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National College of Art and Design

Department of Industrial Design

The Greenaway Audience

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary
Studies in Candidancy for the Degree of B. Des. Industrial Design, 1995.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to

Gemma Bradley (N.C.A.D. Library)

Anthony Hobbs

The I.F.C.

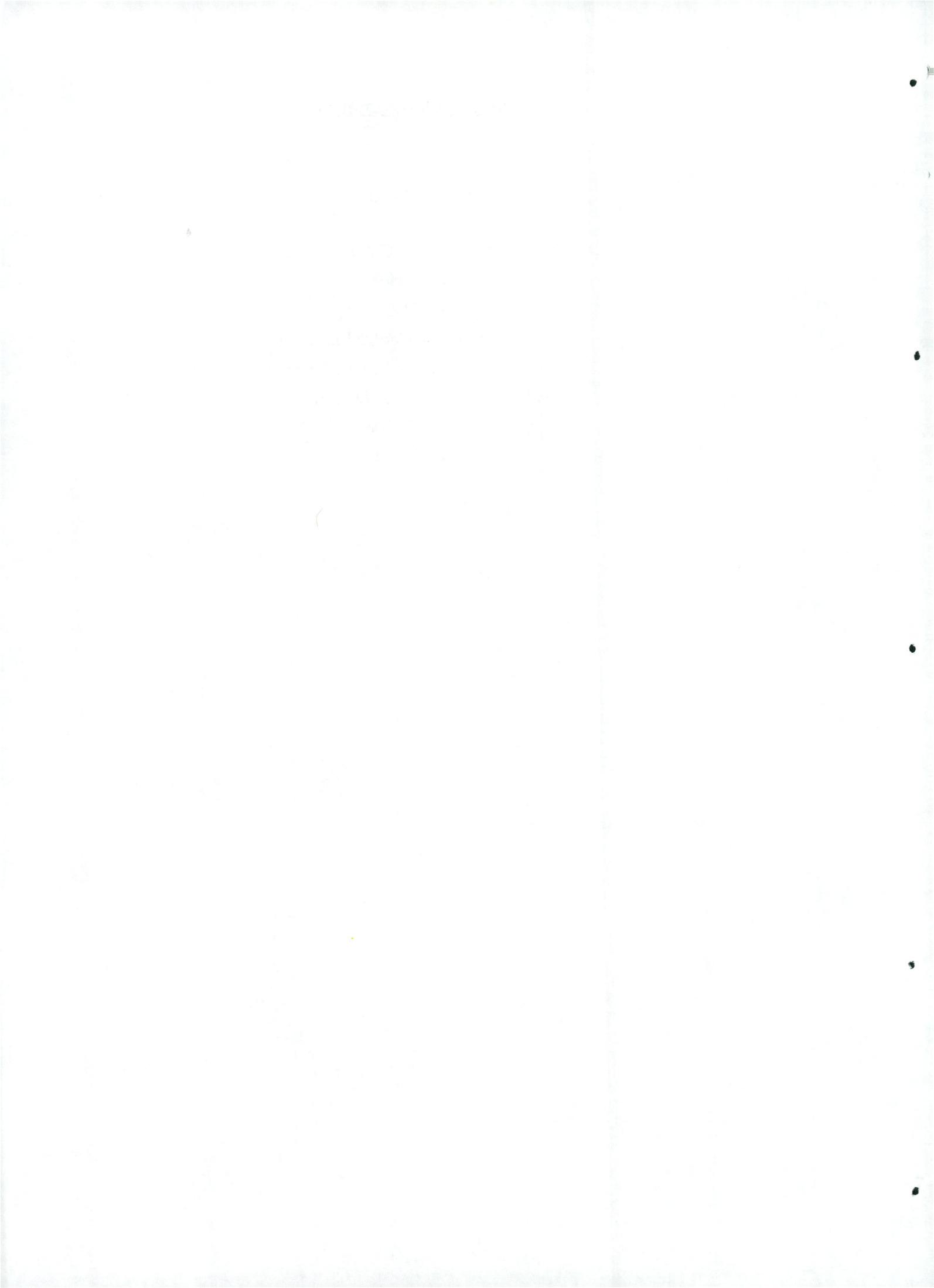
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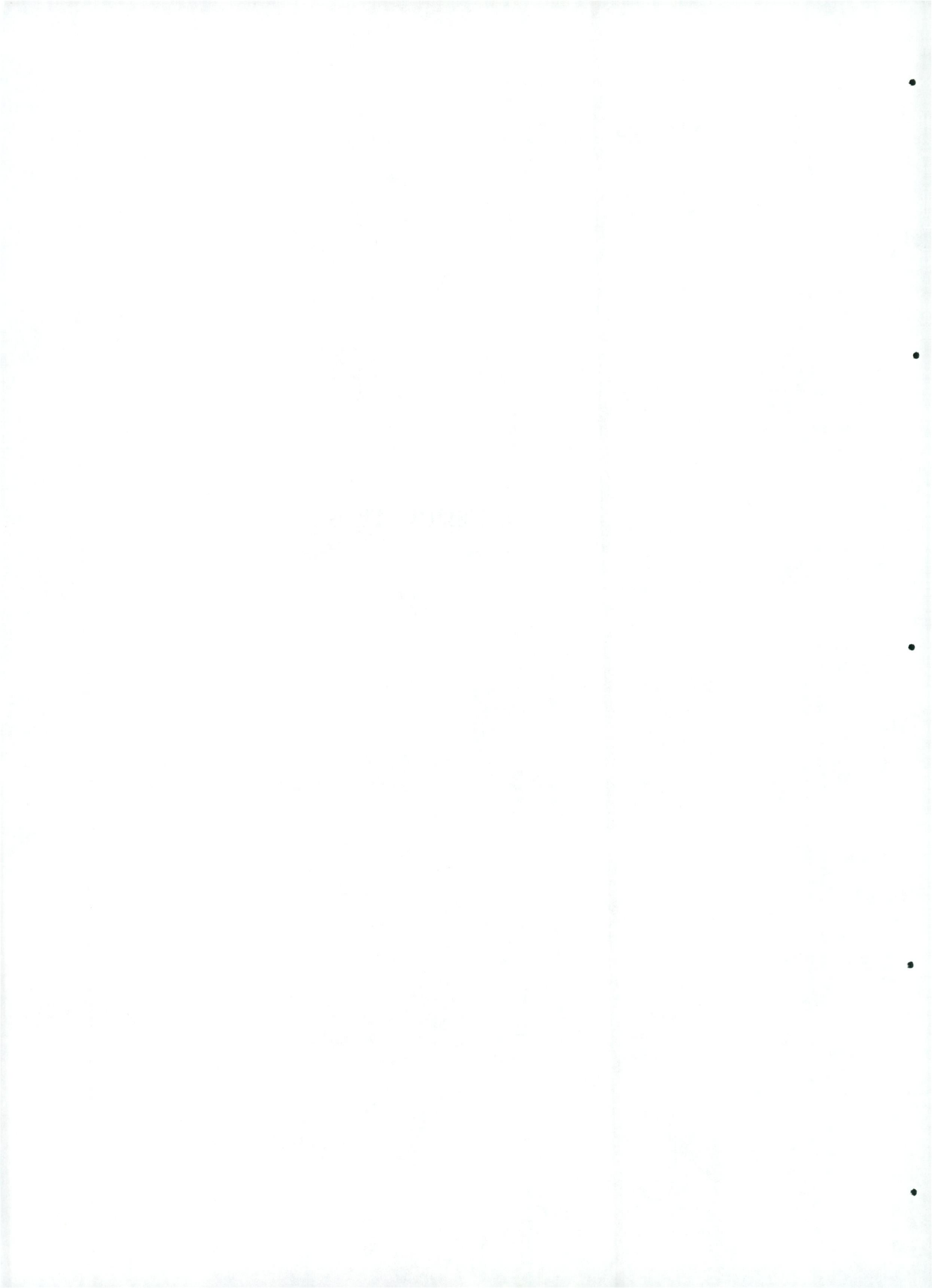


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INTRODUCTION



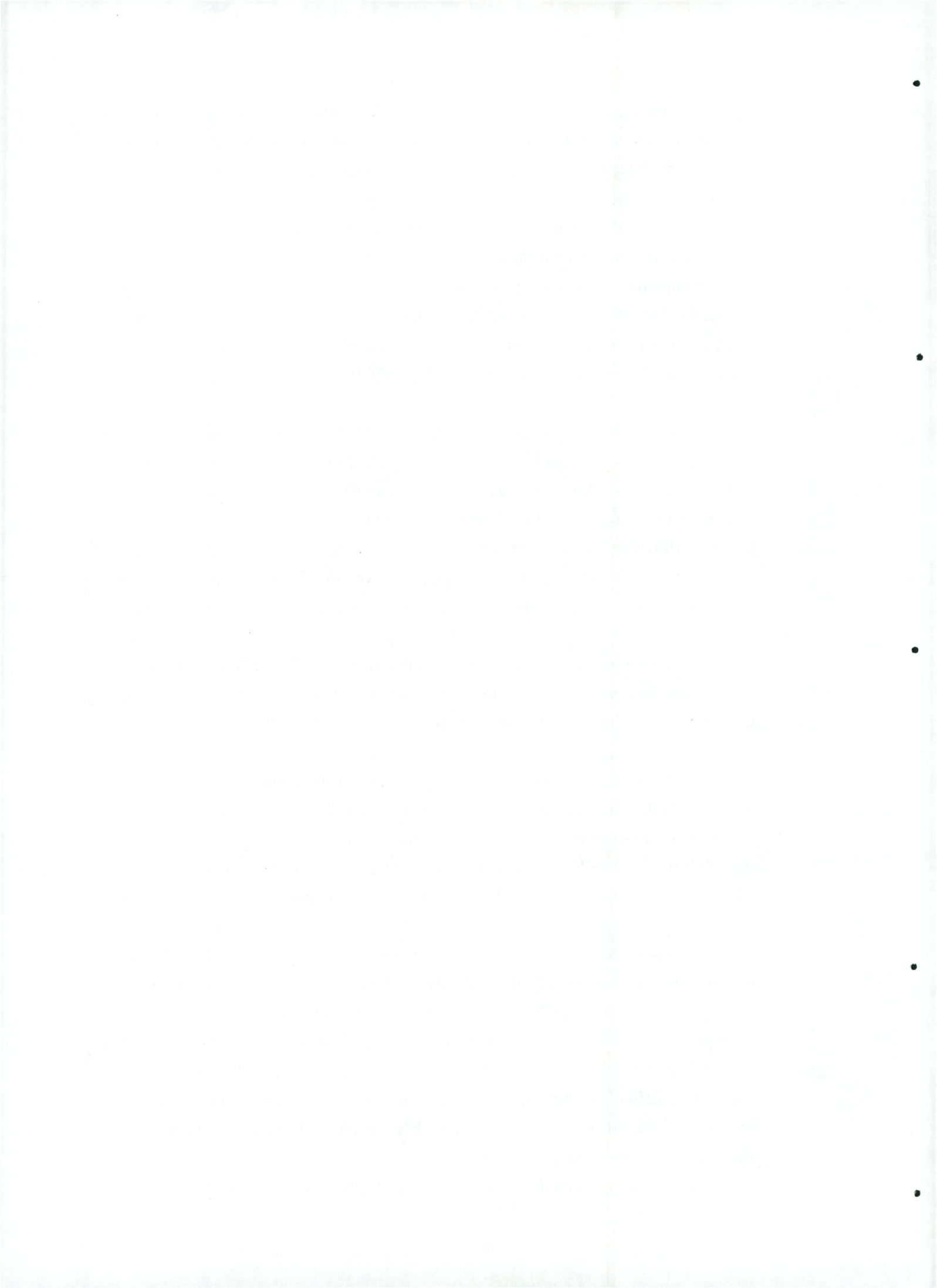
To many, the films created by Peter Greenaway are similar to the monster created by Victor Frankenstein. A creator infatuated with his own powers of creativity that his creations get out of hand resulting in being distasteful and ambiguous rather than anything else. Although on the surface these films do not agree with some viewers, it is probably because they are not looking in the right direction when viewing a Greenaway creation. In order to find the right angle to approach these films the viewer must firstly understand something about the film maker, and secondly themselves. "To iron away all the idiosyncrasies, interests and obsessions of a personal voice is probably certain to make a bland product". (Greenaway, Hacker / Price, 1991, p.211.)

