

Theatre within the interior: A comparative analysis of the works of William Hogarth and Orson Welles

Gene Bawden
Monash University, Faculty of Art Design & Architecture

The creative arts have for centuries exploited the capacity for an audience to visually 'read' an interior. It is an intuitive skill, honed over hundreds of years of domestic sign-reading. Rooms and their component parts have long lost any attachment to simple functional purpose. They serve to clearly reference values both literally and metaphorically, and narrate entire scenarios without need of text or voice. The eighteenth century images of William Hogarth present powerful morality tales, the potency of which is delivered by the artist's innate capacity to incite both loathing and compassion in equal doses through the clear demarcation of moral-specific and socially indicative domestic space. The good deserve cleanliness, homeliness and even some riches. However, for the bad, loss, decay, disease and filth are the just desserts for a life of vice and depravity. Whether grand or decrepit the pictorial theatre of these interiors act as both passive backdrop and overt story-teller, dutifully fulfilling their roles as *mise-en-scene* and 'actor'. They are a clear narration of 'becoming'; a guiding reference to their audience that the life of the characters within them, and what they have become, is deserved and delivered.

The Hogarth modern moral series –*The Harlot, The Rake and Marriage a la Mode*– provides the starting point for this analysis of the domestic *mise-en-scene*. Hogarth's own dramaturgical convictions elevate his work above a simple and sequential tale-telling. 'My picture is my stage, and men and women are my players'. The paintings and their subsequent etchings are masterfully composed and edited. They are the storyboard of future generations; their articulation into ballet, opera and film made easier by his methodical and extraordinarily detailed sequence of action, played out against a series of equally narrative interiors. Despite the abundance of detail in the Hogarth images, nothing is included as a purely ornamental or compositional device. Every object relays a component part of the story, much like, as Hans Dieter Schaal suggests, in the architecture of modern film-making. 'Film architecture is an architecture of meaning. There is nothing in the frame that is not important and does not have something to say'¹. The relationship between Hogarth's eighteenth century images and twentieth century film is one built upon the semiotics of scenery; the 'meaning' embedded in the invented interior.

Through comparing specific images from Hogarth's morality tales with a selection of scenes from two seminal films by Orson Welles in the 1940s, this paper proposes that twentieth century cinematic story-telling draws deeply from the traditions established in Hogarth's eighteenth century interior narratives.

A Harlot's Progress and Citizen Kane.

In Hogarth's first Modern Moral Series, *A Harlot's Progress* (1732) the unfortunate demise of a young woman and her virtue to prostitution is powerfully enacted against a progressively crumbling sequence of London interiors, but not before a specific geography is established. The first frame has Mary (Moll)

1. Schaal, Hans Dieter. 2010. *Learning from Hollywood: Architecture and Film*. Stuttgart: Axel Menges.

Hackabout arriving at Cheapside in London on a country coach from York. She is met by Mother Needham, a notorious London brothel owner, depicted as a portly hag; her face spotted with the artificial beauty spots used to disguise the scars of small pox and syphilis. She caresses Moll's face with a touch that is both kindly and lecherous. By contrast Moll is still, innocent and unblemished, her country innocence symbolized by the rose in her dress; and her foolish trust, by the dead goose to the right of the picture frame². While not interiorized this scene is important to establishing a major and recurring narrative premise: The country is a site of innocence and wholesome purity. The city, by contrast is its corruptor. Further in his analysis of film semiotics, Schall argues, 'the city is chaos, sin, perversion, entanglement, crime, the police, an abyss for many, and a place of happiness and advancement for few'³.

From this important scene-setting introduction, we move inside Hogarth's cavernous labyrinth of sin: the interiors of Georgian London. In the second frame Moll has been introduced to a wealthy merchant who has her 'kept' in lavish apartments. Sacrificing her virtue has brought her riches far beyond what she could ever have hoped for as a respectable girl of humble rural origins. Her bedroom is hung with silk and the picture frames and furniture are fashionably Baroque. The room is appointed with servants: a black, turbaned pageboy and a lady's maid. Its vast proportions are inferred by the unseen ceiling; too high to render in the image. Wealth and privilege are immediately established through this luxuriously appointed and cavernous dwelling. The integrity of the unseen English country cottage from which Moll has fled, is consumed by a powerful and persuasive city interior.

In Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) we discover the young Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles) is not born into wealth but is delivered from humble working-class origins by the discovery of the world's sixth richest goldmine on his mother's inherited property. The scene of his childhood is not presented as a charming or romantic nostalgia. His parent's ordinary, modestly furnished wooden boarding house is cast in an isolated rural snow-drift in Colorado, emphasizing the cold emotional relationships between mother and father and a modicum of warmth between mother and son. It is however, the site of his one lasting memory of happiness: the sled upon which he played during his short, ordinary childhood is of course the mysterious 'Rosebud', the search for which is core to the film. While not presented as a utopian memory this cold rural site and its bleak little boarding house is still the last vestige of a united family the young Charles has, and is therefore invested with a strong emotional tie that cannot be replicated in the luxurious homes of his wealthy adulthood. His continued longing for the humble country house is with him to the end, set in a small glass snow-dome that falls from his hands upon his death.

This is the type of home we can assume Hogarth's Moll has foolishly abandoned in York in favour of city temptation. However, Moll has ultimately misjudged the security of her situation in Scene 2. Her dalliance with the young man departing through the door behind the enraged merchant begins to destabilize her faint grasp on the luxurious life of a desirable courtesan. Her wealthy keeper dismisses her. Moll is simply a chattel in the room, a material possession to be disposed of or upgraded at will. The upturned furniture and shattered crockery symbolizes the loss she is about to befall. The pet monkey is perhaps the most interesting inclusion in the interior. Entangled in a delicate piece lace the monkey is symbolic of exoticism. 'Exotic' was by no means a lifestyle choice of respectable young women in Georgian Britain. It inferred a modish allure to all things foreign and entirely un-British. Yet, the monkey stands for more than her existence on the decadent fringes of society. 'The creature neatly symbolizes the whole scenario: a pretentious façade that merely 'apes' high social rank and fashionable behaviour'⁴. The wannabe middleclass had begun to take a firm hold in Hogarth's London, their state of becoming no better

2 . Hallert, Mark and Riding, Christine. 2006. *Hogarth*. London: Tate.

3. Schaal. *Learning from Hollywood: Architecture and Film*, 21.

4 . Hallert and Riding. *Hogarth*, 81.

Curtin University September 2012

represented than through their desire for things once denied them: rich furnishings, modish ornaments, opulent interiors, and the social graces dictated by them.

In *Citizen Kane* we see the same exoticism at work. The film, built upon a narrative interplay of flashbacks, uses architectural story-telling to relay a great deal of the psychology of its lead character. The film's opening scene pans across the decrepit grounds of Kane's palatial Xanadu, past caged monkeys, palm trees and bobbing gondolas on an artificial canal before culminating at one of the numerous gothic windows of the mansion itself. The mansion is stuffed full with un-opened and uncared for purchases: classical statues, globes, alter pieces, ornamental furniture and vulgar objet d'art. He, like many of the characters in Hogarth's morality tales, is a man of wealth with no notion of how to use it wisely. Ownership is a right of privilege that Kane is determined to unduly exploit: As Andrew Sarris explains, 'Kane emerges as an extension of the Nouveau Riche American seeking a living culture in the dead relics of the past'.⁵

His Xanadu is entirely fabricated (both cinematically and narratively) as a holding pen for his second wife, Susan Alexander (Dorothy Comingore). Here, like Moll, she is kept as a chattel to the interior. Despite Kane's declaration that "Our home is here, Susan" the vast, echoing interiors of Xanadu is a socially isolated prison that keeps his wife's dubious operatic talents (that he so desperately tried to polish) far from the scathing criticism of New York society. The Xanadu set is dominated by the Great Hall, where the diminutive, lonely Susan plays with jigsaws before an enormous Baroque fireplace. The space is isolating, cold, and oppressive, indicative of the relationship between Susan and Kane himself. Susan eventually extricates herself from Xanadu, but her fate is not a happy one. She ends up alone; a tragic, aging, alcoholic nightclub singer in New York.

