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## Hogarth to Monster Wheels : A grotesque connection

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**HOGARTH TO MONSTER WHEELS:  
A GROTESQUE CONNECTION**

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**This thesis is presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Communications Honours**

**Faculty of Communications and Creative Industries  
Edith Cowan University**

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## ABSTRACT

When an audience is exposed to deformed, altered and abnormal entities, their interpretation relies on some form of cultural awareness of both the expected and the altered shape to stimulate a reaction. I maintain that the stimulus for this reaction has its roots in a dark and terrifying primal force, the manifestation of which we regard as the grotesque.

This thesis looks for a commonality in a satirical interpretation afforded to this grotesque force. By using the caricatures in William Hogarth's engravings and the altered cars in three contemporary films. I search for a correlation between the way Hogarth and the film directors have grotesquely altered their characters/cars as a way of parodying common elements to satirize them. I will argue that the audience of Hogarth's period will have experienced a similar fear response as that of a contemporary audience, and that even though there are many cultural and sociological variables that separate the two periods, the core reaction will have its foundation in a common instinctual force.

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## INTRODUCTION

The motorcar in film has affected our way of thinking, both by subtle intrusion and openly manipulative exposure. We automatically read the various nuances and influence without a second thought and expect certain forms of structured action or procedure, depending on the particular film genre. The evolution of these various influences has come about through many and varied sources. I propose to concentrate on one historical source and will try and situate a grotesque reasoning behind this influence: The representation of the motorcar as a grotesque satirical entity in film.

The main thesis question, 'Is there a correlation between the way Hogarth and three film directors have grotesquely altered their characters/cars as a way of parodying common elements to satirise them?' will provide the basis for my research and eventual conclusion. The motivation behind this thesis comes from a personal interest in the motorcar, its filmic representation and a fascination with the works of William Hogarth, the 18<sup>th</sup> century engraver/artist and satirist. I will use these three areas of interest as the foundation for my investigation, and by situating the primal fascination/fear we have with deformed shapes as an integral part of the human psyche, I will try and establish this instinct as the structural link. The task will then be to discern a relevant connection between the three areas of interest and highlight the representation and reception of the grotesquely altered forms.

The significance to me of this subject lies not only as a personally meaningful and interesting subject, but also in the hopefully original concept of the comparison and the choice of subjects. While the work of Hogarth and his use of the grotesque are regarded worldwide as one of the initial building blocks in the formulation of satirical representation, and much has been written about his work, I can find no comparable study that uses a cross-interpretation with the subversion of a vehicle in film.

The aim of this paper is to find some form of comparable 'Hogarthian' satirical representation of the 'corrupt motor car form' as portrayed in these three contemporary films:

- 1.) *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974) Director Peter Weir.
- 2.) *Death Race 2000* (1975) Director Paul Bartel.
- 3.) *Mad Max 2* (1981) Director George Miller.

In each example of my chosen films, the shape of the car has been subverted to represent a totally different entity, each full of grotesque symbolism. I will endeavour to justify these car forms as a catalyst for a primal fear response, and compare this with William Hogarth's satirical interpretation of the 'normal' through his manipulation of form.

In chapter one I focus on finding a workable definition of the term grotesque, and then uncover and question the historical versus contemporary assumptions surrounding the placement and usage of the grotesque in society in Hogarth's time and the present. The emphasis will be on finding a commonality that I can use as a definition of the grotesque and apply this definition to both periods. As a subsection of this chapter I will briefly describe the connection between satire and the usage of the grotesque.

Chapter two is an objective analysis of Hogarth and his position as the father of British satire. I will try and emphasise some reasoning behind his usage of the altered norm, the grotesque, and any historical connection or influence that may have helped formulate his unique approach. I will use a few examples of relevant artwork and qualify his position as a satirist who utilised the grotesque.

Chapter three discusses each film/director in terms of genre, topicality, style, motivation and the relevance of their period of production and the extraneous variables that would have motivated this form of satire at the time. I will highlight the usage of the cars as parody, establishing them as carriers of grotesque satirical meaning.

In chapter four I cover the signs, symbology and meanings of the automobile, emphasising the subversion of its normal form into a grotesque entity. I propose that the reasoning behind our fear/fascination response to these altered shapes comes from an instinctive primal association with fearful animals and the 'dark side'. This, coupled

with our subconscious ability of transferring these animalistic traits to the all-powerful automobile, is what gives credence to my theory that the car should be regarded as a semi-living entity, worthy of respect and caution. I discuss the concept of the car as a harbinger of death and destruction that manifests itself as a grotesque representation, a monstrous symbol that becomes a carrier of satirical representation. The cars in my thesis are like the caricatures in Hogarth's examples, in that they carry the symbolism and grotesque aesthetical representation that will provide both a means for comparison and also a platform for satirical comment.

Chapter five will explore any similarity between historical and contemporary satire in order to provide a framework for a common connection. I maintain the relevance of this type of representation in both periods. Acknowledging the differing values that come to play in the interpretation of the satire by both audiences, as well as the disparity in the understanding and ability of each respective audience to see the relevance in the satirist's cause. I discuss the merits of satire as a medium and argue its value as a form of social protest.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE GROTESQUE: A PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

As the common denominator in my thesis is based around a time and spatial interpretation of the grotesque, some form of concise definition, or at least a contextually workable definition is required. This will provide a platform from which to question the historical versus contemporary assumptions surrounding the placement and usage of the grotesque in society, both in Hogarth's time and the present.

There has always been a problem with defining the grotesque. The fascination of the term has provided an enigmatic quality that in the end leaves many theories but no real consensus. Perhaps the unfathomable nature of the word is what gives it its power, or perhaps it will all make sense when we know more about the mysteries of our psyche. Because of the complexity and many interpretations behind the usage and meaning of the word grotesque, it will be necessary to approach contemporary representation and 18<sup>th</sup> century representation as two separate entities, due to a vastly changing set of values between the two periods. I should add that while I am placing the subject within a purely Anglo/American/Australian context, I am aware of the existence of cultures and their reliance on a continuity with older-based representations of the grotesque that still prevail today.

The need to separate the representation and eventual interpretation of my two chosen periods into separate reference points is necessary in providing an equitable reasoning behind my thesis question. There is a vast socio-cultural difference between the two periods, and therefore the commonality of satirical representation will need to rely on two different yet historically similar forms of portrayal. They both rely on the alteration of the normal to the non-normal, but it is in the interpretational response and influence that these representations carry, where the main subject of comparison lays.

## **Examination of two key theories**

While it is difficult to understand the formulation of the grotesque, many academic theories offer some insight into the fascination/fear that man has seemed to always have with the monstrous, deformed, or altered shape. One thing for sure is that archaeological evidence proves beyond doubt that the practice of recording and symbolising non-normal entities, has always been with us. McElroy (1989, p. 1) states:

From ice-age cave paintings to modern films, from shaman costumes and devil masks to the paintings of Dali and Picasso, from folk stories and fairy tales to the writings of Kafka, the transmutations of men, beasts, devils and chimeras have made their bizarre progress, constantly changing with the world-views of the cultures which produced them, yet still retaining the essential qualities by which we may attempt to designate them as grotesques.

Two of the more recognized theorists of the grotesque, Wolfgang Kayser and Mikhail Bakhtin, agree that the concept relies on either terrifying or comedic stimuli or a combination of the two. Thomson (1972, p. 20) describes this commonality and seed of disquiet, as "The most consistently distinguished characteristic of the grotesque has been the fundamental element of disharmony, whether this is referred to as a conflict, clash, mixture of the heterogeneous, or conflation of disparates." McElroy (1989, p. 2) points out that Kayser and Bakhtin "both retain the central concept of the grotesque as play", but in Bakhtin's theory, the play could be seen as being light in nature and in Kayser's dark and uncanny.

### **Mikhail Bakhtin**

Bakhtin's theory defines the grotesque as being part of a two-part construct. One part requires the expression of order in society and the other, that of comedic disorder. This is a simplified explanation, but I believe it is at the core of his grotesque definition. Bakhtin sees society as structured around rules and procedures, bounded by morality and religious doctrine, but with an inherent need to break away and play with these social structures. Bakhtin observes this alternative, unstructured conduct, manifest itself in the allure of the carnival or fair with its altered and playfully sinister attributes.

The carnival space becomes a stage for a reaction to what is regarded as the normal everyday drudgery of existence. The foil to this existence is what Bakhtin sees as a grotesque state. Bakhtin (1984, p. 48) argues that the grotesque, "discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life. It leads man out of the confines of the apparent (false) unity, of the indisputable and stable". Where better than a time of celebration and play to be honest, inhibition-free and open to experience? These short periods of excess could be seen as the foundation for free expression and an opportunity to forget reality. Bakhtin (1984, p. 96) states, "the activities of the carnival square: collective ridicule of officialdom, inversion of hierarchy, violations of decorum and proportion, celebration of bodily excess and so on, embody an implicit popular conception of the world".

Bakhtin (1984, p. 91) places great emphasis on the power of laughter and the carnival to defeat and nullify the fearful existence that religion, superstition and hegemonic influence had placed on the people, stating "the grotesque is the people's triumphant laughter dethroning the shibboleths of the 'official' world view and substituting in their place the carnival spirit of abundance and renewal thus defeating fear." The need for laughter to negate the nightmare can be seen as practical and reasonable and as Thomson (1972, p. 56) writes "his insistence on the physical nature of the grotesque and on the primitive delight in what is obscene, cruel and even barbaric is quite justified." But I see Bakhtin perhaps ignoring society's more primal fear of the grotesque. He seems to infer that 'the grotesque body' is more of a collective physical state than a series of inherently frightening entities. Russo (1994, p. 8) states that Bakhtin considers that "the grotesque body is conceived of first and foremost as a social body" and Bakhtin (1984, p. 26) confirms this by stating, "the material body principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people". It is possible to see this state as a purely conscious construct, but I believe that it is only a part of the reasoning behind the appeal of the unnatural.

