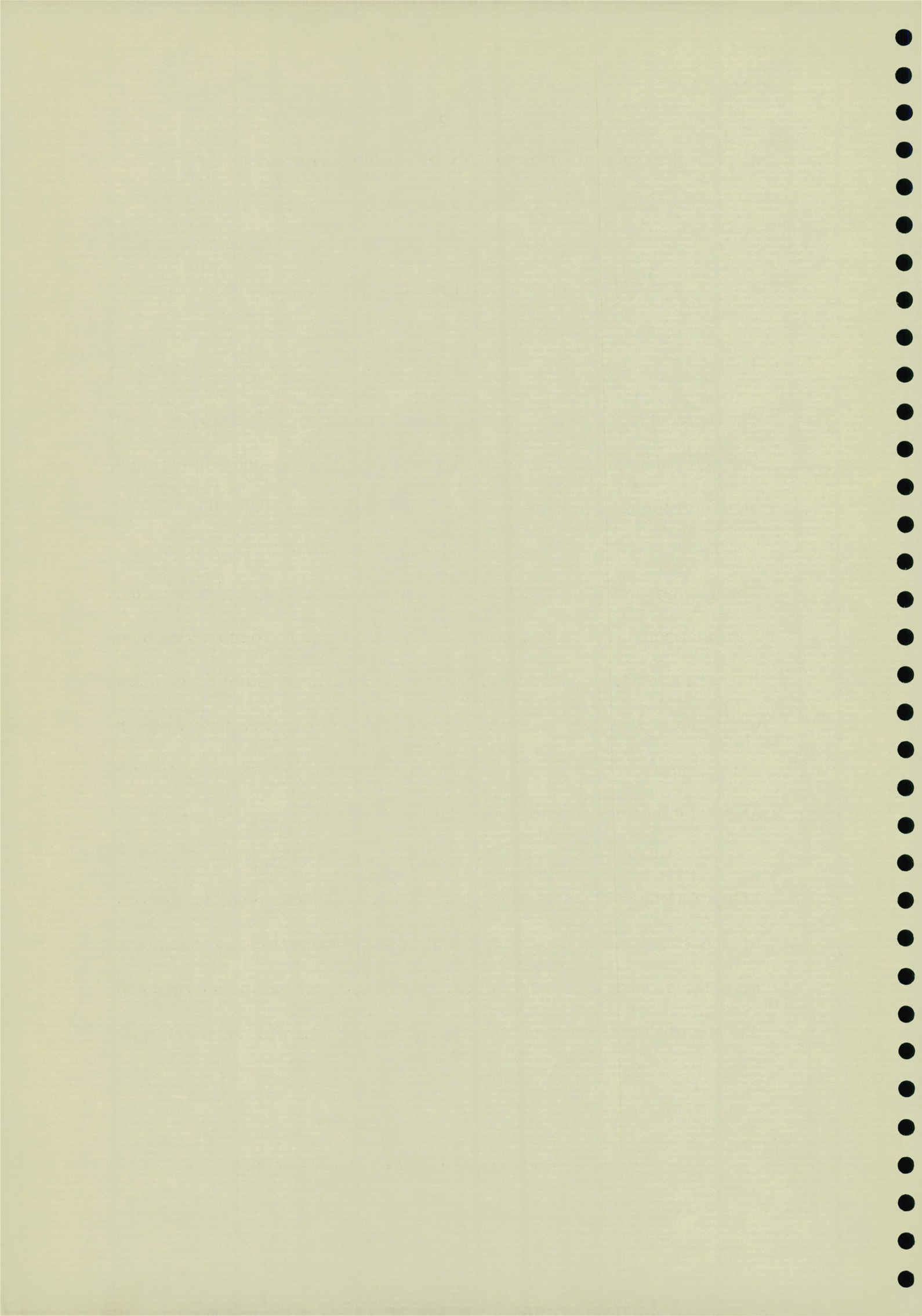
The week leading up to the first class of the sequence saw me engaged in constant preparation in order to ensure that lesson plans were well structured. I drafted and re-drafted "handouts" for the pupils and made countless photocopies. Even though I felt I was very well prepared and had left nothing to chance, I must admit that prior to the class, was the first time in the duration of this course and my teaching practice that I genuinely felt very nervous and anxious. The fact that I was having this class supervised as part of my teaching practice added another worry. At no time did I feel embarrassed and I believe it is important to make the distinction between embarrassment and nervousness. To be embarrassed would certainly have reinforced to the pupils a negative,



stereotypical view of sexuality. My nervousness was due to the fact that I wanted these classes to make a positive, worthwhile impact on the pupils. In hindsight, I realise that I had become afraid that I was neither experienced enough or capable of doing this. The reality now is that I achieved a lot more than I expected.

The layout of the schools art room does not necessarily lend itself to discussion and group debate, so in order to try and create an atmosphere that would be more conducive to this I decided to hold the class in one of the schools' smaller classrooms. This change in location and atmosphere worked well. The physical space and psychological gap or distance that occur between a teacher and pupils became considerably less. I also decided that splitting the class into groups of two would lessen the pressure on some of the more reserved pupils and would also challenge their ability to work in a group situation.

The first class dealt with the work of artist David Hockney. The pupils were given a three page handout on Hockney (F. 1) and a black/white illustration of We Two Boys Together Clinging (F. 2) and Adhesiveness (F. 3). My aim for this class was to develop the pupils understanding of how Hockney's sexuality informed his work and this was to be achieved through a discussion and analysis of the work. I read through the handout with the pupils first



5th Years, Margaret Aylward Community College

14/02/1994

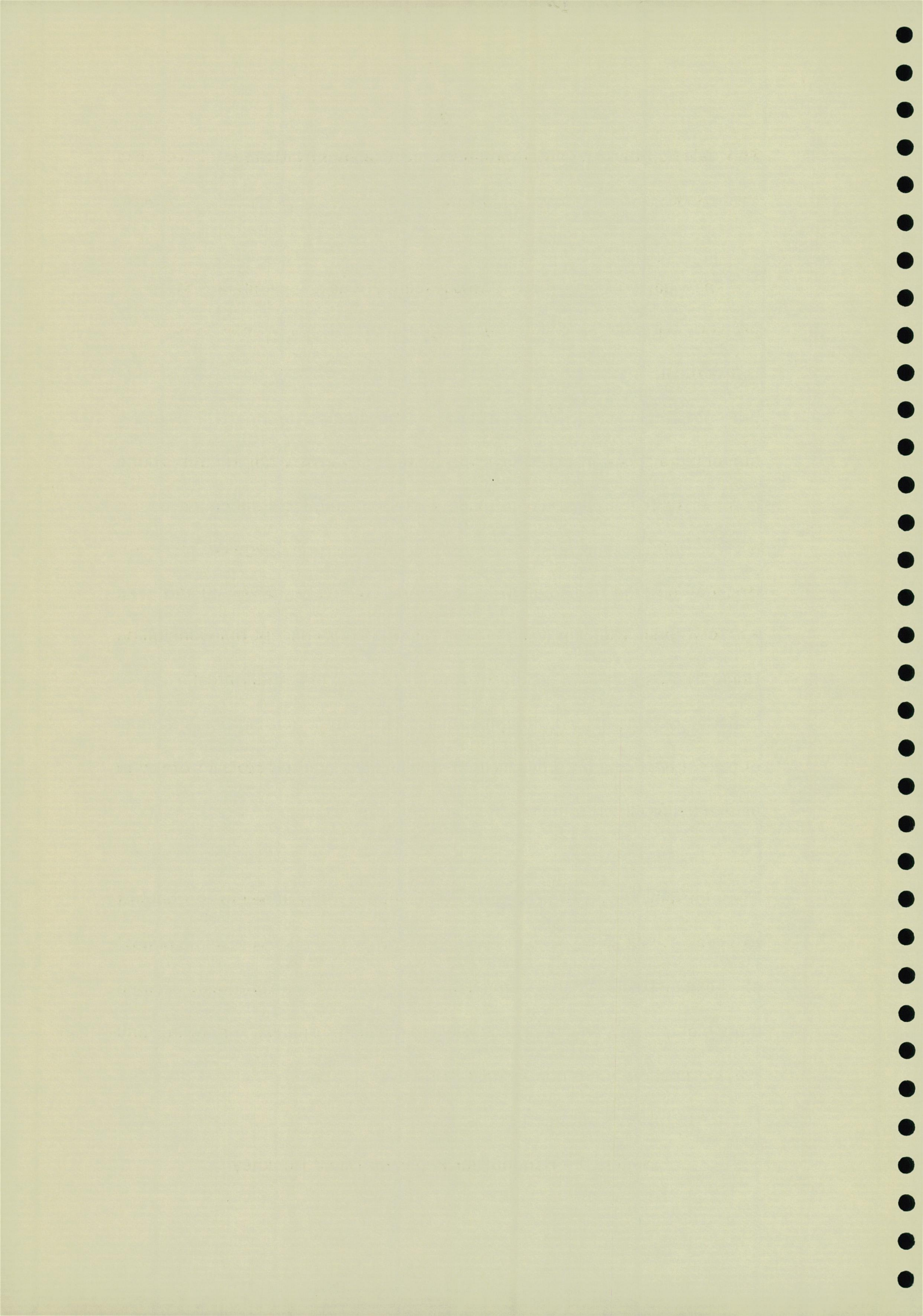
David Hockney

David Hockney one of the most acclaimed artists of our time was born in Bradford, England in 1937. As a child Hockney had aspirations to be a painter but for him a "painter" could have been either the person whose pictures hung in a gallery or the person who made posters for the local dance.

Hockney entered the Royal College of Art, London in 1957. At this time Abstract Expressionism was at the fore in the art world. To many including Hockney Abstract Expressionism was an emotionless, theoretical exercise in painting. It is indeed difficult to place Hockney in one particular school of painting, for in many ways he borrowed imagery and techniques from styles as diverse as, Expressionism, Realism and Pop-Art.

Therefore Hockney's large body of work contains many different approaches to painting. While he lived in England his work had a semi-realistic almost child-like feel to it. When he moved to America the work he produced became more recognisable and more accessible to the general public, indeed in many ways it became more commercial. However the common link in his work is the use of the male figure.

Figure 1 - Handout for Pupils on David Hockney



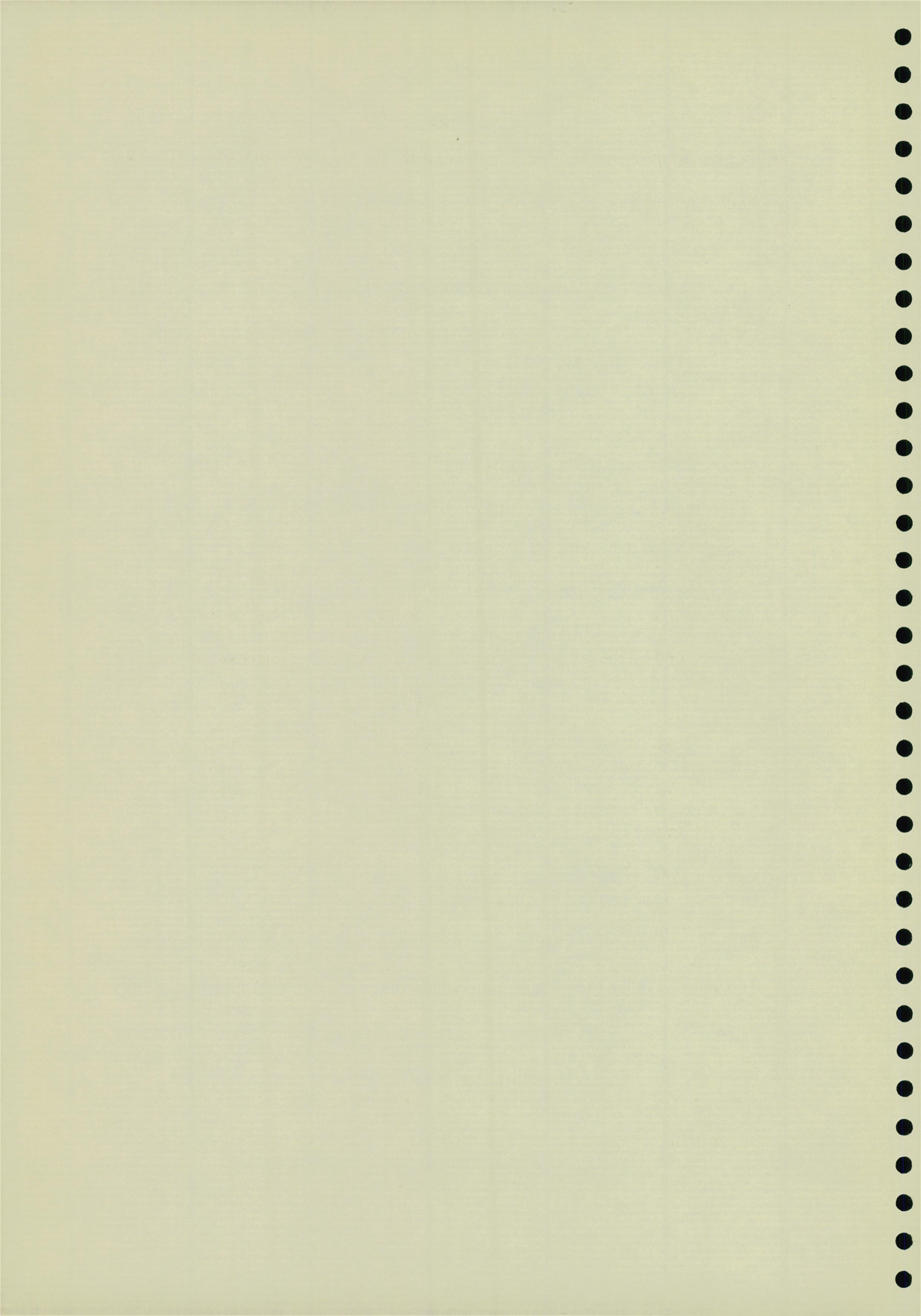
The male figure is a hugely common source for artists from the ancient Greeks to the Renaissance artists who glorified the male form, right up to Pablo Picasso.

The knowledge that Hockney is homosexual helps us to understand and analyse his work, with this knowledge our interpretations of his work can come closer to the truth.

In many ways Hockney became the "token" gay artist. During the 1970's there was a height of sexual re-evaluation and change and the public sought an artist who would fit the shoes of their stereotypical images of gay men. Being from Bradford made him "real", "identifiable", he caused no harm. At a time when it was becoming almost fashionable to accept homosexuality, David Hockney became accepted making him the token gay artist.

But if we are not aware of it, where do we see the homosexual identity in his work? What do we look for?

Hockney longed to use the figure as a subject, but at the height of Abstract Expressionism, to paint the figure would undoubtedly be seen as "anti-modern". The solution to his problem is probably the first sign of the homosexual identity in his work, thus with tremendous sincerity Hockney decided to reinforce and re-define his figure painting by the use of "text".