Like Susan, a life of desirable privilege is to be denied Hogarth's Moll. Of the six plates that narrate her short adult life, she is already in descent by plate three. Here she is a disheveled common prostitute plying her trade from the less salubrious rooms of a Covent Garden brothel. Signs of syphilis are beginning to show on her face, as she sits on her rudimentary bed in an anonymous room bereft of any luxury or prettiness. This scene leads eventually to Bridwell Prison; and finally the squalid and diseased hovels of Covent Garden, where the unfortunate Moll eventually loses her life to venereal disease. Hogarth's increasingly decrepit interiors speak powerfully of moral decline. The link between moral depravity and financial ruin is inescapable. Moll's life ends in a state of impoverished homelessness, forced to share lodgings in a Drury Lane garret inhabited by fellow vagrants and prostitutes. This is not the warm and nurturing place called home, but a hellish comeuppance for a lascivious sinner. The progression of sets before which Hogarth places his protagonist is pivotal to his explicit narrative, for without them he would be unable to induce his formidable combination of both derision and pity. Moll's state of becoming, her ascent from ordinary country girl to lusty object of desire, and swift descent to an emaciated toothless corpse by 23, is entirely embedded within her interiors. For Hogarth, to situate his characters against a flat plane would do inconceivable damage to his narrative. His interiors and their content are a richly encoded architecture, pivotal to our comprehension of his tale.

Similarly, filmic narrative requires the visualizing of place and setting. From *Citizen Kane* we can begin to see the capacity for the interior set to unpack a rich and compelling description of a character's state of becoming, that extends far beyond dialogue and accomplished acting. In 1926, on the cusp of the great ascent of Hollywood film making, the interior designer Robert Mallet Stevens wrote; 'The decor (of the movie set) ought to present the character, even before he or she appears – to indicate the character's

⁵ Sarris, Andrew. 1971. "Citizen Kane: The American Baroque" in Gottesman, Ronald (ed.), *Focus on Citizen Kane*. London: Prentice Hall.

Curtin University September 2012

social situation, tastes, habits, way of life, personality. The decor ought to be an integral part of the narrative and the action, and can become its organizing principle.’⁶

Prophetic as this was for the future of twentieth century cinema, Hogarth had already discovered and exploited this ‘organizing principle’ almost two hundred years prior.

The Rakes Progress and The Magnificent Ambersons

The second of Hogarth’s modern morals, *The Rake’s Progress* (1734), demonstrates Hogarth’s particular distrust of the young, upwardly-mobile, middle-class. Tom Rakewell is the principle ‘rake’, a young man of inherited means and less than ideal moral standing; a womanizer and spendthrift who fritters away his family fortune. Tom’s interiors, like those of Moll’s, descend from riches to poverty, though more slowly than those of his female counterpart.

His story begins in the dark, dreary and basic drawing room of his deceased miserly father. Tom’s inheritance is abundant. The floor is strewn with documents that detail his wealth and property. Coins drop from concealed hiding spaces in the ceiling. He is being fitted for new clothes and in the midst of the action, paying off his pregnant lover with a handful of coins. He is in the process of orchestrating his own destiny – unencumbered by wife and child – one bereft of morality or financial restraint.

His situation swiftly moves to the opulent and decadent life of a ‘cit’, a term Georgian London used to describe a wealthy young man aspiring to the cultural practices of the aristocracy. Scene 2, *The Rakes Levée* reveals Tom’s farcical participation in the fashionable practice of the morning *levée*: a meeting with tradesmen, tailors, business associates and vogueish artists in need of patronage while their potential benefactor prepares for the day. His interior is now far richer and more fashionable than that of his inherited abode. The walls hang with large classical paintings only afforded by the wealthy. A grand archway reveals another stately interior, suggesting Tom resides within a multitude of decadent rooms. It too is wall to wall with morning visitors each gnawing away at his vast, but nonetheless finite riches. As with Moll’s decadent abode, the ceiling is absent, suggesting they are vastly high, unlike the oppressive, low, dirty ceilings of his father’s house.

Tom’s morality tale is spelt out over 8 scenes. His fortune lost, he attempts to rekindle it through a loveless marriage to an elderly heiress. The plan ultimately fails and a term in debtors prison is soon followed by Tom’s descent into madness. Penniless and nearly naked, Tom final interior is that of Bethlehem Hospital. Tom’s grand abode in Scene 2, teeming with admirers and middleclass scroungers, has been replaced by Bedlam, also teeming with people, but insane and dangerous ones. The walls are thick and solid and the windows barred; more prison than our modern reading of ‘hospital’. But most importantly, standing in the midst of this space are two refined women: a wealthy aristocrat and her maid, come, as they did, to be ‘entertained’ by the antics of the insane and the poor. Bedlam happily opened its doors to paying voyeurs. Tom has incurred the worst of all indignities; he has become a pitiful entertainment to the class he once aspired to. He is, quite simply, a joke.