Bakhtin's theory of the carnival/grotesque could be seen as mirroring certain aspects of popular contemporary humour. His reasoning may partially explain the appeal and fascination we have with lavatorial, debased and cruel humour; that in varying degrees of subtlety is so popular. Bakhtin (1984, p. 19) believes, "the essential principle of

grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity". In other words this pertains to all the subjects, images and thoughts that we have deemed taboo or socially unacceptable, making them fair game for the carnival. Dvorak (1995, p. 1) agrees, stating, "the life of the belly, a term popularised by Bakhtin to describe the activities of the lower part of the body (copulation, gestation, ingestion, digestion, defecation), is one of carnival's strategies of grotesque realism which seeks to deflate the sublime".

The fact that Bakhtin based a lot of his ideas on the classic work and writings of François Rabelais give them an historical perspective that adds credence albeit in a slightly idiosyncratic way, and in certain aspects Bakhtin's theory could be seen as trivialising moral and artistic standards by making fun of them, and hence regarding laughter and the carnival as non-serious. But McLemee (1997, p. 16) regards Bakhtin's grotesque/carnalvesque theory as being paramount to fully understanding and appreciating literature. He states: "It is the molten core of culture itself. Without the carnivalizing impulse, literature freezes into mere elegance (chivalric romances weren't carnivalesque; Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were)".

I personally accept that while laughter and the act of 'letting go' in an attempt to nullify what scares us by embracing it as a symbol of mirth and ridicule, can be seen as a way of partially controlling it. I don't believe that this concept is a full definition of what constitutes the grotesque. The problem with finding a definitive explanation must partially lay with the subjectivity, both conscious and unconscious that surrounds one's individual interpretation of what we regarded as grotesque. I prefer a more naturally inherent explanation to one's reaction to the grotesque, a reaction that is based on primal fear and the unknown, and is both an appeal and revulsion to the altered shape. Bakhtin gives us the carnival grotesque and Wolfgang Kayser gives us the serious uncanny grotesque.

## Wolfgang Kayser

Kayser's approach to the grotesque relies on a much earlier interpretation than Bakhtin's study of Rabelais. Kayser regarded the grotesque as a serious manifestation of much darker influences. For Kayser the grotesque was no laughing matter. His definition tries to determine a much closer link to a primal fear of the monstrous, unknown and uncanny. Kayser sees Bakhtin's carnival concept as almost a diversion from his own definition of the grotesque. Thomson (1972, p. 13) distinguishes between the two theories, "to what Kayser calls a loss of substance in the word, meaning the suppression of the horrifying or eerie qualities of the grotesque and a corresponding over-emphasis on the ridiculous and bizarre."

Kayser looks to various living/imagined representations to stimulate a reaction to the grotesque. There are certain images/sensual feelings that prompt uncanny responses, and the fact that these entities appear in many cultures as figures or representations of a dark or altered realm, places these symbols on a more collective plane. Therefore reactions to these images may stem from deep, natural fears that we all experience. Kayser (1963, p. 182) states: "Certain animals are especially suitable to the grotesque-- snakes, owls, toads, spiders-- the nocturnal and creeping animals which inhabit realms apart from and inaccessible to man". This natural fear or exaggerated awareness of certain stimuli is at the core of Kayser's definition.

Religion and ruling powers have used and manipulated these inherent natural fears; by promoting certain aspects and suppressing others, they placed the populace in a vulnerable and submissive position, and this is mirrored in parochial culture and its stories and cautionary tales. Bakhtin sees the carnival theory as a reaction to this hegemony and a way for the people to regain some control over their life. Kayser sees the grotesque as a natural facet of human nature. He suggests the term grotesque refers to a primal state and reaction; it is as natural as the need to reproduce. Kayser (1963, p. 184) maintains, "the grotesque is a structure. Its nature could be summed up in a phrase that has repeatedly suggested itself to us: THE GROTESQUE IS THE ESTRANGED WORLD".

I believe that Kayser's theory; that the grotesque is embedded in our unconscious minds, both collectively and independently, is more realistic and must be seen in some aspects to parallel Freud's theory of the Id. Kayser (1963, p. 185) refers to this as the 'Es'. Clayborough (1965, p. 69) states, "the grotesque is the creation of the 'Es', if the latter term is understood in the sense of the unconscious mind". Kayser's theory suggests that morality is not an issue and plays little part in defining the grotesque. I would agree with this in so far as it may not be part of the inherent motivation, but moral influence must come into play when subjectively or subconsciously processing a reaction to these grotesque stimuli.

Art and literature have often been regarded as a reflection of contemporaneous thought and mores whether intentionally or not, they represent social, cultural and political influence and trends. Kayser (1963) sees this reflection as a perfect way to typify the grotesque influence and its placement in art and literature. Kayser (cited in Thomson, 1972, p.1) maintains that a collective influence can be seen in all art forms, and states:

Do the paintings, the graphic arts, and the richly diversified literary works, which we have considered, have anything in common? Is it significant that the language, the usage of which we have so far followed, suggests the word "grotesque" over and over again?

Kayser believed that the true inherent grotesque is the ultimate controlling influence in the arts, and this as Clayborough (1965, p. 67) puts it, "is the impersonal, autonomous force... that robs the artist of his freedom and gains control of his mind." Kayser also seems to suggest that in order to experience the true inherent primal reaction to the grotesque, one must see it or feel it. The senses must have visual or physical contact in order to 'trigger' our true primal reaction.

This primal subconscious influence is beyond comprehension and must be regarded as part of our unknown psyche. It forms the foundation of the grotesque enigma, and without its dark and undecipherable psychodynamics, the term would have no real power and be relegated to a purely aesthetic representational explanation. Kayser

(1963, p. 185) states: "If we were able to name these powers and relate them to the cosmic order, the grotesque would lose its essential quality". Kayser places our fear of the grotesque as relative to our existence and not our death. Kayser (cited in Clayborough, 1965, p. 64) argues that, "the grotesque arouses in us not fear of death but anxiety about life (*Lebensangst*)". The core of our fear comes from the alteration of known entities. "Kayser insists that in genuinely grotesque art the everyday world is suddenly changed into a strange and unpleasant place, into a world in which we do not wish to live", (p. 64). It is this primal fear and reaction of the living unknown that formulates Kayser's theory of the grotesque.

### **A workable definition**

Both Bakhtin and Kayser fail to give enough recognition to the major influence of each other's theories. As McElroy (1989, p. 15) states: "Both Kayser and Bakhtin commit the same essential error: mistaking the part for the whole". Kayser's core concept of an inherent dark influence will form the basis of my analysis in this thesis. Although I will need to separate and analyse the differences, I believe that the core motivation and reaction are the same no matter what period in time or place.

Art and symbolism are the most obvious places to see the manipulation and portrayal of the grotesque and its changing representations. As my working definition relies on primal forces, it will be impossible to find a starting point, school, or cultural expression with which to equate this formulation. McElroy (1989, p. 182) writes, "grotesque art did not originate in an aesthetic theory or artistic movement: it antedates all theories and all movements" and he adds, "in individual experience, the grotesque is first encountered in the dreams and fantasies of childhood". To me this seems logical and must help place this influence as a constant 'force'.

While I don't necessarily subscribe to this theory, Clayborough (1965, p. 81) touches on the Jungian interpretation of the collective conscious as a way of explaining a common human recognition of the grotesque in art when he states:

Such art is full of images of the type, which Jung describes as 'archetypical' images like the witch and the vampire, which, continually recurrent in art and religion, correspond to something permanent in the relationship of the human mind to its environment.

This suggests that there are common recognisable traits in all things grotesque and these stimuli are processed subliminally. The subconscious recognition of deformity and altered forms, a sensual aversion to decay and morass, the primal fear/response that one sometimes feels when alone in a dark place. It is in the conscious manifestation that the malleable fear/fascination aspect of the grotesque's 'monstrous-element' is formulated and can then be played with.

### **The satiric grotesque**

Kayser doesn't totally discredit the more aesthetically orientated and caricatured usage of the term, and readily acknowledges using the grotesque model as a vehicle for satire, parody and comedic play, but he seems to regard these as just by-products or extraneous elements of the true fantastic grotesque.

We now use the fear and apprehension of this unknown and monstrous entity as a way of controlling it. We appropriate the term grotesque and by applying our own connotations, give it a satirical and humorous value that almost normalises it. Fitzgerald (1988, p. 817) cites O'Connor: "When the grotesque is used in a legitimate way, the intellectual and moral judgments implicit in it will have the ascendancy over feeling". I agree with this statement, and believe that this can be seen as giving the grotesque credibility devoid of inherent fears.

A relevant part of my definition has also been recognised by Thomson (1972, p. 27) as being highly significant. He states, "it has been fairly common practice to distinguish several varieties of the grotesque, in particular to set apart the 'satiric-grotesque' from the purely playful, purposeless or ornamental grotesque". Thomson (p. 20) sees a common thread with satire and it is one that encompasses the whole process of grotesque representation, from artist to reception, He states:

The most consistently distinguished characteristic of the grotesque has been the fundamental element of disharmony, whether this is referred to as conflict, clash, mixture of the heterogeneous, or conflation of disparate. It is important that this disharmony has been seen, not merely in the work of art as such, but also in the reaction it produces and (speculatively) in the creative temperament and psychological make-up of the artist.