One of the first pieces where the use of text is employed is the painting We Two Boys Together Clinging

"We two boys together clinging
 one the other never leaving
 Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking, loving."
 (by Walt Whitman)

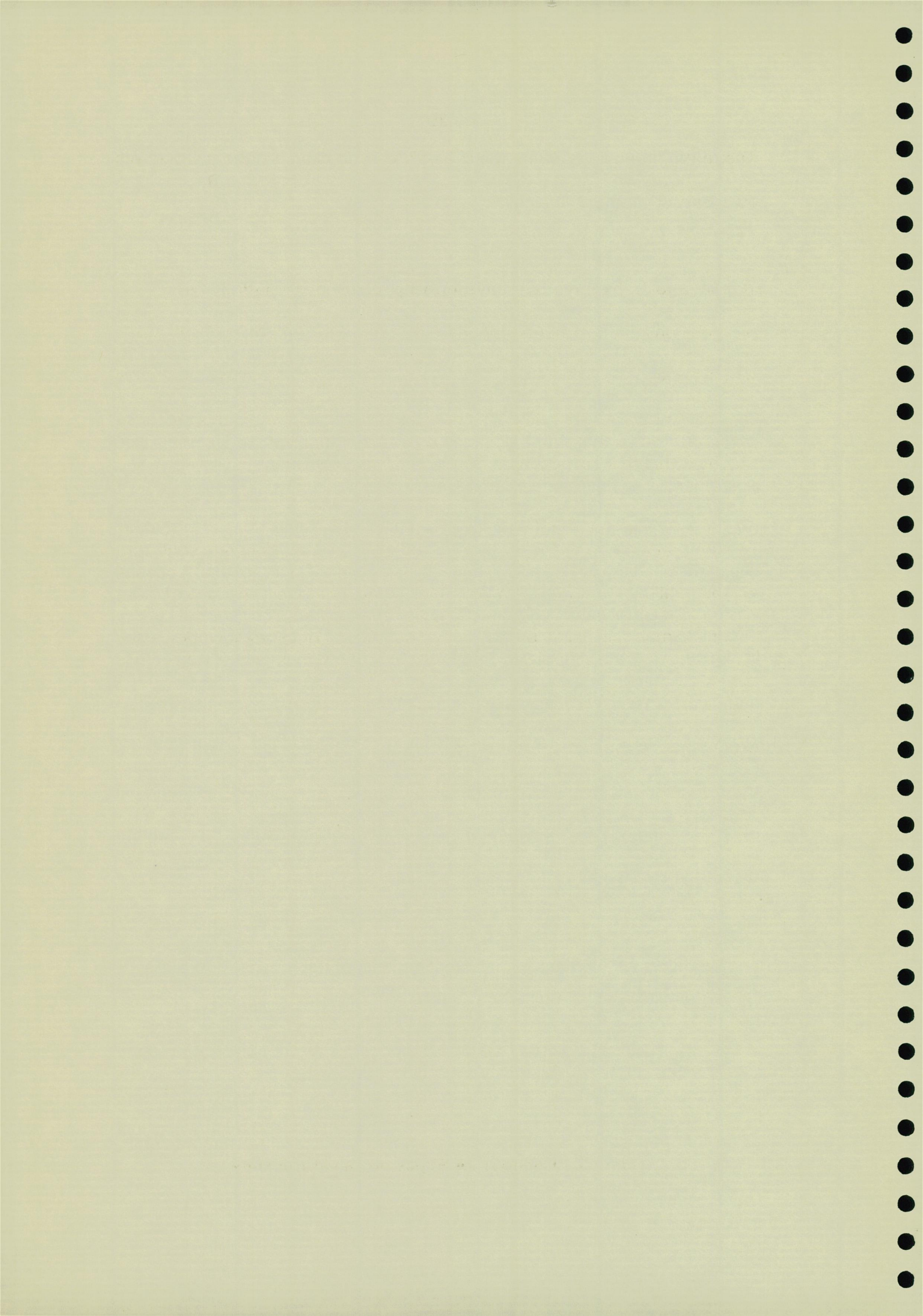
It was from this poem that Hockney drew inspiration for the painting (see illustration). The figures are treated in an extremely simplistic child-like manner, two irregular rectangles form the trunks of the bodies while two simple circles depict the heads. The heads are almost joined together in an act of affectionate kissing. An arm is extended from one figure to the other. The sense of clinging is reinforced by the script. We Two Boys Together Clinging is written across both figures in a semi-circular, unifying manner. A sense of warmth and intimacy exudes from the piece. From this we see that Hockney is starting to come to terms with his sexuality through his paintings. As a student this and his other "coming out" work was perhaps a way of telling us about his private world and his sexual desires

"When artists who are homosexual are denied the means to express their sexuality their art becomes that means."

Emmanuel Cooper

In many ways Hockney's early work is not easy to "read". He often shielded or protected himself behind literary influences the use of text and a semi-

Figure 1 - Handout for Pupils on David Hockney



Abstract Expressionist style he used. So on one hand while his work was open and honest on the other it was suggestive and coy.

In many works by gay artists the formal principles of paintings i.e. space, composition colour etc. become overlooked and the artists response to their sexuality becomes more important. Often the gay artist man feels it is his duty or his role to give public identity to his sexuality. When his sexuality is denied then his art becomes his means of expression.

To sum up we could then say that through his painting Hockney sought to tell the public what it meant to be homosexual. For many, the idea of what a homosexual is, is based on myth or ignorance. In Hockney's work we see the truth.

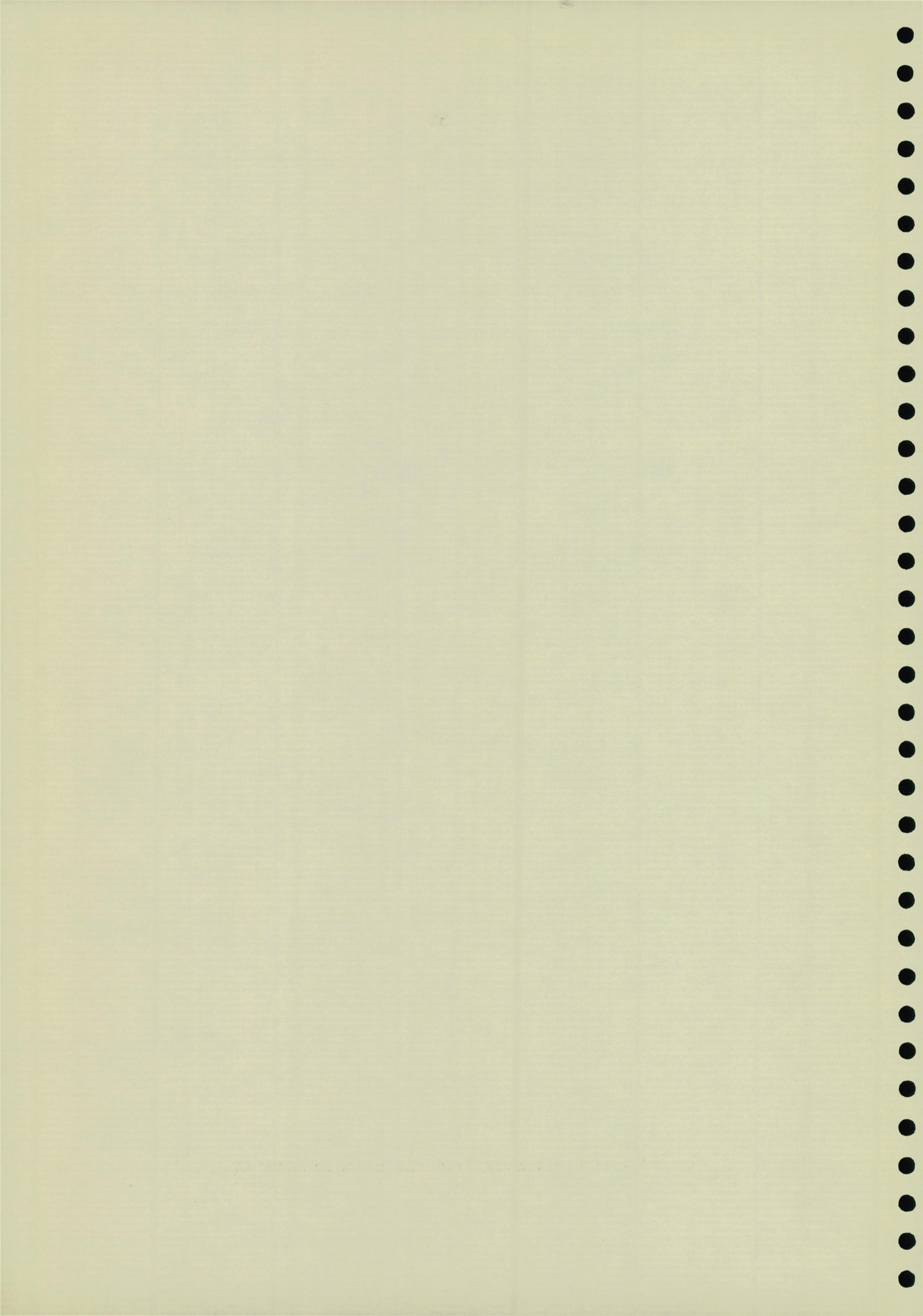
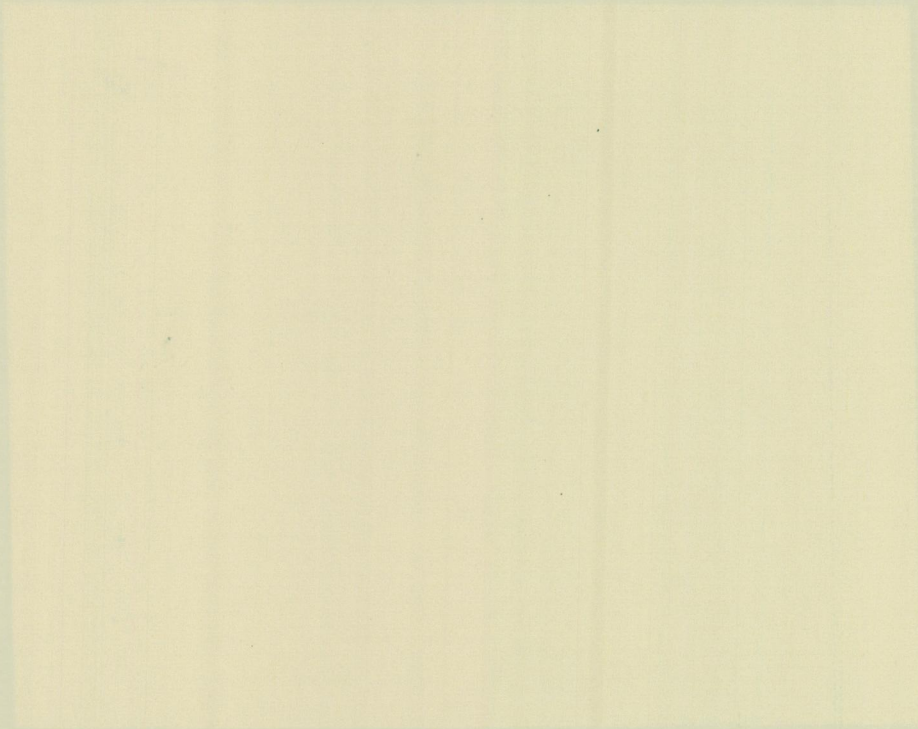




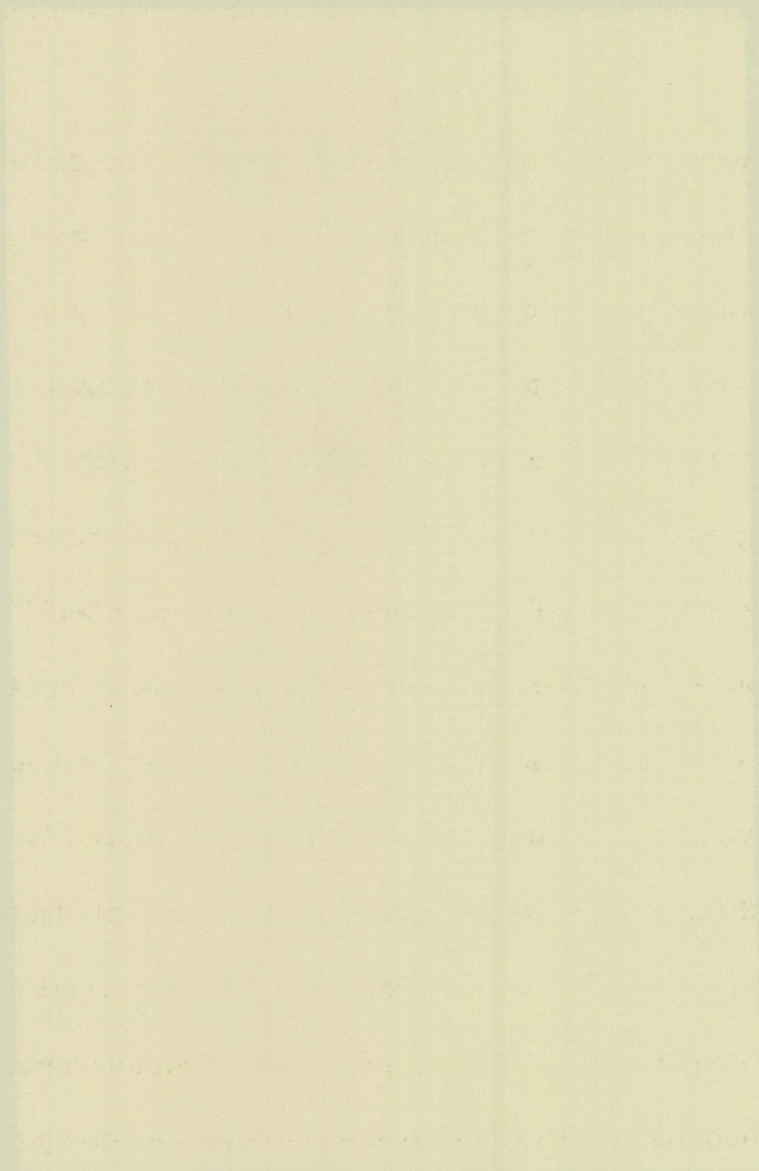
Figure 2 - David Hockney, "We Two Boys Together Clinging"
oil, 1961



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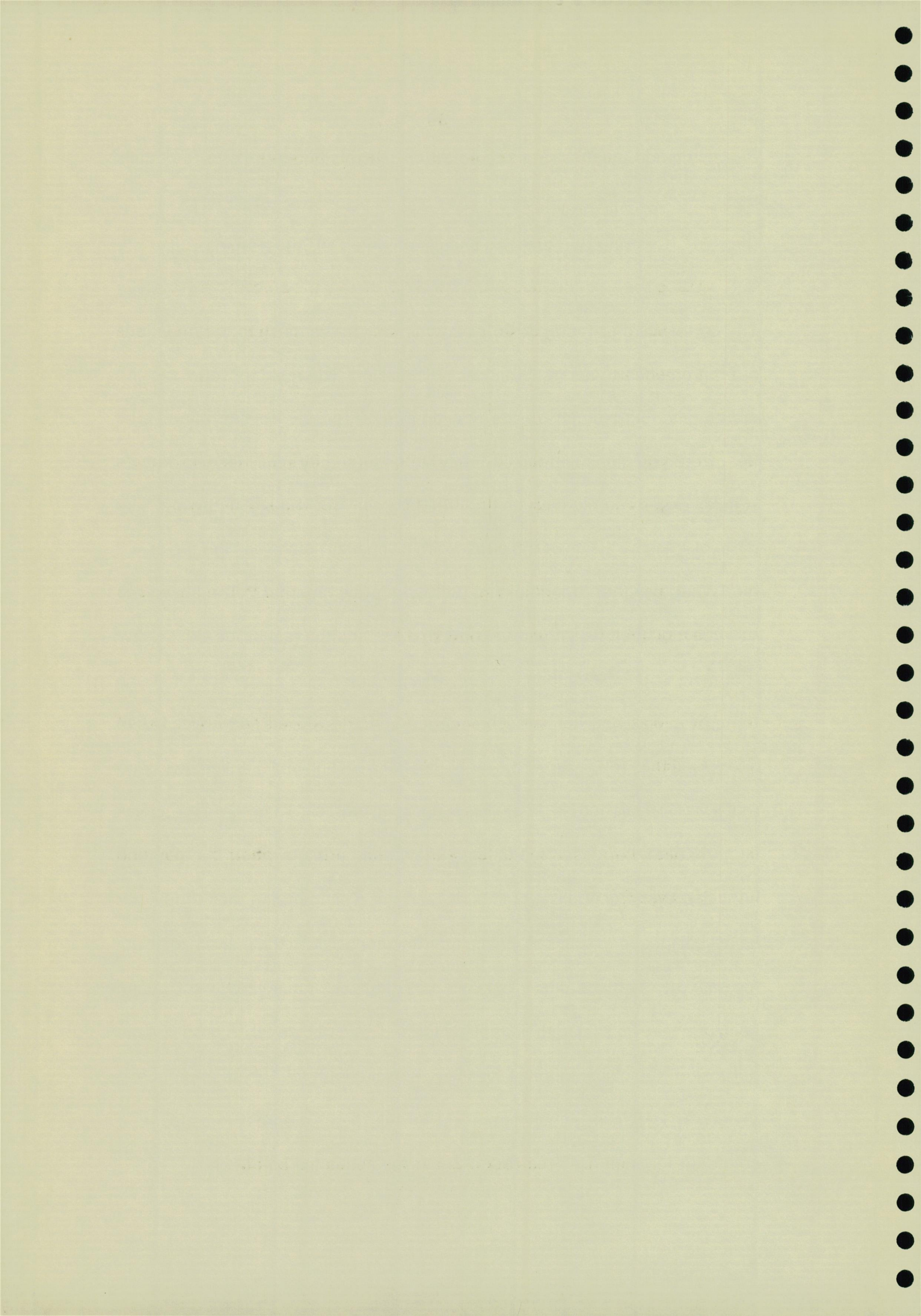


Figure 3 - David Hockney, "Adhesiveness",
oil, 1960



explaining and emphasising key points. I felt this handout gave the pupils a fairly thorough insight into Hockney and his work and would be of help to them in answering the question sheet I prepared for them (F. 4).