In Orson Welles’ film adaption of Booth Tarkington’s *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), the decent of a young man of inherited fortune is told within the confines of a grand family mansion, not dissimilar to Tom’s luxurious home in Scene 2. The Amberson Mansion plays a pivotal role in establishing the social and

⁶ Stevens, Robert Mallet in Frayling, Christopher. “Hollywood Studio Design: The Great Hall of Xanadu”. Anysely Jeremy and Grant, Charlotte (eds). 2006. *Imagined Interiors: Presenting the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*. London: V&A.

moral worth of an enviable all-American family who owes much of its fortune to the good sense and investment of its kind and caring patriarch. It begins as an enviable statement abode, just as it does in Tarkington's original text:

'This house was the pride of the town. Faced with stone as far back as the dining-room windows, it was a house of arches and turrets and girdling stone porches: it had the first porte-cochere seen in that town. There was a central 'front hall' with a great black walnut stairway, and open to a green glass skylight called the 'dome', three stories above the ground floor. A ballroom occupied most of the third story; and at one end of it was a carved walnut gallery for the musicians. Citizens told strangers that the cost of all this black walnut and wood-carving was sixty thousand dollars. 'Sixty thousand dollars for the wood-work alone! Yes, sir, and hardwood floors all over the house! Turkish rugs and no carpets at all, except a Brussels carpet in the front parlour—I hear they call it the 'reception-room.' Hot and cold water upstairs and down, and stationary washstands in every last bedroom in the place!'⁷

The interior is rich and reflective of the rights of Victorian privilege; 'unparalleled optimism, spiritedness and an abundance of sumptuous content'⁸. Their interior cache is a multitude of enormous, richly decorated rooms, intersected by an elaborate staircase. As described by Charles and Mirella Affron the staircase plays an integral role in the film, particularly when defining the relationship between the young spoiled son, George (Tim Holt) and his spinster aunt, Fanny (Agnes Moorehead).

'The progress of emotion is chartered on the stations of the two characters, sometimes uncomfortably close on a horizontal landing, sometimes in positions of dominance and subordination on the inclined portion of the stairs, sometimes glaring at each other across the stairwell'⁹.

Ultimately this activity midway on the stairs is symbolic of stagnation. The characters neither depart nor arrive anywhere, entirely resistant to change and new directions. They simply hover on the plateau of the landing; an architectural nowhere-land. As it progresses the film becomes increasingly interiorized; the mansion a site of suffocating imprisonment, obstinately denying the existence of change outside. The times the Ambersons knew and lorded over had changed. The grand house on Amberson Boulevard was now an out-of-date relic, fit only to be carved into a multi-tenanted boarding house. The town had grown into a city, and the Amberson mansion could not resist it. The mansion is a cautionary tale warning against resistance to change and modern progress. The once grand house is a symbol of the Amberson's loss. Their station as American aristocracy has shifted irreversibly. They become dull, ordinary, poor and forgotten.

As with Hogarth's Tom, George is central to this tale of descent, as are his increasingly regressive interiors. George's wealth is also inherited, and like Tom's, his home is a victory of indulgence over discipline. But, unlike Tom it is his stubborn and selfish resistance to change that results in his irredeemable loss financially and emotionally. This is his ultimate comeuppance, the fate the long lost townspeople had wished upon the indulged and spoilt Amberson boy. Like Tom, his tale ends in the dreary rooms of a hospital, the result of a madness of sorts: dangerous employment in a chemical factory. The grand rooms that delivered George above all others, had morphed into a prison-like cell, before dispelling him completely into sad hospital anonymity.

7. Tarkington, Booth. 1999 (online edition). *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Bartleby.com

8. Forge, Suzanne. 1981. *Victorian Splendor*. Melbourne: Oxford.

9. Affron, Charles and Affron, Mirella. 1995. *Sets in Motion: Art Direction and Film Narrative*, New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press.

Marriage a la Mode and Citizen Kane

Hogarth's images were constructed in a period of rapid change in London society. The demarcation between rich and poor was being traversed by an ever-increasing cash-up middleclass, whose own status was to become a complex division of levels. *Marriage a la Mode* (1743-45) represents Hogarth's criticism of this new social sector and its hunger for aristocratic standing, but equally his distaste for the aristocracy's preparedness to use these social climbers for its own financial gain. The marriage between an aristocrat's son and daughter of a wealthy middleclass trader is critical of both: the pathetic merchant prepared to sell his daughter for the dazzling seduction of rank; and the nobleman, Lord Squanderfield, desperate to continue his expensive taste by siphoning off his status via his son's loveless marriage. As is familiar with Hogarth's morality tales, this one ends badly. The story is ultimately infected by financial ruin, promiscuity, disease and untimely deaths.