It is in the reception and human reaction that the true meaning of the term grotesque lays. The visuality of the satiric grotesque triggers the 'primal grotesque' response and this response is where I will search for my comparison.

The definition of the Grotesque that I will use for my comparison requires that it be seen as a whole structure, a structure that includes the primal subliminal impetus that emanates from deep within our darkest, collective self and acts as a warning device against the unnatural and dangerous. It encompasses the manipulation and interpretation of these fearful entities and provides a way of coping with and accepting them. This grotesque supplies a vehicle for parody and satire. It can instil the greatest revulsion or provide immense laughter. The grotesque I define must be seen as a multifaceted ability to harness and utilise man's primal fears.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WILLIAM HOGARTH

The breadth of achievement and the ability of William Hogarth are immense. His impact on art and social representation has placed him among some of the most influential artists in British history. I will concentrate on Hogarth as the user of the grotesque or altered forms as a way of expressing social and self-comment. Hogarth is regarded as the father of British satire, and incorporated this form of representation as the best way to expose the social and political climate of his time. It gave him the opportunity to protest, yet remain at a distance from openly verbalising his concerns. I will draw on Hogarth's more popular satirical works and his controversial portrayal of subject matter, to reflect his distaste with the casual, cruel and comic society that he lived in. Hogarth's narrative format, grotesque technique of exaggeration and intensity, coupled with highly symbolic scenery, was regarded as refreshingly new and controversial. But when Hogarth devised this style of representation, the impetus may not have been consciously his, but emanated from an influence deep within his psyche.

William Hogarth was born in 1697 in London, at a particular time in history when the population was increasing at an alarming rate. This in turn created extremes of both wealth and poverty. Mortality was high and the increasingly worsening sanitation and disregard of environmental infrastructure began to create tension and unrest, coupled with what could be seen as a decline in moral and religious values. Criminal activity and public disturbances were extensive as the tripling of trade between 1720–1800 resulted in severe congestion in the city and harbour (Caxton-Stockton, 2001).

It is quite difficult to be precise about the influences that shaped Hogarth's early years. His father came from country stock and settled in London. He had various occupations, including that as a teacher of Latin (Jarrett, 1976, pp. 17–21). But he is unfortunately better known for his time spent in Fleet prison for debt and eventual bankruptcy after a venture into coffee shops went sour. This ignominy obviously had an effect on Hogarth who was eleven at the time, and he always played down this period. Jarrett (1976, p. 26) states, "Hogarth told how his father had been cheated by

booksellers and abandoned by rich patrons, but he did not mention anything about the time spent within the bounds of Fleet". This whole incident must have affected Hogarth badly, and it could be where the initial seed for his subsequent satirical portrayal of those he felt were responsible for his father's predicament began. It may also have given him an insight into the 'other' side of London society of which he became a champion and the recorder of unjust political and class exploitation.

Because of his father's poor financial situation, Hogarth didn't finish his formal education and left school to start an apprenticeship as a silver plate engraver (Shesgreen 1973, p. 24). Hogarth's father died in 1718, and Hogarth attributed his early death partly to the treatment his father received from the ruling classes, and this became a point of grievance for him. Hogarth failed to finish his apprenticeship, probably due to lack of funds. During this period he both worked at and attended several renowned art schools mainly to perfect his technique. He then started his own business creating coats of arms and heraldic motifs. This exaggerated style of heraldic representation must have been an influence in Hogarth's later use of caricature, for it was in this period that Hogarth began to produce the style of engraving that he is best known for.

While he formally learnt technique and process, his skill in composition and style came from his inherent ability. Shesgreen (1973, p. 15) cites Horace Walpole when explaining Hogarth's natural skill, "Hogarth had no model to follow and improve on. He created his art... He drew all his stores from nature and the force of his own genius... and was indebted neither to models nor books for his style, thoughts or hints".

While much has been assumed about Hogarth's religious foundation, there is little real evidence as to his father's persuasion. Jarrett (1976, p. 33) states: "We do not even know for certain whether his father was a member of the church of England or a puritan dissenter — with all that this implied in terms of political, intellectual and moral issues".

Hogarth proceeded to establish himself as a portrait painter and around this period began to use his etching skills as a way of drawing attention to moral and social issues,

and hopefully influencing public opinion. He devised a method of serialising a set of images to create a moral story and by using intense grotesque caricature he conveyed his outrage. Hogarth continued producing relevant both literary and artistic works until his death in 1764. Unfortunately in the last ten years of his life, his audience seemed to have changed and his works were often criticised and lambasted. Perhaps they were only now getting the joke and realising it had been a parody of themselves!

## Technique

Hogarth's lack of a formal classic education seemed to provide an impetus to produce work that would be accepted on a higher intellectual level. And while this was a period of burgeoning intellectual awareness with its accompanying artistic snobbery, Hogarth never saw this as a hindrance, even though most of his portrait work came from the British upper classes. Although Hogarth found painting portraits mundane and was forced to rely on these commissions for his livelihood (Wendorf 1978 p. 200), I propose that this could be seen as his saving grace. Wendorf (p. 202) suggests "both of the extremes of contemporary portraiture, the sublime and the grotesque, were clearly available for the moralist and satirist in Hogarth to draw on". It was this opportunity, and the tedium of painting his upper-class subjects, that is regarded as the impetus for his satirical motivation and eventual parody of the British aristocracy.

I draw upon this reasoning in my choice of Hogarth as a perfect example for the satirical art. In the beginning Hogarth used subtle artistic innuendo to add social comment subversively to his portraits, but eventually his 'open' satirical expression became accepted. Hallett (cited in Shesgreen, 2001, p. 339) observes: "Popular satire enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with narratives of 'politeness' that became increasingly dominant in urban society as the eighteenth century advanced". This statement can be seen as describing the changing shape of satire from a mildly amusing acceptable form of light humour, to one that uses decreasing levels of 'respectful' subtlety to carry its message.

Hogarth utilised most of the graphic artist's contemporary media at one time or another, but it is his engravings that most people recognise. The medium proved to be

not only financially lucrative with multiple printings from each plate, but it also provided the 'noir-like' qualities of shadow play and nether-worldly influence that Hogarth used to his advantage. In certain instances, this subversive imagery reveals a much deeper influence. Its appeal partially lies in the darkly altered aesthetic, the grotesque whole. It is from this phenomenon that I will draw my comparisons.

The monochromatic images that we see are of intense altered forms, the scene often representing disorder or confusion. But in this *melée* of seemingly disconnected imagery there lies order. Paulson (1975, p. 56) writes: "His prints refuse to stand still, continuing to impose new *gestalts* and defeat expectations as long as we look at them". Hogarth wants us to look hard at his work. The audience must follow the paradigm that he has laid down in order to fully capture the meaning. And it is then that a more comfortable comedic quality can often be found, one that is perfect for supplying a surreal foundation for his satire.

### Examples

In Steintrager's (2001) critique of the *Four Stages of Cruelty* — a series of engravings that Hogarth produced primarily for the poor as a way of satirically representing his stand against cruelty to animals— he explains how Hogarth used his usual exaggerated symbols and freakish caricatures in these prints, distinguishing the underlying horror of the cruelty to the weak by portraying it as grotesque and monstrous. Steintrager (p. 2), highlights the problem Hogarth encountered when trying to communicate satire across incommensurable systems of value. He found that familiarity with the subject is required for it to have the greatest impact. Steintrager (p. 2) suggests that "the supposedly cruel are in the vast majority as opposed to the 'sympathetic'. I say supposedly, because to know how to recognise something as 'cruel' already requires a good deal of understanding". The work Steintrager cites and the appeal/fascination it generates with its recognisably cruel content, also illuminates the viewer's connection with the image. Steintrager (p. 4) maintains "by connecting cruelty to physical grotesqueness, however, the 'Four Stages' also appeals to the narcissism of the beholder". This suggests that we recognise obvious physical extremes that we regard as being abhorrent and ugly, and these representations alongside the cruel narrative

seem familiar to us. This seems to support the idea that any reaction to grotesque symbols must have some inherent motivation, and this is where Hogarth finds the relationship that the viewer draws upon to sub-consciously analyse the image. They see a part of themselves that they don't like, and this is where the impact of his work lies. It is here that Hogarth believed he had found a method of using our inherent terror/pleasure when seeing acts of cruelty, as a vehicle to convey his abhorrence for it — hopefully drawing attention to its immorality and to eventually halt or at least legislate against it. This series is a perfect example of Hogarth's ingenious primal ability to produce a true, yet satirically relevant, depiction of man's inhumanity.

A perfect example with which to equate my definition of the grotesque would be the 8<sup>th</sup> and final print in the series titled the *Rakes Progress*. While these prints are some of Hogarth's best known and have been well documented, it is not so much the obvious moral message, hidden content or satirical representations that I endeavour to confirm and elucidate. It is more a question of why it is that we find these caricatures fascinating? Do they convey no more than comic stereotypical representations of lunacy? Or do they stimulate a reaction to a darker unknown of our own psychic fragility and fear of madness? When detached from Hogarth's moral baggage these grotesques are still more than just visual representations. I believe that each entity in this print is capable of providing an influence of an intensity that is totally separated from a conscious interpretation. It is in Hogarth's depiction of these influences that the enigma lays. Was Hogarth aware of his ability to 'breakthrough' into the primal unconscious and reproduce some of its terror? I don't believe he saw it this way. But I do believe that he was aware of his special inherent talent for grotesque imagery. It was not the portrayal of madness that had the impact, it is in the way Hogarth portrayed it.

Another example of Hogarth's use of the grotesque is in his portrait of John Wilkes Esq. an MP, reformer and champion of liberty. Wilkes was known for his outspokenness and had severely criticised some of Hogarth's work, accusing him of vain and self-serving motives. This upset Hogarth terribly, and his engraving of Wilkes plainly portrays his grievance. The satirical bias is obvious, as are the exaggerated features and symbol play. Shesgreen (1973, p. 98) describes it as, "Wilkes emerges in

the portrait as a man of treacherous, unprincipled character, shifty, cynical and derisive... his wig is fashioned to suggest he wears fiendish or demonic horns". But I see much more than derision and comical depiction in this drawing. While Hogarth attaches political and religious symbols to this caricature, the depth of demonic representation goes much further than satirical suggestion. Hogarth's depiction carries great threat; and the audience, whilst under the illusion of pure satirical characterisation, are in fact processing much deeper facets of a primeval representation. To me the subject's eyes portray a darkness that goes far beyond humanistic recognition. I don't believe that Hogarth intended to produce such a virulent piece, but his loathing and spite for Wilkes has manifested itself in this work. I believe this print is a perfect example of my definition of Hogarth's grotesque.

### **Hogarth's Grotesque**

Hogarth's use of the grotesque and deformed aesthetic must be the most recognisable trait of his art. It is by far the most relevant feature when it comes to recognising the value of his work. The grotesque caricatures and situations are the driving force behind his satire. Antal (cited in Hollington 1984, p. 12) observes that "even in his most realistic works — the cycles — he employed means to bring out the unusual, fantastic, grotesque potentialities in human figures as well as in inanimate objects."

Hogarth wanted to reach as many people as he could with his art, but especially the 'common man' of whose plight he was becoming increasingly aware. He believed that the general populace needed some form of representation in higher circles, but he also needed to produce art that was generally acceptable to all strata of society. Satire is based on comedic parody and Hogarth believed that it shouldn't be too hard to decipher. Rieger (1999, p. 3) explains:

In this theoretical approach towards art, Hogarth defends the priority of a mimetic rendition of nature instead of the classical concepts of imitation, harmony, and the traditional systems of proportion. By so doing, he claims that aesthetic experience and knowledge are not limited to a privileged and sophisticated circle, but are based on common sensual perception.

Hogarth's use of grotesque and deformed images wasn't just for spectacle; he regarded these works as more than just comical representation. Hogarth could see a much deeper influence in these images, one that touched certain emotions among the audience and made them think. These grotesques provided guilty pleasure into the darker side of humanity and supplied a comedic release with which to purge their darker pleasure at other's misfortune. Kim (2000, p. 1) points out: "In volume one of Hogarth's *Graphic Works*, it states that he claimed his works should not be viewed as contemptible caricatures but a new genre that was in between the sublime and the grotesque". While this justification lifted the imagery above more primal reasoning I believe Hogarth was ignoring his own subconscious motivation when he developed this style of representation.

From early on in his youth Hogarth had an interest in the working class strata of humanity and was a keen observer of the underprivileged. He drew on life in general for his subject matter and would seek out the more 'interesting' and darker locations for his inspiration. Pritchett (1962, p. 139) observes:

In Hogarth's paint and drawing, one sees a terrifying London. It is the London he saw when he wandered into the Covent Garden of his time, the centre of brothels, the crime, the rough pleasures of the city. The place is hearty, roaring, and violent in the gin-drinking days.

Jarrett (1976, p. 31) cites an earlier biographer who refers to the young Hogarth's fascination with grotesque imagery, and records a violent incident in a London Pub:

Hogarth made a sketch on the spot, the blood running down the man's face, together with the agony of the wound, which had distorted his features into a most hideous grin, presented Hogarth with too laughable a subject to overlook.

These quotes must help to confirm that Hogarth's penchant for using the freakish, deformed and exaggerated may have more meaning than that of just finding a suitable vehicle for his satirical expression. He seemed to have struck upon a way of exposing some of our primal suppressed traits and giving them a 'respectful' outlet. I believe this motivation must have come from deep within his psyche. Hogarth seems to have

tapped into a primal appeal that people recognised and took pleasure/pain in. This appeal may come partially from a subliminal force that makes us laugh at the misfortune of others as a way of detaching our own fears. In discussing the sublime, Jarrett (1976, p. 147) cites Burke when he says:

Terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling power of the sublime...I am convinced that we have a degree of delight, and that no small one, in the real misfortunes and pain of others.

Hogarth's grotesques need to be seen as more than just caricatures or characters; they must be viewed as more than parody or satirical representation. In my mind they fall neatly into my definition of the grotesque. They encompass the two main elements of fear and fascination and provide a safe environment for them to be acknowledged. No special artistic skill is required to appreciate the primal terror that these images stimulate, yet no direct threat can be seen as forth coming. The way Hogarth has composed his portrayals makes us feel secure in the knowledge that we can control our fear of these 'creatures' by laughter and disdain.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FILMS AND DIRECTORS

As in Hogarth's work the three directors have used a canvas (film) for their presentation medium and like Hogarth they have taken the opportunity to apply grotesque satirical representation to compound a degree of social comment.

The use of the grotesque in modern day cinema has increased tremendously since the technical effects explosion. Summar (2005, p. 1) provides a particularly relevant and insightful viewpoint regarding this increase. He steadfastly maintains there is a huge cross-genre sway in using grotesque images, acts and cultural inference that reflects society's need to be shocked and entertained. Summar (2005, p. 1) also states: "Scatological humour, dwarves, misshapen people. Destruction, desecration and deformation of the body. Twisting of the psyche. Grotesque realities veiled beneath handsome appearances. Vulgarly and the profane. The grotesque revels in film".

The three directors of my chosen films play a big part in the formulation of the satirical grotesque symbology that appears in each film; yet their filmic representations can be seen to be on a different level to Hogarth's. This is due to the obvious cynicism and advanced cultural awareness that contemporary audiences have about the use of the grotesque or dark side. My three example films *Mad Max*, *The Cars That Ate Paris* and *Death Race 2000* touch on a sub-genre of the 'road movie' as their backbone, in so far as they utilise the car and its spatial placement as their main focus. In an Australian context of that period, *The Cars That Ate Paris* can be seen as the starting point for a new sub-genre, as it was the first of the 'killer-car satires' to be produced.

Falconer (1997, p. 259) emphasizes the ambiguity in defining the Australianess in film. She maintains that Australian audiences — at the time *Mad Max* and *The Cars That Ate Paris* were made — expected more serious and original work, and were not used to viewing from a satirical stance. I believe parochial naivety is the reason why the audience originally could not see the satirical message imbedded in the films. They were regarded as simply pure entertainment, until evolving realisation of their satirical

merits became apparent and they achieved their true recognition. This naivety will help to place my chosen films in a position of comparison with Hogarth's own expectations of his audience's comprehension of his satire. Falconer (1997, p. 256) also makes reference to the rejection of social realism in these films. I see this as creating a mythical platform for a monstrous interpretation of the cars.

*Mad Max* and *The Cars That Ate Paris* are Australian productions and *Death Race 2000* is American. While my theory of what constitutes the 'grotesque' in this thesis, runs true in all three films, I will place more emphasis on the Australian productions, as I believe they have been more influential in creating the sub-genre of the 'road exploitation movie' than the American production. Not only was this sub-genre formulated in Australia in the 70s, it was also the influence behind the now common filmic recognition of the car as an all-powerful animalistic entity. This exposure to a car's 'true nature' highlighted a new period in Australian filmmaking; the start of a deeper understanding and placement of the car in Australian film. Kitson (2003, p. 64) states, "the vision was exciting, new and seemingly divined some rich underground Aussie tradition".

These films have been used as examples based on the symbolic usage of the grotesque as opposed to their artistic merit. And while the choice of example may seem obvious and well used, finding different films that use the specifically altered form that I required has been impossible. While there are many examples of films that portray the car as an evil presence I believe that these types of killer car films, (*Christine*, *The Car*, *The Black Cadillac*) are based around 'possessed machines'; as opposed to the cars in my examples, that are imbued with a living spirit and therefore there is a marked difference. We inherently see the altered cars in the films I have chosen to analyse as having no real demoniacally evil intent, their destructiveness and threat is just part of their nature as beasts.

O'Regan and Venkatasawmy (1998, pp.17–28) set out to position the Australian film *Dark City* into a section of contemporary filmmaking by using filmic/generic comparisons and connections with other films, including my three examples. They argue that its success partially came from its almost direct mirroring of certain

gothic/grotesque influences that appear in my chosen films. The two writers give much credit to *The Cars That Ate Paris* as being a similar model of Australian representation that most certainly paved the way for *Dark City*. They state their reasons for this as: "Its gothic images, its weird conceptualisations of apparently 'normal settings and places, its glorious mediation on the vehicular imagination and small town isolation" (p. 17). I intend to use their paper as a way of describing and defining the impact and influence the scenery and location have in promoting a gothic representation of the grotesque car forms.

### **The Cars That Ate Paris (Peter Weir, 1975)**

Peter Weir first worked for the Australian Commonwealth Film Unit (later to become Film Australia) in 1969. This is where he began his film career in earnest. The ACFU can be regarded as a major training ground for some of Australia's best 'new wave' filmmakers of the early seventies. It was in this period that we saw not only the resurgence of the Australian film industry as a producer of quality and uniquely Australian films, but the period also produced a wealth of new talent as Australia established its place in world cinema. It is regarded as one of the most significant times in filmic history and Peter Weir had a lot to do with this recognition.

