



# **The Cinema of Mike Leigh : A Sense of the Real (Directors' Cuts)**

*Garry Watson*

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A keen observer of manners and mores, Mike Leigh has been hailed as a celebrator of "ordinary" people, yet it wasn't until relatively recently that audiences have been able to appreciate the full body of his work. In discussing all his films from *Bleak Moments* and *High Hopes* through *Naked*, the Oscar-nominated *Secrets and Lies* and *Topsy Turvy*, to *All or Nothing*, Garry Watson considers this claim, examining the films' influence and their effect.

At the same time, he takes on the very concepts of "the real" and "the ordinary" in regard to Leigh's work, challenging much perceived thinking among critics and moviegoers alike. To what category does the director's work really belong? Is it British Realism? The avant garde? Through careful textual detail and wider social and literary comparison with the works of Charles Dickens and T. S. Eliot, he argues ultimately for the artistic and cultural significance of Leigh's work as one of Britain's most respected filmmakers.

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