The pupils were encouraged to jot down notes in response to the questions but the emphasis was to be on class discussion. The results of this session greatly encouraged me; for the first time my fifth year pupils truly opened up, offered opinions and talked freely. In general they really like Hockney's Adhesiveness commenting on how the figures "interlocked" and were "like parts of a jigsaw". One of the pupils with a "cheeky" smile on her face asked me "what was that 'thing' joining the two figures together?" The answer to this question I felt was crucial. I knew that she and the rest of the class knew that it was obviously a penis - they were testing me! I asked her what she thought it was and her smile broadened and she replied "a hand". I then addressed the group as a whole repeating her question and I replied by saying that it was a penis and Hockney was suggesting oral sex. There were no giggles, laughter or embarrassed red faces. I knew had I not answered the question honestly, then the pupils would have read this as something that should not be talked about or discussed. Being open and honest with the pupils had helped me gain their respect I feel. To leave that question unanswered would have been both patronising to their intelligence and defeating in terms of the whole purpose of the class. Indeed I was very pleased with my whole approach in the class. It was extremely important for me to come across in a clear and confident manner. This the first class in the sequence had been



Adhesiveness, oil, 1960 - David Hockney

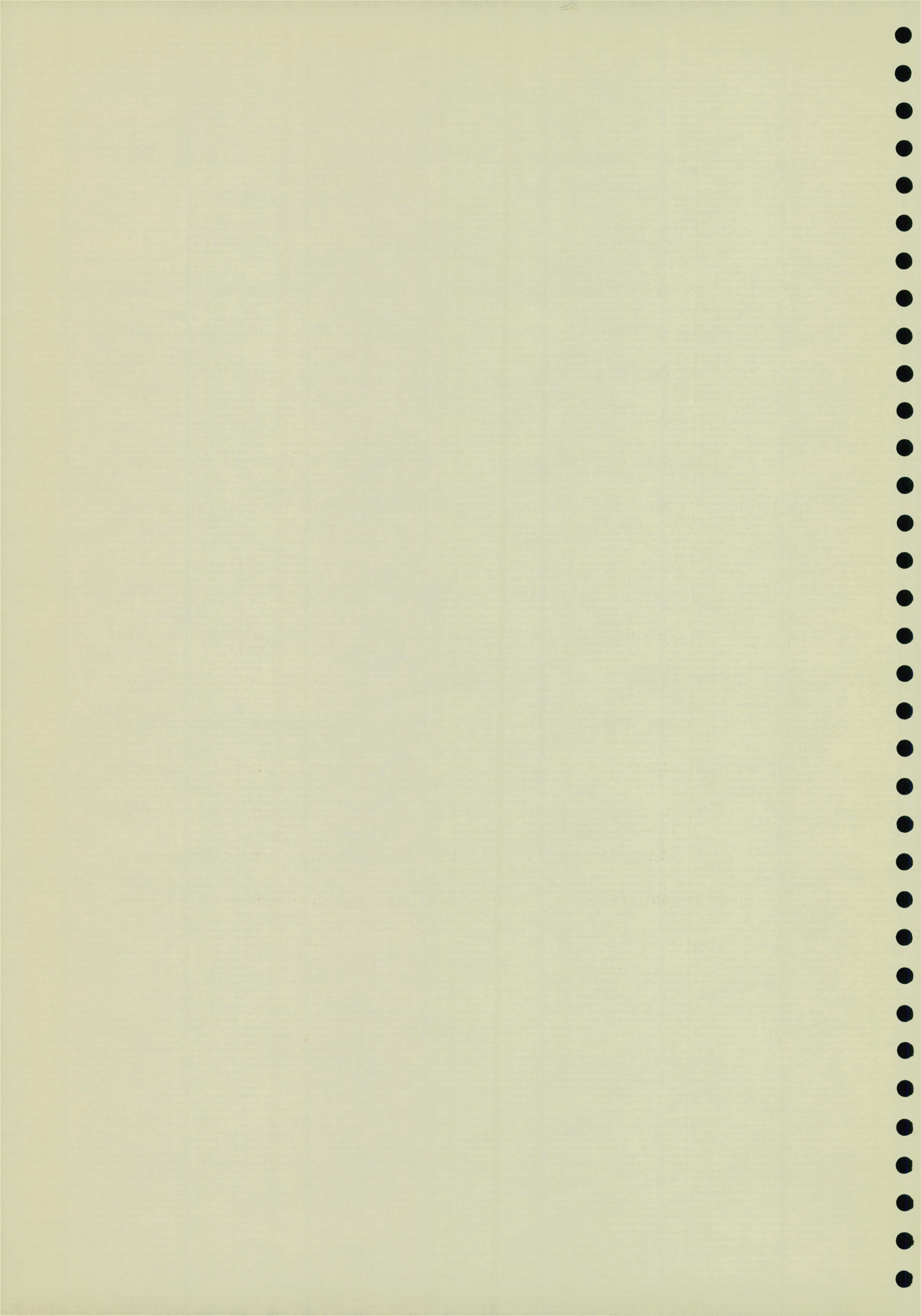
- 1 Using the appropriate colours shade in roughly the areas where Hockney has used (a) Warm colours (b) cold colours. What effect do they have on each other?

- 2 Do you feel the objects to the right and fore of the picture are recognisable as human forms? If so why so, if not why not?

- 3 The title of the painting is Adhesiveness. How do you think this is suggested in the painting and why?

- 4 Do you think this painting is informed by Hockney's sexuality. Why? Discuss.

- 5 What (a) Appeals to you, (B) Does not appeal to you about this painting and why?



in my opinion a great success. The group of untalkative, reserved pupils had finally woken up.

The second class of the sequence dealt with the artist Egon Schiele. This time I changed my approach slightly. Each pupil was given an illustration of The Family (F. 5) and a question sheet (F. 6). No information was given to the pupils until after the questions were answered. I felt that this approach would challenge the pupils even further, it would also pose the question - do pupils need a lot of information on an artist before they discuss his/her work?

The approach worked well, the answers the pupils gave were well thought out and not just "shots in the dark". I encouraged the pupils to elaborate on their answers and while I at all times stressed that every one's interpretation was valid, the pupils actually felt that having background information would have made answering of the questions a lot easier. A handout on Schiele (F. 7) was then given and I talked it through with the group - a group who now in the space of two classes had become animated, interested and involved. All my work, I felt, had been so worthwhile.

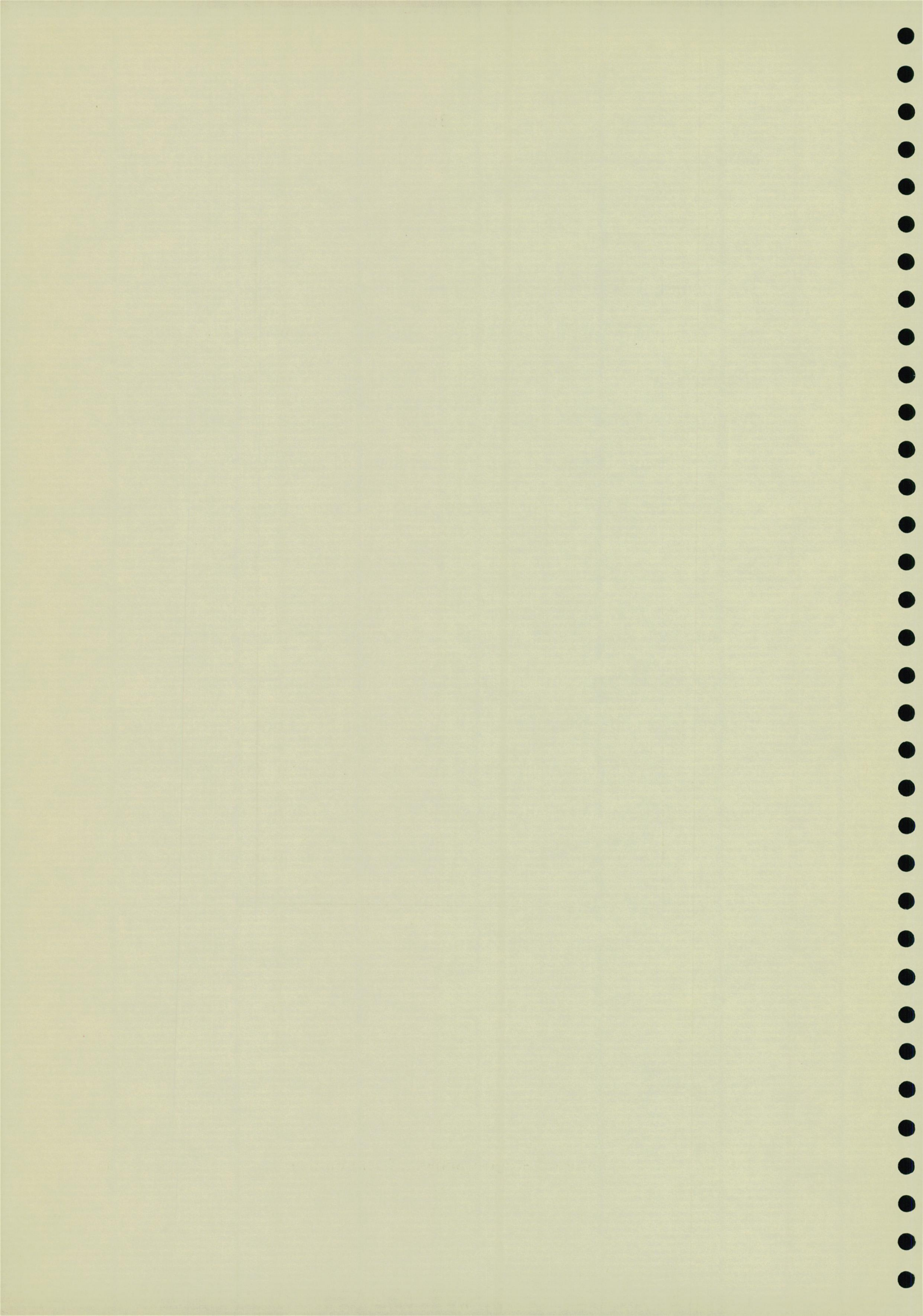
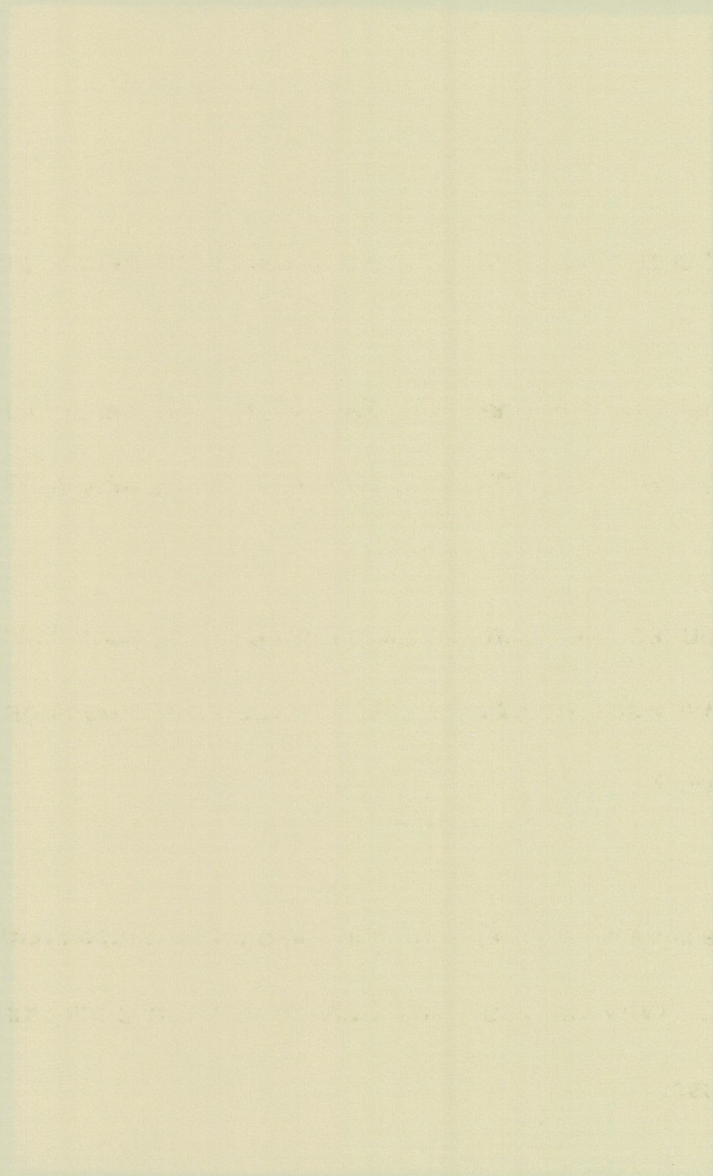