Just as Greenaway sees it fundamental to draw on personal experiences when making a film, it is also fundamental that the audience draw on their own experiences when watching a Greenaway film. Greenaway audiences need to prepare themselves before a viewing. They should not expect to be entertained without effort on their behalf. These films lead the audience into a position whereby they must leave the auditorium or stay. If the choice made is to stay one must make the most of these films. In order to do so the viewer must be aware of the depth and intricity of Greenaway films. Each film is like an elaborately woven fabric. At first sight it is alluring and attractive to the eye with its use of colour and symmetry. On closer inspection each thread acts as a channel for symbolism, text, metaphors and double meaning.

Peter Greenaway goes entirely against the traditional Hollywood method of film making, with its sole purpose of fulfilling user needs, the Hollywood method treats films like products. The targeted market is established, their social ethics and expectations are taken into consideration and films are churned out as though off an assembly line out to the consumer market.

In contrast film-makers on par with Peter Greenaway, such as Stephen Frears, script writer on "My Beautiful Laundrette" (1985) and "Sammy and Rosie get laid" (1988) put more of themselves into their work. Their films are a representation of their ideas, experiences and talents tactfully combined together as one. It is this self expression of film makers in their work which many audiences find difficult to deal with. This can be empathised with, considering that the majority of films which people have been subjected to are largely main stream Hollywood "product" films.

Greenaway himself sees the necessity for films other than those aimed at



global audiences. People really should not be led like sheep but should be allowed the option to think, interpret and reason as their individualism allows. Greenaway outlined these needs in an interview with Hacker and Price for their book as follows -

I am arguing for cinema for its own sake, and for its ability to hold thought and ideas without necessarily demanding that an audience should be battered into suspending disbelief or that such a thing is cinema's sole function. I do not deny the validity of 'emotional' cinema, but there are other ways to make movies than '*Kramer Versus Kramer*'. (Greenaway, hacker / Price, 1991, p.213.)



1. Peter Greenaway

This thesis will be divided into three chapters. Chapter one will describe the term "Mass Audience" and the difference between American and British film-making. The second will deal with Greenaway's approach to film-making and the characteristics of his work. The final chapter will investigate Greenaway's application of the uses and gratifications theory in the "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*". This film will be referred to with any comparisons or deviations in style, workmanship, or design drawn with "*The Draughtman's contract*" and "*Drowning by Numbers*". It has been chosen as the main film for analysis because it demonstrates all of Greenaway's characteris-

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tics or trademarks in one film. "*The Draughtman's Contract*" deviates only slightly from the traditional 'Who Done It?' mysteries and is easy to follow. On close inspection however, the film is full of symbolism, ambivalence and ambiguity. "*Drowning by Numbers*" is also riddled with these elements also that the individual feels as though any interpretation may require a life time commitment. These three films together display features of Greenaway films which may not be common to each film.

My own interest in Greenaway spurred from the visual impact of his work, the use of light, colour, symmetry and in particular cinematography. The fact that so much could possibly be happening at once, not knowing whether incidents in films have symbolic meanings, and the sheer buzz of the heated discussions which always follow his films.

The objective of this thesis is not to form any kind of interpretation or derivation of the symbolism and metaphors associated with Greenaway films; these I feel are beyond my scope. I hope that by reading this argument that the begrudging Greenaway viewer will view his films with a fresh attitude, hopefully understand more fully and be able to appreciate the perplexed, bewildered and dizzy sensations they feel as they leave the cinema.

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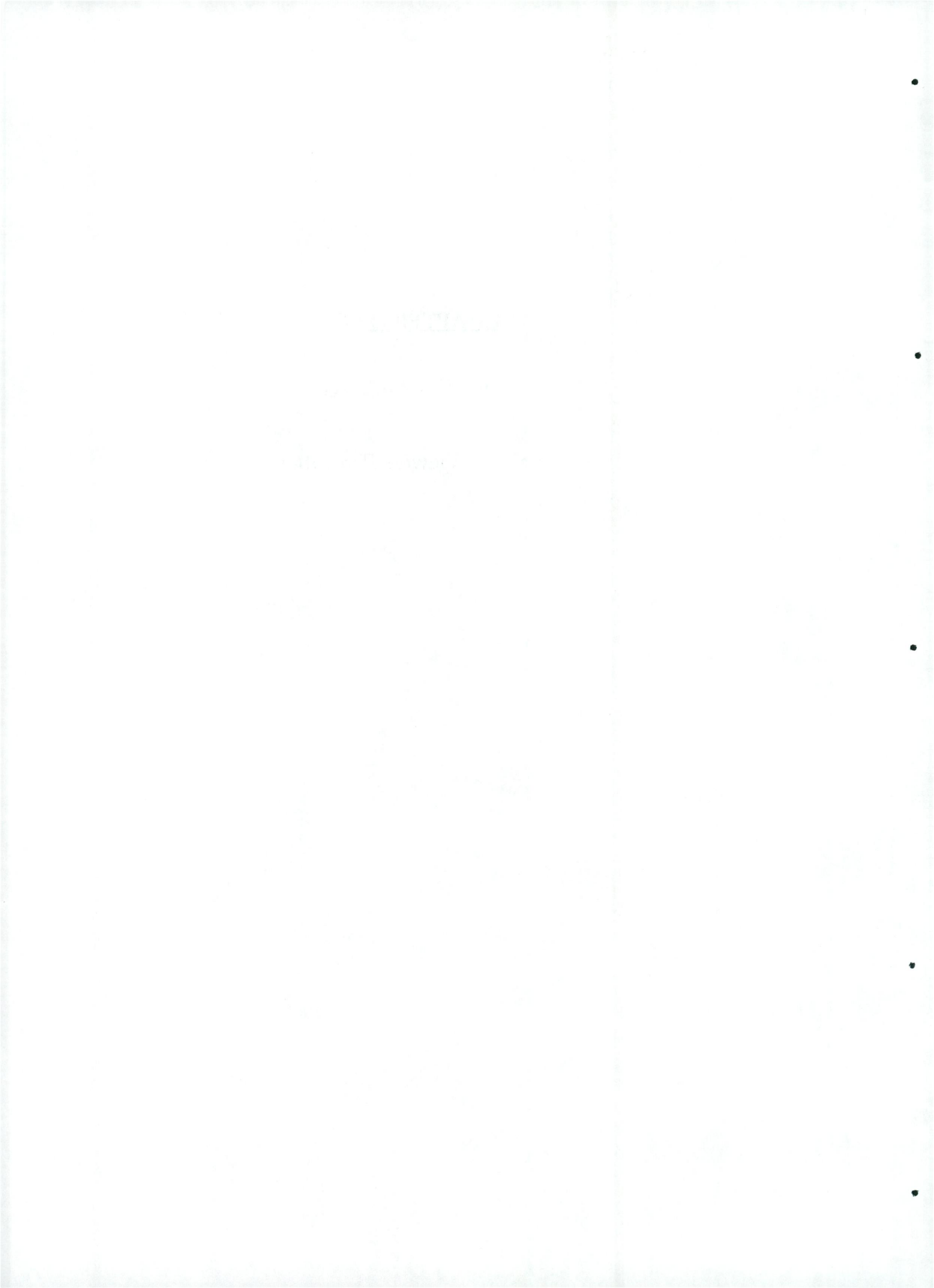
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CHAPTER ONE

- The Mass Audience

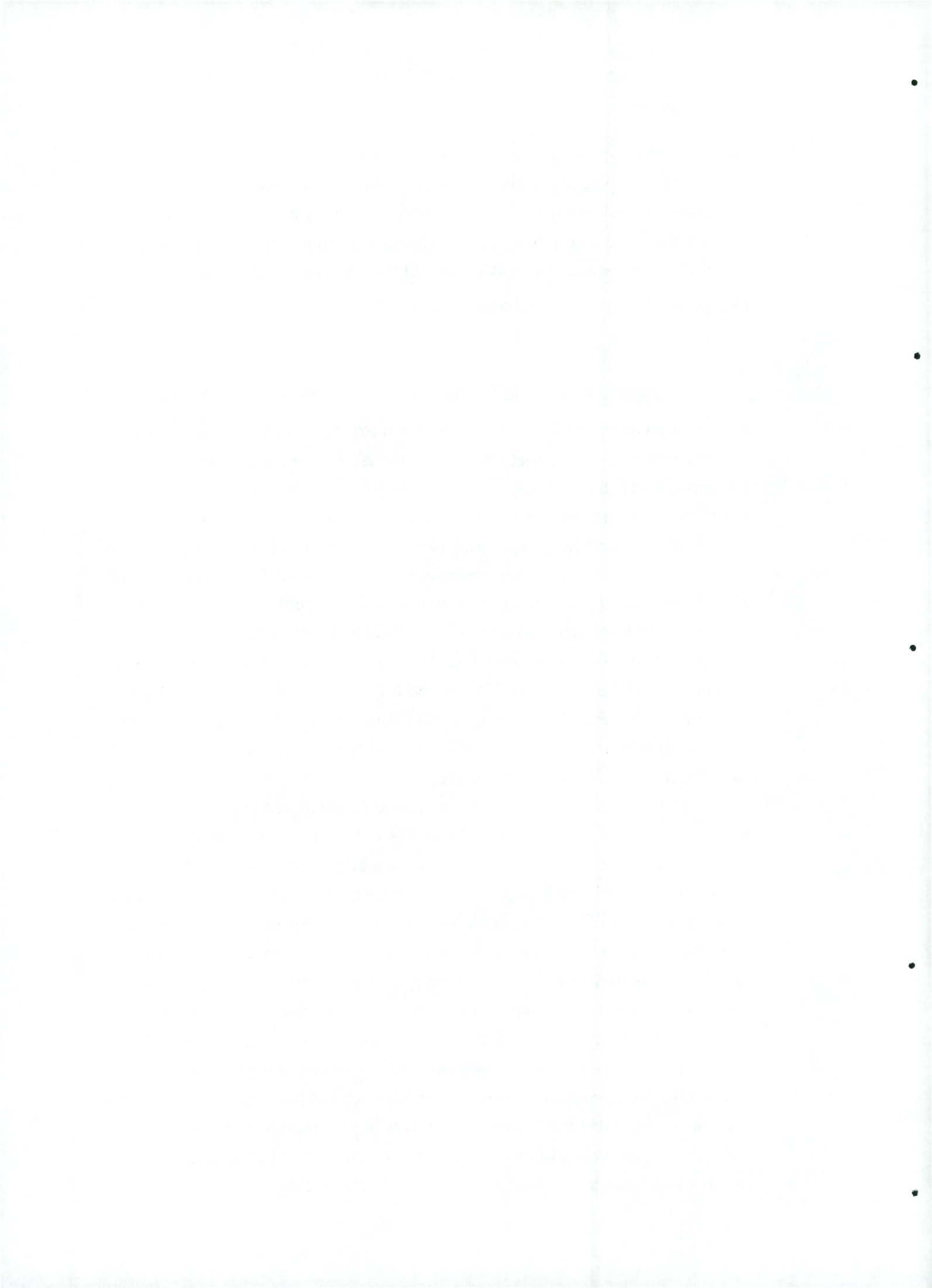
- Origins of Viewers Perceptions



This chapter serves as an illumination of the composition of an audiences individual requirements from which their uses and gratification are derived. This selection will look at social differentiations, what they are and their influence on media selection. Secondly, it covers the change in Hollywood production codes after the second World War with all its consequential effects in an effort to highlight the necessity for a film industry in Britain.