While Weir had directed a few television programs and short films, *The Cars That Ate Paris* was his first feature film. Weir is known for his early leanings towards the supernatural and obscure, as well as being acutely aware of social issues. *The Cars That Ate Paris* provided him with a training ground to hone his uniquely Australian gothic aesthetic while making satirical comment. Leonard (2003, p. 13) cites Weir when referring to the director's approach: "Its allegorical. It can be seen as a straightforward adventure yarn, but it has underlying issues, such as the concept of the cars taking us over." Weir's skill in subtlety providing these two layers of understanding and relevance can be seen in the early stages of this film. We initially see what we believe to be a black comedy with all the prerequisites for this, and on one level it can be watched as such. But on the other level there is a much deeper message hidden within this film; and the grotesque representation of the cars become part of the stimuli that provides us with this message. Haltorf (1996, p. 129) states, "His filmic world evokes the enigmatic

and the bizarre hidden beneath the visible, fragile surface of the rational". Weir tapped into and exploited a totally new form of representation, that of the living car being as natural as any human and this concept is now readily accepted as part of film culture.

Ward (2003, p. 1) sees this movie as a typical Weir film, stating it was "the first of Weir's films featuring his consistent theme of closed or alienated sections of society and people who don't fit into their surroundings". Pike and Cooper (1980, p. 354) state, "*Cars* has been described as a sardonic exercise in Australian gothic horror", thereby providing a perfect mixture of satire, horror and a grotesque portrayal of the cars that will place the film in the realm of my thesis.

*The Cars That Ate Paris* is a satire on consumerism, recycling and the isolation of outback Australia at its best. It supplies an 'Ausgothic' placement, shadowy and unknown. The grotesqueness seems almost normal and acceptable, providing a safe haven for the monster cars. We can all see Weir's messages and comment, but through the comical overtones and parody there lies the disquiet and sinister familiarity as we recognise and attune to the real power and threat of these 'animachines'. The Australian parochial landscape supplies the scenery for a detached satirical portrayal of these altered grotesques and their habitat. It creates an almost mystical environment far from real towns and cities; its isolation is its defence against reality and provides itself with its own separated world.

The cars in this film wonderfully provide the grotesque animal attachment that I need. The drivers are almost totally obscured by shadow and blend into the interior. Strange animalistic noises accompany the malevolent beasts as they pursue their instincts. We see beyond the disturbingly comic sheen that is initially presented to us. The people, scenery and storyline all take second place to the malevolent and grotesque beings that Weir has created. These monster cars are the entities that make the film real. Weir himself sees the cars as a living force, Hawley (1973, p. 8) cites Weir as saying "if there's life on Mars looking down, who could blame them for thinking that cars are creatures inhabiting Earth. Cars eat, excrete, breed and multiply in choking competition with humans".

As in the case of Hogarth's audience, seeing what we regard as inherently frightening fascinates us. As part of our reaction to these abnormal and changed forms, we see a reflection of our collective selves. In the case of *The Cars That Ate Paris* it can also be seen as a look into the future. Weir uses our subconscious fear of these beasts to bring home — through his satirical representation — the idea that cars are a threat to mankind; they control us, can kill at whim and have the ability to regenerate through integration. Strick (1975, p. 102) maintains: "The erosion of humanity by malevolent technology is a continual theme", every scrap heap or breakers yard, every garage or auto parts shop can be seen as a holding store for when the cars regroup for the final take over, and achieve their goal of a monster car dystopia.

This movie prophesies the coming threat of the car in a way that wholly embraces my conception of the grotesque man/beast. That is, the melding of flesh and steel through necessity, and the eventual birth of the mancar. Morris (1989, pp. 113–134) asserts: "the mutant machine begins to connect with its assembler in a new supra-subject of desire, and action. Old distinctions between parts (man/machine, user/tool, driver/vehicle) become obscure, archaic, *ancient regime*".

A point to note is that the producer of *Death Race 2000* (Roger Corman) owned the American distribution rights to *The Cars That Ate Paris*, and there has always been some speculation as to whether Weir's production influenced the director Paul Bartel in any way. There are certain similarities in the animal-like aesthetic of the cars, but there is none with the screenplay or narrative. For my purposes the real similarity lies with the audience's reception and reaction to the grotesque cars' subliminal power.

### **Death Race 2000 (Paul Bartel, 1975)**

Paul Bartel can be seen as an important influence to many directors and writers in the seventies and eighties. Although there is not a wealth of information written about him, his achievements and originality must place him in a minor role among the film world's luminary. He was born in New York in 1938 and from an early age he started making his own movies. Over the next fifty years he produced an extremely eclectic and impressive resumé of work both as an actor and director/writer. His ultimate

importance as Morris, (2002, p. 1) points out “may lie less in his directorial efforts, which are variable in quality, than in his unwavering presence as an inspiring figure in the independent film world”. Weinberg (2000, p. 1) emphasises his influence: “He worked with Scorsese, Burton and Spielberg, discovered Stallone and invented the ‘cross-country race’ sub-genre. He was a jokester who pulled no punches, whether it be buckets of blood, cannibalism, racial and social satire, or just breast-filled exploitation”. While he had local recognition he never became as prominent as many of his contemporary directors.

While *Death Race 2000* is not widely known, it does have a healthy cult following and is regarded in filmic history as one of the first car chase/race movies. Bartel used an alienated subculture as a basis for his storyline, with the altered car aesthetic emphasising the grotesque. The film reviewer Tom Keogh (2005) states, “the film is clever and macabre enough as a modernist satire, but finally overplays its hand in grim, decadent humour”. These grotesque cars represent evil at its very worst, hunting and killing in order to feed man’s competitive need. They are the ultimate black comedic metaphor for the destructive and deadly nature of the car. This wonderful mix of horror and humour carries a satirical representation that places these grotesque vehicles perfectly and supplies the medium I require for my Hogarthian comparison.

*Death Race 2000* is a good example of satirical representation and when it was released in 1975 its concept of commodification by exploiting human beings’ primal instincts in this method, paved new ground. If one looks at today’s reality TV and the almost total control of the media by a few worldwide corporations, one can see that Bartel’s message was prophetic. It is pure satire on America’s obsession with violence, sports and the motorcar. The cars are more like restrained animals in this film. They are not totally in charge, but they seem to portray a feeling of aggression, almost as if they are waiting for the right time to pounce. We still recognise their animal qualities, but they are more like a trained hunting dog. The juxtaposition of reality and parody, as we see the cars run down and kill people, stimulates a mixed emotion that creates a conflict between morality and primal force. These beasts are in a race to prove their strength; the animal code of the fittest surviving is displayed at its finest.

Bartel's grotesque car creations supply a recognisable individuality, as well as portraying the inherent animalistic qualities. They each supply an identity associated with aggression and death. Bartel has used certain cultural symbols when constructing these monsters — and while simplistic and unsubtle — they provide the right amount of ambiguity for a satire of this kind. There are among others; the nazi car, the gangster car, and the fighting bull car. But the one that stands out the most, and is immediately recognisable as the strongest and most dominant is the dragon car, and this is the ultimate victor at the end. This reptilian car is the real enigma; apart from being the most colourful as well as the fastest, it is also based around a mythical being, and therefore detached from the other humanistic entities. From the very start this car exudes elitism. We know it will win and instinctively identify with this. All the cars touch our subconscious, but this one compels us to follow it, as we would follow the strongest of the pack.

Looking back at this movie, one can see Bartel's message clearly, but I wonder if it was quite so obvious when first viewed in the seventies. I believe that at the time it was made it would have been easy to dismiss this film as nothing more than a cheap blood and guts adventure. It is only now that the real power of his satire is being realised and as Duralde (2000, p. 2) remarks, "even his most outrageous films convey truths about people and society", and this alone makes them worthy of notice.

### **Mad Max 2 (George Miller, 1981)**

I will use the car entities from the whole *Mad Max* trilogy as the basis for this example. The three films had at their core, Joseph Campbell's teachings on the 'hero's quest'. The mythological element of this theory helps to place the altered car shapes and their grotesqueness as peripheral beings in these adventures. Barbour (1999, p. 30) uses the post-apocalyptic savagery and moral breakdown as his starting point when he reviews Max's adventure. The deformed and altered cars can be seen as mirroring Max's journey in their representation, some of them good, some evil, but all of them important in the defining of their almost living/spiritual identities. Sharrett (cited in Barbour, p. 30) sees *Mad Max* as being "a darkly humorous satire of a failed world". It is the attention that is paid to the landscape, and the connection between the desolate

and unknown, that I will justify as one of the influences in the representation of the cars as a grotesque force.

*Mad Max 2* is probably the best known of my examples. It is not a satire in the true sense of the word, but Miller does parody certain aspects of Australian culture. Kitson (2003, p. 64) states, "Mad Max was Dr George Miller's two-fingered salute to the Aussie period drama. Sick of weak men, women artists, pianos and dreary sheep stations, Miller claimed he wanted to make a film about the 'now'." The *Mad Max* example will provide another angle to my grotesque representation theory by adding a more esoterically altered car — which I will explain shortly. It will help situate and confirm the global appeal of deformed vehicular entities. Max's companions are his dog and his car, the other cars in *Mad Max 2* are more like actors playing supporting roles, but we are still aware of their animalistic qualities; in fact we take it for granted. The new filmic representation of the degenerate and primal car has started to become embedded in our psyche.

The feeling of animal association is not as strong in the *Mad Max* films as it is in *Cars That Ate Paris* and *Death Race 2000*, but we embrace the cars as we would any of the other 'human' actors that are a necessary part of the narrative. I don't believe that these grotesque cars stimulate the same sort of fear reaction as the *Cars That Ate Paris* or *Death Race 2000* because they appear to be subversive steeds, as opposed to wild creatures. But the scenes in *Mad Max 2* of the pack of car/animals rushing down the barren desert landscape in formation, represents a herd of charging wildebeest, honing in on the water/fuel hole that holds the liquid they need to survive. Without the life fuel they face extinction. This is a fight for survival and nothing else matters; they are willing to sacrifice some of their own kind to accomplish their goal.

The *Mad Max* films gave a new representation to the use of these altered cars in cinema, they seemed to become more accepted and comfortable, or as Morris (1989, pp. 113-134) states, "only the *Max* films, however, developed the historic anxieties that gave the metal monsters of *The Cars That Ate Paris* their seriousness, menace and wit."

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CARS

The altered cars in my thesis will be used initially as a comparison with the caricatures in Hogarth's examples. They both carry the symbolism and grotesque representation that provides a platform for satirical comment/perception. While Hogarth's visualisations rely on the exaggeration of known entities, their initial form stays the same. In the case of the cars, the form is not exaggerated as such; it is deformed/altered to a totally new shape with only scant lip service being paid to its original shape and purpose. It has become an unrecognisable monster. In both instances the appeal/impact/stimulation of these transformations comes from, not only the intellectual satisfaction of understanding the satirical message, but also from the sub-conscious recognition of the grotesque phenomenon.

I propose to argue that the grotesque (my definition) manifestation that we experience when we see these altered monstrous automobiles comes firstly from our ability to transfer animalistic and humanistic traits to an automobile's original form. Then secondly, compounding this influence by attaching on a subconscious level, the inherent abhorrence and fear of the unknown and deformed that is stimulated when we see the exaggerated symbols of the grotesque in the car's new shape/persona. This stimulation provides the connection with the primal grotesque that runs parallel to Hogarth's audience's experience of his grotesque forms.

In order to help supply a foundation and starting point for the contemporary reaction to these altered entities, we must firstly discuss the various cultural influences that come into play when these cars are in their expected form. Is an unaltered stock-standard automobile empowered with humanistic/animalistic qualities naturally, or does it require some special recognisable feature? An elite sexuality and status-driven allure are well known advertising tools used to create a desirable and 'aesthetically loaded' means of travel, but would this attraction and mystique still surround the automobile if it were just a plain and simple standard sized 'box on wheels' and not beautified with superfluous adornments and varying dimensions? Maybe the entire

myth of the automobile as a 'living entity' has been constructed through commodification. I do not agree, preferring to hold the view that there is an element of the magical or subliminal that stimulates within the psyche an image of the beast, fire breathing, smoking and deadly, and this is what motivates our desire/fascination.

Once the earliest of cars had lost their initial technological newness, did they then become the indispensable carriers of status based on a conscious need to appease? Or were they fulfilling a defined part of human nature? I believe there is truth in both of these questions, and that deep within us we inherently believe that objects that move, make noise, kill, have energy, and unknown qualities, must automatically be endowed with a life force and therefore be regarded as such in all our instinctual behaviour regarding them. This assumption, coupled with the cars reputation as a machine that can kill — a destroyer of landscape through road development and a controller of society through necessity — is why we react to it the way we do.

### **Significance and identity**

Much has been written about the car phenomenon, and Sachs (1992, p. 7) simplifies it nicely when he states, " the automobile is much more than a mere means of transportation; rather, it is wholly imbued with feelings and desires that raise it to the level of a cultural symbol". This symbol carries so much weight. It represents every facet of human desire from the practical to the frivolous, and from the docile to the deadly. Cars have become a semiotic field that has been honed, manipulated and so processed that every conceivable form of representation will have been attached to it. Sach's (1992) theory of the car as a catalyst for the massive social change that has affected every conceivable previous notion of personal travel versus nature versus society, helps to clarify the huge significance of the car.

Casey (1997, p. 79) uses and draws upon the signs, symbology and meanings of the automobile through the writings of among others, Steinbeck and Faulkner. He claims the car is a superficial symbol of success that carries much power — both positive and negative. He relates through these texts a historical picture of the huge significance the car had in shaping the American psyche as well as its purse. He also highlights the

destructive propensity for the future of society that underlie many of these texts. I will draw upon this theory as a way of confirming the 'harbinger of death and destruction' model that plays a large part in my interpretation of the car as a monstrous destructive symbol.

Status, style and image are the obvious drawcards in the selling of most desirable commodities; practicality often takes second place in contemporary western societies' aesthetic values. The car is a fluid value/aesthetic and has the added advantage of its mobility. That is to say, that some cars are kept purely for their aesthetics and collectability and are never driven. But as McLuhan (1964, p. 223) stresses "To mistake the car for a status symbol, just because it asked to be taken for anything but a car, is to mistake the whole meaning of this very late product of the mechanical age". This description could be seen as highlighting the danger of regarding the superficiality of the car as its sole value, instead of deconstructing the car down to its original practical form, and placing more emphasis on its influence in the formation of modern day society.

Barthes (cited in Graves-Brown, 1997, p. 68) states, "the car can be a symbol of status, but equally it can be a symbol of community and identity". Not only does the car influence personal emotions and identity, but it also provides a hierarchical structure in the form of embedded achievable or non-achievable class dictated goals. Certain models go with certain occupations and standing in society. Examples would be Royalty and Rolls Royce, businessman and Jaguar, or student and 'old bomb'. These positions in society encompass spatial and environmental issues, which could be seen as being in conflict with society's expectations. Sheller (2004, p. 192) sees this as:

When every individual driver demands a car expressing his or her unique identity, the number of cars on the road grows and creates frustrating impediments to automotive expressionism. This problem is further exacerbated if, as the postmodernists claim, each individual has a number of identities that cry out for expression at different times.

This quote if taken in literal terms would require each of us to have many cars of differing attributes that we would use depending on what impression we wanted to portray. Like masks, the 'identities' could mislead our true position in society.

Can you analyse a person by the car they drive? I would automatically say yes, but only up to a point. A person's car should be seen not only as a reflection of their public persona, but also as an indicator of their social and economical expectations. Sachs (1984, p. 146) states, "they communicate outwardly the owner's self-conception and sense of place in society and in an internal dialogue, they reveal themselves as a source of gloating self-conformation." It should therefore also be possible to reverse this assumption and pick the relevant car to fit with non-car owner's personalities, and of course this sort of classification is used when creating demographic studies for marketing. It becomes an archetypal study, which has at the root of it the all important prosthetic image and form that we desire to fulfil our place in primal hegemony. As Sheller (2004, p. 225) states, "whether phallic or feminised, the car materializes personality and takes part in the ego-formation of the owner or driver as competent, powerful, able and sexually desirable."

We have come to rely so totally on the car not only as an extension of our personality, but also as our provider, comforter and carrier of sensual stimuli. That co-existence we have afforded with the car is becoming more of an 'existence', with the relationship becoming inseparable. Katz (2000, p. 33) sees this amalgamation as "an intertwining of the identities of the driver and car that generates a distinctive ontology in the form of a person-thing, a humanized car or, alternatively, an automobilized person". It becomes not just our visual persona, but also our mask to the outside world. Sheller (2000, p. 228) says: "We not only feel the car, but we feel through the car and with the car".

### **The power and control**

We can imagine that the car controls the creation of its own evolution. As soon as an obstacle arises, the car demands a solution and thousands of technicians scurry about to solve this. We can ask, 'have we made the car indispensable or has the car made

itself indispensable?' Whole cities are designed to placate the car. Rules, regulations and boundaries are in place to try and tame the beast. The car has the power to incite every emotion we have, and it makes us lazy by making things easier. Cars control us by making us feel safe and therefore we take more risks, we go faster, we drink and drive, we talk and we fall asleep, and then the car pounces, and in conjunction with its stable mates it herds us into slaughter.

The car gives us false bravado by altering our sensual boundaries; it supplies a quasi-natural physical defence. Stallabrass (1996, p. 127) refers to the car as our "exoskeleton", suggesting a haven for our insecure fears that makes us feel deep and secure in the belly of the beast. The vehicle becomes our outer shell or skin, and can be seen sometimes as promoting a confrontational fight-response. The natural primal urge to defend or attack — the appearance of physical might that may be inherent in us — is now stimulated by our protective armour, the auto simulacra that replaces 'muscle'. This image is our personal dream-being. Ready to be admired or feared, it becomes our external presence and dilutes the boundary between the physically strong and the weak. Sachs (1984, p. 115) sees this as: "Now that it is no longer fashionable to slap up admiration for oneself with one's fists, the car offers the best medium for powerful self-presentation, from which even the weakling emerges strong". This powerful personal representation medium not only becomes our body image, but it also adopts our personality. It becomes our mechanical doppelganger.

The car's interior is the controlling centre of the car/beast and could be seen as providing a private spiritual/mythical element. It is the centre of the car's subversive life-force/core, a place where the most intimate and impacting decisions are made. Giblett (2000, p. 19.) states: "The magic of the car not only resides in stasis in its sweeping fender and swelling hood, nor only in movement in its power and speed, but also in its private domestic interiors," implying a representation of intimate intrigue and power within the interiors of cars, making them almost sacred and unique to the owner and analogous with a human psyche. The car is like a sexual partner and accomplice; it is a place of creation as well as a place of death. It is embedded in contemporary thinking, not only as a sexual tool but also as a sexual

prize. It is an aphrodisiac and an object of self-gratification. The car replaces or adds to the very essence of our being, it is the ultimate procreation accessory.