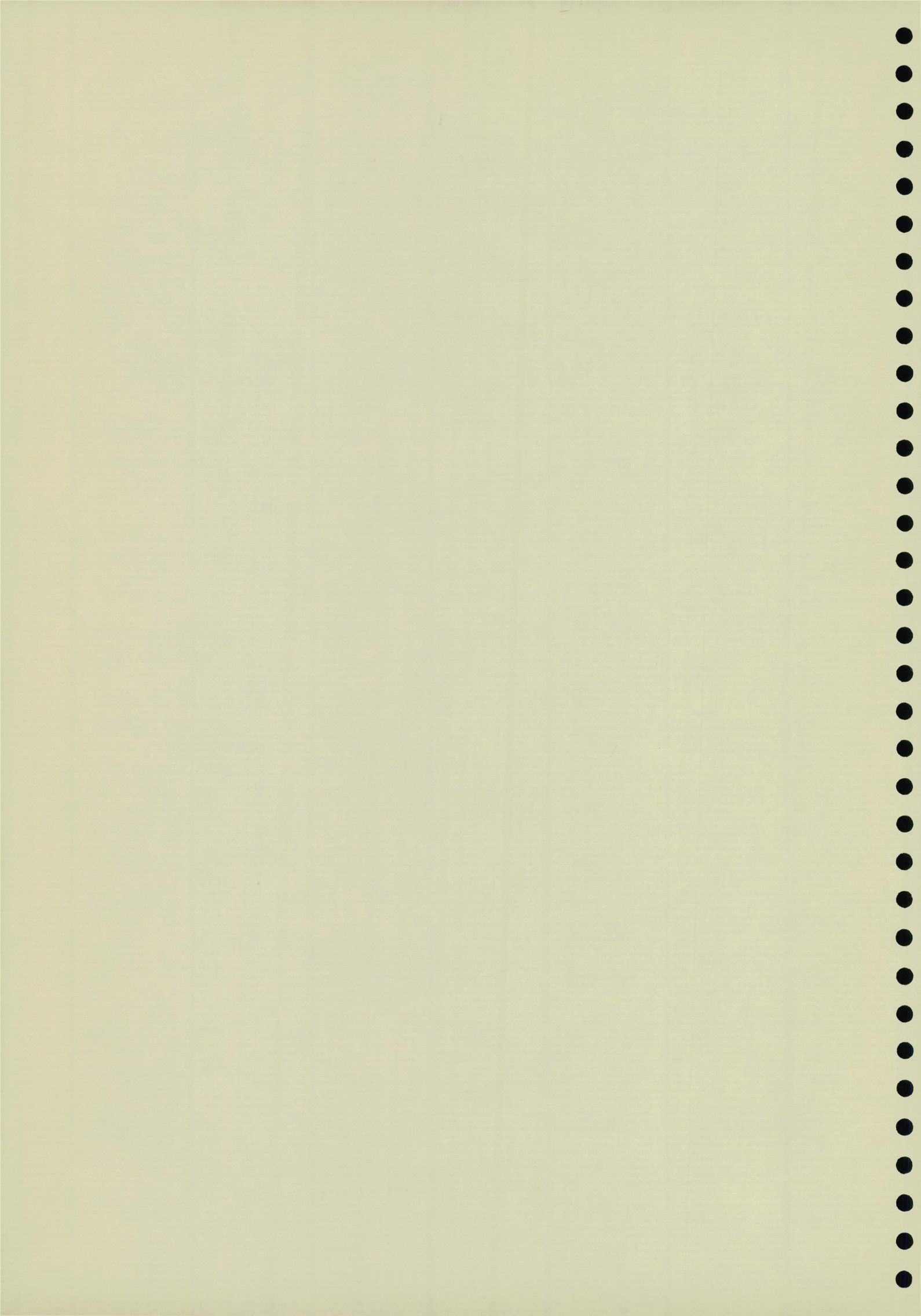


Figure 5 - Egon Schiele, "The Family",
oil, 1918.



The Family, oil, 1918 - Egon Schiele

- 1 What sort of mood does the colours in this painting create? Explain.
- 2 The painting is entitled "The Family", do you feel Schiele has established a sense of "family"? If so why so? If not why not?
- 3 Do you feel the figures in the painting were posed like this on purpose? If so why so? If not why not? What does the positioning of the heads suggest?
- 4 There is very little happening in the background as with all of Schiele's work. Why do you think Schiele left the background so unfilled? Discuss.
- 5 What (a) Appeals to you (b) Does not appeal to you about this painting and why?

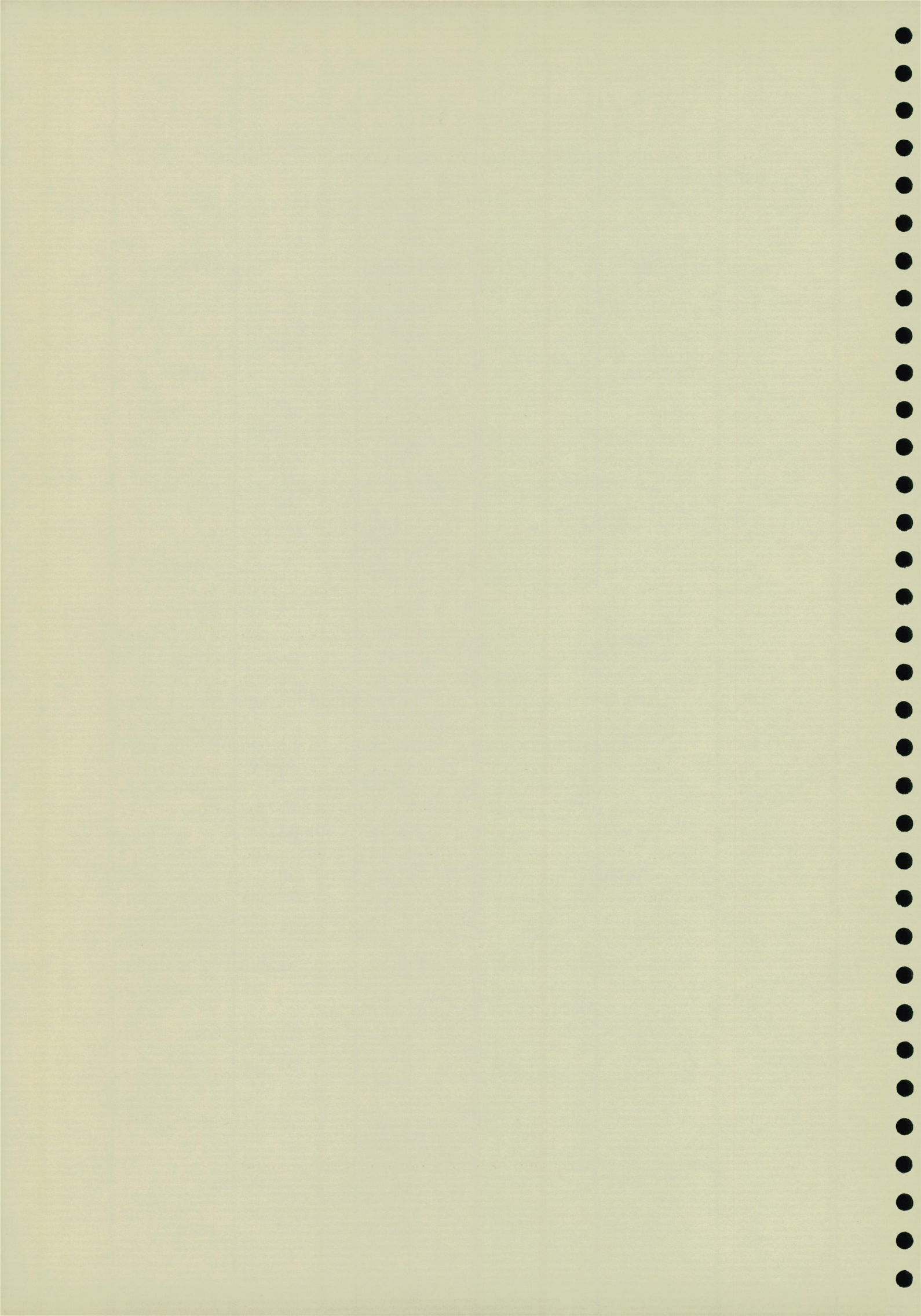


5th Years - Margaret Aylward Community College
21/04/1994
Egon Schiele

Egon Schiele was born in 1890 in a small town outside Vienna named Tulln. His family had strong connections with the railways and his first childhood drawings were of trains.

Schiele was a weakly and silent child. A lot of his short life was pained, firstly by the death of his father who he was very close to, then his mother and finally the death of his lover Wally Neuzil. Due to this death was to become a major theme in his work as he says himself, it shaped him as an artist.

Schiele's father died when Egon was fifteen, the following year he went to the Vienna Academy. From then on in he employed the figure as a source for his work. Schiele is best known for his self-portraits of which he made many. There has long been a highly established tradition of portraiture, but Schiele's work could be seen as the final process in its evolution. Schiele's work concentrated on the soul and the innerself and in that it became more than just a recording of external features. Schiele's hundreds of self-portraits suggest that he was narcissistic, certainly he did scrutinise and observe himself closely but a lot of portraits are far from flattering.

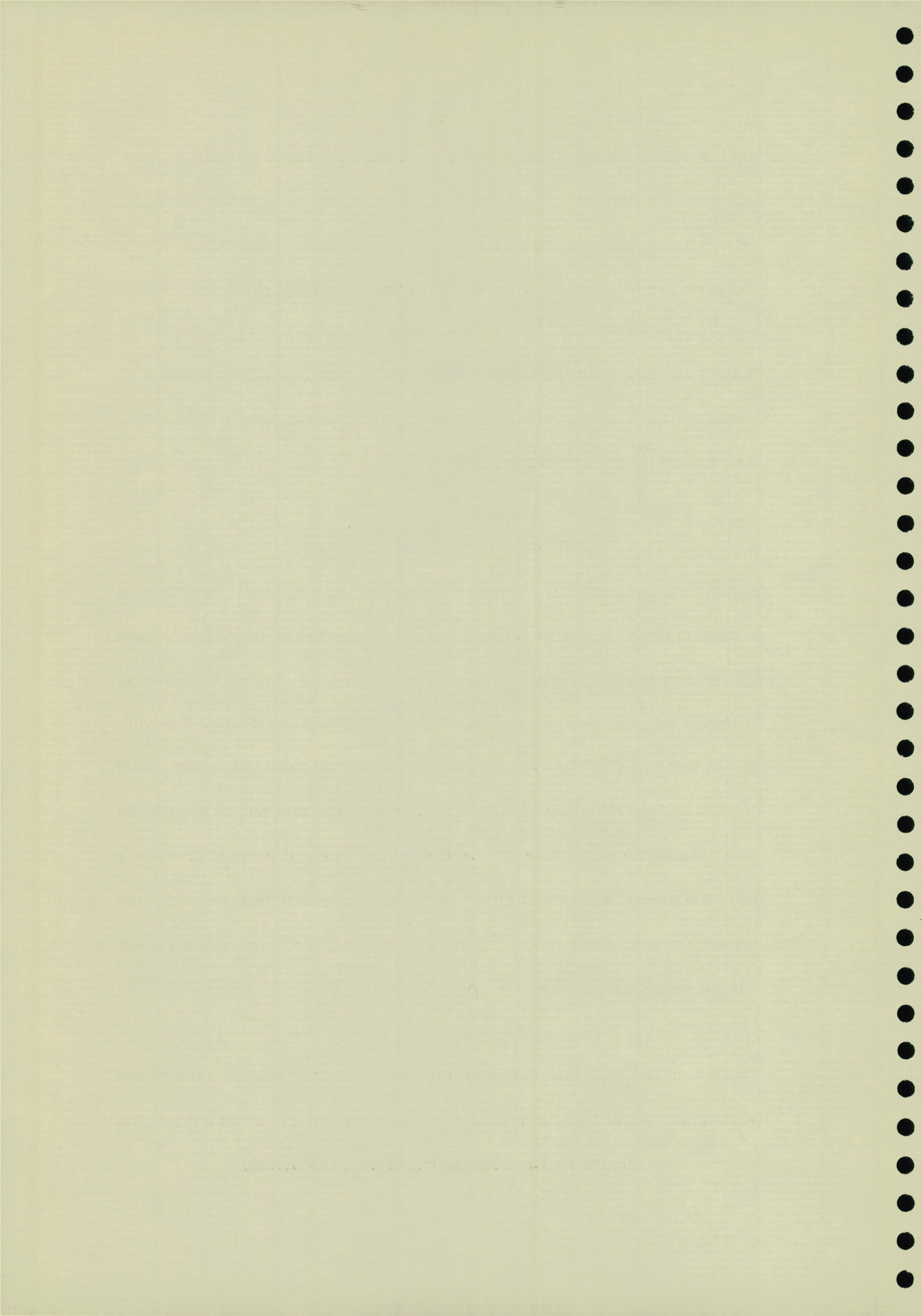


Schiele was a master draughtsman, his work expressed through a highly individual line while often distorting the body captures its form and "realness".

Schiele's use of line is both frail and clenched. It is often quite sharp hardly ever straight or rounded. His lines become heavier or lighter depending on the emphasis he uses. He always drew his figures from models and painting was done from memory. But his assured and controlled use of line clarify his position as genius draughtsman.

Schiele became very influenced by the artist Gustav Klimt who was four years his senior. He adapted his principles, above all the emphasis placed on the painted surface. However, Klimt's work was very decorative while Schiele substituted this for bleak backgrounds where only the figure had importance. Both Klimt and Schiele painted the nude figure and while a lot of the work Klimt produced was seen as erotic it could also be termed voyeuristic. It is not just the sheer nakedness of the work but the positioning of the figures which makes Schiele's treatment of the nude different to Klimt's. In Klimt's work the models suggest that they are alone absorbed in their own thoughts and desires and this is why we become voyeurs, we are seeing a private world but we are unseen onlookers. In Schiele's work however the figures' poses looked arranged their bodies look defenceless, they are hardly ever relaxed. It is almost like they have been put on show. And because of the artificial poses and the fact that frequently the models look directly at us argues that

Figure 7 - Handout for Pupils on Egon Schiele



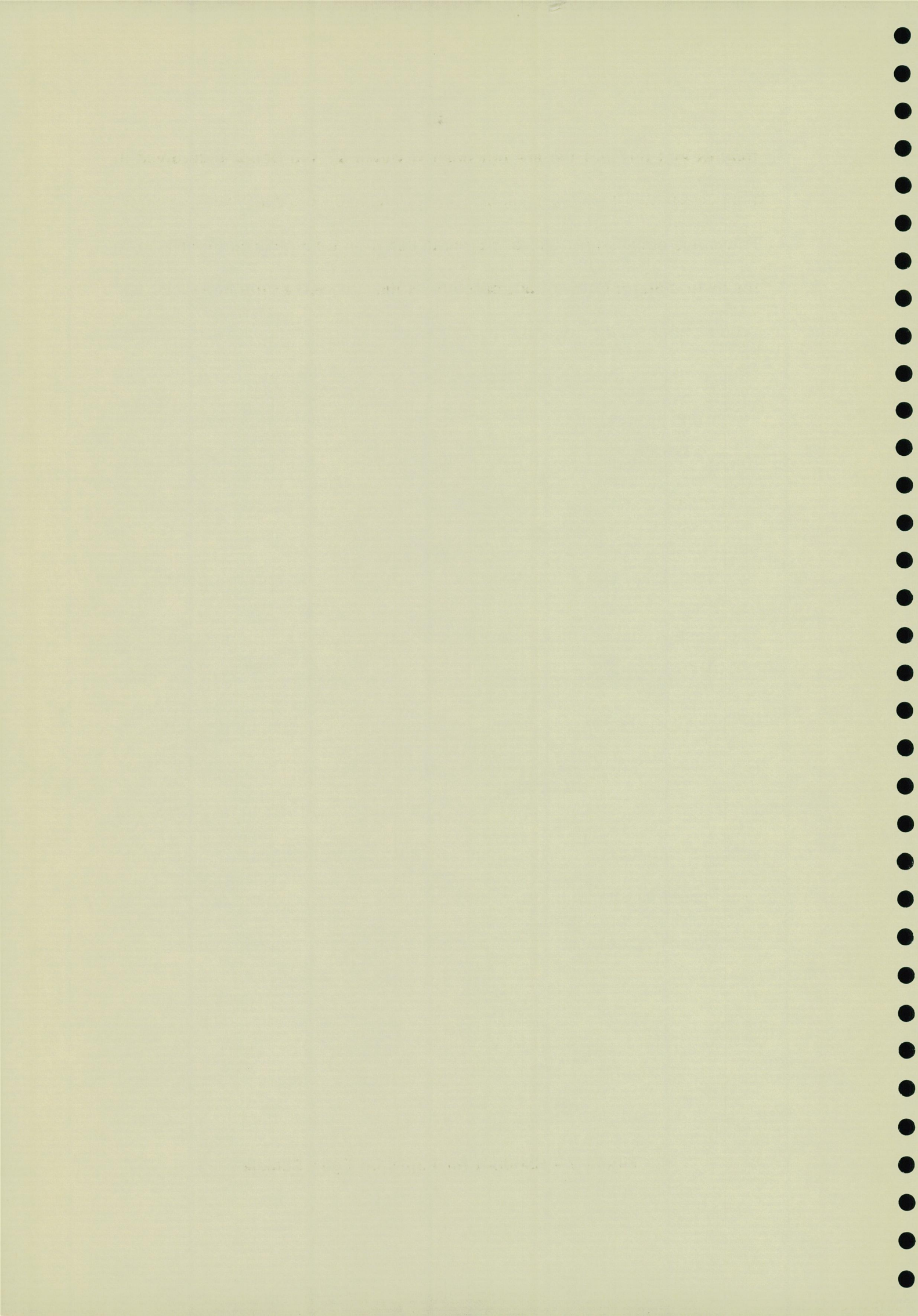
they do not possess the same sense of voyeurism that Klimt's do.