Mass audiences can only form opinions of films they see based on comparison with others to which they have been exposed to. What is viewed on screen becomes part of society through conversation, or individuals taking on role models. It is through fulfilling uses and gratifications that individuals leave themselves open for manipulation in certain aspects of their personalities. Therefore one could say that if cinematic releases were controlled so too would society to a certain extent. This however would be politically incorrect, as individuals need to be presented with a whole variety of films so they have the option to selectively view as they wish. Be that as it may, individual members of an audience should be open minded enough to accept those films which do not conform to the traditional Hollywood formula of film production. They should be aware that there is more to film making than these methods. Once aware of this the individual can better understand many more films and gain a more fulfilling insight into films through their own interpretation.

Audience expectations of films depend on their past experiences, not as an audience but as individuals. In the context of media transmissions and consequential interpretations, the individual members of an audience will selectively choose which media messages to expose themselves to and which ones to avoid. The choice of messages will be determined by the individuals social, cultural and religious backgrounds, in short their social grouping. Along with these elements social grouping also incorporates age, sex and educational attainment. Within any social grouping there is a structure based on the common perceptions, opinions and consensus of its members. A common structure appears throughout different groupings and comprises of the following elements. Usually a group develops its own hierarchy of prestige, it has its own perception of what is the "Norm", it involves the emotional relations of it's members (their likes and dislikes), finally, groups differ by the degrees all members participate in it's activities. (Sprott, 1967, p.168)

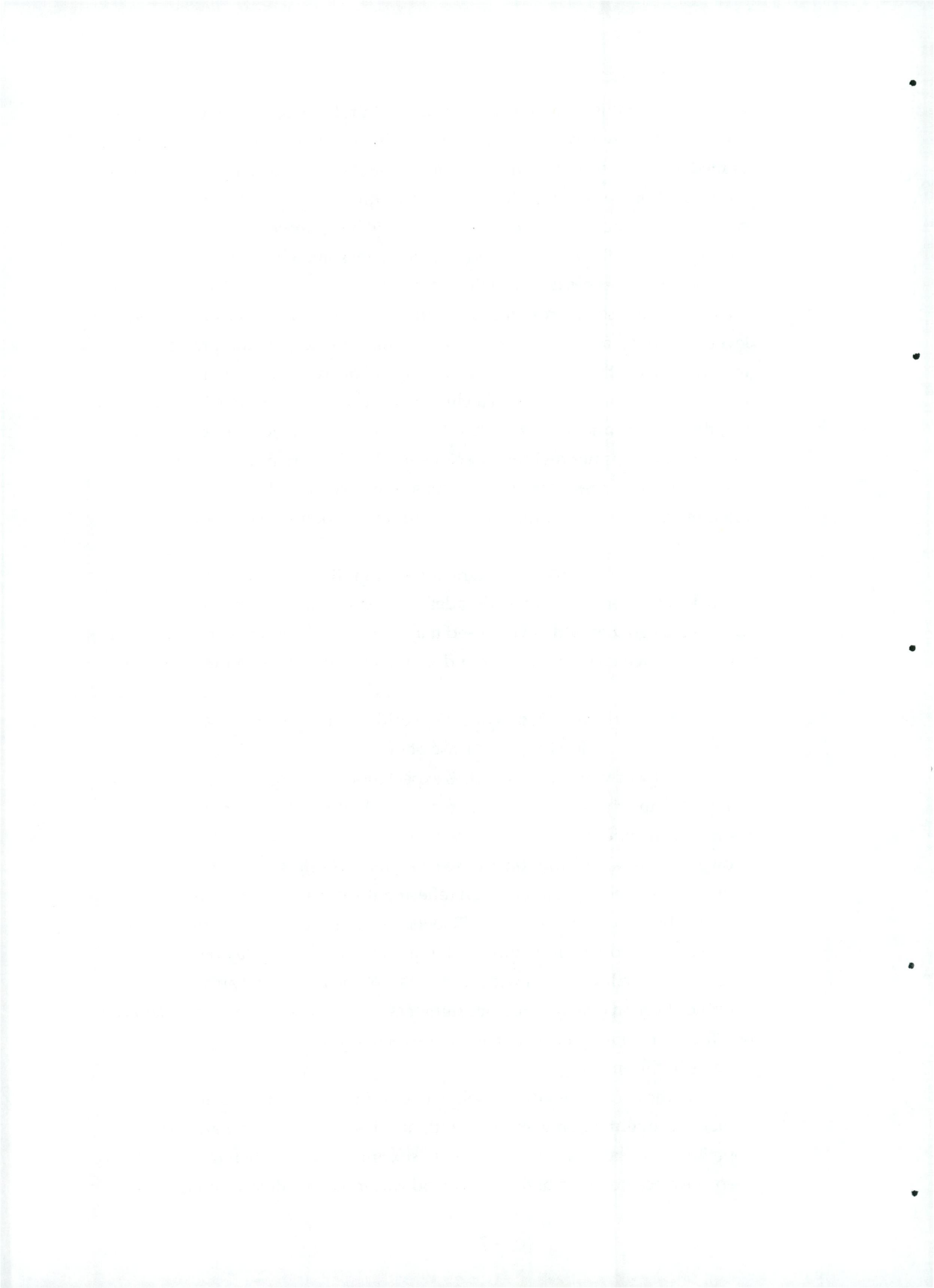


Bearing this in mind the social and cultural differentiation of audiences throughout the world produce a myriad of interpretations and transformations of media messages. In the United States alone there are so many social, cultural, ethnic, and religious groups that in order for film production to become a success, the films must bear messages which will be approved by audiences "across the board". The result being, content, yet somewhat deprived audiences. Deprived of messages and meanings directly associated or related to the fundamentals of their socio-grouping. The satisfaction of an audience on a superficial level and not on a more base level leads us back to the uses and gratification requirements of the audience. Some but not all of an audience may find fulfillment in media messages. Often a viewer may claim that a film was fully satisfying, this may be due to the fact that the individuals conscious needs were fulfilled but perhaps not their unconscious needs. What an individual expects to gain from a film does not demand a conscious awareness but subconscious requirements are also fulfilled through the choice of media exposure.

The difference in film content and user gratification needs have changed dramatically over the past few decades, if a contemporary film was shown forty years ago it would have caused major uproar beyond belief. What were the changes which took place around us, which spurred the more lenient society of today?

After World War Two, while the world was pulling itself back on its feet there was an aspiration for a new lease of life felt by everybody. Now that the pressures of war were gone, societies expectations of a higher standard of living soared. During this period of social reconstruction the strongest influence on people's perceptions of the new lease of life was television and film. Film allowed people across the states to see glamorous film stars such as Cary Grant surrounded by objects which reflected the potential prosperity of the new era about to be embarked on. Television on the other hand brought these glamorous products right into the living room of the everyday person. The success rate of television viewing at the start of the Fifties had an almost catastrophic effect on cinema audience numbers. The challenge posed by television was fought by the introduction of wide screen technology and lavish colour systems in film-making.

By the end of the Fifties, Hollywood found itself with a relatively young audience brought up on television, with new tastes, particularly an insatiable appetite for sensationalism riddled with sex and violence. Therefore in order to keep audience numbers high, Hollywood was forced to alter its production

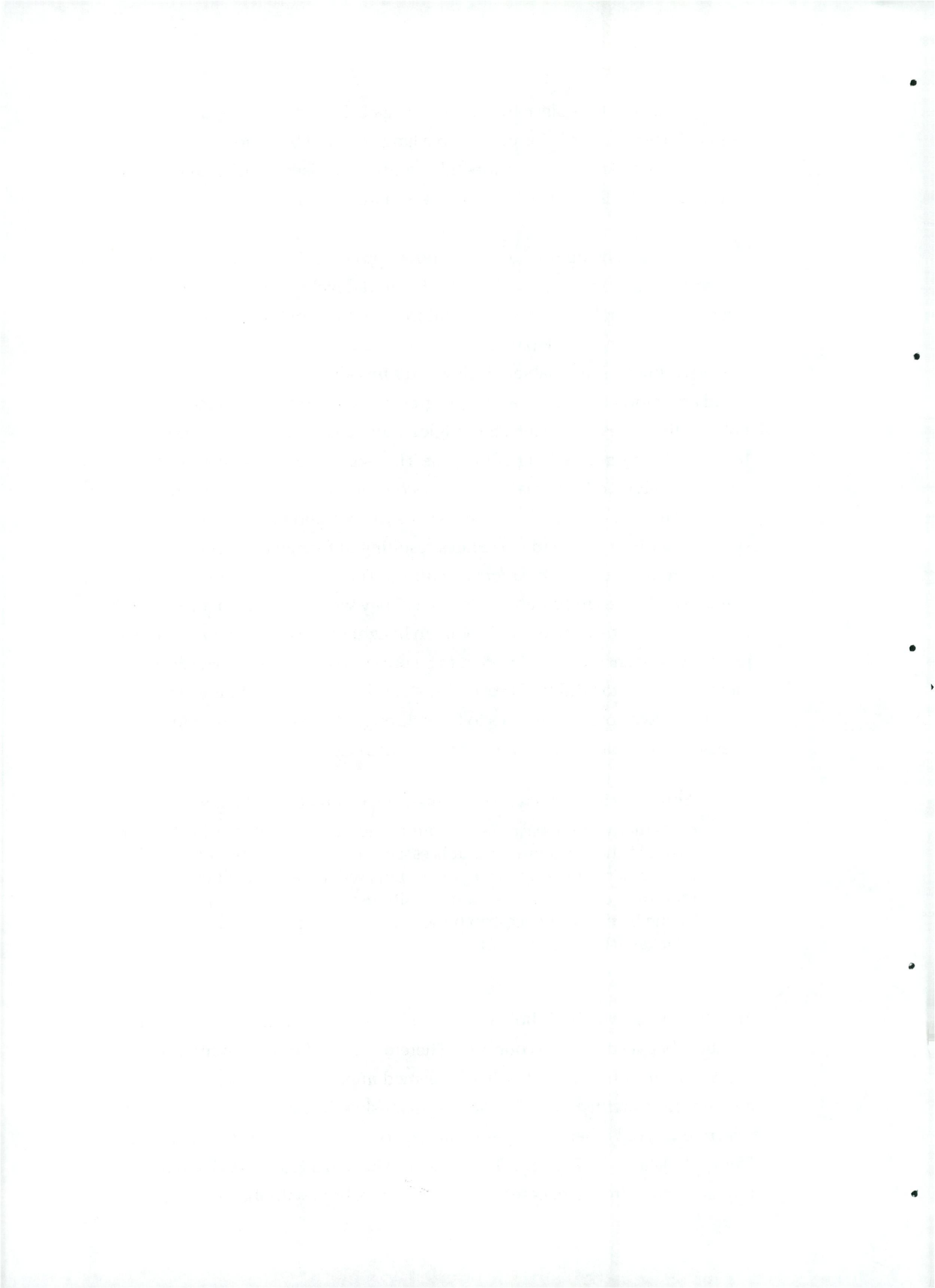


code for the first time since the industry began. This change saw the implementation of new standards for permissible language and behaviour on the big screen. Film-makers and directors filled with enthusiasm pushed these new standards to the limit in order to satisfy and increase their market.

Film was being used as a medium to promote the new life style, music, and to a certain extent, technology. With rapid developments over the following decades, people were under the impression that anything was possible - a true burst of enthusiasm, particularly in the States. In the States people believed that anything was attainable. Hollywood films always reinforced American social and moral ethics, but as people grew more confident with the new technologically successful society, the rigidity and coldness of the conservative times of war became a thing of the past. This 'softening' of social attitudes enabled Hollywood film makers to become more adventurous with their film content. However, these films were being exported and viewed by English speaking audiences outside the States resulting in foreign audiences being exposed to films based on American culture. These films had limited beneficial value to audiences in Britain for example. They were beneficial to the extent that they presented the British public with an insight into American way of life. But just as American audiences needed to be presented with their own social and moral ethics, so too did the British. British audiences needed home productions with their own social references to filter through the media in order to reinforce a sense of individual security and national identity.

Some foreign films whether American, Continental or Japanese, can cross many of the barriers without reducing the depth or possible relevance to their meaning. But it is essential that Britain should not rely on these other sources alone. Foreign films will reflect even if critically, their own cultures values and conditions; yet these values if absorbed by the British audience, can be socially very inappropriate.
(Hacker / Price, 1991, p 2)

The strength of America's hold on Britain laid in the vast difference in audience numbers between the two countries. Therefore any effort Britain made to combat American cultural bombardment seemed miniscule. According to the uses and gratification theory, individuals consciously select what to view, and also selectively avoid other messages regardless of what the medium may be, (De Fleur / Rokeach, 1982, p 88.). Therefore if in Britain a Hollywood and an English made film are released at the same time, both with the same content



only social ethics deviating in each case, the taste and requirements of the individual will be the deciding factor as to which one is viewed. Because an individual's taste comprises of the accumulation of past experiences and exposure to different incidents, it is easy to see how mass audiences can be directed in different ways. When people are conditioned to the 'glossy productions' of Hollywood, whose sole purpose is to fulfill the audience's uses and gratifications, it becomes more difficult for them to accept or try to comprehend films which try to express or provoke more thought than what the viewer normally associates with film.

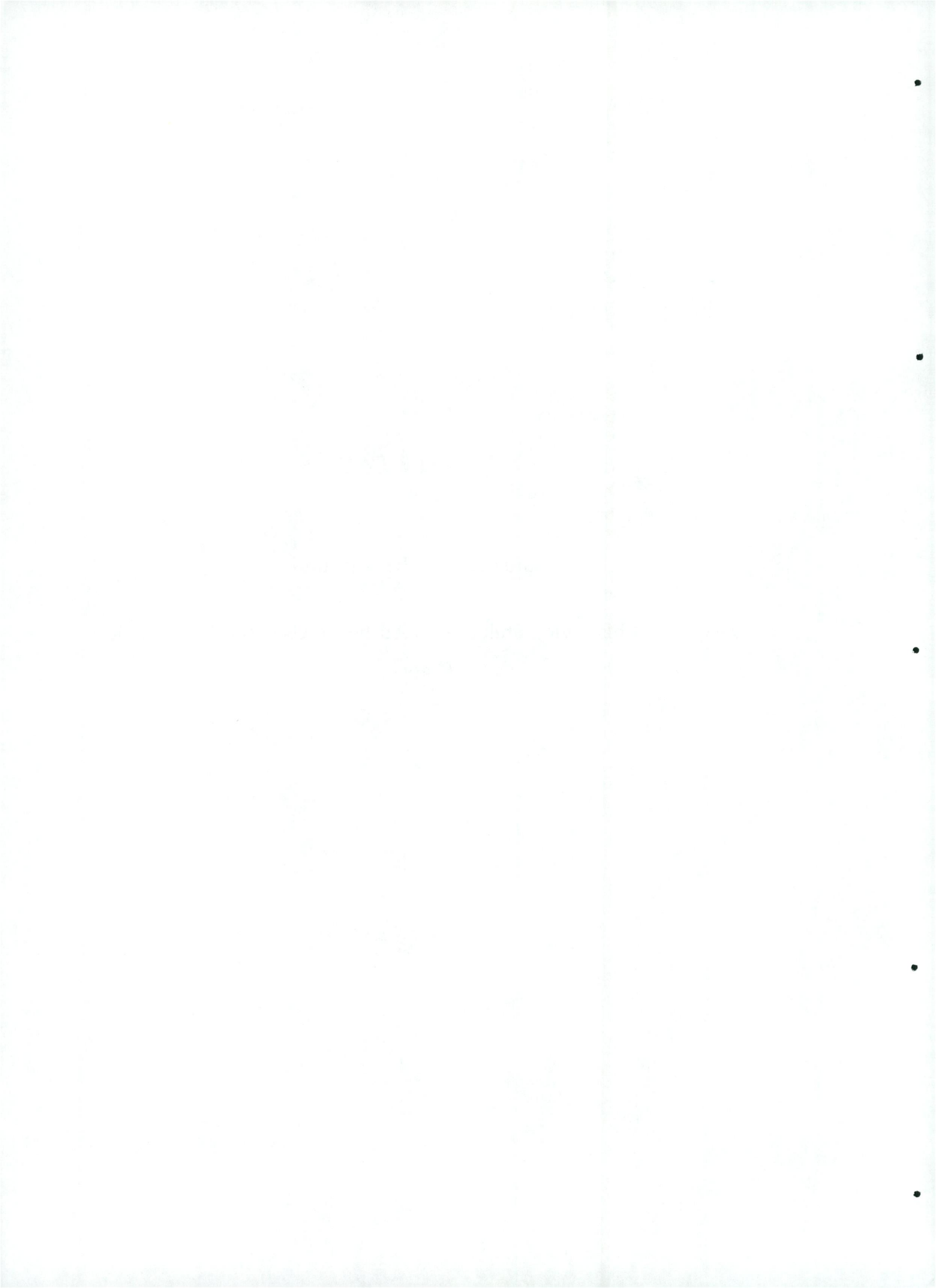
It is often asked, in debating shops, whether Channel 4 gave a life-saving transfusion to the British film industry in the 1980s. It gave transfusion certainly - witness the careers of Stephen Frears, Peter Greenaway and Colin Gregg - but whether the patient has the strength to quit his sick bed and produce an amount of worthwhile work, only the next ten years will reveal. (Pym, 1992, p8)

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CHAPTER TWO

- Greenaway's Background

- Features of his Style in relation to Audience Uses and Gratification
Theory



To briefly outline Greenaway's background and characteristics of his work will give the reader a clearer insight into the origins and background of his creations. Films referred to in this chapter will be "*Drowning By Numbers*", "*The Draughtman's Contract*", and "*The Cook, The Thief, His wife and Her Lover*". Three aspects of his work will be dealt with in relation to the uses and gratification, the incorporation of game playing, his system of structuring and the role of female characters. An explanation of the uses and gratification theory will firstly be described in order for the reader to understand the proceeding discussions.

The uses and gratifications theory deals with people's conscious and unconscious approach and desires in the selection of media exposure. The theory suggests that the functions served by media are to match one's wits against others, to obtain information or advice, to provide a framework for one's lifestyle, to increase cultural awareness, and to assure one of the dignity and usefulness of their role in their social sphere. It suggests a variety of desires within audience members which cause them to consciously or unconsciously expose themselves to. Whether the urge felt by the individual in the selection of particular media message is a need or a desire differs from person to person.

The uses and gratifications provided by the media serve to fulfill audience expectations, and can be divided into three parts. Firstly there is the desire to gain experiences. These experiences are mainly emotional. To experience empathy with characters in books, television or film the individual learns how to react to situations similar to those the empathetic character experiences.

-To experience the beautiful, everyone has their own opinions as to what beauty is, and therefore the selection of media for this reason varies with the individual. Be that as it may, people do find great satisfaction from seeing beautiful things, be they human or otherwise.

- To experience amusement, the entertainment element of media messages help people to relax and unwind. Entertainment may even cause mood changes, mostly from bad to good moods.

-To share experiences with others, makes the individual feel socially acceptable, as shared media experiences lead to conversation and discussion amongst groups. It forms a relationship amongst its viewers in that they all have something in common during the time of exposure.

-To experience extreme emotions in a guilt free context. Because when we see acts of violence in the media we feel as though we are witnessing it second hand and although emotions may be stirred to certain extremes.



-To experience history. everyone likes to feel as though they are a contributing part of their times. Technology now allows us to "be present" at historic events as they take place.

-To identify with deity and the divine plan. the media helps reinforce peoples sense of belonging and self importance through some messages.

-To believe in romantic love. We all like to think that the perfect love will overcome all social pressures, racial differences, class differences etc. The implementation of this element in media results in the individual feeling a sense of satisfaction at having witnessed the wonderful.

-The final emotional experience required by some audience members is, to be purged of unpleasant emotions. Unpleasant emotions may be released through exposure to particular media, such as fast action violent films. They act as a channel through which these emotions can be discharged.

The second part to the uses and gratifications theory deals with the the individuals desire to explore. The exploration of subjects which satisfy the individuals curiosity and desire to be informed. Being kept up to date on issues by the media satisfies the natural curiosity which gnaws within each of us.

-Next is the desire to be informed, the media is constantly relating news of world issues. Along with this we actually learn a lot about other cultures without actually realising it.

-Media also allows us to explore taboo topics in a guilt free context. It allows us the option of condoning or condemning taboo subjects such as child abuse, rape, etc, without having to experience them on a personal level.

-Our moral, spiritual and cultural values can also be reinforced or explored through media. The media tell us through some messages about our society and it's values, how we are expected to behave or conform within our social structure. These values vary from country to country and culture to culture.

The final part to the theory lists reasons for exposure to certain media. Firstly to see authoritative figures deflated. People feel more secure in their society when they are reminded that people of authority are actually normal human beings and experience human problems. From this treatment of authoritative figures by the media, we learn how to deal with these figures in our society.

-To find models to imitate, these models help us to build on our characters. Problems occur when violent characters are taken as role models.

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The following table provides a detailed overview of the financial data for the quarter. It is organized into three main sections: Revenue, Expenses, and Net Income. Each section contains a list of items with their respective values. The revenue section shows a steady increase in sales over the period, while the expenses section highlights the areas where costs were most significant. The net income section shows a positive trend, indicating that the company's operations were profitable during the quarter. The data is presented in a clear and concise manner, making it easy to understand and interpret.

In conclusion, the financial data for the quarter shows a strong performance across all key metrics. The revenue growth is particularly noteworthy, and the management team has successfully managed to keep expenses under control. The net income has increased significantly, which is a positive sign for the company's long-term success. The document also provides a clear overview of the company's financial position and offers valuable insights into the factors that have contributed to this success. It is hoped that these findings will be used to inform future business decisions and to continue to drive growth and profitability.

-To find an identity, enables us to develop our individualism and define our own personal style in this fast changing world. The media offer us heroic and unheroic characters to choose from in order to help us in the development of our own identities.

-To see order imposed on the world. The ways of the world are taught to us through the media. Subjects such as human psychology, laws of nature etc, are all presented to us so that we can put context on everything in the world in relation to each other.

-To see others make mistakes. We feel less guilty or embarrassed of incidents which have happened to us when we see others make the same mistakes in front of large crowds. We also learn how to avoid the occurrence of some mistakes.

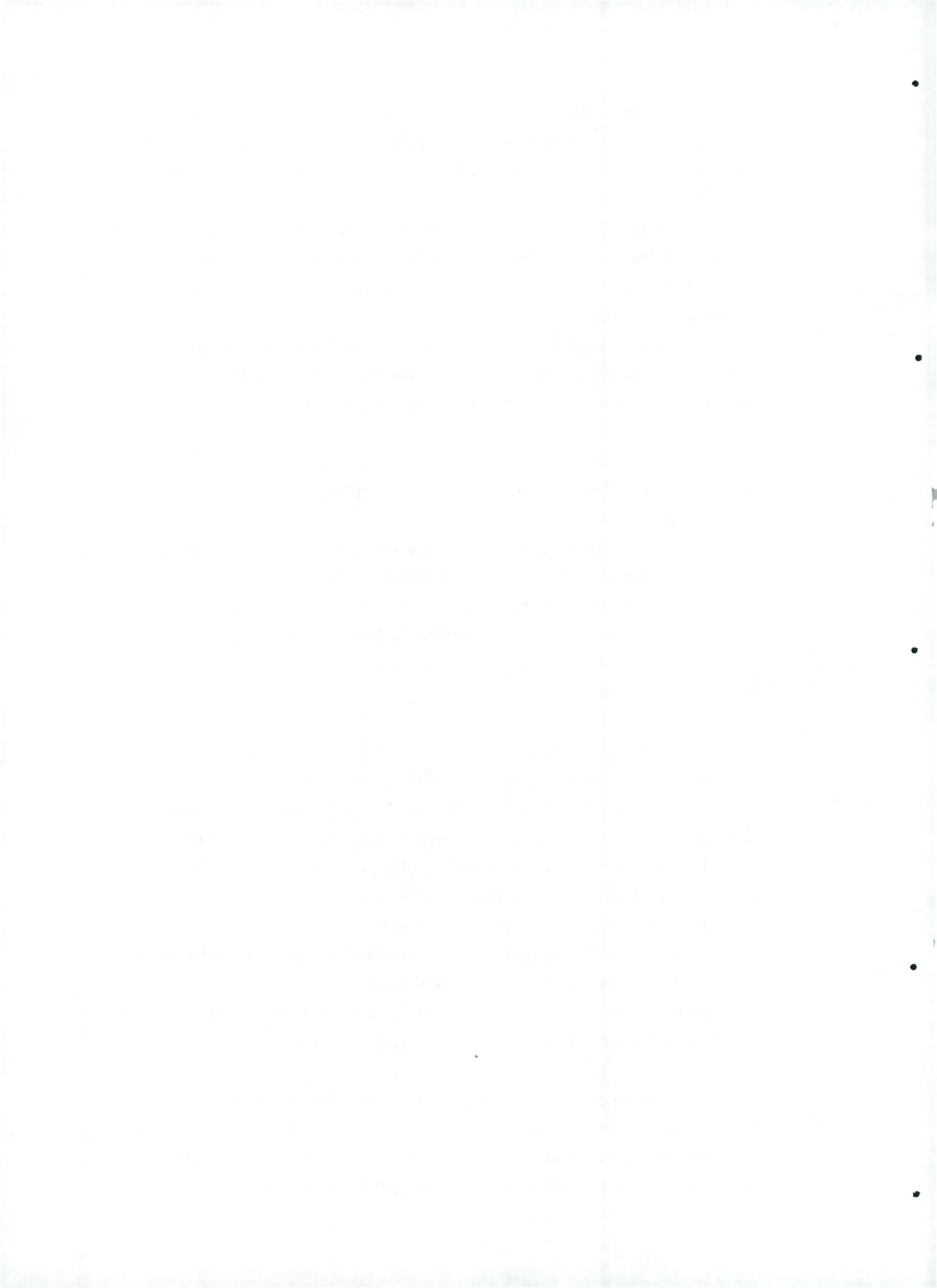
-To reinforce our beliefs in magic, which may be a derivation from childhood fairy-tales. This may account for enjoyment attained from horror and science fiction films.

-To see villains in action . We enjoy seeing the antics and strategies of villainous characters, and treat it as an insight into the social elite. Along with this we also like to see them punished and justice imposed on the world once more.

-To reinforce our beliefs in justice. We like to see villains defeated and the virtuous rewarded. Basically the fairy-tale syndrome where everyone lives happily ever after.

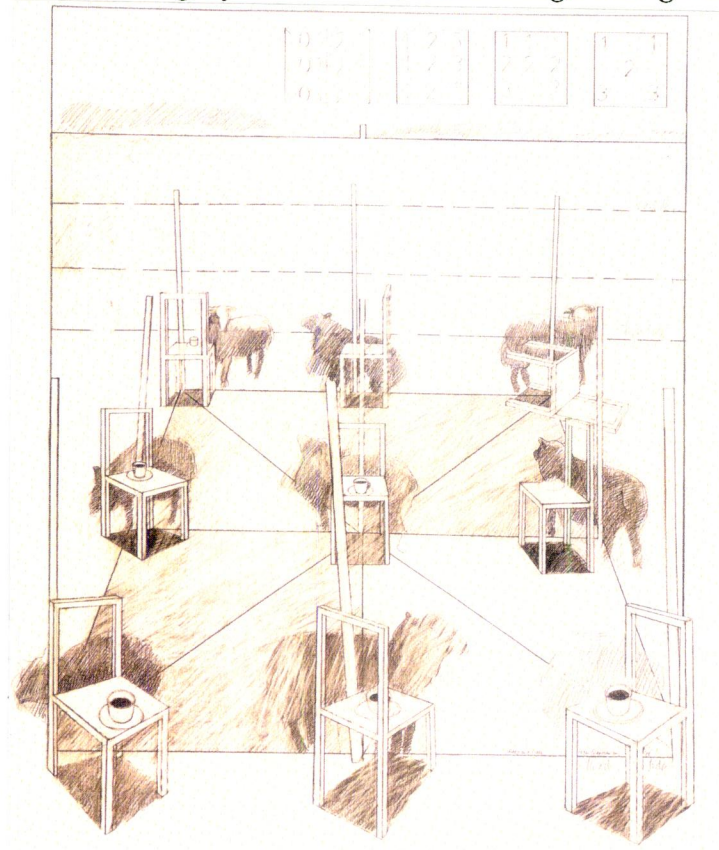
The Welsh born Greenaway spent his childhood in suburban London. He studied painting in Walthamstow College of Art during the mid Sixties, where he first became interested in film-making. He claims that Bergman's " *The Seventh Seal*" (1957) opened his eyes to film-making. He stumbled accidentally and was so impressed with it took a years crash course in European cinema. After leaving college he worked at organising exhibitions and after a year or so got work in B.F.I. (British Film Institute) in the distribution department where he had the opportunity to view short budget films. These short budget films encouraged him towards making his own films. From there he went on to work at the C.O.I. (Central Office of Information) and slowly rose up through the ranks from sweeping the clippings to becoming an editor.

The nuclei of Greenaway's films comprise of symbolism, metaphors, black humour, double meaning and ironies. Another feature of his work is his constant identifying of situations to gameplaying, particularly in " *Drowning by Numbers*" , where situations are treated as games. This film sees Smut, a thir-



teen year old boy living his life according to rules set out by himself. Everyday activities, for example, answering the telephone is described by Smut as having an objective, a player / players, their objectives and the aim of the procedure, all are carried out in complete earnest. In relation to the uses and gratification theory, the games in the film offer amusement, an affirmation of cultural values to an extent and the exploration of taboo subjects.

Viewers may find entertainment in the abstraction of Smut's games - the turning of the tides game sees several sheep attached to the legs of chairs on which are placed cups of coffee, when the tide turns the sheep react and in so doing disturb the chairs and spill the coffee. These disturbances are then noted. The viewers interest is maintained by the fact that the theory of each game designed by Smut is thoroughly researched, hence heightening the entertainment factor.



2. A concept sketch by Greenaway in preparation for the game of the turning of the tides ("*Drowning by Numbers*")

The systematic and orderly fashion, not only in Smut's games , but also in those played by the adult characters in the film create a number of very structured scenes due to the uncompromising adherence to rules. For the British audiences these may serve as an affirmation of cultural values. This structuralism creates "The Stiff Upper Lip" quality, creating a very British feel to



the film. This affirmation may or may not be obvious to British viewers but even so it reinforces a sense of national identity in the traditional sense. This is achieved through the clean cut unemotional mannerisms of the games and characters.

The final desire to which may be evident in the game playing element of this film is the exploration of taboo subjects. In the cricket game, we see Madget the coroner and his son Smut playing a game which has the objective of demonstrating the dangers of cricket playing at night. The game is played in accordance to rules outlined by Smut, he being the batter and Madget the bowler. Each time the ball hits Smut the area of injury is marked on his body and photographed, resulting in a visual example of the most frequently injured parts of a batters body whilst playing cricket by night. However this game of observation touches on child abuse, when Madget is accused of battering and perversly photographing the beaten child. Other issues such as masturbation, circumscision and sexual fantasies are also included in this film. Topics such as these when elemental parts of Greenaway's work allows the viewer to explore taboo topics in a distanced manner and in the security of the darkness draped by the cinema.



3. Injuries obtained while playing cricket by night are marked on Smut's body, ("Drowning by Numbers")

When watching this film the viewer is the observer of all this game playing. According to Greenaway they are actually part of a game themselves in being there watching the film themselves.

My intention of course is ironic; some people do not know how to take the irony because they believe that gameplaying is not compatible with film-making. Film-making itself is a complex game of illusion and bluff played between the film-maker and his audience. (Hacker / Price, 1991, p.192)

The use of game plays reinforces the structural rigidity of the film. This structuring of films is used by Greenaway in all his films. The structure is always quite obvious similar to a tree, with the trunk and branches as the structure and all other characteristics being the foliage. The structure of each film is directly related to the film topic. For example, "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*" is structured into both seven and ten parts. Seven sections to reflect the seven colours used in the scenes throughout and ten sections to represent the ten days in which the events take place. Likewise in "*The Draughtman's Contract*" the film is divided into twelve parts in accordance with the twelve drawings to be executed by the Draughtman.

This approach to film structure is probably one of Greenaway's more dominant characteristics in his work. He does not try to hide or camouflage them but uses them to bring the viewer through the film in a systematic fashion. The repetition of the almost grid like structure of these films simulates the feeling of inevitable fate. As in "*Drowning by Numbers*", the skipping girl counts to one hundred at the beginning of the film, and with each number between one and one hundred appearing in different scenes thereafter, the viewer becomes gradually aware that the film's climax will be in the scene in which number one hundred appears. They feel as though they are at a count down to a major incident, and the lack of awareness of what the count down is leading to is disconcerting for the audience. As with the game playing element in "*Drowning by Numbers*", the structural rigidity of Greenaway's films reinforces cultural values in the audience to a certain extent. An uncompromising structure clearly stated or illustrated to the audience reflects the conservativeness associated with British culture. This feature may also be associated with the viewer's desire to experience the beautiful. This of course is entirely subjective in that the definition of the term beauty differs from individual to individual, based on their life



experiences and expectations. Be that as it may the perfect balance is struck by the director between the tight structure of his films and the mayhem and pandemonium of the events which appear within the "chassis". The contrast in organised film structure and the chaotic events within serve to unbalance and disorientate the viewers to a degree of confusion.



4. The drawing grid of the draughtman, representative of the films structure

Women characters in Greenaway's Films are those who are devious, unpredictable, and seek justice on their own terms in order to fulfill their own needs. Looking at "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*"; we see Georgina Spica degraded, humiliated, embarrassed and beaten by her brutal husband. The irony here is that Georgina is all her husband aspires to be, sophisticated, educated and refined. She maintains a dignified stance whenever Spica abuses her, eventually she stoops to his level in gaining revenge. In this instance we see the authoritative figure deflated, when treated to a dose of his own medicine Spica does not know how to react. The humiliating means by which he dies does not provoke sympathy or pity from the audience. All praise and admiration goes to Georgina for her noblistic and dignified revenge in a manner, which is just as ugly as the person it is designed for. Georgina's actions in this film serve to reinforce our beliefs in justice. This film is one of Greenaway's few in which the evil are punished and the persecuted freed



from suppression.

In "*The Draughtman's Contract*", the draughtman takes on the dominant position in the Herbert household by insisting that Mrs. Herbert sleeps with him throughout the duration of the contract. Later his contract is altered so that he must sleep with Mrs. Herbert's daughter, unknown to him that her intention is to conceive an heir to her father's estate.



5. The persecuted becomes the persecutor in
"The Cook, The Thief, His Wife And her Lover"

"Drowning by Numbers" demonstrates the fatal seductive powers of the three Cissies. Each of them drowning their husbands. Cissie number three ensures she is pregnant before drowning her husband.

Overall we can see the women in these three films are downtrodden by men, who in each case are the source of these women's torment. In each instance here, the women gain the upper hand and prove themselves stronger than the traditional tyrannical, dominant male, whom according to social ethics they must obey. They prove themselves stronger by unnervingly and cold bloodedly forcing them into uncompromising situations where the men are at their mercy.

Each of these features of Greenaway's work, use of gameplay, structuring, and the role of women all contribute to provoking the audience. The



emphasis of gameplaying in " *Drowning by Numbers* " leads the audience into a state of confusion. At first the game-like structure of proceedings in the film is entertaining. When half way through, the viewer feels as though there should be some important significance of this constant gameplaying and naturally begins to interpret them. With the introduction of game after game the viewer ends up confused and disorientated with the film. Because the viewer has spent most of the film interpreting the games in vein they become annoyed with the fact they have dismissed more relevant and significant incidents for something which had no real significance with what was going on. In a case such as this Greenaway describes the incorporation of irrelevant material in his films as " Serving the purpose of not serving a purpose".

As mentioned previously the systematic structure used in the films creates that sense of inevitable fate, the constant threat of fear and the unknown. It is like being part of a procession moving in an orderly fashion, the individual senses that they are the only one who is ignorant to the reason for the procession. The structure also adds to the distancing of the audience from the proceedings on screen. In most of Greenaway films, the audience is constantly reminded or kept aware of the fact that they are merely observers and not participants of the film. The distant and threatened sensations now felt by the audience makes them more aware that they are helpless and under the control of the director. They have been unsuspectingly led into a web, beautiful and intriguing at first, but once inside, their emotions are spread out open in preparation for the predator to do as he wishes.

The manipulative skills of Greenaway's female characters help them prove themselves to be a force to be reckoned with. However obtruse or abstract the situation may be, it is the underlining factor which offers the audience something to fulfill as part of their gratification needs, to see the persecutors persecuted. If the emphasis of the film were on this alone the viewers would be fully satisfied and the film would have a "fairy-tale " touch to it. Thankfully they don't, these films are so full of layers of meaning etc., that simple and traditional values associated with film-making, such as the reinforcement of cultural identity, justice being enforced on the world or the demonstration of the beautiful all slot into their own layers to become elements of the impressive network of layers constituting Greenaway films.

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CHAPTER THREE

- The application of Uses and Gratifications Theory in "*The Cook , The Thief, His Wife , and Her Lover*"



Peter Greenaway is a widely acclaimed film-maker and artist. His recent catapult into the public eye was caused by his flair for film-making rather than screen writing or artistic abilities. The viewers however should not forget that he is firstly and foremost an artist, after having studied this field in college. Much of his work has been shown in exhibitions all around Europe. A wide selection of his work is created in conjunction with his film-making career. Some serve as a starting point from which films are later developed, and others as after thoughts of a completed film. In the "*Draughtmans Contract*" for example all the drawings executed by the draughtman were draughted by Greenaway as part of the films construction, likewise those in "*Prosperos Books*". A long and thorough range of illustrative after thoughts were created by him after the filming of "*Drowning By Numbers*". One could say that any project initiated by Greenaway never has an official ending whereby it is left to gather dust. Any afterthoughts or responses to critics even years later may spur him to begin more drawings in the relevant area.

The next issue is brought forth by the fact that Greenaway is an established artist before a film-maker. Taking "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife, And Her Lover*", I shall endeavour to illustrate whether or not the uses and gratifications implementations in this film are consciously selected by the film-maker, or, coincidental to the proceedings as devised by an artist in an effort to illustrate his concerns to the public.

"*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*" bears some resemblance to Hollywood films, particularly in the plot. The wife of a tyrant having an affair, the possessive husband finds out, and in seeking revenge kills the lover. The wife in revenge convinces the cook to cook the body of her dead lover. And in treating her husband to a dose of his own medicine makes him eat the lover at gun point. At this level the plot appears straight forward and uncomplicated, and could easily pass as 'Hollywood' plot. However it is the treatment of the incidents and characters within the plot itself which turn it into the controversial film it is.

In this film the identifiable character is Georgina. Having such a character is a new thing for Greenaway, the identifiable character tends to hold the viewers interest much longer than if there was no central personality. For example, "*The Draughtman's Contract*" and "*Drowning by numbers*" do not contain any characters to whom the audience can relate to in any sense. It was after his production of "*The Belly of an Architect*" with actor Brian Dennehy taking the leading role of Krackelite the architect, that Greenaway realised the potential-



ty of having his characters brought more to life than other parts of the film. In Georgina's case, it is she whom the audience follow through the film. She may also be deemed the heroic character, the persecuted, the persecutor, the protector, the conspirator.

Through this character we search for an affirmation of our beliefs in romantic love. The hopes of the audience are that she and her lover conquest the evil which surrounds them and live happily ever after. However the murder of her lover incites Georgina to murder her husband by means just as foul as those he is accustomed to afflicting on those about him. Although our hopes of romantic love are shattered, the decidedly vulgar means by which Spica is murdered fulfill our beliefs in justice, the good gaining revenge and the evil punished.

In contrast to the character of Georgina, the personality of her husband can only disturb audiences everywhere. The brutality and cold-bloodedness of his treatment to both his friends and enemies leaves one wondering how such a grotesque character could be created by anyone. In watching this film individuals are purged of unpleasant emotions through experiencing the ugly (Spica). The Spica character carries us through such a variety of emotions to a point of extremity, that the individual leaves the cinema reeling after the persistent bombardment of thought, and emotion provoking content in a short period of time. Spica takes us through the taboo , the ugly, we experience the cruelty of his villainous nature through the extremity of his torturing methods. There is absolutely no compassion or sympathy provoked from the audience in this instance.



6. Spica, the brutal villain

The first part of the report is a general introduction to the project. It describes the objectives of the study and the methods used to collect and analyze the data. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the results of the study. It includes a discussion of the findings and their implications for the field of research.

The third part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references. The conclusion summarizes the main findings of the study and provides a final assessment of the project. The references list the sources of information used in the study.

The fourth part of the report is a list of appendices. These appendices contain additional information that is relevant to the study but is not included in the main text. They include a list of abbreviations, a list of symbols, and a list of figures and tables.



Through the use of an uncomplicated plot, one identifiable character, Greenaway has revealed the faint inclination towards Hollywood film-making methods. Be this as it may, the weight of light, sound, colour, cinematography and other treatments of the film quickly render the Hollywood syndrome almost obsolete.

Greenaway does not allow the audience to get involved in the film. By distancing them from the events within the film by constantly reminding them that they are merely observers on the outside looking in. He has the audience in a position whereby they must follow his directions through the film. Distancing enables viewers to experience a range of taboo topics "from a safe distance". Even the cinema itself acts as a contributor to the distancing element in any film. The dark shroud of the cinema offers the same security and reassurance of voyeurism as the emphasis on the long tracking shots used in the "*The Cook....*". For example when Spica rapes Georgina in the back of his car and forces Pup (the kitchen boy) to look on. In doing so Greenaway limits and controls the audience's views and hence perceptions of the events. The audience duly become aware of the strength of the director's hold on them, they are only allowed to see what Greenaway wants them to see. They are distanced even further when presented with textual reminders that they are the audience, and what they are watching is not real but a construction of fictional events. For example, when Michael (the lover) tells Georgina (the wife) of a film he saw in which the main character didn't speak for the first half hour and when he did, he lost interest in the film. Georgina asks if this situation is like their relationship, he reminds her (and the audience) that "It was only a film". Also, when Georgina asks the cook if all lovers behave as she and her lover did, he tells her that his parents did, lovers in films do, and lovers in his fantasies do. Georgina dismisses his assurance that lovers in films do when she says, "That doesn't count". In these instances Greenaway is not to look for confirmation of beliefs in romantic love.

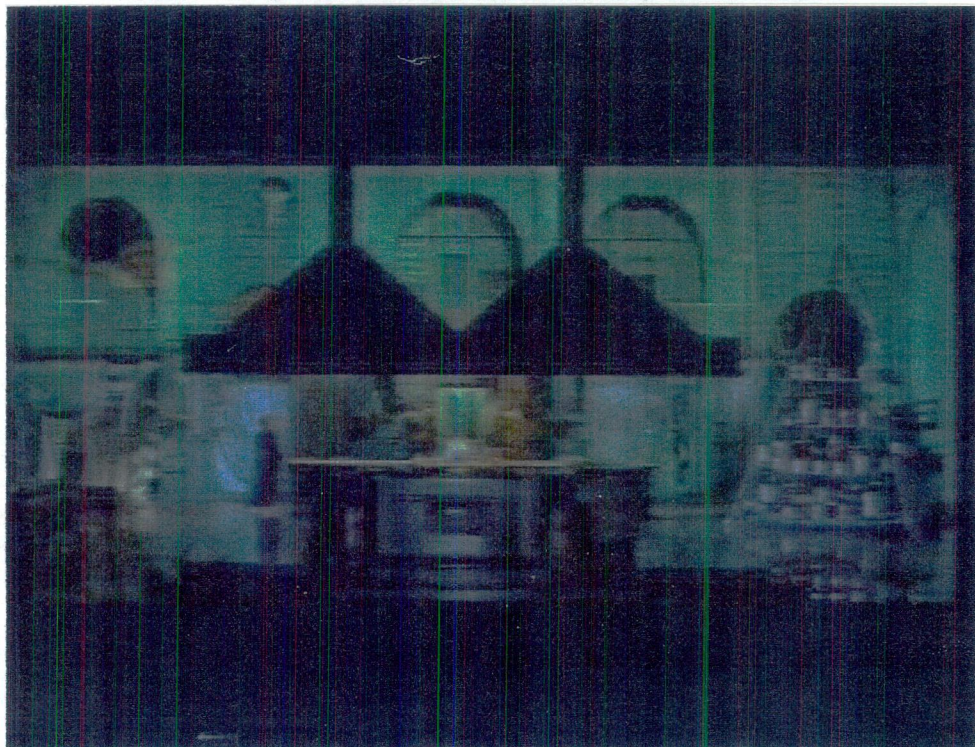
The theatrical feel to the film also adds the distancing quality. All the extras in the film act as though they are on a theatre stage. In one scene for instance we see the lovers sneak through a kitchen full of people completely unnoticed. This behaviour is acceptable in theatres where space is limited and audiences are willing to accept the apparent "short-sightedness" of characters. In watching "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*" audience members may accept the theatre treatment and let themselves be led along by it. This quality emphasises even more the extremity of emotions stirred by the realistic portrayal of Pup (the kitchen boy) having his belly-button ripped out, or



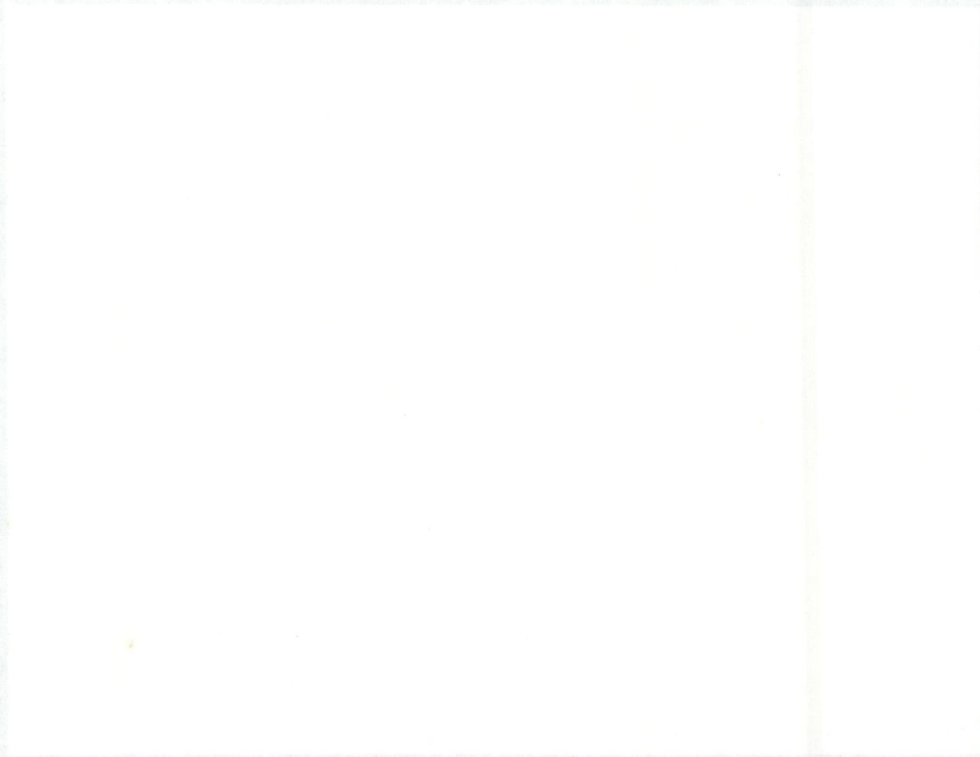
Spica's brutality towards his wife, or the lover having the leaves of his favourite book rammed down his throat. The audience feel cheated and betrayed by the director, and even more distant than ever from the film.



7. Textual reminders add to the distancing of the audience.



8. Long tracking shots are used so the viewers cannot get too involved in the proceedings



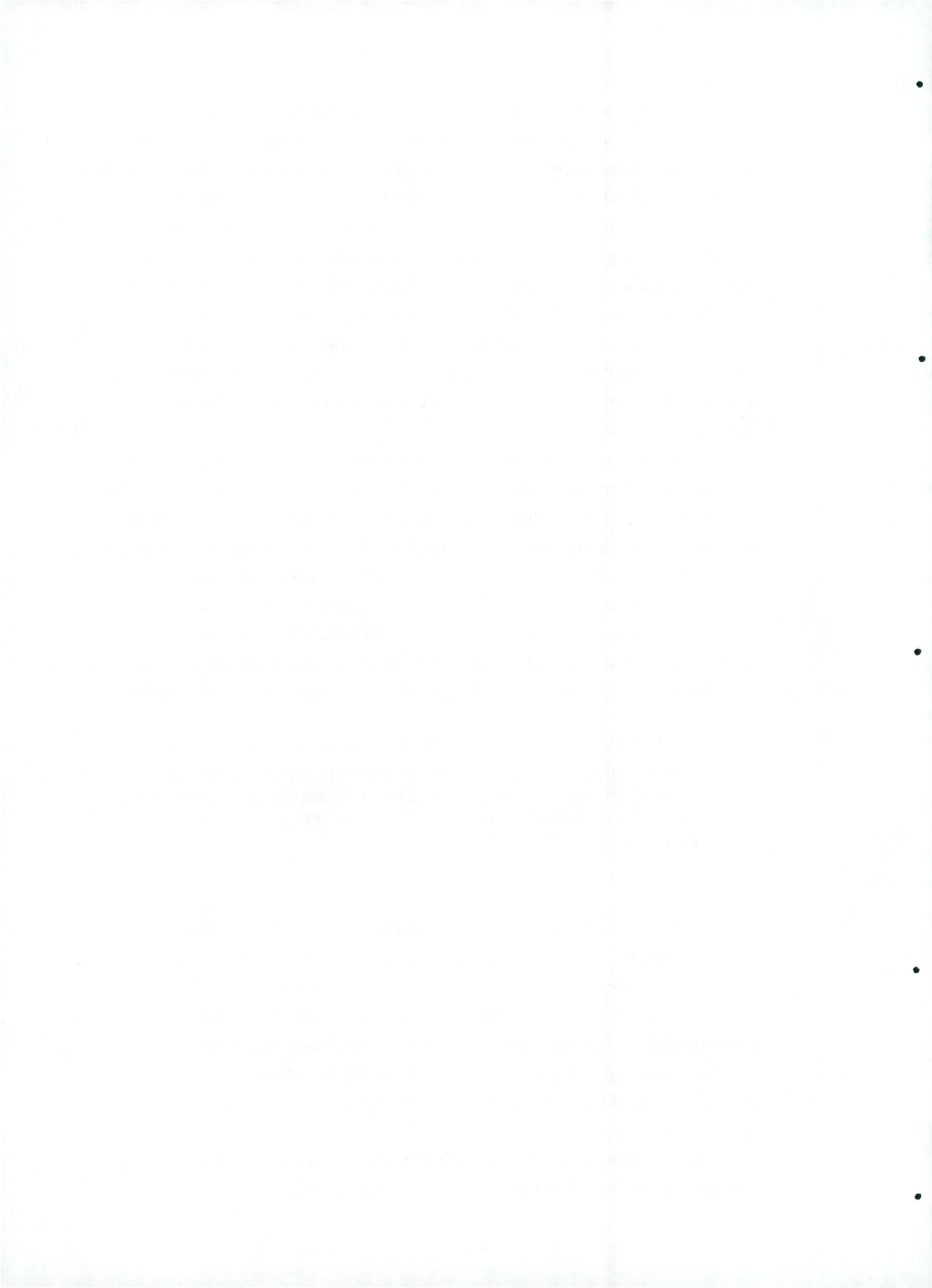
The passion and intensity of the music throughout the film adds to the viewers psychological discomfort. The music has a definite religious sound to it, both choir like and processional throughout. To see characters arrive into the restaurant in a very upright, rigid manner to the processional type music, hints to the viewer that death is inevitable. On this level, the other senses Greenaway plays up, are sight, and taste also to a certain extent. Throughout the film he makes use of mainly seven colours. Each room in the film is designated a specific colour. Clever use of lighting helps enhance the colour element to it's fullest. Taste is provoked in the audience with close up shots of people vomiting, a man having dog's excrement smeared across his mouth, or the fine food which is prepared by the cook for Georgina and Michael whilst they are in hiding.

The features which have the most impact on the viewer in this film are the distancing techniques and the extremity to which everything is done at the "other side of the screen". It is not just the actions or events, but also the extremity and intensity of the characters themselves. We see the evil painted black, the good white, and behaviourism of other characters stilted or else over dramatised. It appears that Greenaway is trying every technique he can think of, in order to place the individual in a position from which they are reminded on a very extreme level of the corruption of the world in which we live in today and what we are doing to accelerate it's downfall and not help in its preservation.

In all my films there is a contradiction between the romantic and the classical; violent, absurd, bizarre subject matter treated with a severe sense of control... ..Which I would like to think shows a wish - against the odds - to create a rational view of the world out of all it's chaotic parts. (Hacker / Price, 1991, p 190.)

In his work Greenaway presents us with issues as he sees them, which for the most part, are representative of something. He claims that "*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*" is expressive of his anger for the Thatcherite condition whereby the concern was for the price of everything and very little was valued. In it's representation he designed the Albert Spica character whose intense and extreme character disposed of everything which was not consumable. The point of the matter being that if everything is consumable we must inevitably eat ourselves.

In contrast the seriousness of this theme, the theme for "*The Draughtman's Contract*" is the symbolism of food which is what one might



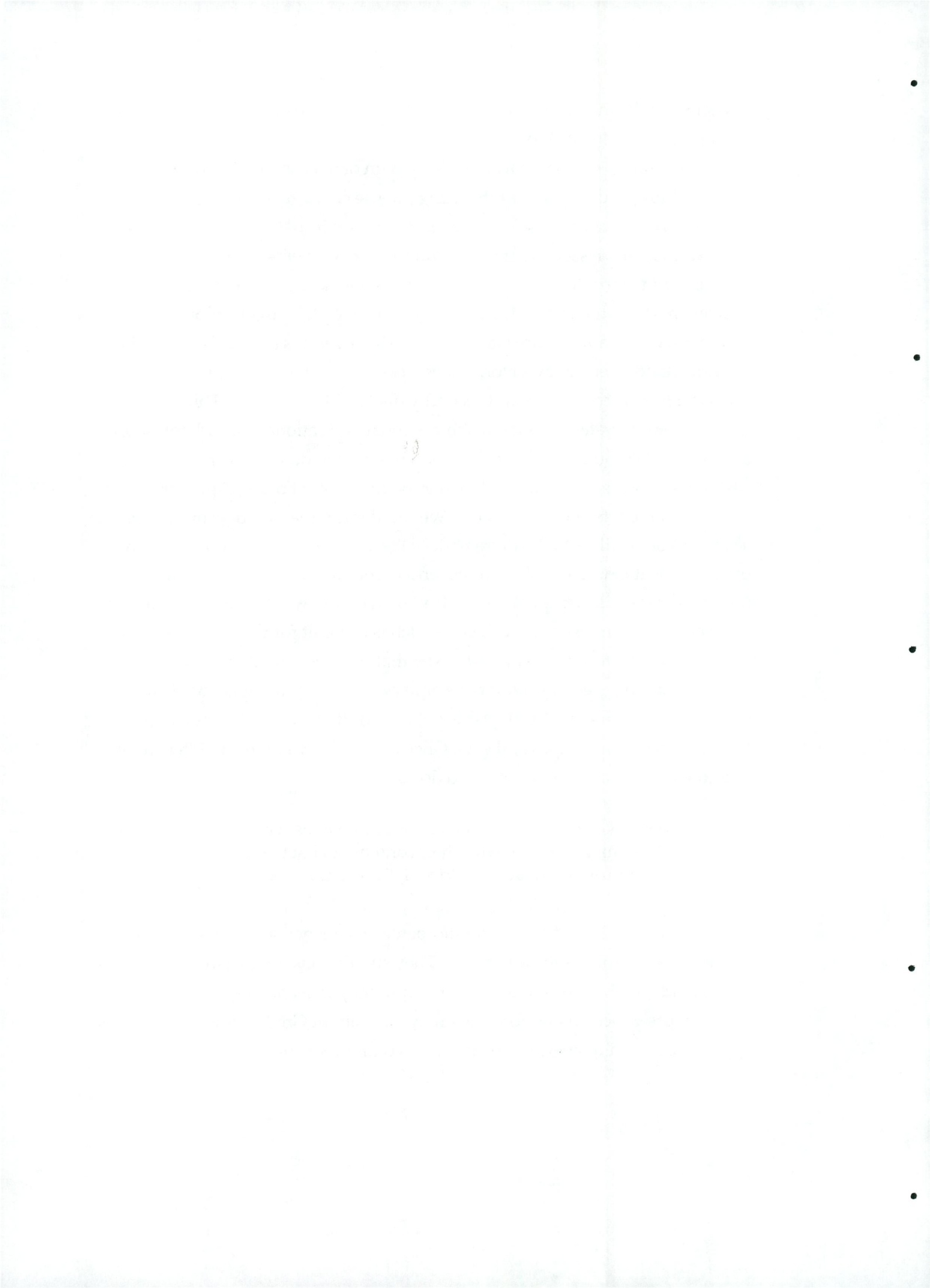
expect to be the theme of " *The Cook.....* ". It can also be taken at face value as an Agatha Christie mystery.

To sum up see Greenaway playing with our senses, emotions, using harsh lighting and strong colours, using intense characters and creating an artificial world in order to set the scene. He dresses it so that it can only be seen as he wants it to be seen. In order to find the correct theme of any of his films the viewer must try to break past the tough outer skin and search deep beneath. Viewers find it difficult to scratch the elaborate facade of light, colour and sound which enbalm all Greenaway films. However it is also difficult for them to understand Greenaway's work unless this outer shell is broken. He treats his films firstly as pieces of art and secondly deals with the theme. This is adequately demonstrated through his discretionary and rational use of light, sound and colour, " I would say that my cinema has a lot to do with aesthetics, but aesthetics is related to ethics and then to politics". (Art Forum, April 1990).

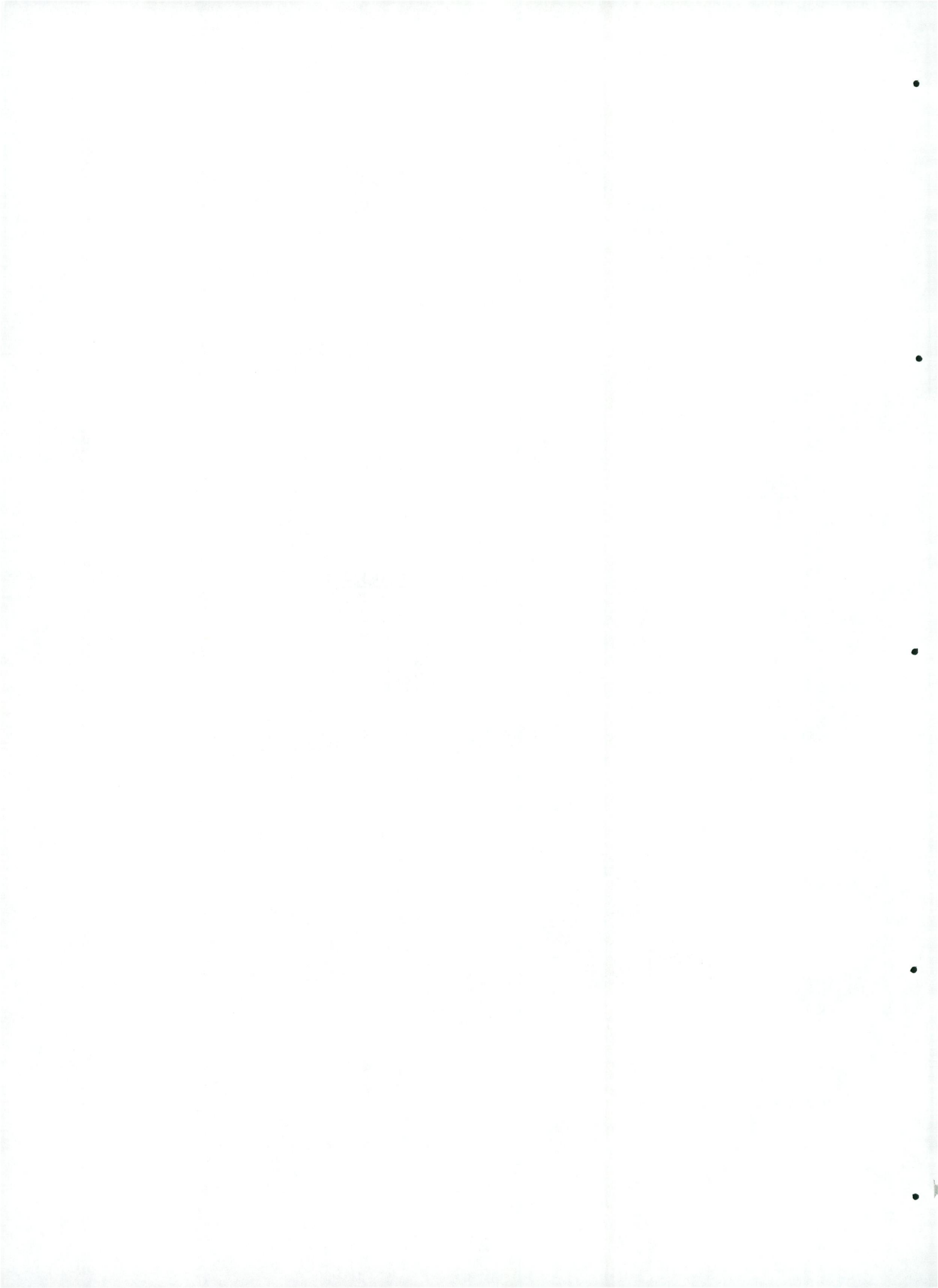
In conjunction with this view, we can deduce that he concentrates on the aesthetics of his films to the detriment of the viewers gratification needs. In other words the function of his films tend to follow their form. He creates a film, and using his manipulative skills in images and words, presents it to the audience on an almost abstract level, which is difficult for them to grasp. It is presented on his terms. That is not to say that he does not intend to provoke the audience because he does but it is secondary to the visual impact of his work. Once inside the cinema the viewer is obliged to sit , listen and perceive issues through Greenaway's eyes and ears. Once outside they are free to interpret the film to whatever degree they wish to do so.

I would like audiences to think about motives as well as to feel the need to emotionally identify with their content or characters : it is true that I want to provoke. (Hacker/ Price, 1991, p. 212)

Therefore the individual should perceive Greenaway's works as paintings and the cinema as the art gallery. They should look and listen for the statements made by the director. In order to do so they must be prepared to disregard any pre-conceived notions they may have about Greenaway and be able to appreciate the uniqueness of his means of communication.



CONCLUSION



I hope that in reading this thesis the reader has attained a clearer understanding of what is expected of them as a Greenaway audience. It is important I feel that the viewer realises that they do not have to interpret a Greenaway film. It is up to them to do with it as they wish. Audiences are made up of individuals, which is the central factor to Greenaway's work. Each individual can do with as they wish with his work ; to interpret symbolisms, ironies, metaphors and word play as they feel fit. They may view his work as pieces of "living" art, and enjoy the strategy he uses in creating different atmospheres, or the perfection and care which goes into the balancing of content in every scene. " To make something for public consumption - however small the audience - it must be theirs to interpret as they wish. You cannot control it" (Hacker / Price, 1991, p.300).

It does not matter what approach the individual takes with Greenaway's work, they should under no circumstances take events in his films personally. It is an understanding of the fim-maker himself which thus enlightens the viewer. Greenaway stratigically works symbolisms, ironies, double meanings and elemental compositions into his films with a set objective in mind. The objective being the theme of the relevant film. The director goes against the uses and gratification theory in order to distance as well as to provoke emotions and senses on different levels. Hence the individual should be respectful enough to stand back when so directed. The effect otherwise is like viewing a painting; stand too close and all one sees is brush strokes, merging colours and vague images, but when standing back at a correct distance the piece can be fully appreciated for all it is worth. This is the case for all of Greenaway's work; he shows the ability to direct both the film and the audience. However, because he is not personally there to tell the audience how to behave , he must use the film to create the gentle "push" for the audience to sway them in the right direction. The confusion occurs however when individuals become aware of this "push" and resist it rather than going with it, resulting in the sense of betrayal, disgust and disbelief which is all too common at most showings. An insight into the directors characteristics and objectives enables some audience members to have an edge on others thus deriving more from his films.

The Greenaway audience are not meant to seek entertainment in the true sense of the word. Thought and effort are required in order for them to get the most out of his films. As outlined in chapter one, viewers draw from their own personal experiences in order to understand a film; they need to be able to relate it to something before any kind of interpretation can be made.



Individuals at Greenaway screenings, if open-minded enough should be able to treat his work as a new experience, and use it as a base from which interpretations of other films can be formed. Greenaway's films deviate slightly from the 'normal' which is why many people find them difficult to deal with. This being the case they tend to label his work unsatisfying and disturbing.

The audience members must be aware of the role it must play as the Greenaway audience. Going back to the elemental games feature within his work, Greenaway envisages the whole film-making process as a game played between the film-maker and the audience. The audience must therefore understand this and prepare themselves for the participation in a game of the director's choice. If audience individuals are prepared they shall be susceptible to pick up on subliminal messages and images within Greenaway's films. Otherwise they fall vulnerable to the nastiness of the face value of his work and most of his efforts go unappreciated.

His success and popularity outside of Britain demonstrates that his approach to his work is appreciated on the whole. It shows that there is a niche for self-expressional film-makers. Through the passing of time, the persistence and dedication of film-makers like Greenaway will shine through and films such as theirs will prove to be as strong, influential and popular as Hollywood's "plastic" productions. The age of audience contentment at the escapist level being film-making's soul objective is fast disappearing with this century. Its successor being a cinema which serves to stimulate thought on many levels in the audiences.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical tools employed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, including a comparison of the different methods and a discussion of the implications of the findings. It also includes a section on the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

4. The fourth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions. It highlights the main points of the study and offers a final perspective on the overall significance of the research.

5. The fifth part of the document contains a list of references and a bibliography. It includes citations to the works of other researchers in the field, as well as a list of the sources used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the document is a concluding statement that reiterates the main findings and the overall purpose of the study. It serves as a final summary and a call to action for further research in the area.

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