### **Animalistic/living representation**

In order to situate the featured cars as grotesque beast-like entities, I must establish an oppositional argument to provide a foil for what constitutes 'beauty' in a car's body and presence. Beauty is often used when describing cars' attributes and Glancey (2000, p. 1) uses the historical design evolvement of the motorcar to clarify the various influences that have gone to define the meaning of 'auto beauty'. He draws parallels with the commonly perceived svelte-like animalistic influence that defines certain car design in terms of animal/human physical features, including the naming of the car/beast in terms of an elite animal nomenclature. Examples would be Jaguar, Panther and Mustang. This definition of the car's form and 'spirit' in appealingly creative terms could place my misshapen car forms as animal-like. Of course the other side to this argument would have to be the naming of a particular monstrous car as a beautiful beast. Glancey (2000, p. 1) states: "When, however, we use the word 'beautiful' in relation to the style and design of cars, we are usually thinking of sensual or streamlined beauty, rather than the brute beauty of vintage Bentleys or Mercer Raceabouts." This statement supports a definition of beast in auto-textual terms that conjures up huge powerful noisy machines that require brute force to drive and are endowed with society's image of patriarchal power. This seems to put more emphasis on the term 'beast' in terms of sexual aggression than just solely animalistic qualities. The machismo power and phallic representation of some designs does seem to place certain cars as sexually dominant beings or beasts.

As well as the previously discussed animalistic rhetoric that goes hand in hand with all concepts of auto description, we find an embedded natural association that juxtaposes our human traits with those of a car. A car can not only be seen as being a physical part of us, but also as a separate living entity in its own right. Giblett (2000, p. 17) suggests that "to endow the car with human qualities as a person is to anthropomorphise dead matter into living being".

The emotional ties people have with their cars and the need we have to nurture and maintain these 'beings' in a healthy and caring way, suggests trait transference, and in some cases a car has the ability to supply more emotional, supportive and practical assistance to an individual than a lot of humans. It can be seen as filling a space that 'normal' humans can not, and as Miller (2001) cited by Sheller (2004, p. 232) suggests, "it is this highly visceral relationship between bodies of people and bodies of cars that forces us to acknowledge the humanity of the car in the first place". Davidson (2004, p. 72) refers to *The Cars That Ate Paris* as a "grotesque metaphor for the dehumanising effects of the car", and this can be seen as erasing the line between car and human to a state of ambiguity, supporting a beast-like depiction that the audience will recognise and in some respects relate to.

### **Altered aesthetic or more?**

I am using these arguments to prove that we inherently regard the car as a living entity and therefore when altered in my films, it becomes relatable as a grotesque symbol which can be compared to Hogarth's altered living entities. The more we regard the car as a living entity the more relevant my thesis becomes.

Now we have the car placed as more than just a vehicle, it is accepted as a carrier of expectations, influence and necessity. Whether we feel comfortable about it or not, it has become a constant in our life. Notwithstanding the design, variety and creative modifications that have encompassed most aesthetic possibilities, and the massive range of engine power, the car is basically still accepted as that of a vehicle. But what if we altered the shape/presence of a car in a way that went beyond these expectations? What if we not only changed the form but also changed the expected stimuli? Let us imbue the car with a whole new identity that goes further than conscious recognition. One that is perceivable from within, one that stimulates the grotesque representation that I base this thesis on. Then let us take this new identity and harness it with clever humour to give us a protection against our fears. Let us also use this conflict in a constructive way by attaching it to relevant social issues thereby giving it relatable credence one more step away from its true dark meaning. Thus

providing a satirical barrier, that will tame the monster-like instincts that have been triggered by the films subliminal stimuli.

Stallabrass (1996, p. 128) compares the visual persona of the car as a reflection of its owner's personality, and also society's dependence on conforming to a norm. The expected placement and shape of the car has been drastically changed in my example films, and this creates a conflict that we sense. I suggest that this is because we recognise our changing selves in this image, or at least the knowledge that we have the capability to regress to this state. In the example films we see snarling lurching betoothed symbols that stimulate something within us. This could be regarded as a reflection of our own darkest self. The images instil a subconscious self-recognition of our collective inner beast, or at least a fear of it. The compelling attraction of these monstrous cars, comes not only from being able to view these images from a nice physically safe position, but also from the knowledge that our contemporary cynicism and postmodern powers of reasoning provide a rational defence against the purest form of fear that these images would otherwise instil. Their extended hostile features resemble the weapons of an attacking beast and strike at the very core of our fear response conditioning. Natural defence mechanisms draw deep into our collective memory and ignite long dormant emotions. But we now know we are safe from their clutches and so can enjoy the spectacle.

There is a noticeable difference and public reaction between altering a car for style and altering a car for meaning (grotesque satire). Stallabrass (1996, p. 126) places the automobile in an almost cognitively aesthetic sphere, important when viewing cars as more than simplistic metal structures, and imperative when attaching a symbolical satirical presence. The car's 'skin' carries its mask. Casey (1997, p. 5) states that, "car murals locate truth not in actual objects or events, but in the retelling or simulation of these objects and events". We instinctively look further than both the concept and relevance of the original car form and the confrontation of the altered shape, albeit on a subconscious level, and this is where I will find my comparison.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SATIRE

Satire is the connecting link between each of the four chapters. An exploration of any similarity between historical and contemporary satire is needed to provide the structural framework that will support my thesis. The use of the grotesque as a satirical entity is paramount to finding a commonality between Hogarth's and the film directors' differing representations.

In its most basic form, satire can be seen as using misshapen entities or parody as a form of raising awareness, usually of political and social issues. The target of the joke in satire is usually aimed at a particular group or individual in society. The tools at the satirist's disposal are many, but it is their use and relevance that defines the great satirist. Clark (cited in Pollard, 1970, p. 66) states:

'Wit, ridicule, irony, sarcasm, cynicism, the sardonic and invective'.  
All these hurt, because satire aims to hurt, but, as with the bull-fighter, so with the satirist, his competence lies not in his ability to do his job but rather in the skill he deploys in doing it.

Satire justifies itself by providing the audience with laughter as a means of realisation and control over unpleasant and unjust truths. It also gives those who understand the satirical relevance of the piece an advantage over those that do not — very often the intended target who may refuse to see the possibilities of themselves as being a subject for ridicule.

One can argue that the reason the grotesque lends itself so well to satire is the element of the comedic within it. Werrett (2002, p. 1) claims, "the grotesque art lacks solidity and permanency; it is associated with decoration, fashion and style and it stems from the old coming to the surface, adapting and mingling with the new". This may be relevant in contemporary western society, but I believe it had even more of a subversive power in Hogarth's day. Satire using the grotesque was more seriously viewed in this period, or at least taken in a different context. The religious connotations and the connection with the 'unknown' in the 18<sup>th</sup> century must have

suggested a very real and possibly evil influence that may not be present in today's enlightened perception. This differing reaction to the satirical use of the grotesque in the two periods covered in my thesis is a key part of my argument, and as the outcome relies on my definition of the grotesque as being a force that stimulates inherent primal reactions, it is important to recognise this at this point.

Satirical representation must not be seen as a purely aesthetic modality. It is an ongoing social process. Connery and Combe (1995, p. 5) see this process as imperative if satire is to be dynamic, and hold the view that "closure, in most cases, would turn a narrative satire into either comedy or tragedy and thus contradict the satirist's representation of evil as a present and continuing danger". This reflects the fluidity of satire, and the changing face of it, as both a mirror of society's ills, and as a carrier of comedic value. I agree with this assumption and view the satirical medium as another important form of recording contemporary events in a topically reflective way.

This thesis is concerned with finding a commonality between the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a contemporary representation of the grotesque, so I will not go too deeply into the various forms and historical evolvement of satire. In my chosen examples I have used their satirical aspects as an obvious vehicle for the form of grotesque representation that I require. The use of a deformed or altered shape to convey a message through the audience's recognition of the difference and the relevance of the alteration is the key to understanding the satire.

To distinguish between the comedic and the satirical is as difficult as it is obvious. That is to say that if we have prior knowledge of the foibles or wrong doings of the targeted entity, then we soon see added nuances or triggers that make this plain. In some instances the satirical side of what we have seen may not be obvious until later on, when we become aware of its intended target. Satire is like an extra bonus to those that understand its relevance and get the joke.

Satire ridicules to expose a weakness or wrongdoing and as Paulson (1967, p. 3) sees it, "satire can be said to study an ugliness in a manner that is not itself painful, and its approach consists of denigration or attack". But this isn't always the case. Hogarth,

while having at the root of his satire a need to draw attention to the social injustice among the classes, was not above using his satirical skill for more personal reasons, as were some of the better-known satirists. Sutherland (1962, p. 155) states: "Dryden, Pope, and Swift were all capable at times of using their satirical skill to ridicule someone who was not culpable at all, or to pour contempt on something they happen to dislike".

Good satire should leave with us an image that we take with us. It should create a catalyst for deeper thought or influence. As in the case of my definition of the grotesque, the satirical representation of the grotesquely altered cars is what triggers our deeper subconscious fear, and this is what we process and connect to the writer's social goal. Sutherland (1962, p. 156) states: "Satire, in fact, is often active below the level of consciousness, and may therefore work by delayed action". Satire has worked if we recognise its objectivity and find it amusing. We may not agree with the initial premise but we can enjoy the joke.