However, because his use of the model was so open and daring it led to much trouble for Schiele. The society of the time were very moralistic and prudish about sexuality and the sheer aggressive "nakedness" of his nudes caused much offence. So much so that in 1912 his erotic drawings were seized and he was jailed for 3 weeks for displaying "immoral drawings" where they could be seen by children. Schiele had used children as models in his work and because of the nature of his work he was charged with sexually abusing children, the charges were however dropped.

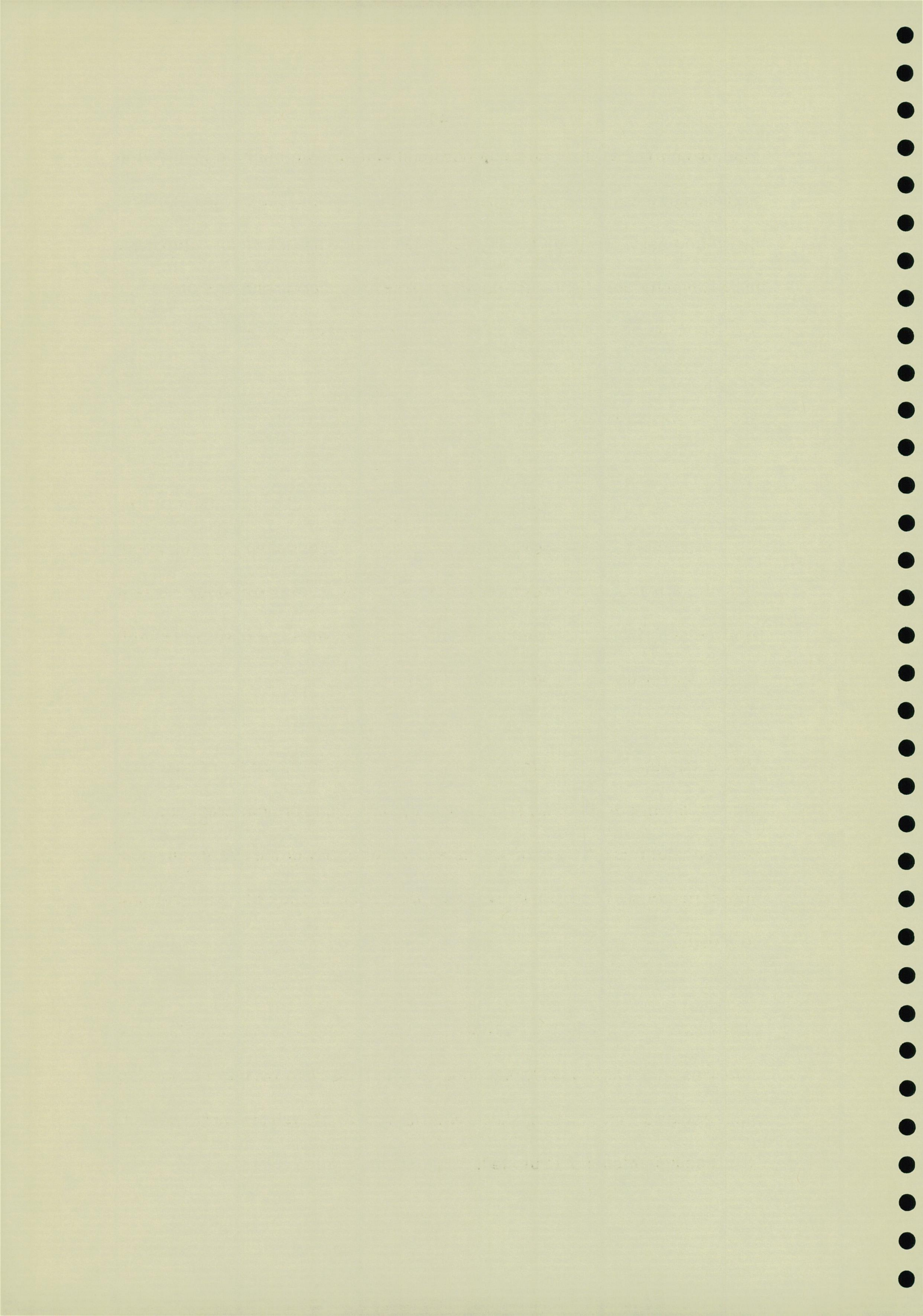
The piece entitled "The Embrace" was painted in 1915. It depicts himself and his wife Edith and was painted shortly after the death of his former lover Wally Neuzil. The large staring eyes suggest pain and angst and the puppet like almost rag doll features of the figures suggest pain and sorrow. Egon depicts his wife holding him. This suggests that only she can take away the pain of losing his lover. The "shock quality" of this piece lies not in Schiele's semi-nakedness but in the stare of the two figures. It is almost as they knew we are looking at them. This "tenseness" in his work is reinforced by the unease we as viewers feel.

To sum up it could be said that the nakedness of Schiele's drawings and paintings is not what causes them to be startling but the positioning of the

Figure 7 - Handout for Pupils on Egon Schiele



models and the fact we are not unseen viewers. We become involved in Schiele's thoughts, feelings, and desires. Schiele's work deals with sexuality, death and pain. Through his ingenious use of line he has clearly shown us his inner self. He has in fact bared his soul. He died at the age of 28.



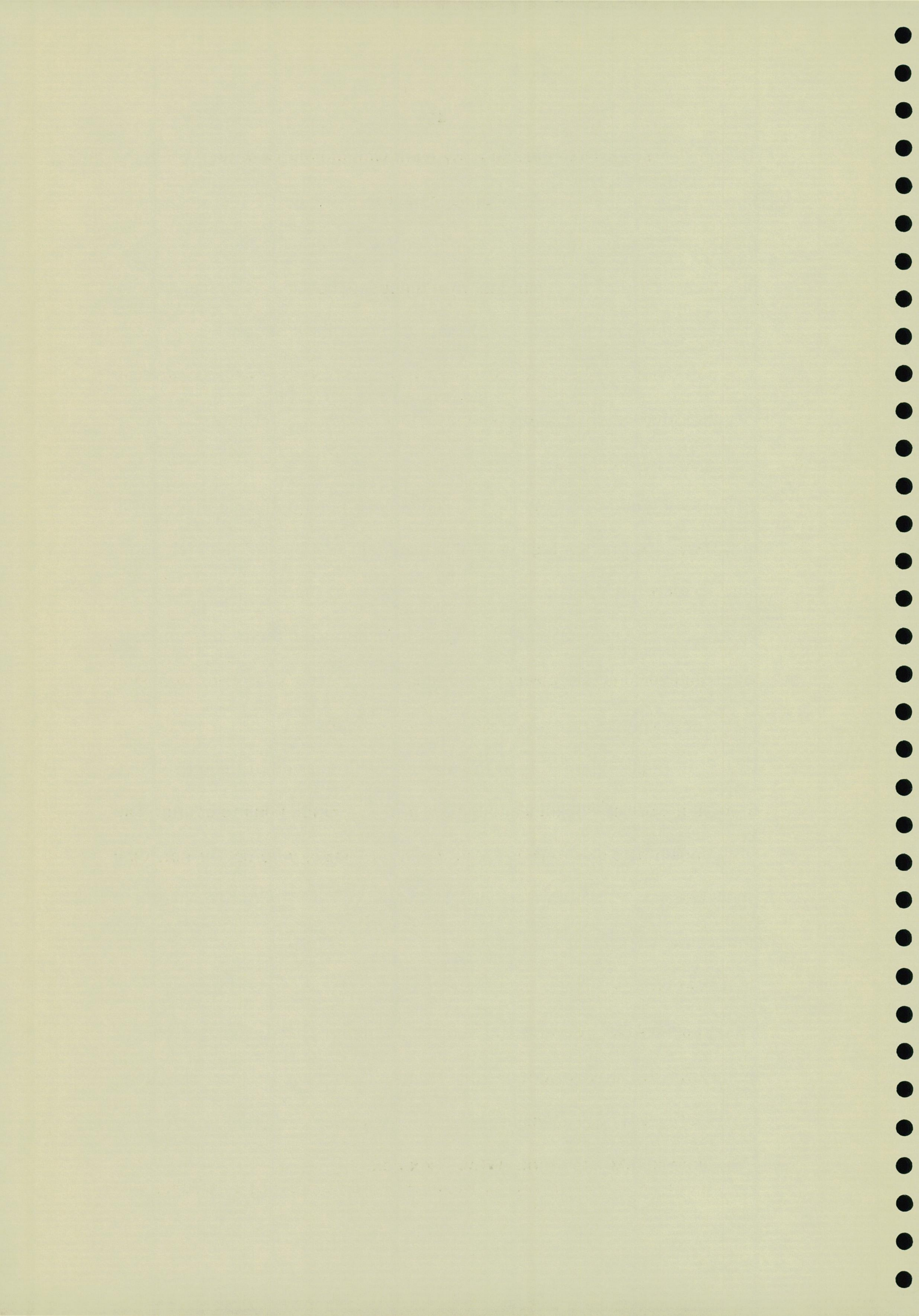
The final two classes of the sequence dealt with drawing/painting where the pupils used the theme of "the self". The first two classes encouraged and motivated the pupils to pursue their practical work while the second two were practical in nature. I will not deal with these practical classes because I feel it is from the questionnaire (F. 8) that I can best base my analysis.

Analysis of Pupils Reactions

Towards the end of the sequence I gave each pupil a questionnaire to fill out. From their responses I wished to ascertain exactly how they felt about dealing with the subject of sexuality in art, was it embarrassing? Was it worthwhile? Was it relevant to them? In many ways the results are both surprising yet ultimately very encouraging.

Of the 16 pupils who returned the questionnaire not one of them said they found the work of Hockney and Schiele embarrassing or uninteresting. The limitations of this dissertation do not allow me to fully detail every individual pupils' response, therefore I have selected a cross section of responses and comments.

When asked "Did you find the subject matter of David Hockney's work embarrassing in any way?", one pupil replied, "No, because there is nothing really embarrassing just because he was homosexual". While another replied, "No, because it's all part of life".



5th Years - Margaret Aylward Community College

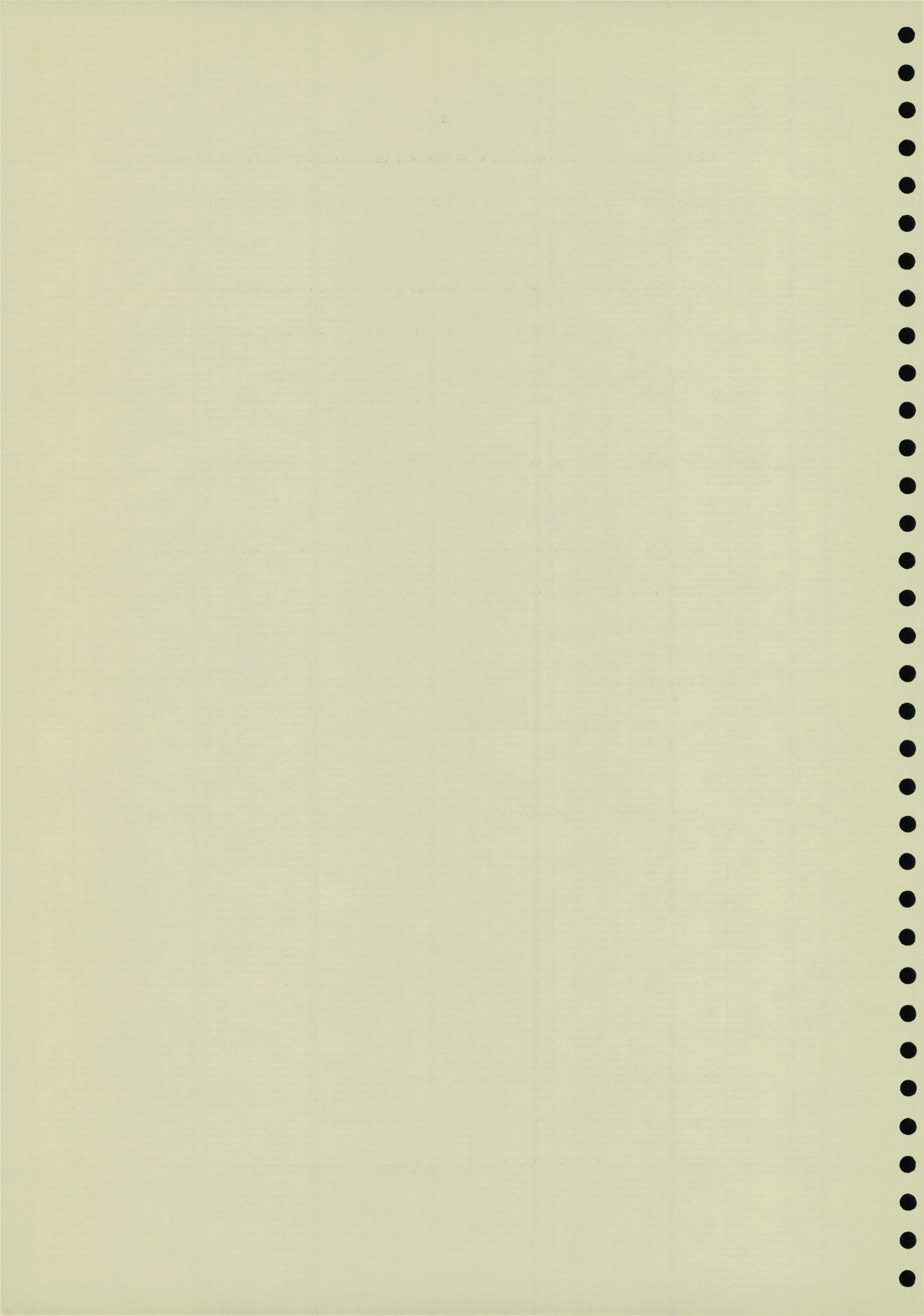
Questionnaire

Please answer all questions

- 1 In the first two classes we dealt with artists whose work is informed by their sexuality. Did you find their work
- (a) Interesting []
- (b) Embarrassing []
- (c) Uninteresting []
- Tick 1 box.
- 2 Did you find the subject matter of David Hockney's work embarrassing in any way? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- 3 Egon Schiele's work featured nude bodies. Did you find this embarrassing when discussing his work in the class? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- 4 Do you feel that these classes gave you
- (a) A very good insight []
- (b) A good insight []
- (c) A poor insight []

Into the Artists work. Why. Tick box.

Figure 8 - Questionnaire for Pupils based on Sequence of Classes



- 5 Before these classes, did you think that sexuality played a big part in the work of some artists? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

- 6 Do you think it is important to know a lot of information about the artist before you can understand his/her work? If so, why so? If not, why not?

- 7 In the first two classes, did you find it easier working in groups? Why?

- 8 Why do you think some people would find the subject of an artists sexuality embarrassing to talk about in class?

- 9 What did you
 - (a) Most enjoy about the classes?

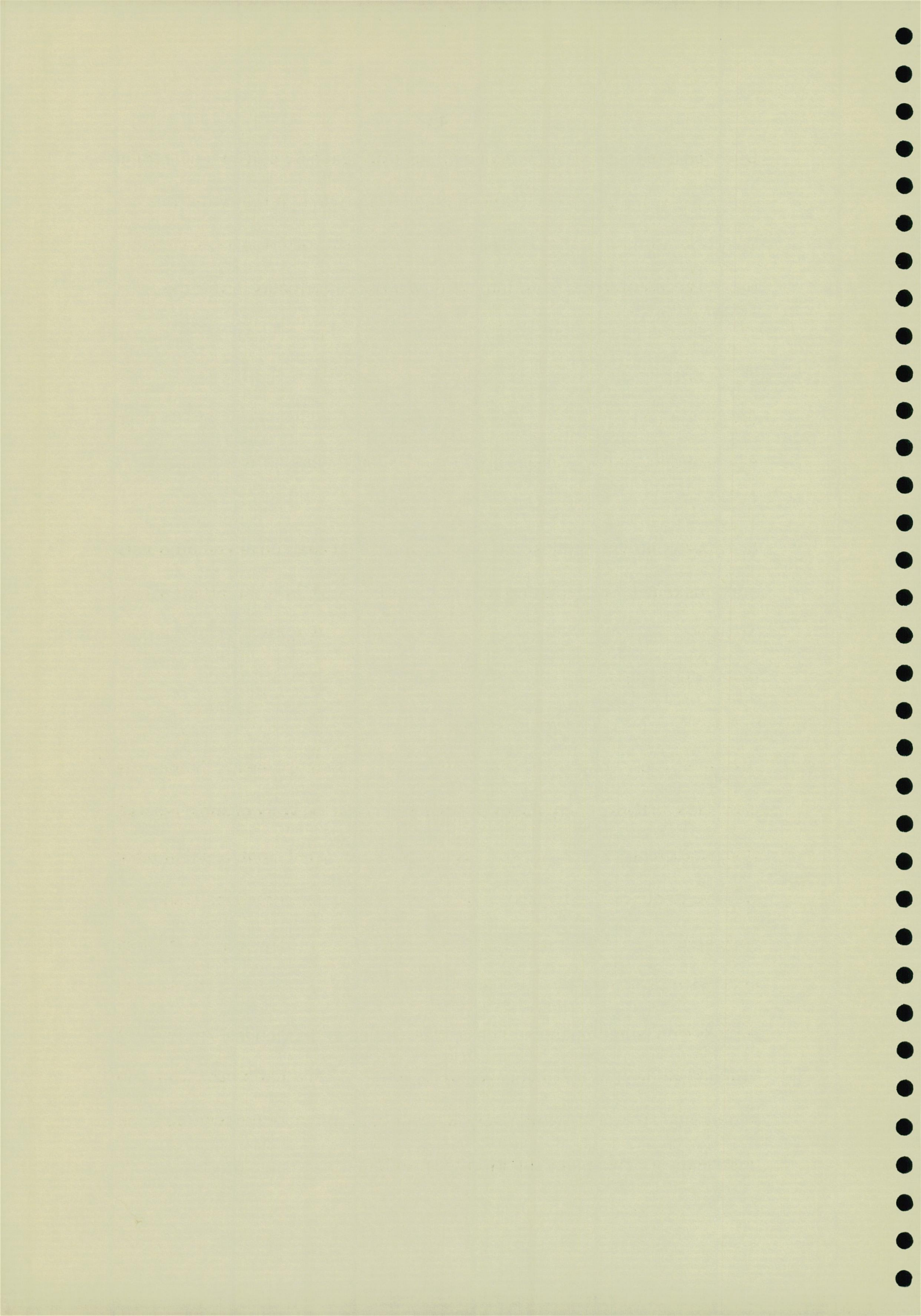
 - (b) Least enjoy about the classes?

All fully completed questionnaires to be handed in on Monday 7th

You do not need to write your name on this.

Please answer questions honestly and truthfully.

Figure 8 - Questionnaire for Pupils based on Sequence of Classes

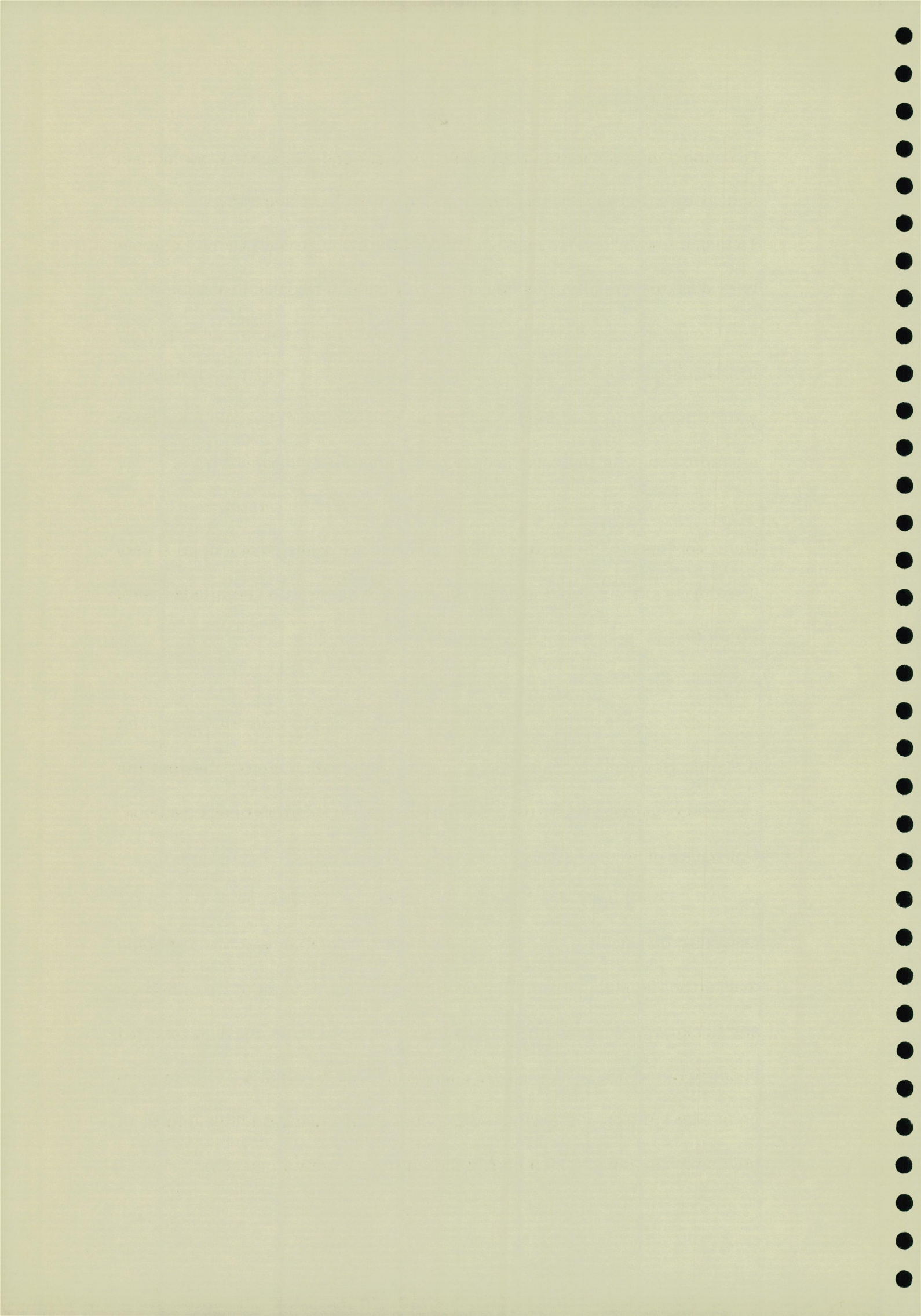


Question 3 received slightly varying responses. "Egon Schiele's work featured nude bodies. Did you find this embarrassing when discussing his work in class?" To this, one pupil honestly replied, "Yes a little because it was a male teacher who was talking about this and there was (sic) all females in the class".

While another pupil greatly encouraged me by saying, "At the start of the year if the teacher told me I would be doing nudes (sic) I would have been embarrassed. But the class is easy going and not embarrassing".

Question 4 asked the question, "Do you feel the classes gave you (a) A very good insight; (b) A good insight; (c) A poor insight, into the artists work. 15 of the pupils ticked box B. When I asked them about this they said they would liked to have been more illustrations.

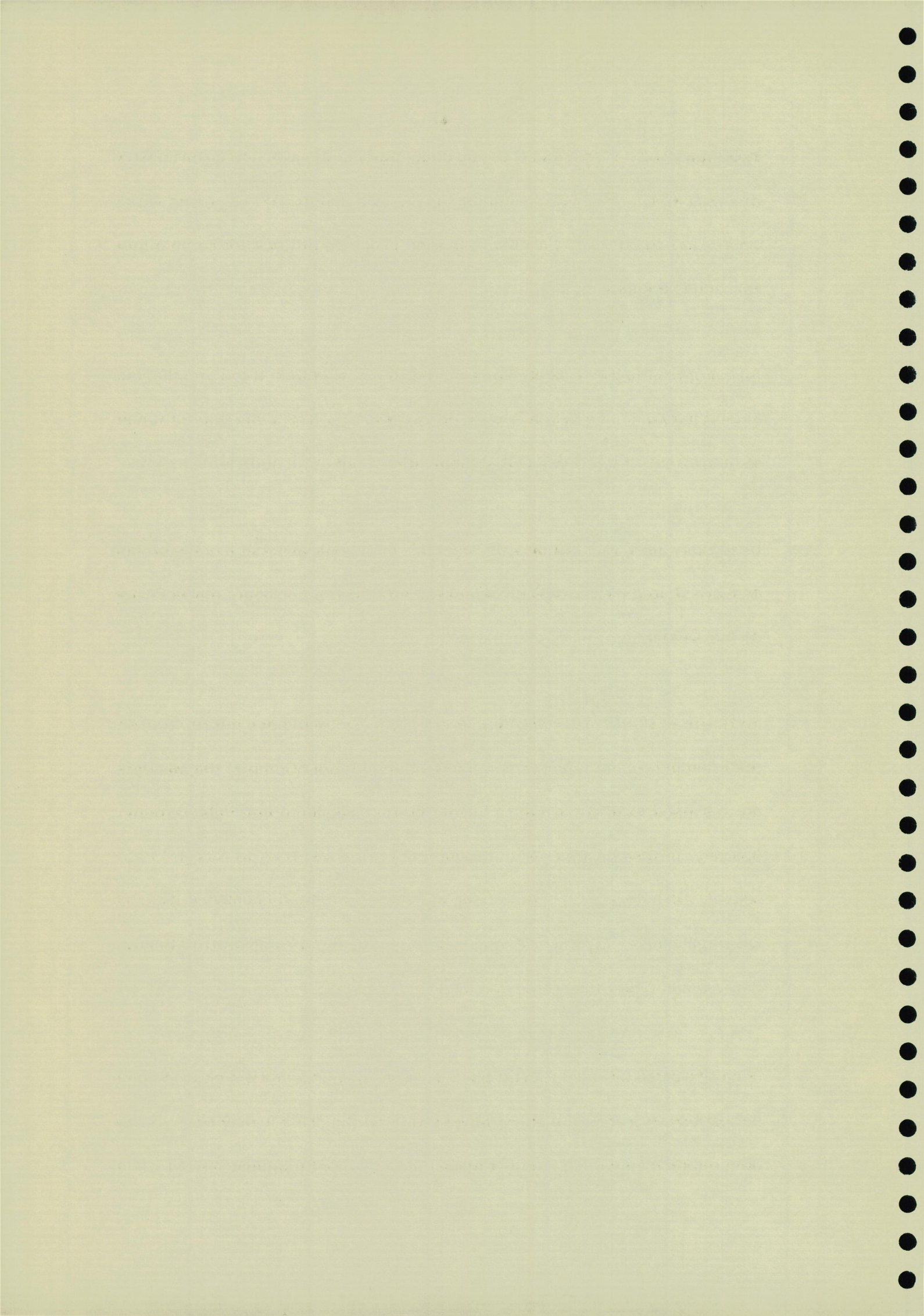
Answers to question 5 showed some very interesting ideas. "Before the class, did you think that sexuality played a big part in the work of some artists?" One pupil's reply emphasises what Lesley Holly suggested - that the information we give to our pupils should not be based in sexist stereotypes. One pupil answered by saying "I thought it had a small part in their work. As in some male artists depicting beautiful women, but I never thought of it like Schiele and Hockney". While another pupil's response to the same question was "No, because before these classes we never went into an artist's background in great detail at all and therefore I was never confronted with having to think how sexuality could play a part in their art".



From the pupils' responses to the first five questions I believe that the subject of sexuality is not embarrassing for the pupils if discussed in a sensitive yet open and honest way. I also believe that it may be difficult for some pupils to discuss the subject simply because they never have had the chance to or have never been encouraged to before. Sexuality therefore, has well and truly been kept "outside the school gates". I also discovered that the very limited access they did have to information on sexually based art work was confined to heterosexist stereotypes. A male painting a beautiful nude female. I fully accept that due to limitations of time, gender inequality in art practice cannot be feasibly dealt with but to counteract this I firmly believe that a cross-section of work should be shown and discussed so that the pupils are made aware of the existence of all human experiences.

To question 6, the majority of pupils felt it necessary to have information on the artist in order to help them understand their work. Some of the answers given suggest that to avoid the issue of the artist's background limits the pupil's ability or indeed desire to understand the work.