Almost the entirety of this story is enacted not through the characters but through their interiors. The most telling are the comparisons between the couple's initial marital home in West London; a brand new, luxurious Palladian mansion in Scene 2, and the young wife's death scene in the final frame played out in the dull bourgeois home from which she came. The first home is a site of fabulous abundance: exquisite architecture, brilliant lighting, luxurious new upholstered furniture, Persian carpets, and numerous fine, exotic ornaments. The fanciful clock to the right is a highly expressive component. It is a mad hybrid of fashionable Rococo styling: a cat, fish, foliage and Buddha are twisted into a meaningless, decorative tangle. Christine Riding suggests, '(the clock) can be read as a critique of the more fantastical, bordering on grotesque, aspects the Rococo style and its novelty-seeking devotees'¹⁰. Their taste is expensive, but questionable. Fortune does not bring with it connoisseurship.

Again Welles' *Citizen Kane* unveils a similar interior narrative. Before the move to Xanadu the Kane interiors were 'traditional', appointed with comfortably upholstered furnishings and displays of ornaments, palms and flowers, replicating America's old-money attachment to the tasteful trappings of history and tradition¹¹. This is immediately apparent in the breakfast room montage with his well-chosen and well-connected first wife Emily (Ruth Warwick), niece to the President of the United States. The room is abundant, but scale appropriate; lavish, but sensible. The room's key appointment is an elegant Sheraton style dining table that progressively lengthens the physical and marital divide between Kane and Emily.

Xanadu, however, is a vulgar excess; an entirely manufactured and artificial palace that turns its back on its geography and its time. This is not a smart, modern, art deco abode reflective of its real time, but a hybridized confection of motifs harvested from the history of architecture. Like Hogarth's ridiculous clock and fanciful collection of mantelpiece statues, the Kane mansion is rife with ornamental excess, the most compelling of which might be seen in the hall of Baroque mirrors Kane walks slowly past following Susan's departure from Xanadu. The figure of Kane is reflected into an eternity of abundant ornamentation, trapped by his own nonchalant but obsessive desire to immerse himself in the most ornamental, fanciful but emotionally bankrupt interior money can buy.

In Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode*, a life of decadent nonchalance is expressed through the upturned furniture and the mass of unpaid bills being held by the servant to the left of Scene 2. This life of enviable but inevitably foolish luxury is to be short lived. The young man is murdered by his wife's lover and she dies

10. Hallert and Riding. *Hogarth*, 147.

11 Mandelbaum, Howard, Myers, Eric. 1985. *Screen Deco: A Celebration of High Style in Hollywood*. Bromley Kent, UK: Columbus.

of a laudanum overdose in the final scene; a dull, dark, ordinary middleclass home bereft of the luxuries she once enjoyed. It is not however, a hovel. It is decorated with entirely respectable paintings, a brass clock, curtains and pelmet and is lit by a pretty leaded-glass window. This is the sober home she should not have strayed from; or more accurately the home her father, (seen removing the ring from his dying daughters hand to sell) should never have sold her from.

Again a similar narrative can be detected in *Citizen Kane*. Before meeting Kane, Susan leads an ordinary but acceptable life as a music store sales girl. Her home is a respectable middle class New York boarding house; a safe haven for young women in a city of endless corruption. The parlour of the boarding house is a well-appointed Victorian drawing room; rife with bloated overs-stuffed upholstery, fringed lampshades, ferns, drapery and a piano. The parlour speaks as the parlour should: it is a space that reflects well of its inhabitants to those rare visitors within in. It is saturated with “things” the language of which could only be understood by others familiar with the same spaces. It speaks of pride, ownership, belonging, civility and, most of all, good behaviour.

Like Hogarth’s young and innocent bride, this is the home that Susan should never have ventured from. Her decent into alcoholism and life as a gritty nightclub performer would never have happened had she not been tempted from her middleclass boarding house by the unparalleled wealth of Charles Foster Kane.