In both *The Cars That Ate Paris* and *Death Race 2000*, many critics regard that without their social relevance these films could be regarded as a form of black comedy, as they base part of their narrative on the acceptance of killing for pleasure, sport and profit. An important point is to set some form of boundary between satirical humour and black humour. Do we regard my example films as being satires, black comedies or a combination of the two? Black comedy uses subjects that are often regarded as far too serious for comedic representation. By its very nature black humour is based on the darker side of humanity and the slightly uncomfortable acceptance of it through humour. It has as its core a similarity with satire, but it seems to lose any meaningful social comment as it takes one step nearer to what society deems as the limit of acceptable comedy. Gehing (1996, p. 1) proposes "black humour is a genre of comic irreverence that flippantly attacks what are normally society's most sacredly serious subjects". Satire is used to further a cause; black humour is used to create reaction and nothing more.

Satire can also be used as a connecting device; that is to say, a piece of prose or a play may consist of non-satirical pieces joined by satirical references. Alternatively, a whole

piece may be seen as being totally satirical. Very often the root of satire comes down to a negotiation between the author and the audience as to whether the work was a satire or not. If the audience does not understand or see relevance in a particular work, then it cannot be regarded as being satirical.

### **Historical versus contemporary satire**

Understanding satire often comes down to education or good cultural reasoning, and this is where Hogarth's work may fall down, as his targeted audience may not have seen the relevance in his humour. Of course, whether they actually got the chance or had the inclination to view his prints is another factor that lays weight in the relevance of his work.

We know that it was during Hogarth's time that satire was beginning to find a place in mainstream artistic expression. Although it has been on the periphery of literature since Roman times, it was in the enlightened 18<sup>th</sup> century that this new form of representation began to become accessible to all. Hogarth helped to create his populist movement by making his art readily accessible to the masses by producing relatively cheap reproductions. The general populace was mainly semi-illiterate, and therefore while they enjoyed the caricatures and imagery, the real message was often lost. Obviously in the case of the upper classes that were the intended target, there was the access, if not the understanding. While satire in these early periods was often aimed at certain people or groups, such as politicians, royalty and foreigners, there now seems to be a much wider range of concerns that have become the focus. While it is still acceptable to satirise individuals, worldly awareness provides much larger targets and issues that are prime for satirical representation. Sutherland (1962, p. 21) states that "to some extent it might be said that the emphasis in modern satire has shifted from the individual man to mankind, and that the satirist is now concerned to save the human race". The new age of mass communications and McLuhan's concept of the global village has significantly broadened the satirist's scope for ridicule, as has his awareness of global injustice.

Likewise the contemporary audience reaction to the satirical use of the grotesque in my example films will stimulate on a deeper level, the same sort of primal reaction that Hogarth's audience will feel. It is on the initial reception that the modern audience will have the benefit of cynicism and educated thought, as well as cultural recognition of the nuances of satirical representation. Hogarth's audience may have been new to satire and hence required more time to grasp the concept and relevance.

Whether Bartel chose to present his story in a satirical way, or if he was just making a movie that was perceived as satirical, is an interesting question. Whether that subject matter has now become much more relevant and so can be seen as satirical, is also an interesting point. In the case of *The Cars That Ate Paris* it is well known that Weir set out to write and produce a satirical representation. One example is the mayor of Paris and his pleasing and totally acceptable manner as he presides over the carnage and recycling as if it were no different to arranging a garden fete. This is satirical portrayal of the familiarity and acceptance of small town corruption. Likewise we see a group of women stealing articles for themselves as they clear the treasures from the crashed cars, a representation of independent survival riding on the back of mass consumerism. There is the mayor at the dance when he says jovially 'let's hand it over to the young people' and the cars launch their final attack. This scene satirises death and destruction caused by youth, with the ultimate influential weapon 'the car'. Although the satire is obvious it is also extremely relevant. The use of the car as a grotesque animal can be seen in the scene where they stop the truck leaving the town; they snarl and rumble as they play with the driver. They control the town and no one is going anywhere.

In the case of Bartel, he was adapting a science fiction short story, and I believe that while he realised that there were issues worthy of satirical comment he did not regard this film solely as a satire, but more of a hybrid black comedy/satire. It is now when we view this movie, that the true prophetic nature of it becomes apparent. Seeing the way the dragon car driver's fan club happily sacrifice one of their own to the might of the famous 'driver' Frankenstein. She stands in front of his oncoming monster car, smiling as it devours her, while Frankenstein states dispassionately something about her love for him. This is a pure satirical comment on the patriarchal force of the car coupled

with the power of celebrity; as if to say it is acceptable to give your life to the superficial values of fame. Likewise, the total lack of compassion given towards the widow of the first victim of the cars by the organisers as they give her prizes and gifts, satirises the disregard for compassion and human life over the power of sport, entertainment and political sway.

Once the premise has been set for the satirical representation, it requires more than just presenting the concept to the public. In order to fulfil its required role the satire must be accompanied and supported by a solid structure. This is most important when the satire is regarded as high humour. Griffin (cited in Ball, 1997, p.1) maintains that:

At least as important as satire's content, therefore, is its performative aspect: the display of skill that earns applause, and the sense of free, uncommitted play (with words, ideas, referents) in a special place away from (but still part of) the more serious real world.

The beauty of satire is that if you are not the intended target, you then have the right to feel slightly superior, especially if the message is subtle and you see the relevance where others do not. Satire can supply a comfort of sorts and provide camaraderie among those who share the message. Sutherland (1962, p. 155) says "satire has performed a useful function if it only cheers on the faithful".

## CONCLUSION

The hoped for outcome of this study, was to provide some form of commonality in the way Hogarth and the three film directors have grotesquely altered their characters/cars, and to whether their respective audiences, would react in a similar fashion and if so, why? The obvious limitations have been in qualifying the disparity of comprehension between the two time-separated audiences and their ability, or lack of it, to fully comprehend satire. Hogarth tried to aim his work at the lowest common denominator, but through obvious class/educational variables, the true meaning of his message may have only reached a much smaller section of society. This ambiguity is extremely relevant in my study and one that all must be aware of in the final conclusion of this research.

I began this thesis by clarifying a useable definition of the term grotesque; I looked at some of the many historical interpretations of the grotesque and I decided to find a suitable definition that would acknowledge the possibility of an inherently natural primal fear of deformed or altered beasts. My definition could be used to describe the impetus that stimulates our primal subliminal fear that we experience, either consciously or subconsciously, when we view exaggerated, abnormal and deformed shapes. I argued that my definition required the term to be accepted as a whole structure, one that embraces all the elements of our darkest fears and inherent instincts, and then stimulates a reaction by emanating from deep within at times of visual or sensual awareness. This force from our darkest collective selves acts as a warning device against the unnatural and dangerous. The grotesque I define must be seen as a multifaceted ability to harness and utilise humankind's primal fears. I then applied this definition both historically and contemporarily in a context that was usable for both Hogarth and the film directors as a medium for their satire.

I have argued that Hogarth's work typifies the use of the grotesque as a vehicle for satire. His use of exaggerated forms, heightened scenic images of discovery and mystique, coupled with a narrative that often involves the darker side of human nature, portrays an influence in his work that must come from deep within his primal

psyche. Hogarth knew how to use the grotesque to instil and stimulate an aura of fascination, which in turn could manipulate a previously dormant sense of fear and dread. By attaching a meaningful and socially aware narrative, Hogarth believed he was helping to achieve emancipation among the disadvantaged.

In the chapter describing the films I have argued for the existence of animalistic referents. We have in one film; *The Cars That Ate Paris*, the animal cars feeding off themselves and regenerating. Then in *Death Race 2000* we have them competing against themselves in a show of individual strength, the fight to be leader of the pack. And finally, in *Mad Max* we have them displaying their herding instinct and collective killing power as the pack attacks. What we see in all three films is a familiar mechanical entity that we attach primal animalistic qualities to. This image has been grotesquely altered to supply a satirical representation and this altered shape in turn stimulates a primal trigger that is embedded in us all. The response to this is our reaction of both fear and fascination, and our method of controlling this manifestation, is laughter and cautious understanding.

I have endeavoured to highlight some differing satirical interpretations through historical and cultural variation, through emphasising the difference between traditional comedy, black humour and satire, and to place some of the representational impact not only on the subject matter, but also on the performance variables. I argue that a prerequisite for satire must be the audience's understanding of the topical issues at play. The key to appreciating satire lies in the area between the normal and the grotesque; the audience recognises the altered shape and attaches their new interpretation to it.

My conclusion to this study has found more arguments against a commonality than for, but I claim that these negatives are in fact superficial. When it comes to the main motivation for our grotesque stimulus the common denominator is an unfathomable influence that by its very nature is the essence of all our fears.

I argued that the proletarian audience of Hogarth's work might have regarded the grotesque symbology with more fear than contemporary audiences, due to their

naivety and its historical hegemonic usage. If they did understand the satirical significance of the grotesque, they would possibly have viewed it in a more serious manner due to the very real influence and subjection that they lived under. Understanding Hogarth's message may have made them feel subversive, or at least disrespectful to the ruling classes, and therefore presented defiance. I have assumed contemporary audiences are a lot better educated, more cynical and less influenced by superstitious, mythological or supernatural entities. The fear and excitement they feel during the viewing is tempered by rationality and culturally astute observation. Today satirical representation is regarded as part of mainstream humour, even though it is still regarded as more of an intellectual representation. It no longer carries quite as much mystery or incomprehensibility than it would have in Hogarth's period.

At the deepest level of our being — the sublime, the natural, the darkest or most basic, the subconscious, the primal — is the realm of the instinctual sense that is embedded in every human, and this is the area where the audience's reaction to the grotesque will be the same in both of the periods I cover.

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