One pupil replied, "Yes I do. Because you want to know what kind of a person they are and where they came from and what their background was like because artists tend to draw about what happened to them in their life". While another pupil answered by saying, "Yes, because some paintings are not clear to some people on what they are about so by studying the artist it may help you to understand their work". Another pupil quite intelligently suggested that while



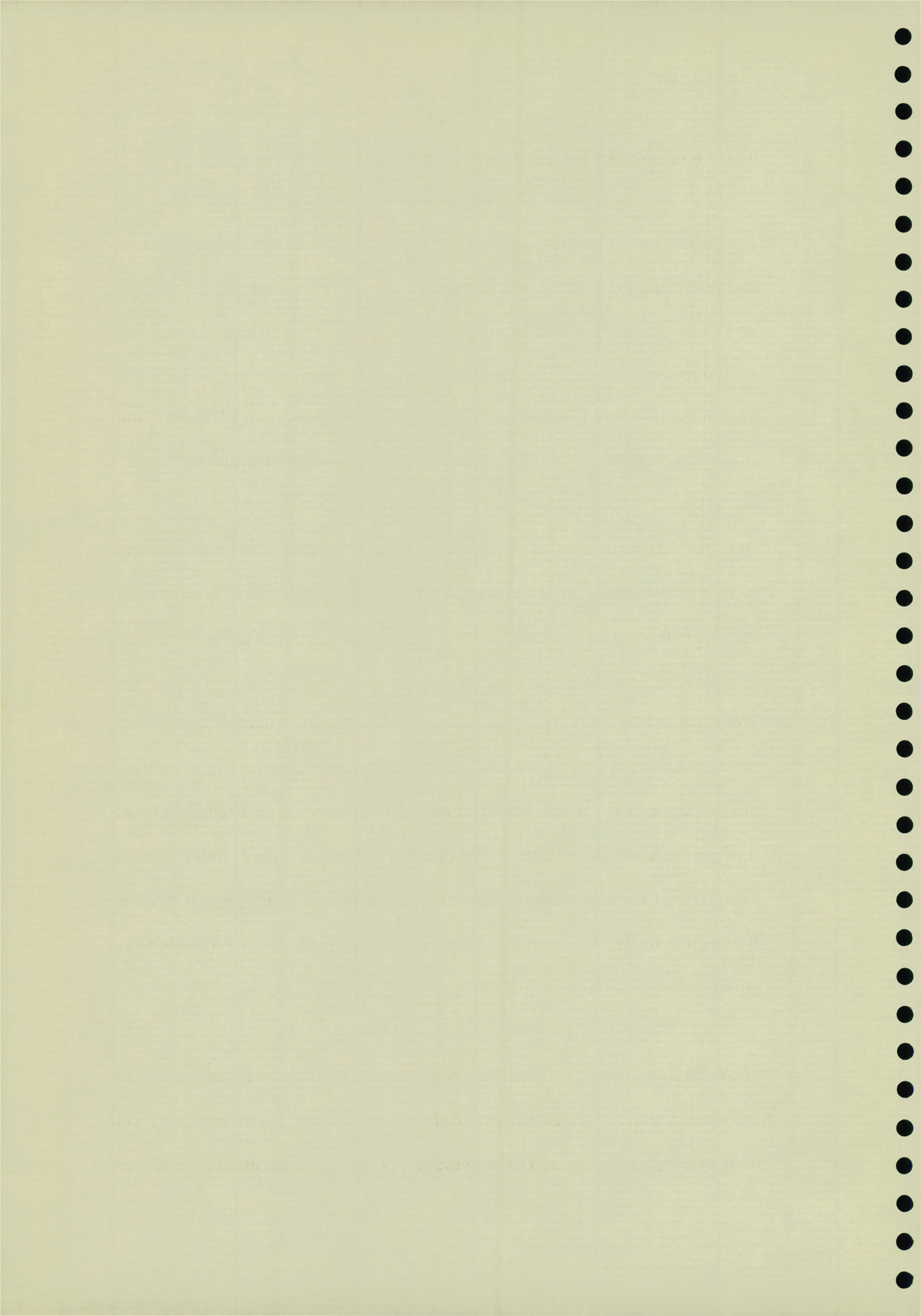
information on an artist can help you understand their work it does not follow that you will appreciate it. As she says, "To understand their work it is sometimes better to know what the artist is about, but to appreciate it you just need to look at it".

All the pupils found it easier working in groups, it helped them share ideas and opinions. It also helped the more reserved pupils to give their input and in general made them feel less anxious about talking in front of the class.

One pupil replied to question 7 by saying, "Yes, it was easier to work in groups as we exchanged views and ideas and we often feel embarrassed and nervous on our own".

From the answers I received to question 8, it has become clear to me that pupils would be embarrassed about discussing sexuality simply because they are not used to it. It is a subject that is often closeted and hidden away. It is not surprising therefore that pupils will not know how to react. When sexuality is hidden, and kept outside the classroom, then I believe it lessens the pupil's ability to deal with it in everyday life. Not to deal with sexuality, in my opinion, is to make it taboo.

"I would think the only reason people would find this embarrassing would be because they are not used to dealing with this subject and often don't know how they are supposed to act" replied one pupil. Her response sums up the



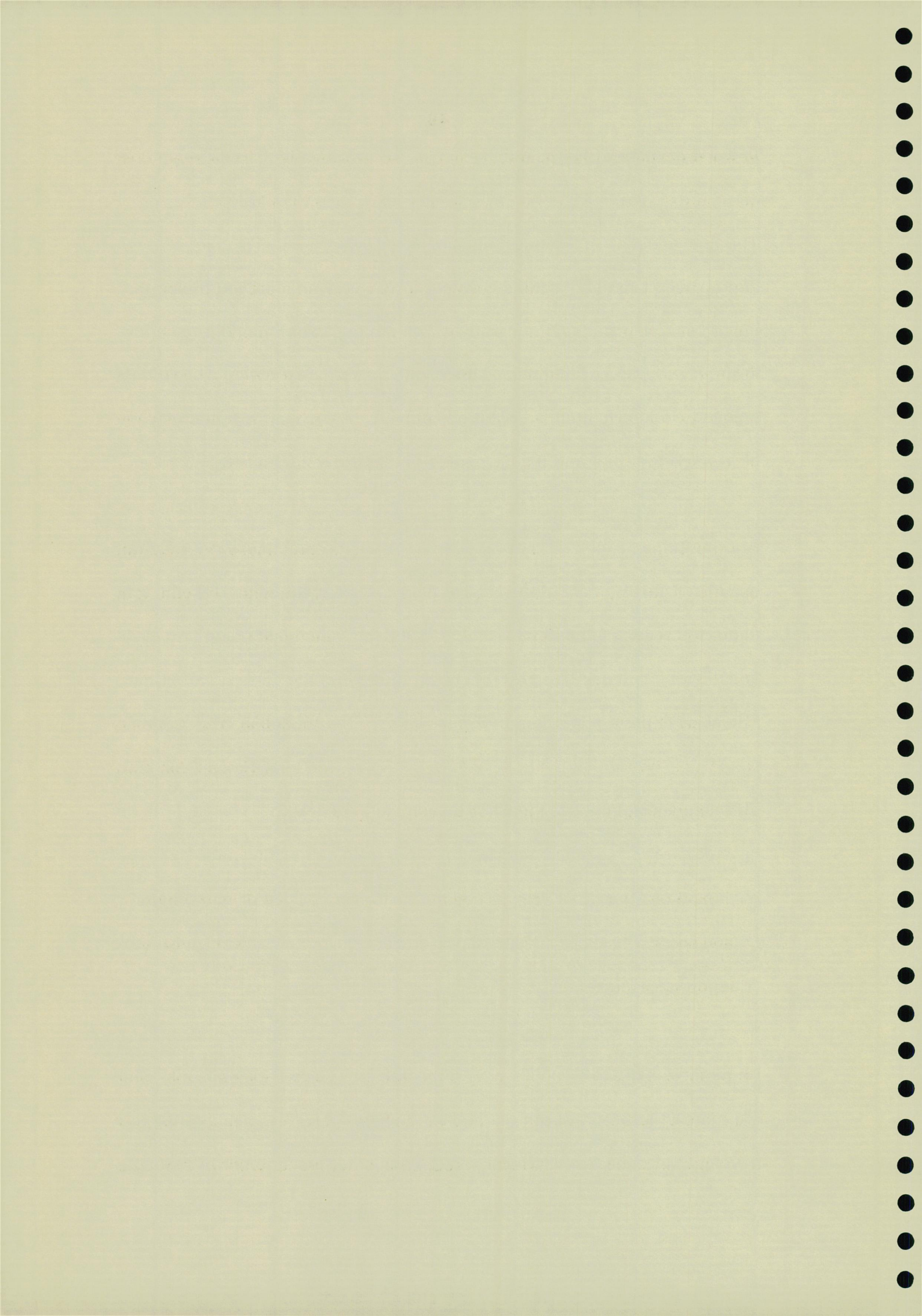
feelings of most of her peers.

The final question in the questionnaire asked what the pupils enjoyed most and enjoyed least about the sequence. I was very encouraged to see that no one said that they did not enjoy it. All the pupils had found it beneficial in some way. Some felt it helped them with their figure drawing while others enjoyed working in groups. What one pupil most enjoyed was "the way we all worked together and this helped us get to know each other".

Another pupil suggested that an over emphasis on practical work may not ensure full development of the pupil as a person when she said: "I liked talking about the artist's life and sexuality. It's different than just going into class and drawing and painting. Now I know more about the lifes (sic) of artists. The class is great and open to discussion on different subjects".

This sequence of classes I feel has been hugely successful. The pupils I feel have progressed so much more in those four weeks than they have since the beginning of the school year. They are no longer passive or withdrawn or unmotivated. The subject of sexuality in art became a catalyst in the remarkable change that occurred.

I now have a group of pupils who recognise and voice their opinions, who are more at ease with both me and their peers. I feel that each pupil has developed in some way as a fuller person. A positive presentation of sexuality



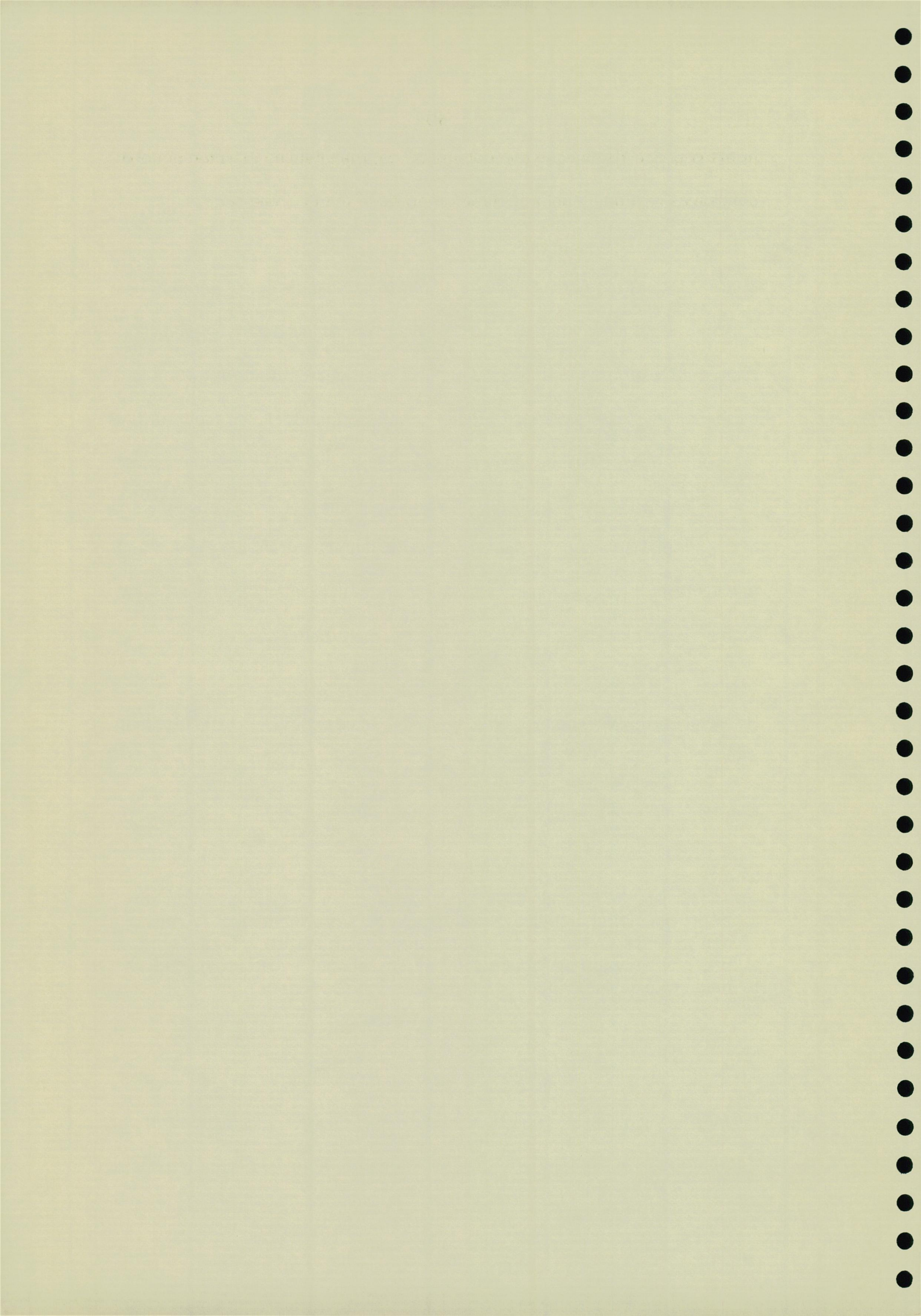
in art practice had been, for my pupils, so worthwhile. Their reactions, comments and enjoyment of the class is more than I could ask for.

The purpose of the questionnaire was not to establish a set of percentages and figures. The responses of each individual pupil I feel are more important. From their responses I firmly believe that a positive treatment of the subject of sexuality in art practice is of much benefit to pupils. I also feel that the art room is only one of the many places within the school where the subject can be dealt with. A comprehensive sex/relationships programme implemented in all post-primary schools should be more than one class a week in isolation. Because sexuality is found in every facet of our lives, then dealing with it in a cross-curricular approach would be much more beneficial.

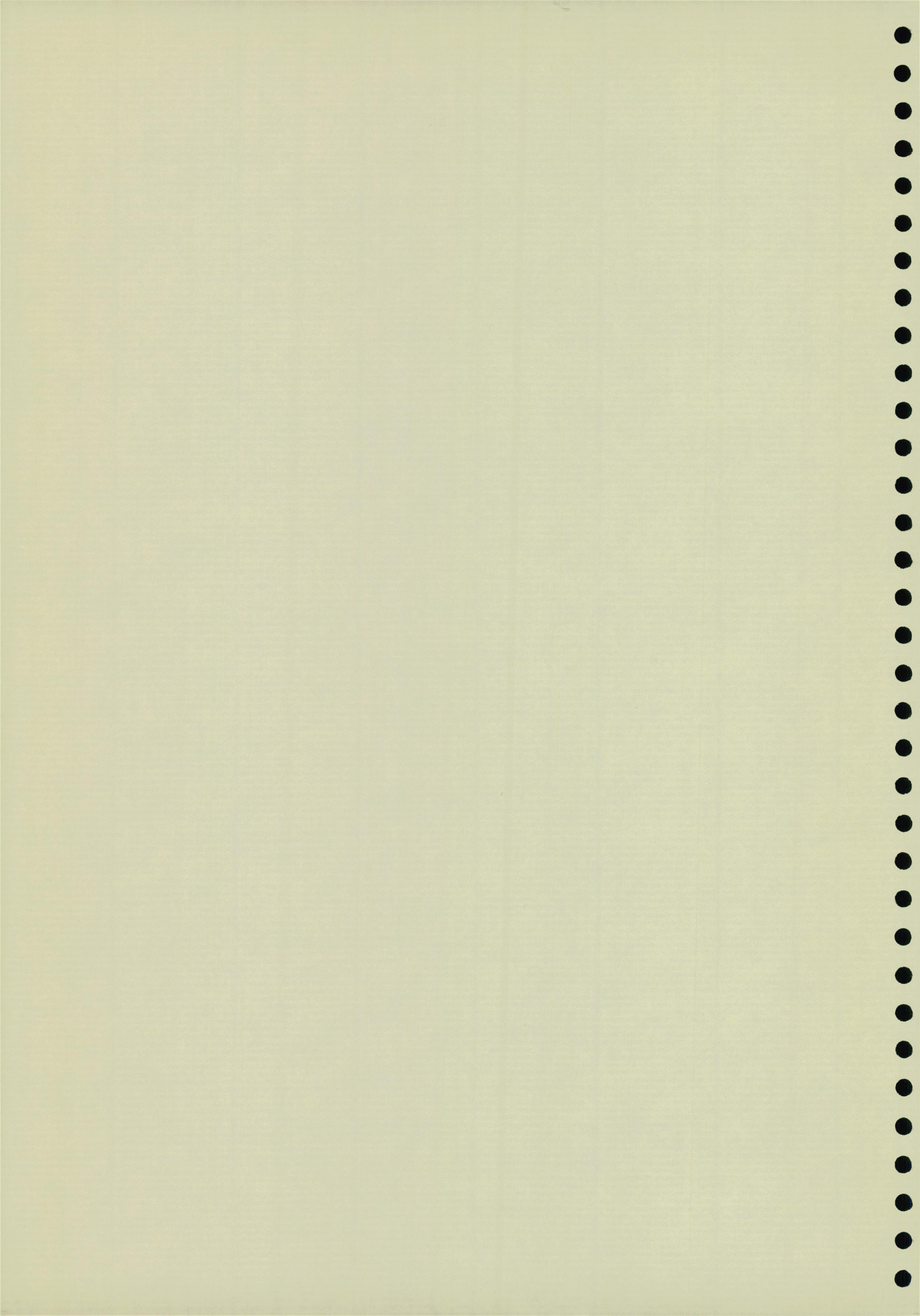
However, at this very point in time, the future of sex education in post-primary schools is "hanging in the balance". Paul Cullen, the Irish Times Education Correspondent, on March 31st 1994 reports that

The Minister for Education, Ms Bhreatnach has backed down on a promise to provide a comprehensive programme of sex education in primary and secondary schools. Instead, she has established an expert advisory group to draw up optional guidelines for schools No provision is made to place sex education formally on the curriculum.¹

No doubt speculation and debate on the subject will continue steadily over the coming year. One can only hope that the right decisions are made. Without a comprehensive sex/relationships education programme, without the basic



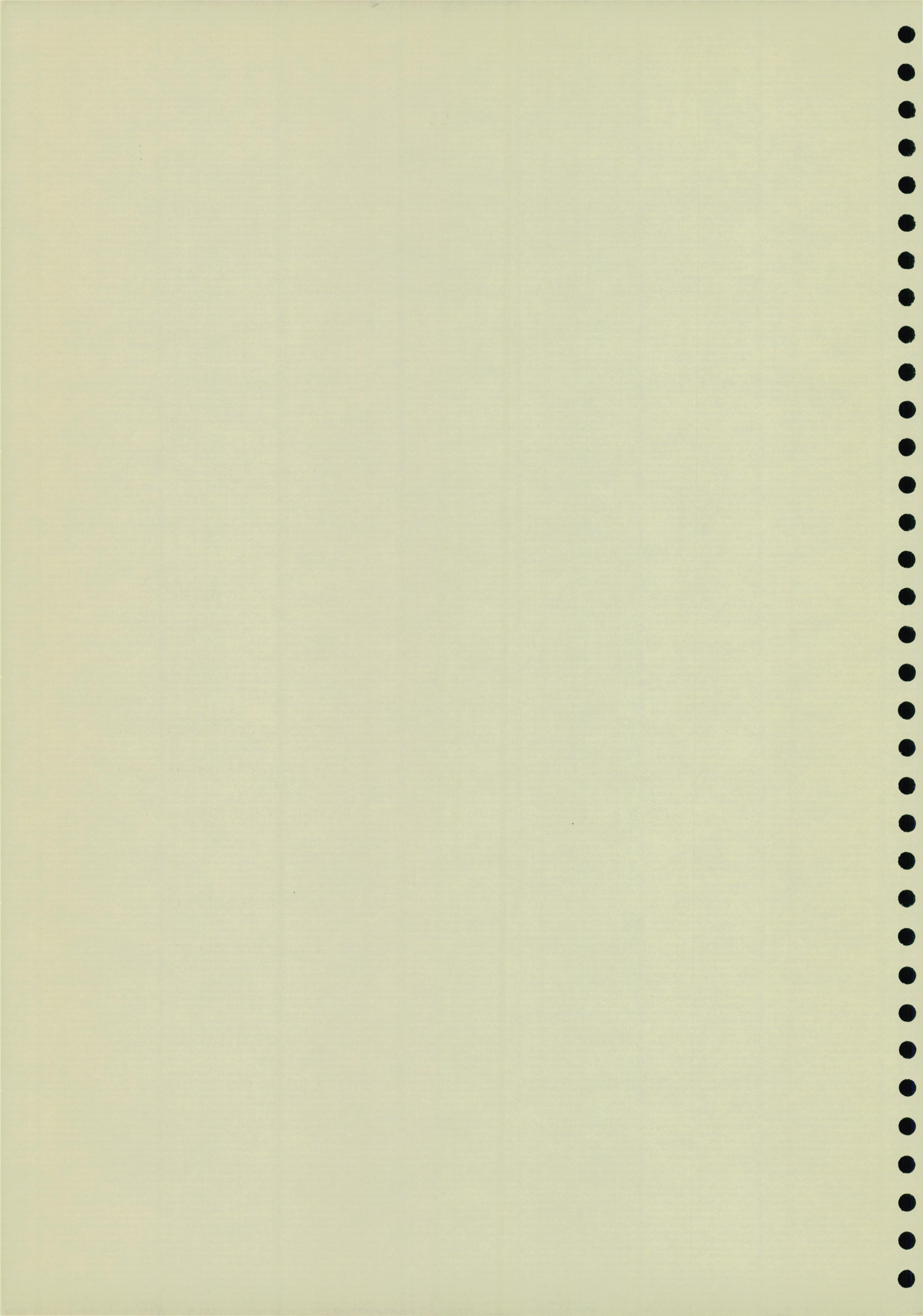
human right to knowledge and not ignorance, then dealing with the place of sexuality in art becomes a futile and unproductive experience.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

1. Taken from The Irish Times, March 31st, 1994.



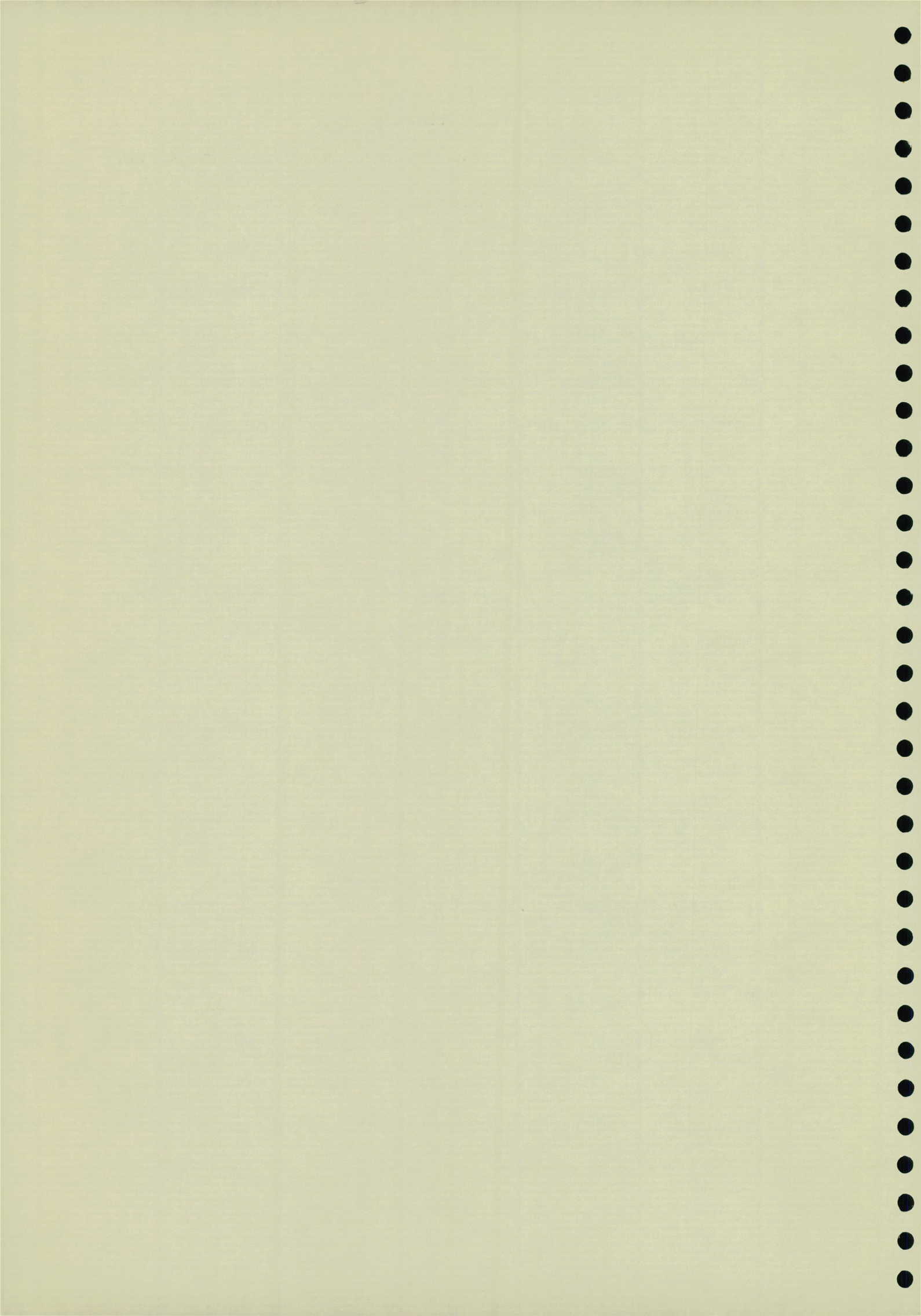
CONCLUSION

In many ways this dissertation, initially, was a reaction to my own experiences in post-primary school. That fact that I received little sex education, the fact that I felt embarrassed about the nude bodies in my history of art book, and the fact that I did not conform to a traditional male stereotype meant, that on conclusion of my secondary education, I had little understanding of my sexuality. I feel now, that had I had an open and honest presentation of sexuality, my adolescence and school years would not have been as turbulent and confusing.

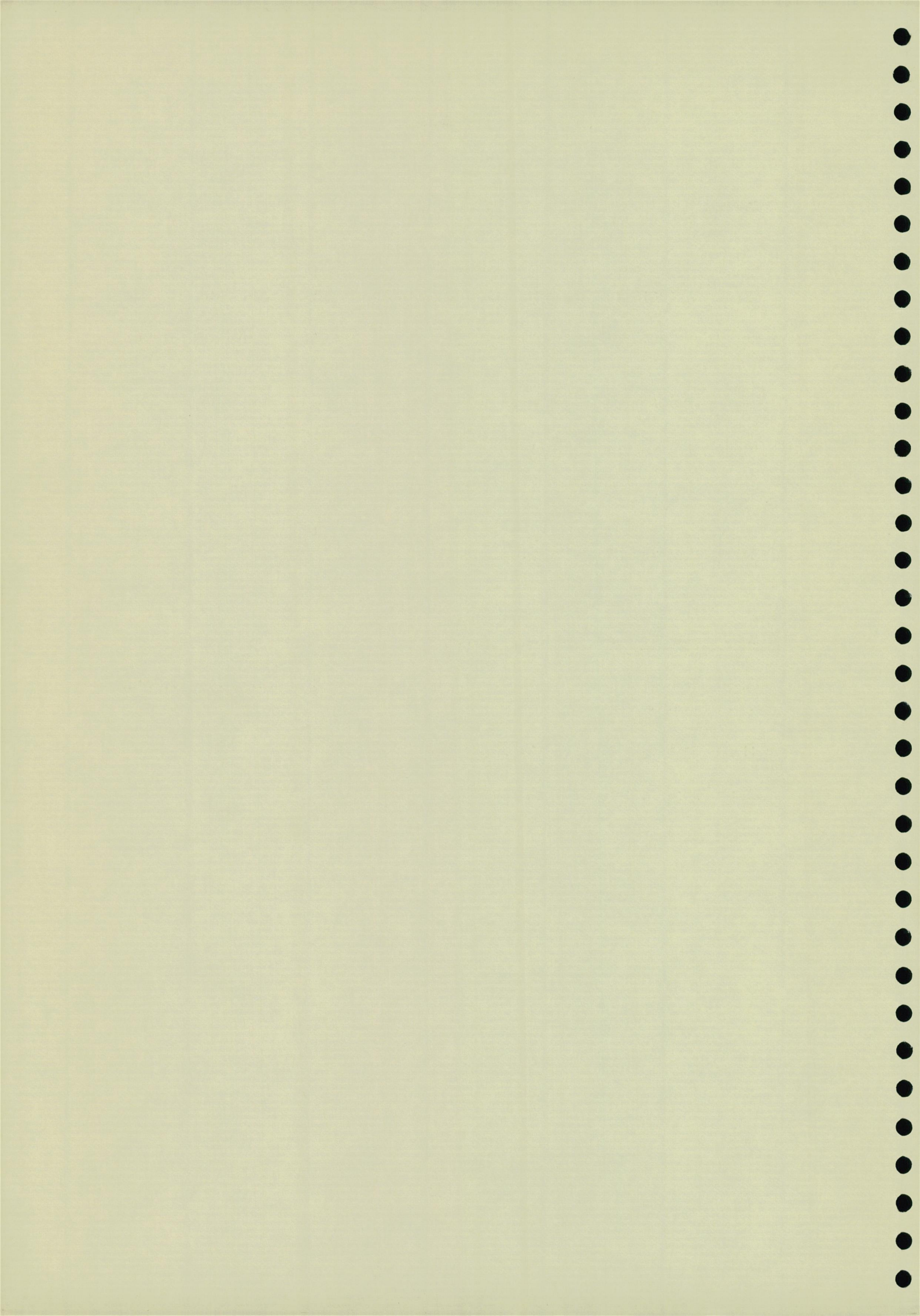
It has always been my hope, that as a teacher, I would give to pupils those things I as a pupil did not receive.

Of course there is truth in the suggestion that my experiences are far removed from the experiences of senior cycle pupils now. But it is the fact that these experiences are different, which has led to the writing of this dissertation.

If sexuality is a social construction, then it is these pupils who will determine attitudes to sexuality in the future. Attitudes to sexuality are in a constant state of change and motion. I would like to think that the place of sexuality in history of art education would play a part in furthering this change. Throughout this dissertation I have strived to insist on its importance and relevance. In doing this I have come to realise that my own experiences stem



from a society that has long since changed. But as to whether the place of sexuality in art education is taboo, the answer to that I feel lies in all our hands.



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