Alongside parlours and living rooms, the bedroom is also a space imbued with established narratives and meanings well exploited by both Hogarth and film-makers. ‘Associated with the nooks and corners of solitude are the bedroom and livingroom in which the leading characters held sway’¹². Bachelard suggests the bedroom is a principle site of private empowerment. In Hogarth’s *Harlot*, Moll’s bedroom in Scene 2 is the site of her sexual conquests that are, ultimately, her only power. In *The Rake’s Morning Levee* (Scene 2) and in *Marriage, The Toilette* (Scene 4) the bedroom is a vast, personal empire of luxuries populated with sycophantic lackies.

In *Citizen Kane* Susan occupies three different bedrooms, the most narrative of which is her first. Her original boarding house bedroom is a cocoon of Victorian femininity abundantly decorated with drapery, pretty bows, china ornaments and notably the log cabin snowdome held by Kane at the time of his death. The bedroom door, Susan insists, is to be left open by decree of the landlady during the discourse of “gentleman callers”. The room is a component part of a morally righteous home of good reputation. Nothing untoward happened in the room, and to be sure all privacy is removed. However, this bedroom contains a duality of narrative: it references Susan’s own innocence and naivety, but also the downfall of Kane’s future as a morally upright governor. His mere presence in the room, unsexual as it initially appears, is sufficient evidence of infidelity, the news of which ruins his chance of governorship and his respectable marriage to the President’s niece. The appearance of a piano in the room is, however, proof of his impropriety. It, like Moll’s china tea set and modish furnishings, is the expensive gift of a wealthy suitor. It also means Kane’s recurring private audiences with Susan have shifted from the righteous sanctity of the parlour – the site of the original piano – to the seductive lure of the bedroom, the door to which we can now assume has been closed. The bedroom, for both Hogarth and Welles is a key narrative device. It suggests impropriety, unbecoming behavior, downfall and corruption.

Hogarth’s images were, to their original audience, ones of contemporary life, critical of current social structures, events and personalities, yet 280 years later we view them with equivalent legibility. Our own capacity to read interiors and understand their complex narratives, be they true or invented, does, after all, stem from this period of rising middleclass aspiration. From the late eighteenth century the furnishing and

12. Bachelard, Gaston. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon.

decoration of the middleclass home, and the carefully rehearsed social etiquette performed within it, had become a means of showcasing ones social position¹³. The play enacted within the frames of Hogarth's pictures, were more than exaggerated tales of woe and disaster. They were 'real', reflective of a new social structure that relied on a complex process of playacting, with each level of society being identified through carefully rehearsed rituals and performances. As Erving Goffman has argued we are all a multiplicity of acting selves. 'Everyone is always and everywhere more or less consciously playing a role. It is in these roles we know each other, it is in these roles we know ourselves'¹⁴. He suggests also that the comprehension of our roles is assisted by the set we surround ourselves with. 'Firstly there is the 'setting', involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within or upon it'¹⁵.

Like Hogarth narratives the viewing of film relies on a basic operation of decipherment. The scenery plays an intrinsic role in aiding our comprehension of plot, situation, personality, relationships, time and space. But, unlike Hogarth's still images that permit us time to analyse, query and comprehend, film is swift and its scenery fleeting. Peter Wollen suggests our ability to comprehend film relies on a core supply of repeated motifs¹⁶. Throughout the history of cinema it became possible to build upon a lexicon of motifs, reappearing time and time again. Home, house and the rituals of domesticity have long been entrenched among film's most familiar motifs; a language ably exploited by Orson Welles in both *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

The capacity for fictionalized interiors to demarcate time, space and progressive narrative is undeniable. In the mid-eighteenth century Hogarth fully exploited the emerging legibility of the bourgeois interior to cast his players within a distinctive and revealing narrative. Hogarth serialised his stories over a sequence of compositions with sufficient intrigue in each one to lure the viewer to the next installment. Within the cinematic works of Orson Welles, we see the same practice in play: the narration of fate, intrigue and morality-tales within a Hogarthian framework. Stories of class, status and circumstance are told before an equally revealing interior set. The conclusion of each installment draws its viewer compulsively to the next, until we reach the inevitable conclusion – the characters are delivered to their inevitable fate. They have become what they warrant within the interiors they deserve; in fictions of justice and moral dues.

13. Miller, Daniel ed., *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. Oxford: Berg.

14. Goffman, Erving. 1969. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.

15. Goffman. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 19.

¹⁶ Wollen ,Peter. 1976. *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana.