

**ADAPTATION AS AN INTERTEXTUAL
MODE OF PRACTICE:
British Nineteenth-Century Literature
and the Hollywood Studio Era**

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Portsmouth

April 2018

DECLARATION

While registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in the thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed..... Date.....

Total word count 71,051

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interdisciplinary study of adaptations produced in the Hollywood studio era, focussing on British nineteenth-century literature adapted between the years 1930 to 1949. Based on the critical fields of adaptation criticism and historical scholarship of film, it emphasizes adaptations in relation to production practices, examining how and why a range of British literary texts were adapted in this era. The study uses a specially-created dataset collected from the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures*, and archival evidence from the Margaret Herrick library, New York Public Library and British Film Institute. The introductory chapter provides an overview of the period, considering the impact of economic constraints, censorship, and war. This chapter argues that adaptations were an integral part of the industry in this period, driving innovation and production trends.

Following this overview of the period, five case studies are presented in order to consider the diverse range of strategies employed in the adaptation of literary texts. These focus on the screenwriting process of Universal's *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931), the production design of MGM's *David Copperfield* (Cukor, 1935), the impact of censorship on two adaptations of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Stevenson, 1897?), Sherlock Holmes' iconography, and the direction of Twentieth-Century Fox's production of *Jane Eyre* (Stevenson, 1943). These chapters consider the complexity and diversity of adaptation practices as they met with different studio house styles and production trends.

Throughout this thesis, adaptation is investigated as an intertextual mode of practice. Each case study reveals how filmmakers drew on a range of non-literary sources, such as illustration, theatrical productions and radio to inform their creative processes. Following an appeal for a broader engagement of industry practices to form part of the discussion on adaptation processes, this thesis will argue that an understanding of the literary text's prior relationship with more popular forms of culture is a necessary component to the study of adaptation. Furthermore, it will create a space for reconsidering Hollywood's relationship to other cultural forms.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to my PhD supervisors for the completion of this thesis: Dr Christine Etherington-Wright, Professor Justin Smith, Dr Laurel Forster and Dr Esther Sonnet. Their support and guidance over the course of this work was crucial, I am forever thankful. The staff at the University of Portsmouth have also offered much in the way of moral support, and I would especially like to thank the CCI Faculty Office. My colleagues there celebrated all the little milestones and triumphs, and offered emotional support when I struggled.

I would also like to thank the various libraries I visited for allowing me access to their archives. Those at the Margaret Herrick Library were especially helpful, as were the librarians at the Lincoln Centre of Performing Arts. A special mention is due to Michael at the Conan Doyle archive in Portsmouth who was incredibly accommodating and lovely to talk to.

Finally, I'd like to thank my friends and family; to Sue, you were there from the beginning and walks with you, Basil, and Ted gave me the required dose of fresh air and fresh ideas; and to my partner Sam, you kept me sane (just about), and were unwaveringly patient. Thank you.

DISSEMINATION

Presentations

‘Textual Evolution: Adapting Sherlock Holmes 1899-1942,’ University of Portsmouth Postgraduate Conference, Portsmouth, UK (October 2014).

‘Adapting Sherlock Holmes for the Screen,’ Chichester Cinema public lecture, Chichester, UK (July 2015).

‘Animating Phiz: An examination of the use of Victorian Illustration in MGM’s *David Copperfield* (1934),’ Association of Adaptation Studies, Oxford, UK (September 2016).

‘Gothic Transmutation: How Frankenstein was made of many parts,’ British Association of Film Television and Screen Studies, Bristol, UK (May 2017).

Publications

Chalk, Penny. “Edgar Dale’s Film Appreciation Program: An Early Education in Adaptation.” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*. Published electronically December 13, 2017. doi: 1080/01439685.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Hollywood adaptations has not yet been written. There are hundreds of books and thousands of articles about film adaptations of novels and plays, but only a tiny percentage consider adaptation from a historical period.¹

The above quote by Peter Lev represents a new and evolving conversation in adaptation studies. In 'How to Write Adaptation History' (2017), he argues that 'to write a history of adaptations in a given period and place, one would need to know how stories were chosen, how they were adapted for the screen, and who had influence over the final product.'² In this thesis I aim to address these questions, by examining the selection and adaptation of British nineteenth-century texts in the Hollywood studio era. Based on the critical fields of adaptation studies and film history, this thesis is an interdisciplinary study that emphasizes adaptations in relation to production history. Using data collected from the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures*, unexamined archival evidence and close textual analysis, I will argue that adaptation was integral to the film industry in the Hollywood studio era, driving innovation and key production trends. The findings of this research are presented in both an overview of the period and five case studies, which reveal the diverse strategies used to transpose a literary text onto the screen.

To date there have been extensive studies of the Hollywood studio era with the work of David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, Kristin Thompson, Douglas Gomery and Thomas Schatz forming essential readings of the period. Drawing on archival sources, these critics investigated the way in which the studio system worked as a business entity, examining the development of management strategies, technological advances, and industrial regulations. Their work has been crucial to my investigation of the period, since they reveal the structure

of the industry, and illustrate how the development of films was subject to institutional hierarchies. Through an examination of cultural, social and economic changes, they present the Hollywood studio era as a complex period of commercial filmmaking influenced by a wide set of contextual factors.

This present study draws on the work of former film historians and asks new questions, such as how the structure of the industry affected the way texts were translated to the screen, and how cultural, social and economic changes influenced the selection of story material. Accordingly, the first task of this study was to collect quantifiable data on British nineteenth-century texts adapted during the Hollywood studio era, to establish which stories were selected and why. Turning to the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, I gathered information on every film based on a British nineteenth-century text from 1930-1949, detailing the literary source, original author, and key personnel involved in its production (see Appendix 1). This dataset has revealed key patterns in production and indicated that a number of concerns impacted on the adaptation process, ranging from industrial determinants to the wider social considerations of censorship and war. Through an investigation of the films included in the data, this study aims to build a detailed picture of the industry, and examine adaptation as an industrial practice.

However, like any historical investigation, this study must navigate a complex terrain. If too narrow a focus is placed on archival material and individual films, it is possible to lose sight of wider contextual factors. Similarly, an attempt to include only a detailed overview of the whole period would lead to broad-brush generalisations. Therefore, this thesis is structured

so as to include both an overview of the adaptation practices in the period and five individual case studies that focus in depth on key production processes, such as screenwriting, production design, cinematography, and the importance of costume and props. I will be using my examination of these processes to question how adaptation operates as an intertextual mode of practice.

The originality of this thesis lies in its new approach to the study of nineteenth century British texts as they were adapted in the Hollywood studio era. Much of the current thinking about adaptation owes its orientation to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of intertextuality, a dialogic process that constantly engages with and is informed by other works and voices.³ In this thesis intertextuality will be examined as an essential and premeditated mode of practice that informed filmmaking techniques and, more often than not, generated commercial success. For each primary adapted film text examined in the case studies, a related and overlapping industry practice is discussed. This provides the basis for an intertextual discussion of the ways filmmakers used paratextual elements and former adaptations to influence their practice. Chapter Two is an examination of *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1818), tracing how narrative elements of the novel were altered and shared between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century theatrical productions and Universal's 1931 film. Chapter Three uses archival evidence related to the production design of *David Copperfield* to show how filmmakers relied heavily on the original nineteenth-century illustrations of the novel. For the fourth chapter, a comparative analysis of two adaptations of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is made, using original censorship records and draft scripts to chart how the introduction of censorship impacted upon MGM's remake of Paramount's 1931 adaptation. The fifth chapter traces the iconography of Sherlock Holmes in illustration,

theatre and film culminating in a close textual analysis of the use of props in the 1940s. In the final chapter, this thesis considers the intersection of radio and cinema, looking at Orson Welles' and John Houseman's radio adaptation of *Jane Eyre* and their subsequent involvement in the Twentieth-Century Fox adaptation.

The innovative approach this thesis employs takes into account both historicity and a changing cultural and media climate, spanning cultural forms as disparate as nineteenth-century etches and twentieth-century theatrical production design. Therefore, this thesis crosses boundaries of literary text and filmmaking practice, it travels across historical periods from 1818 to the late 1940s, and moves between nation states and identities. Fundamentally it is not restricted by formal properties or modes of cultural apparatus. This is an interdisciplinary discussion that invites a broader more inclusive approach to adaptation studies and film history than has hitherto been undertaken.

Existing Scholarship on Film History, 1930-1949

The period I have chosen for this thesis is part of what is termed the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood, a time when the studio system was at its peak and movies played a pivotal role in the cultural landscape of America and abroad. At this time eight companies constituted the so-called major studios that created the Hollywood studio system. Of these eight, five were fully integrated conglomerates: Twentieth-Century Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, RKO Radio Pictures, and Warner Bros. These vertically integrated studios combined the ownership of production studios, distribution and substantial cinema chains to form an oligopoly market.⁴ Producing movies primarily on their own filmmaking backlots, with creative personnel under long-term contract, the studios

produced on average five hundred films a year between 1930 and 1949.⁵ Arguably, this era represents a high point in film history in terms of both quantity and quality. Prolific and multi-faceted, 'Hollywood' became a synonym for the mainstream film industry in the US, a term that evoked not just its production, the films and its stars, but the aura of glamour that surrounded it all.

As one of the most influential periods of film history, the Hollywood studio era has been the object of a number of scholarly works that are drawn on for this study. According to Thomas Schatz, the roots of the discipline can be traced to a group of critics in the 1960s and 1970s who cultivated a 'theory of film history' based on the notion of directorial authorship.⁶ Proponents of the 'auteur theory,' such as Andrew Sarris, claimed that the Hollywood studio era was a formulaic and profit-driven industry. His landmark text *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929-1968* (1968) canonized a number of directors who struggled against the system and imparted their own personal style on films. Sarris claimed that: 'he [the director] would not be worth bothering with if he were not capable now and then of a sublimity of expression almost miraculously extracted from his money-orientated environment.'⁷ Sarris' work was highly influential, yet the later work of Bordwell, Staiger and Thomson called into question the notion of one sole creative practitioner by exploring Hollywood's complex hierarchy of authority.

The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960 (1985) set new standards for historical research in film studies. Focusing on the organisational history of the industry and production practices, this work delineated the formal features of what they termed the 'Classical Hollywood style' to reveal the historical conditions that

controlled and shaped the textual process. Released a year later, Douglas Gomery's work *The Hollywood Studio System* (1985) was equally significant. As one of a small percentage of film scholars researching the economic and business facets of filmmaking, Gomery became one of the leading authorities on Hollywood as a business operation. Drawing on a range of primary documents generated by the major corporations, his work analyses the structure and conduct of each of the major studios, arguing that the drive for profits defined the nature of filmmaking in the period.

These two texts influenced a diverse array of historical studies in the succeeding decade, including *The Genius of the System* (1988) by Thomas Schatz, Janet Staiger's collection, *The Studio System* (1995), Tino Balio's *Grand Design* (1995), and *Hollywood Cinema* (1995) by Richard Maltby. Each of these works had slightly different aims, but all used archival evidence to explore the social, cultural and institutional contexts that surrounded the filmic text. As Thomas Schatz argues, the structure of the system created 'a melding of institutional forces.'⁸ Using industrial documents, his work provides detailed accounts of each studio, as well as an overview of the studio system at large to illustrate the collaborative nature of filmmaking in this period. As he argues, films were not the result of any one creative practitioner, but successful formulations based on the delicate balance of power and industrial forces. A similar argument is proposed by Tino Balio, who examines multiple aspects of the filmmaking and film exhibition system as it matured during the Depression era. In an effort to streamline production, each of the studios featured a strict division of labour and systematic methods of production. As Balio argues, 'like modern business enterprises, Hollywood had organized all phases of production process in a rational manner, from story acquisition to editing.'⁹ The result of this structure was the development of clear

production formulas and modes of production. However, it is important to note that despite the consolidation of corporate power and systemized production, the Hollywood studio era was a period marked by immense change, technologically, legislatively and socially.

In 1928 the film industry was transformed. As Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson note in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985), the innovation of synchronized-sound films showed how the factors of novelty, and economy, encouraged the industry to make major adjustments in its mode of production.¹⁰ New roles were created and the studios worked closely with publishers and theatrical producers to gather story material laden with dialogue.¹¹ However, the introduction of sound also ushered in new concerns over motion picture content. Works such as Matthew Bernstein's *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era* (2000) and Tom Pollard's *Sex and Violence: The Hollywood Censorship Wars* (2010) explore the history of film censorship in the United States, and analyses how censorship impacted on motion picture content. In 1930 the industry adopted a code of standards to censor film content including the use of profanity, depiction of nudity, and criminality. Initially, oversight was poor but by July 1, 1934, the establishment of the Production Code Administration (PCA) saw censorship rigorously enforced. The legislation led to two distinct periods in the 1930s: the pre-code era in the first half, marked by the proliferation of films depicting sexual immorality, crime, and horror, and the latter half of the decade when the Hays office required all films to obtain a certificate of approval before being released. This gave the PCA a huge amount of power, with the office deciding which literary texts were suitable for adaptation, and dictating how they were produced.

Further legislation was imposed on the industry at the advent of the Second World War. In December 1941, America entered the war after two years of conflict in Europe. As Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black note in *Hollywood Goes to War: Patriotism, Movies and the Second World War from Ninotchka to Mrs Miniver* (2000), up until this time the government had pursued an isolationist policy. However, after the attack on Pearl Harbour, the Office of War Information (OWI) issued a set of guidelines to the film industry on how to portray the conflict and those who did not comply were refused distribution in foreign markets. This policy dictated how attitudes and opinions were formed or reinforced, with film content altered to serve a propagandist agenda.¹² My own research reveals that adaptations were not exempt from contributing to the OWI's agenda. In the early 1940s, Sherlock Holmes battled Nazis in *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (Rawlins, 1942), Tarzan saved Boy from German paratroopers in *Tarzan Triumphs* (Thiele, 1943), and Count Dracula stalked Britain during the Blitz in *Return of the Vampire* (Landers, 1943). Therefore, the impact of the Second World War affected both story selection and how literary properties were adapted for the screen.

Beyond the now seminal texts that provide broad investigations of the period, a number of studies exist that are split between examinations of popular genres and key production processes. Work on the Universal cycle of horror films is the most prolific of these, with studies by a number of historians such as David J. Skal, and Tom Weaver, Michael Brunas and John Brunas. Skal's *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (1993) mixes archival research with social analysis. Through his examination of horror films in the 1930s Skal argues that the archetypes depicted in *Dracula* (Browning, 1931), *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Mamoulian, 1932) and Tod Browning's *Freaks*

(Browning, 1932) were responses to the Great Depression that contain metaphors of class warfare. *Universal Horrors: The Studio's Classic Films, 1931-1946* (1980) by Tom Weaver, Michael Brunas and John Brunas applies a more focused approach on production processes, creating a critical survey that covers the classic chillers produced by Universal Studios from 1931 to 1946. Contained within the work are complete cast lists, production history, and commentary from the cast and crew that reveal, like Balio, how Universal's films were produced under rigid management structures with clearly defined production departments. Aligning creative specialisation with departments, such as story, casting and art direction, the structure of the studios helped define a common practice and develop consistent modes of production.

Works that I have drawn on to complement my analysis of these production departments include Beverly Heisner's *Hollywood Art: Art Direction in the Days of the Great Studios* (1990), and *A History of the Screenplay* (2013) by S. Price. Heisner's work was one of the first studies to trace the development of art direction, providing a history of production design during the Hollywood studio era, and exploring how the art director worked with large teams of craftsmen and designers to develop the visual identity of a film. In more recent years, similar studies have been instigated, including *Art Direction and Production Design* (2015) edited by Lucy Fischer, and the journal articles 'Cedric Gibbons: Architect of Hollywood's Golden Age' (2013) by Christina Wilson, and 'From Instruction to Consumption: Architecture and Design in Hollywood Movies of the 1930s' (2007) by Gabrielle Esperdy. However, Heisner's work remains the only thorough historical investigation of production design in the Hollywood studio era.

A comparable scarcity of information is available on screenwriting in this period. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, Janet Staiger provides an account of screenwriting in the first half of the twentieth-century, and shows how the creation of screenplays was subject to dominant modes of production. In the 1930s the consolidation of power and introduction of synchronised sound necessitated a more complex form of script, blending dialogue with continuity. As Staiger notes:

A written script which included descriptions of each shot and its adjacent shots provided a long-term cost advantage. It was cheaper to pay a few workers to prepare scripts and solve continuity problems at that stage than it was to let a whole crew of labourers work it out on set or by retakes later.¹³

By providing such information, the script served as a blueprint designed to monitor quality and manage costs. Such efficient production practices standardised the way screenplays were produced in this period. As S. Price notes in *A History of the Screenplay* (2013) ‘all subsequent studies of screenplay history need to take account of Staiger’s work as a starting point.’¹⁴ However, Price notes there is less consistency between approaches to screenwriting than might be expected.¹⁵ Despite the standardisation of approach, pervasive changes throughout the 1930s and 1940s resulted in inconsistencies. The screenwriting process was subject to the hierarchal structure of the studio, differing approaches between producers, and technological innovation. Therefore, whilst this study will provide an account of how a number of studios adapted British nineteenth-century texts in the Hollywood studio era, it is important to note that these accounts are not indicative of an all-encompassing model of this creative practice. Instead they will chart the dynamics and causalities of this complex production process in order to conceptualise adaptation practices in this period.

All of the existing work on the Hollywood studio era provides insightful analyses of the different departments involved in the production of films and are used to inform my analysis of key adaptations. The work of former film critics illustrates the importance of taking into account the structure of the industry and economic factors that impacted on film production. As André Bazin noted in 1957, ‘the American cinema is a classical art, but why not then admire in it what is most admirable, i.e. not only the talent of this or that filmmaker, but the genius of the system, the richness of its ever-vigorous tradition, and its fertility when it comes into contact with new elements.’¹⁶ Indeed, this was a core citation in the work of Thomas Schatz and formed the title of his work *The Genius of the System*. However, whilst the work of film historians provides clear examples of how wider contextual factors affected the industry, and consider to what extent Hollywood film production constituted a systematic enterprise, the role of adaptations in this period of film history is a relatively undeveloped area of analysis.

As Peter Lev notes in ‘How to Write Adaptation History’, very few critics have pursued a historically-situated investigation of adaptation practice. As a new area of study, current work ranges from highly detailed case studies, such as Renata Kobetts Miller’s ‘Nineteenth-century Theatrical Adaptations of Novels’ in the new *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies* (2017), to more broad investigations, such as *The History of British Literature on Film: 1895–2015* (2015) by Greg M.Colón Semenza and Bob Hasenfratz. In 2016, the Association of Adaptation Studies held a conference on ‘Adaptations and History’, which brought together diverse work on the field, including topics on the history of adaptations, adapting history itself, and adaptation as historical appropriation. However, it is notable that although this collection featured over thirty papers, I was the only contributor to offer a

revisionist archive-based analysis of a classic Hollywood text, when I looked at the MGM adaptation of Dicken's *David Copperfield* and the impact of original illustrations on production design.¹⁷

Those who have investigated adaptation in the studio era include Kyle Dawson Edwards, who examined adaptation as a corporate strategy in 'Brand-name Literature: Film Adaptation and Selznick International Pictures *Rebecca* (1940)' (2006), and Linda A. Robinson who investigates the shifting of time in MGM's *Pride and Prejudice* (Leonard, 1940). Leslie Kreiner Wilson's article 'Frances Marion, studio politics, film censorship, and the box office; or, The business of adapting *Dinner at Eight* at MGM, 1933' is equally informative, examining the complexity of converting Edna Ferber's play into a successful film adaptation. However, to date one of the only critics who have sought to provide a comprehensive analysis of adaptation practices in the Hollywood studio era is Guerric De Bona, whose work *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era* was published in 2010.

De Bona's work analyzes four films from the 1920s to the 1950s based on canonical British and American novels, blending archival research with his own interpretations of *David Copperfield* (Cukor, 1935), an unrealized adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *The Long Voyage Home* (Ford, 1940), and *The Red Badge of Courage* (Ford, 1951). Throughout his work, De Bona emphasizes the historical and cultural contexts as well as the political and economic filmmaking decisions made during the adaptation process, conclusively demonstrating the importance of historical context to adaptation studies. Though not widely read, Thomas Leitch contended, 'Guerric De Bona's new book makes a powerful case that film adaptations are shaped as much by contextual

forces as by their literary forbears. Once it is as widely read as it deserves to be, adaptation studies will never be the same.’¹⁸ What De Bona contributes to the field is a shift in focus, redirecting the conversation to the industrial choices, audience responses, and socio-cultural factors that contribute to the construction of the cinematic text.

De Bona’s work provides a clear methodological model for analyzing the political and economic filmmaking decisions made during the adaptation process and demonstrates how there is much to gain by examining the historical and cultural contexts of adaptive texts. His work on *David Copperfield* is particularly pertinent to my study looking at the legacy of Dickens’s common-man aura and the impact of Victorian illustration on the design of the film. Like De Bona I intend to take an interdisciplinary approach to adaptation criticism and film history. However, my work will differ in its approach. This thesis will provide an overview of the Hollywood Studio era through the examination of quantifiable data on adaptations made in this period, identifying which adaptations were made, discerning cultural trends in the industry, and comparing the approaches of a number of different studios. Furthermore, my selection of case studies is intended to examine multiple production departments of the studios, and multiple types of sources drawn on in the adaptation process, such as illustration, theatrical productions and former film adaptations. It is hoped that this methodology will give a broader picture of adaptation production in this period. However, to gain a clearer understanding of how this study differs from former academic enquiries, it is necessary to provide an outline of adaptation criticism and show how this historical investigation contributes to new debates in the field.

Adaptation Criticism

Adaptation studies as an academic field began to emerge from English departments in the 1950s. The first texts to focus exclusively on the process of adaptation was a series of articles by Lester Asheim, published in the *Hollywood Quarterly* in 1951, and *Novel into Film* (1957) by George Bluestone. Both of these early critics concentrated on canonical novels, undertaking comparative analyses of films and their sources and examining how signs move across systems. This medium-specific approach paid close attention to the problems of textual fidelity by isolating the formal capabilities, and limitations, of each medium. For example, Bluestone's analysis of *Wuthering Heights* (Wyler, 1939) charts the many omissions and additions made by the screenwriters, and proposes that alterations were made in order to 'force Emily Brontë's story into a conventional Hollywood mould.'¹⁹ He concludes that 'the collective unit responsible for making the film, however honorable in its attentions, seriously shifted the meaning of Emily Brontë's book.'²⁰ This form of investigation dominated adaptation studies in its early years. Like Bluestone, Morris Bèjà introduces his work *Film and Literature, an Introduction* (1979) with the aim to 'get a sense of all that they [literature and film] share, to be sure, but also of all the traits that they do not, so that one may grasp as well what is unique about each form.'²¹ What Bèjà sought was a conceptual framework for adaptation asking such questions as 'What relationship should a film have to the original source? Should it be faithful? Can it be?'²² A similar perspective was provided by Seymour Chatman in 'What Novels Can Do and Film Can't (and Vice Versa)' (1980), who took a semiotic approach to the analysis of narrative in film. Chatman argued, 'each medium has its own properties, for better and for worst usage, and intelligent film viewing and criticism, like intelligent reading, needs to understand and respect both the limitations these create and also the triumphs they invite.'²³ However, as later critics such

as Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Ray Cutchins noted, the medium-specific framework was problematic, placing fidelity as a marker of an adaptation's success.

Much of the initial work on adaptation studies was based on firmly established theoretical and conceptual bases. It was these writings that progressed the field, exposing the attitudes and prejudices about adaptation. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, more contextually focused works began to emerge. Dudley Andrew's work was perhaps the most influential of these, setting out three separate modes of adaptation; borrowing, intersecting, fidelity and transformation in order to describe the diverse strategies employed in adaptation practice.²⁴ This study expanded the boundaries of adaptation criticism and suggested a more contextually focused analysis of the adaptive text. Brian McFarlane's work in 1996 was similarly significant. His work highlighted that the adaptation is subject to a number of competing non-literary influences and championed the adaptive text as a work of art in its own right. By acknowledging the aspects of a film's cultural context, circumstances of production, and by measuring not only 'what is retained and how that is presented [but also] the extent and nature of inventions and departures from the original',²⁵ McFarlane sought to redefine fidelity as a quality that evokes 'the viewer's memory of the original text without doing violence to it.'²⁶ Both Andrew and McFarlane established clearly defined critical methodologies independent of Bluestone's heritage. Their work was historically informed, readdressing assumptions about adaptation practice and reinvigorating the field. However, it was the groundbreaking work of Robert Stam, who conceptualized film adaptation as a dialogic process that marked the most significant shift in the field.

In 2004 and 2005, the publication of Robert Stam's three-volume project on adaptation marked a transformation of the discipline, aligning adaptation discourse with post-structuralist modes of analysis. In his work Stam sought to readdress the fundamental questions of adaptation studies by positing the adaptation as an example of 'intertextual dialogism', referring to the 'infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of culture.'²⁷ Rather than viewing the adaptive text as simply a transformation of a prior text, Stam proposed that there was a matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated. This pioneering work provided the analytical framework for a diverse array of texts, opening up new varied ideological debates in the field, such as Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Julie Sander's *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006), *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (2007) edited by Deborah Cartmell, *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation* (2007) edited by James M. Welsh and Peter Lev, and Christine Geraghty's *Now A Major Motion Picture: Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (2008). Harnessing concepts from a number of fields, including post-structuralism, postmodernism, and gender studies, these critics explored the ubiquity of adaptations in all their various media incarnations and questioned the primacy of literature as a touchstone for cinema.

In the introduction of *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, Cartmell asserted that 'it's vital that literature and film be distinguished from literature on film,' and proposed that the time had come to 'free our notion of film adaptations from this dependency on literature so that adaptations are not derided as sycophantic, derivative and therefore inferior to their literary counterparts.'²⁸ In an attempt to escape the elitism that had constrained adaptation criticism, many academics, such as Linda Hutcheon, James Naremore and

Thomas Leitch, turned their attention to films that were based on other cultural forms. Furthermore, they argued that turning to such texts is becoming increasingly relevant, as ‘recent Hollywood adaptations have strayed far from what observers seem to have assumed are their God-given roots in classic and contemporary novels.’²⁹ In *Film Adaptation and its Discontents* (2007) Leitch chooses to examine ‘Postliterary’ adaptation, ‘movies based on originals that have neither the cachet of literature nor the armature of a single narrative plot,’³⁰ including investigations of pulp fiction, illustrated books, comic strips, video games, and true stories. He proposes that by turning to such works it is possible to shed a new light on adaptation and suggest an alternative free from the discourse surrounding fidelity.

Leitch used his work to apply a new adaptation theory attuned to intertextuality, revision, and rewriting. He argued that such a theory has the potential to be ‘the keystone of a new discipline of textual studies less ideologically driven, and therefore more powerful, than either contemporary literary or cultural studies.’³¹ By looking at a film's complex, variable, and fluid relationships with non-filmic narratives and images, his work highlighted that a clearer understanding of adaptation can be gained by examining the economic, political, technological, and personal conditions under which it was produced. In turning from the traditional comparative analysis of classic texts and incorporating popular forms of entertainment into the field, these critics made adaptation studies a much broader and more stimulating discourse. However, in the last decade studies have begun to emerge that apply a contextually focused examination of intertextuality to the investigation of classic texts, looking at how paratextual sources and former adaptations impacted on adaptations.

Adaptation Criticism; New Directions

Unlike the wider theoretical notions of intertextuality introduced by Stam in 2004, until recently the analysis of the way in which paratextual sources and former adaptations impact on adaptation practice was a limited area of the field. It features in three texts: in Kamilla Elliott's *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (2003), in which she examines the use of original illustration in the silent adaptations of *Vanity Fair* (Thackeray, 1848); a chapter of Leitch's work, which examines the history of adapting Sherlock Holmes throughout the twentieth-century; and Gueric De Bona's *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*. Julie Grossman argues in *Literature, Film and their Hideous Progeny* (2015), all adaptations reread and rewrite prior texts, thus forging 'new perspectives and variant ways of looking not simply at source texts as their origins but at the creative means by which adaptations come to be.'³² Grossman's central metaphor is borrowed from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and whilst it could be argued that this terminology is questionable, since the term 'hideous' implies that adaptations are unnatural and repellent, there are themes in Shelley's tale that can enlighten our understanding of the adaptation process. Frankenstein's creature, made of many separate parts, is reanimated, and reborn with new concerns. He therefore prompts us to ask questions about the fundamental issues of textual identities, and the notion of originality.

In *Cultural Afterlives and Screen Adaptations of Classic Literature* (2012) Hila Shachar describes the cultural legacy that arises out of multiple adaptations. Focusing on the adaptations of *Wuthering Heights* (Brontë, 1847), she argues that 'societies and cultures continually rework certain texts as a collective inheritance. [...] The intimacy with which many people respond to *Wuthering Heights* speaks for its presence not only in their

individual lives, but also, within culture.’³³ Quoting and Christine Geraghty, Shachar employs the metaphor of a palimpsest which accrues meaning over time through the adding and altering of a previous text or texts, a notion also explored by Linda Hutcheon in *Theory of Adaptation*. Like Stam’s notion of dialogic exchange, such an approach disrupts the traditional comparative analysis of adaptation criticism and allows the critic to examine multiple layers of meaning that accumulate over time. Many of the texts this study examines have long and fruitful ‘cultural afterlives’ that pre-date the Hollywood studio era. Is it possible to peel back the layers of their development and establish the influence of this legacy? What types of sources did adaptors draw on in this period and how did they impact on adaptation practices? In order to understand the implications of this intertextual borrowing, it is necessary to provide an overview of the cross-media and cross-cultural strategies employed in former adaptations.

Cross-Media Critiques

Despite an ongoing debate on the cultural value of film adaptations, as a commercial enterprise the film industry’s primary aim is to create popular and profitable films. It is therefore natural that filmmakers display an awareness of earlier forms of adaptation; sites where the literary text intersects with popular culture and much larger audiences. Iconic characters of fiction such as Frankenstein’s monster or Sherlock Holmes have spanned several types of media, from theatrical productions to political cartoons and advertisements. As Thomas Leitch argues, this history of adaptation allows adaptors to ‘draw their iconography not merely from their literary originals, but from a mixture of visual texts.’³⁴ By incorporating elements of previous adaptations, adaptors draw on the populist perception of classic texts to ensure the popularity of their own creations.

As an interdisciplinary study that examines cross overs between multiple cultural forms, this study will investigate a number of different media from both Britain and America, looking at illustration, theatre, radio and film, examining how they impact on latter adaptations. In the mid-nineteenth century the key form of visual text was the illustration. Appearing in newspapers, journals, magazines, and works of fiction, illustrations were at the forefront of the development of nineteenth-century popular culture, providing pictorial references from which to draw inspiration. The nineteenth-century saw the rise of serialized fiction with accompanying illustrations, such as *Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1839), *Vanity Fair*, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1865). Works that have dealt with the melding of these cultural forms include *Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators* (1970) by John Harvey, *Serials and their Readers, 1620-1914* (1993) edited by Robin Myers and Michael Harris, and *The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century* (2009) edited by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor. Brake and Demoor's work examines the role illustrations played in developing character and story in nineteenth-century serials. They propose that the development of visual language in the Victorian era had a profound effect on how readers approached texts, with authors and illustrators working together to shape the visual imagination of the reader, creating an interdisciplinary form that blurred the distinctions between high art and popular culture.

Many of these illustrated texts made the transition to the theatre almost as soon as they were published. Whilst the 1842 Literary Copyright Act protected authors from having their works illegally reproduced in print, this did not extend to cross-media adaptations, meaning that adaptations of popular novels were a common and highly lucrative feature of the stage

because they did not have to pay royalties to the original author.³⁵ Examining the theatrical adaptations of Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) Renata Kobbett Miller argues that, despite significantly altering their original sources, the proliferation of such adaptations maintained the popularity of these novels throughout the nineteenth-century.³⁶ Arguably, this continuing popularity enticed future adaptors; such theatrical productions created recognizable iconography, simplified narrative structure, and provided commercially viable strategies for adaptation.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, such strategies began their transition to the screen. As André Bazin notes, early pioneers of the cinema sought inspiration from popular forms of entertainment, such as the circus, music hall and provincial theatre, appropriating conventions such as slapstick comedy, melodrama and spectacle.³⁷ Adaptations were integral to the early days of cinema, with the proliferation of films based on literary, biblical, and historical texts. The dominant reading of this early history of the medium, taken from Urrichio and Pearson's *Reframing Culture: The Case of the Vitagraph Quality Films* (1993), is that cinema adapted works of legitimized culture to raise its reputation through the appropriation of artistic prestige. The difference in values between the literary text and the popular cinematic form served as a guarantee, a resource that lent cultural status to the new form. However, this view negates the popularity of the literary texts themselves and the history of their adaptation on stage. Many of the novels adapted in this period had a long and fruitful history in the theatre. Former adaptations served as a reliable model from which filmmakers could borrow popular conventions and practices. Rather than just cultural value,

the popularity of former adaptations indicated to filmmakers which novels would make successful adaptations, and how to profit from them.

These examples of cross-media strategies disrupt the traditional mode of comparative analysis and suggests that a consideration of the impact of both hybridity and history may foster a better understanding of adaptation practices. Throughout the history of Hollywood, the industry has borrowed conventions with impunity, from popular musicals on Broadway, to radio shows broadcast across the country.³⁸ However, the convergence of British nineteenth-century texts and the American film industry also requires a consideration of transnationality. Despite an expansive debate on American cultural hegemony, very few critics have chosen to explore how America draws on other cultures. Key critics that have explored this field include Mark Glancy, Jennifer Jeffers, Sarah Street and Tom Ryall. Based upon original research conducted in the film industry and government archives, Glancy's work *When Hollywood Loved Britain: The Hollywood British Film 1939-1945* (1999) examines American films that were set in Britain, or based on British literature or history. He proposes 'actual British films were seldom popular in the United States, but Hollywood found that an American perspective on British stories provided a winning box office combination.'³⁹ Glancy attributes the success and appeal of these stories to a 'shared Anglo-American heritage.' However, whilst Glancy covers the period I wish to explore, out of the nine films he closely examines, only three were adaptations and none were taken from nineteenth-century texts. Therefore, I intend to expand on Glancy's work by establishing what proportion of Hollywood features deployed British nineteenth-century texts as their primary source material, examining how they were made, and how they were received by audiences and critics.

Jennifer Jeffers differs from Glancy by focusing on contemporary films drawn from British source material. In *Britain Colonized: Hollywood Appropriation of British Literature* (2012), she argues that ‘British literature is colonized to cater to American values and Hollywood tastes in order to be marketed to a mainstream audience,’ and proposes that this leads to the wholesale eradication of British culture and history.⁴⁰ *Britain Colonized* focuses not on the formal discrepancies between text and film but rather on the cultural and political implications of these erasures, gaps, and re-inscriptions. In her examination of *The English Patient* (1996), Jeffers traces the success of the film and its several Academy Awards to director Anthony Minghella’s changes to the character of Almsy that ‘make the film fit comfortably into the historical, empire adventure genre.’⁴¹ However, critics such as Andrew Higson highlight that the contemporary film industry features complex interchanges between cultures and agency so that arguably it is no longer possible to assign a nationality to film.

Both the work of Sarah Street (2002) and Tom Ryall (2000) disrupt Jeffers’ argument by examining the impact British culture has had in America. Street’s work is a highly detailed study of the distribution and exhibition of British films in the USA, from the 1920s onwards, drawing parallels between the cycle of British films popular in the 1930s and Hollywood’s own productions. In this study, Street proposes that ‘the persistent patterns of chivalry in American culture points the way to understanding how US audiences appreciated films such as *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Korda, 1933), *Nell Gwyn* (Wilcox, 1934) and *The Four Feathers* (Korda, 1939).’⁴² She argues that British culture and texts which featured a ‘proletarian-aristocratic’ alliance could easily be related to contemporary American New

Deal politics. Charles II and Henry VIII are shown to be in league with the populace, downtrodden by their demanding, selfish and scheming courtiers (or wives), illustrating that despite their exalted status they can be as oppressed as any man. Similarly, *The Four Feathers* shows little conflict between the officers and soldiers, or between the empire and its subjects. Although these films portray distinctly British codes of chivalry and aristocratic values, they also foreground the notions of individualism and equality integral to America's democratic and libertarian heritage. Therefore, in the case of British film reception in America, British texts were not colonized for mainstream American audiences. Rather it was the inherent similarities between American and British culture that made certain texts popular on both sides of the Atlantic.

Taking a broader approach to this relationship, Ryall's work looks at aspects of the relationship between British and American cinema covering a period from the First World War until the 1960s. Examining how British cinema has been closely intertwined with the history of the American film industry, Ryall acknowledges that this has often been a one-sided relationship but provides examples of how Britain has had an impact on the American industry. Such examples include actors and directors that have become integral to the history of American film, and British literature and history that has provided a rich source of subject matter. Looking at the history of Shakespearean adaptation, he proposes that early films by Vitagraph used the bard for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was cultural capital, such adaptations gave the cinema a much-needed air of respectability and legitimacy, and secondly there were the added economic factors of availability and popularity, such adaptations would be suitable for both British and American markets, and all the plays were freely available in the public domain. Therefore, though broad, Ryall provides clear

examples of how the American film industry adopted aspects of British culture and the motivations behind these appropriations.

In 2013, Glancy published a second text that dealt with the intersection of American and British cinema. *Hollywood and the Americanization of Britain* uncovers a ‘hidden history’ of the consumption of American films in Britain. Examining taste patterns of British audiences and providing case studies of films that were popular, Glancy proposes that the success of Hollywood films in Britain is not linked to their American origins. Rather it was those films that transcended national or cultural barriers, and demonstrated the medium’s capacity for spectacle and fantasy, which appealed to audiences. Therefore, although Glancy’s work examines American films and British audiences, his work illustrates the complexity of the transatlantic relationship, and furthers the concept that these two cultures interact and at times merge.

Whilst these key texts give valuable insights into the interaction between American and British culture, in the case of adaptation each seems to suggest that defining cultural texts by their origins is both reductive and does little justice to the complexity of the relationship between Britain and America. With the exception of Jeffers, each critic highlights that Britain and America have a shared cultural heritage, and it is connection between these cultures that maintains the continued appeal of certain cultural texts. Many of the texts this thesis will examine were popular on both sides of the Atlantic, blurring the boundaries of culture. Dickens toured America in the 1860s gaining celebrity status and solidifying his position as a nineteenth-century Anglo American classic. As Guerric De Bona notes, the author ‘had an almost folkloric appeal in America.’⁴³ Arguably, it was not his Britishness

that made him popular, but his ability to speak to a wide range of the social strata, from the ‘hunter of the buffalo in the wilds,’⁴⁴ to a member of the Boston literati. Therefore, this thesis does not intend to provide an in-depth cross-cultural analysis. Instead it will provide a historical exploration of the adaptation process in the Hollywood studio era, looking at the interaction between different textual forms.

Conclusion

Learning from the work of several critics such as Kamilla Elliott, Julie Grossman, and Hila Shachar, who introduced the concept of a palimpsest, a central thread that will run throughout this thesis is the examination of intertextuality as a mode of industrial practice. Throughout I will question how filmmakers in the Hollywood studio era drew on the work of former adapters, and how this allows us to review interdisciplinary exchanges across decades, genres and nations. This study proposes that a detailed analysis of textual histories and the way in which popular texts are recycled across multiple cultural forms, will reveal how adaptation operates in the wider context of cultural practice. Therefore, rather than undertaking comparative analyses of films and their source texts, this thesis will employ a historical investigation of the industrial process of adaptation based on archival research, looking at a range of archival materials from stage and screen to build a picture of the adaptation process throughout the nineteenth and twentieth-century.

As the work of former adaptation critics suggest, a study that seeks to give a comprehensive account of adaptation practice would contribute to a new and emerging area of adaptation studies. Most adaptation critics lament the rivalries between literature and film, and many

are now calling for a historically-situated investigation of adaptation practice. Similarly, in film history, film production during the Hollywood studio era has been presented as one of the most visible cultural industries in the world, but few works exist that examine how this industry drew on other cultural forms. Therefore, the central aim of this thesis is to provide a historically-situated investigation of adaptation practice that takes into account the myriad of cultural sources drawn upon during the adaptation process. As Peter Lev states in ‘The Future of Adaptation Studies’ (2007), ‘I believe one important direction for the future is greater hybridity, [...] films are often based on multiple works, visual as well as textual.’⁴⁵ In response to this initiative, this thesis intends to look at the interaction between multiple adaptive forms, arguing that to adapt is to recycle, disseminating texts and their values into ever widening circles of the cultural sphere.

In what follows I hope to make new connections and new conclusions about the cultural dynamics of adaptation in a period of high capitalism. However, before introducing my first chapter I wish to describe some of the methodological issues which this thesis navigates and indicate the range of sources that I have drawn upon for this analysis. Therefore, the next section will outline my methodology and lay out in simplified form the structure of the whole thesis.

Notes for Introduction

¹ Lev, “How to Write Adaptation History,” 661.

² Lev, “How to Write Adaptation History,” 662.

³ See Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

⁴ Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System*, 71.

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- ⁵ See *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States, Feature Films 1921-1930*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999; *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States, Feature Films 1931-1940*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999; *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States, Feature Films 1941-1950*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.
- ⁶ Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 5.
- ⁷ Sarris, *The American Cinema*, 37.
- ⁸ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 6.
- ⁹ Balio, *Grand Design*, 10.
- ¹⁰ Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 245.
- ¹¹ See Cartmell, Deborah. *Adaptations in the Sound Era*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
- ¹² Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 182.
- ¹³ Staiger, *A Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 227.
- ¹⁴ Price, *A History of the Screenplay*, 6.
- ¹⁵ Price, *A History of Screenwriting*, 8.
- ¹⁶ Bazin, "Les Politiques des Auteurs," 258.
- ¹⁷ Chalk, Penny. "Animating 'Phiz': An examination of the use of Victorian illustrations in MGM's *David Copperfield* (1935)." Paper presented at the Association of Adaptation Studies, Oxford, 2016.
- ¹⁸ "Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era," University of Illinois Press, last modified January 30, 2018, <https://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/75zdw6qd9780252035418.html>
- ¹⁹ Bluestone, *Novel into Film*, 99.
- ²⁰ Bluestone, *Novel into Film*, 103.
- ²¹ Beja, *Film and Literature, an Introduction*, xi.
- ²² Beja, *Film and Literature, an Introduction*, 81.
- ²³ Chatman, "What Novels can Do and Film Can't (And Vice Versa)," 140.
- ²⁴ Andrews, "Adaptation," 98.
- ²⁵ McFarlane, *Novel to Film*, 163.
- ²⁶ McFarlane, *Novel to Film*, 21.
- ²⁷ Stam, "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation," 27.
- ²⁸ Cartmell, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 1-2.
- ²⁹ Cartmell, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 257.
- ³⁰ Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 258.
- ³¹ Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 19-20.
- ³² Grossman, *Literature, Film and their Hideous Progeny*, 1.
- ³³ Shachar, *Cultural Afterlives and Screen Adaptations of Classic Literature*, 1
- ³⁴ Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 208.
- ³⁵ Laird, *The Art of Adapting Victorian Literature, 1848-1920*. 52.
- ³⁶ Miller, "Nineteenth-century Theatrical Adaptations," 67.
- ³⁷ Bazin, *What is Cinema, Vol 1*, 66.
- ³⁸ See Richards, Jeffrey. *Cinema and Radio in Britain and America, 1920-60*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.
- ³⁹ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 4.
- ⁴⁰ Jeffers, *Britain Colonized*, 5.

⁴¹ Jeffers, *Britain Colonized*, 115.

⁴² Street, *Transatlantic Crossings*, 63.

⁴³ De Bona, *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*, 38.

⁴⁴ "A Letter to Charles Dickens Esq," *New World*, January 6, 1844.

⁴⁵ Lev, "The Future of Adaptation Studies," 335.

APPROACHES, ARCHIVES AND STRUCTURE

The literature review provided in the Introduction of this thesis examined the findings of both film historians and adaptation critics and charted how each discipline developed. In this next section I wish to explore the methodological approaches of these fields in order to establish the research methods and structure that will be employed in this study. Taking into account the drive for more contextualized approaches to adaptation studies, methodological approaches will be taken from the work of ‘new film history,’ blending the analysis of archival evidence with close textual analysis of texts. This chapter then will provide a description of the evidence collected for this study, reporting on the archives visited, and recounting the collection and organization of data from the *American Film Institute’s Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*. Finally this chapter will outline the structure of the study, and provide brief descriptions of each of the case studies I intend to undertake.

From the survey of current literature, it is clear that an interdisciplinary methodological approach to adaptation is required to take into account the complexity of adaptive texts. There are a range of methodological approaches that can be applied to the study of adaptations split between textual analysis of formal qualities and wider examinations of contextual factors, however I suggest that there is a need to combine both in order to establish the range of determinants affecting the film text. Adaptation criticism’s precarious position between literary and film studies has resulted in successive waves of

methodological self-examination, yet a contextually focused examination of the discipline remains side-lined. As Deborah Cartmell proposes:

where information about a given adaptation's industrial, economic, legal or reception contexts is incorporated into academic analysis, it is frequently introduced as a preliminary framing device to set up the ensuing textual analysis, rather than being presented as constituting a viable methodological alternative.¹

The incorporation of a contextualized approach to adaptations constitutes a widening of the frame, making possible a consideration of textual afterlives and how these impact on future adaptations.

In the introduction to *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation*, Cartmell outlines how a contextualised approach to adaptation studies can be used to map the interconnections between multiple areas of cultural studies. She suggests that a consideration of social and economic factors can be used to illuminate the industrial conditions for the creation of an adaptation, influences of contextual issues on textual form, and the reasons for textual afterlives beyond the cultural resonance of specific narratives.² She argues that such areas of analysis would connect adaptation criticism to energetic debates in cultural studies, media studies, book history, and media history disciplines. A similar argument is posited by Anne-Marie Scholz in *From Fidelity to History: Film Adaptations as Cultural Events in the Twentieth Century* (2013), who argues for a historically informed approach to American popular culture that reconfigures the classically defined adaptation phenomenon. Whilst Scholz contends that adaptation qualifies as an example of intertextual dialogism, she argues that 'intertextual dynamics are material dynamics and therefore subject to controls and limits that cultures everywhere impose upon the texts that circulate within them.'³ Therefore the historian is required to demonstrate the significance of material concerns in adaptation

practice. Following the aims of these critics, I intend to examine material conditions that shaped the adaptive text in the Hollywood studio era and establish a historical precedent for the convergence of cultural forms. To meet these aims this study intends to work with existing film scholarship in order to create a more refined methodological model.

As James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper note in their introduction to *The New Film History* (2007), film history as an academic discipline has only gained momentum in the last thirty years, and up until the early 1980s there were just a handful of works split between opposing methodological approaches. In the early days of the discipline two paradigms arose, one focused on the history of film as an art form, such as Paul Rotha's *The Film Till Now* (1930), and the second looking at film as a mirror of social reality, such as Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947). Emerging primarily from an English Literature background, the aesthetic tradition of film history employed textual analysis, placed emphasis on the text's formal qualities and applied theoretical models to produce a reading of the text. In contrast to this, the reflectionist model incorporated the industrial and cultural contexts of film-making to form a cultural and social history. It was proposed that such an approach provided insight into the collective mindset of a mass audience, yet many criticized it for offering too simplistic a view on the complex relationship between film and the society that consumed it.

As has been shown through my survey of existing research, it is the latter approach of historical enquiry that my thesis will be chiefly concerned with, since adaptations studies traditionally privileges the textual and formal aspects of the literature/film relationship. Yet isolating a clear and concise methodology for moving forward with this work is complex,

since the field of film history continues to be contested. As James Chapman notes in *Film and History* (2013), ‘a methodological and ideological rift opened up quite early in the intellectual history of the fledgling young discipline.’⁴ This was due in part not just to the complexity of the cinematic form itself, but the multitude of approaches one can employ in the study of film. Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery’s foundation text *Film History: Theory and Practice* (1985) illustrated just how vast this field was and formed a guide to the historical enquiry of film, investigating the diverse spheres of film history. Part of a wider phenomenon labelled ‘New Film History,’ which encompassed the work of Borwell, Staiger, Thomson and Schatz explored my literature review, Allen and Gomery’s text was one of many scholarly works that sought to move beyond film history as the history of films, to consider how style and aesthetics were determined by economic, technological, and industrial factors.

However, Allen and Gomery’s text remained the only thorough historiographical and methodological study of the discipline, until the publication of *The New Film History* in 2007. This work attempted to break open the tight boundaries between areas of practice, and ‘place the film text in the nexus of a complex and dynamic set of relationships between the producers and the consumers.’⁵ Their approach highlights three key characteristics of New Film History. Firstly it has a ‘greater level of methodological sophistication.’⁶ This involves paying close attention to the cultural dynamics, and extending the historical analysis of films from their production to reception. The second feature was the importance of primary sources and the proposal that the ‘new film historian is comparable to an archaeologist who unearths new sources and materials.’⁷ Finally, the third feature was the recognition that films are cultural artefacts with their own formal characteristics and aesthetics. A new film

historian would be able to navigate the complexity of the cinematic form by analysing not just the narrative, but film style. The aim of this present study is to employ all three concerns of the ‘new film history’ to inform my approach to adaptation studies, developing a knowledge of the contextual factors at play in this period, seeking out previously unexamined archival evidence, and employing close textual analysis. Unlike the analysis of formal elements and aesthetics traditionally employed in adaptation studies, it is proposed that this method of approach will allow me to take into consideration the wider contextual factors of adaptation production, and gain a greater understanding of the cultural dynamics of the field.

The primacy of the archive that these critics advocate, alongside close textual analysis, answers much of what was missing from the two paradigms of film history. No longer was film seen as simply a ‘mirror on reality’, nor was it seen in purely abstract theoretical terms. Chapman’s *Film and History* champions this approach and proposes that applying such a methodology ensures that ‘film is understood as a complex cultural artefact whose form and content are the outcome of many processes – ideological, industrial, economic, technological, social, aesthetic – that shape the final product.’⁸ Foregrounding empirical evidence and archival accounts over interpretive models, such an approach adds material weight to the analysis of the filmic text and directs attention to the contexts of production.

Archives can provide untold riches to the film historian and thankfully, apart from the odd issue of penmanship, most are legible. One does not encounter issues of translating extinct languages or deciphering deteriorating parchments such as the historian of medieval history. However, the film archive does present problems of its own. Many of the papers which form

the basis of today's film archives include material relating to famous producers or directors that has been filtered to avoid issues of controversy. Many feature incomplete series of interdepartmental memos that require additional contextual information to tease out their meaning, and in the case of the film adaptation historian, sources often have to be sought from elsewhere, such as theatrical stills libraries or individual collections in libraries. As Sarah Street reminds us 'in order to tease out diverse relations and meanings, the film historian has to draw on a plethora of source material, often not directly concerned with the films in question.'⁹ Yet drawing on the breadth of archival material available can allow for a much larger picture of the adaptation process to emerge.

Material for this thesis has been gathered from a range of archives in both Britain and America. The most useful was the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles which holds studio production files, correspondence and censorship records. At this archive I was able to source research files for the film *David Copperfield*, draft screenplays for Universal's *Frankenstein*, and two key sources for an investigation of MGM's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; its censorship records, and the original script for its hallucinatory montage sequence. A visit was also made to New York where archives at the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts, and the New York Public Library holds stills of William Gillette's original stage adaptation of Sherlock Holmes, and the original script and prompt books. In the UK three further archives were consulted. The British library holds a script of Peggy Webling's adaptation of *Frankenstein* on which Universal's film was based. This allowed for a comparative analysis of Universal's own script and allowed me to debunk a number of assumptions that had been made about Webling's adaptation. The Reuben Library of the British Film Institute holds a draft script of *Jane Eyre*, and a number of press-books, fan-magazines and critical reviews

which were consulted for each of my chapters. Finally, the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection held at Portsmouth Public Library brings together books, photographs, objects, documents and memorabilia chronicling the life of Conan Doyle. Information gathered here pertained to the Arthur Conan Doyle estate and outlined a set of determinants that led to Universal's ownership of the rights to Sherlock Holmes stories in 1940.

These archives have allowed me to amass vital data on adaptation production processes and critical reception during the Hollywood studio era. Original scripts, casting and pre-production records are used in order to build a picture of how creative teams approached the task of adaptation. It is hoped that such sources will give an indication of how these films were made to cater to contemporary society and an already established readership. In order to consider the reception of these films I have analysed a number of sources, including audience surveys, film fan magazines and critical reviews. These sources should give an indication of what cultural value was assigned to these films, who assigned that value, and what contributed to their assessment. It is proposed that the juxtaposition of diverse sources will enable me to engage with the wider contextual factors that influence an adaptive text whilst teasing out the finer details of their production.

What hopefully will distinguish my work from others in the field will be my emphasis on the issue of style. A thread which runs right through my thesis is the desire to undertake both contextual and textual analysis. When looking at the literary texts, I will consider key themes, styles of narration and structure. When looking at cinematic texts, I intend to avoid plot paraphrasing by alluding to elements such as mise-en-scene, editing, lighting and composition within the frame. As an interpretive model, this approach is not without its

criticism. As V. F. Perkins states, ‘no intra-textual interpretation ever is or could be proof. More often it is a description of aspects of the film with suggested understandings of some of the ways they are patterned.’¹⁰ This suggests that interpretative readings are inherently subjective. However, by including detailed analysis it is possible to foreground the complexity of the cinematic form and explore different aspects of the relationship between textual detail and broader conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, each close textual analysis will be supported by an exploration of archival evidence.

Structure

Chapter One

As a precursor to this thesis I collected production data on every British nineteenth-century texts adapted in America from 1930 to 1949, this appears as Appendix 1. This method of approach was chosen after gaining previous experience as a research assistant for Christine Etherington-Wright. As part of a larger project on British adaptations, my role as researcher was to collect information on every adaptation listed in *The British Film Catalogue, Volume 1, Fiction Film 1895-1994* (2000) by Dennis Gifford, and input basic data on the adaptation’s cast and crew into a table for review. By undertaking this research I learnt that the collection and organization of such data can reveal a great deal about patterns of production and changing tastes. In my own collection of data I hope to find equally revealing patterns, identifying the key trends in adaptations in this era and key creative practitioners.

Information for this study was taken from the *American Film Institute’s Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, a series of volumes which features basic information on every feature film produced in the United States. For this study three volumes were

consulted, which covered the years 1921 to 1930, 1931 to 1940 and 1941 to 1950. This amounts to approximately 12,000 pages of information that were meticulously surveyed to build a filmography of the period. For all credited films the source was listed as play, novel, short story, or other. However, in some cases an obvious source was not listed. Therefore, the films' synopses were also consulted in order to ascertain whether it was an adaptation. In the rare cases where I could not determine whether a film was an adaptation or an original I omitted them from the data.

Information collected from the catalogue included film title, original author, studio, producer, director, writer and major stars. Once this was gathered I added the date of original publication and attached loose generic categorizations to the original novels, such as canon, crime, science fiction, child and adventure. This was done in order to discern patterns in the selection of story material. I also supplemented the data with information on Academy Award nominations and wins, film budgets and profits. Whereas information on the Academy Awards was easy to locate, budgets and profits were far more difficult to substantiate leaving significant gaps in the data. A comprehensive analysis of the commercial success of these films was therefore unachievable. However, where available I have incorporated such figures into my analysis. All information was put into a table, allowing me to sort through the data and establish which directors worked on the most adaptations, who were the key producers, and which stories were chosen in different periods of the studio era.

As Sue Harper states: 'the historian ought to produce a geology of culture in a specific period and medium... it seemed to me that such a project, though broad in its implications,

had to be narrowly focused to have any credibility.’¹¹ Initially the limitation of British nineteenth-century texts was introduced in order to examine the effects of anglophilia on the industry as discussed by critics such as Mark Glancy, Jennifer Jeffers, Sarah Street and Tom Ryall. However, it was quickly ascertained that this made the study far too broad in its remit, and that in many cases British nineteenth-century texts were subject to multiple adaptations for stage and screen, not necessarily because of their Britishness, but their widespread popularity. Therefore, to create a more focused area of study, and safeguard against being biased in my selection, the limitation was maintained. Setting up this parameter allowed a number of questions to emerge, such as why novels from the latter half of the century were adapted, and whether there was a particular literary style from this period that was especially suitable for adaptation.

Of the 9715 films made in this period, eighty-six adaptations used a British nineteenth-century text as its source material, all of which are listed in the appendix of this thesis. This represents less than ten per cent of Hollywood’s output at this time. However, many of the films included in this data are still popular to this day such as *David Copperfield*, *Captains Courageous* (Fleming, 1937), *Wuthering Heights*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Werker, 1939), *Jane Eyre*, and many of Universal’s horror cycle. My data shows that Hollywood adapted a number of different genres of texts during different periods of the 1930s and 1940s. Key producers include MGM, who adapted several canonical texts into prestige pictures such as *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Conway, 1935) *A Christmas Carol* (Marin, 1938), *Pride and Prejudice* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Twentieth-Century Fox who turned a number of novels into star vehicles for their child actor Shirley Temple, such as *Wee Willie Winkie* (Ford, 1937), based on a story by Rudyard

Kipling, and *The Little Princess* (Lang, 1939). However, the most prolific adaptor in this period was Universal Studios who made genre films out of a number of Gothic texts at the beginning of the 1930s such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* (1897), before starting a highly lucrative franchise based on Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in the 1940s.

The findings of this research are dealt with at length in the first chapter of this thesis. However, whilst this data is used to build a detailed picture of an adaptation industry in the 1930s and 1940s, the selection of texts the studios worked with also raises a number of questions about what criteria the studios used in selecting literary properties for adaptation. Why were canonical texts adapted in the middle of this period, what made Gothic literature so lucrative for adaption at the beginning of the 1930s, and how did constraints such as censorship and war affect the way texts were adapted? Therefore, following a historical survey of the Hollywood studio era, the remaining chapters in this thesis demonstrate how different studios selected different texts to fulfil an array of cultural and commercial agendas.

Case Studies

From the outset of this thesis I planned to incorporate individual chapters based upon specific texts into my analysis of the period. In contrast to broad surveys of genres and periods such as Schatz' *The Genius of the System*, and Elliott's *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* the use of individual investigations and close textual analysis form a micro-history based on specific texts that is both instructive and informative. As stated in the introduction, contemporary adaptation critics criticize the use of such studies since the traditional

comparative analysis of classic texts places literature and film in competition. However, my analyses will be primarily focused on paratextual sources and former adaptations and thereby avoid the rivalry of value judgments placed on the literary text. Furthermore, since these chapters are framed by the broad historical survey of the industry from which they are drawn, I have given them the necessary contextual backing missing from former individual enquiries. This will allow me to map out the similarities and differences of approaches between studios, genres and time whilst giving an in-depth analysis of key production processes.

From the survey five chapters were selected based on Universal's *Frankenstein*, MGM's *David Copperfield*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* produced twice in this period, the adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, and *Jane Eyre* (Stevenson, 1943). These investigations encompass a number of different production practices at various studios, such as screenwriting, production design, and cinematography. Additionally, they represent key trends in the data, from the proliferation of the horror film in the pre-code era, to the development of the prestige picture in the aftermath of conservative criticism. Together these diverse histories will allow me to build a more detailed picture of adaptation practices in the period and investigate how former adaptations impacted on the filmic text.

Chapter Two

One of the most prolific trends uncovered by the data on adaptations made in the Hollywood studio era is the horror cycle, therefore the intention of the first case study is to examine the screenwriting process of one of the most iconic horror films made in the Hollywood studio era, Universal's *Frankenstein*. In this chapter I will investigate the film's sources of

narrative structure, and examine the changes made during its development. Primary sources used include the scripts of *Presumption; or the fate of Frankenstein* (1823) by Richard Brinsley Peake, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1930) by Peggy Webling, and screenplay drafts by John L. Balderston, and Robert Florey. Beginning with a brief history of the novel's first adaptations on stage, this examination will investigate how nineteenth-century adaptations of Shelley's novel simplified the complexity of *Frankenstein's* original structure and thematic ambiguity, opening it up to a number of meanings, interpretations and cultural applications.

By providing a comparative analysis of each of the scripts of Universal's *Frankenstein*, as well as former theatrical adaptations, this chapter has two key aims. Firstly, it aims to investigate the relationship adaptations have to former readings and interpretations. Such an approach will allow me to chart the evolution of the story and reveal that each screenplay or script was hugely influenced by its predecessors. Secondly as a genre film, this chapter will help me begin to build a picture of the cultural hierarchies in operation in Hollywood during this period. Together these objectives will demonstrate that a comparative approach to script analysis fosters a better understanding of adaptation as an industrial process, and establish the permeability of adaptations as they interplay with a series of past interpretations and readings.

Chapter Three

The second case study presented in this thesis will be an examination of the prestige picture *David Copperfield*, which sought to appropriate the cultural value of its source text by incorporating original illustrations into its production design. As the data presented in my

survey of the industry reveals, *David Copperfield* existed at the nexus of change. Whereas pre-code films such as *Frankenstein* were designed to shock and entertain, by the mid-1930s, the industry began to shift its aim towards the replication of cultural prestige in an attempt to quell growing conservative criticism. Part of a wider trend known as the prestige picture, *David Copperfield* was one of the first British nineteenth-century novels adapted in the mid to late 1930s that was used to bolster a film studio's perceived artistic integrity.

Employing archival research alongside close textual analyses of key scenes, this chapter will investigate how filmmakers used original illustrations to build the film's narrative structure, and as an inspiration for production design and casting. The chapter will then move on to a consideration of critical reviews and the development of educational study guides. In this chapter I will question how the filmmaker's insistence on matching characters and settings to original illustrations contributed to the film's sense of authenticity, leading critics and educators to promote the film as a superior text.

Chapter Four

Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was adapted twice during the studio era, by Paramount in 1932, and by MGM a decade later. As this chapter will reveal, whereas Paramount used Stevenson's text as a vehicle for showcasing technological innovations in camerawork and overtly sexual themes in the pre-code era, MGM sought to capitalise on the original text's literary prestige by transforming the story into a psychological drama. Both films expose their respective studio's house style, yet their differences may also reveal how the industry had transformed both technologically and politically during a period many consider consistent.

Using censorship records and production files, the aim of this chapter is to expand conventional analyses of adaptations to highlight how technical advances and ancillary institutions impacted on the adaptation process. Comparing two interpretations of the same text, these films will be used as a cultural barometer, examining how anxieties may have altered and shifted over the course of a decade, and how these might manifest in the films themselves.

Chapter Five

The fourth case study of this thesis will provide an examination of Sherlock Holmes adaptations, considering how the industry turned to more popular themes at the end of the 1930s through the selection of texts that had a long history of adaptation. As this chapter will demonstrate, Sherlock Holmes' texts provides fertile ground for the analysis of multiple modes of adaptation because of the frequency and diversity of its adaptation. Arguably this diversity may only be made possible by having a firmly established set of visual conventions. The aim of this investigation is therefore to present a history of the image of Sherlock Holmes and examine how his iconography was appropriated to serve a contemporary agenda in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Whereas the former chapters of this thesis provide in-depth analyses of how Hollywood filmmakers created hybrid versions of literary source texts by drawing on extradiegetic sources, this chapter aims to build a more coherent picture of the textual evolution a text undergoes as it is continually recycled. Films based on the tales of Sherlock Holmes are rooted in core iconography yet are able to be reconstituted with remarkable flexibility.

Through this analysis I seek to question how visual signs become visual conventions and establish whether it is popular conventions that make texts malleable.

Chapter Six

The last chapter of this thesis investigates the production of *Jane Eyre* in the mid-1940s. In the dataset, *Jane Eyre* occupies a unique position. Produced independently by David O. Selznick who instigated the film's pre-production and scripting, the project was sold to Twentieth-Century Fox as a package before filming began. In this chapter, I want to question whether this change in management affected issues of agency. *Jane Eyre* was produced as a radio dramatization by John Houseman and Orson Welles five years before the film's release. Through this case study I want to explore their contribution to the latter adaptation and question whether the struggle for creative autonomy affected production.

Whereas former chapters look at films created within rigid management structures, through this examination I intend to problematize this approach. *Jane Eyre* was both part of this system but was conceived outside it. It is therefore at variance with the dominant view of film production in the Hollywood studio era. Houseman and Welles were both known for their outspoken political views. By situating *Jane Eyre* in their body of work, this chapter will question the relationship between adaptation, authorship, and the wider cultural landscape.

Conclusion

It is hoped that applying a historical methodology to the study of adaptations will provide an original approach to adaptation studies, illuminating the structures and processes that

have determined the nature of the medium. By applying this methodology this work is intending to move beyond film history as just the history of films to show how adaptors took inspiration from a range of different sources. Furthermore, this study provides a contrast to the non-contextualised studies that exist in traditional adaptation criticism. This investigation will examine adaptation as an industrial practice, looking at the broader contextual factors that played out in this period, and providing in-depth analyses of individual production histories. Furthermore, it is hoped that such an approach will foreground original archival evidence and actively challenge existing perceptions about the Hollywood studio era.

In this study I aim to open up and extend existing parameters of both adaptation studies and historical investigations by providing a historically situated investigation of adaptation processes in the Hollywood studio era. Focusing on adaptations made from British nineteenth-century texts, I want to investigate how and why the industry produced adaptations in this era, assess how different aspects of the production process left their mark on the text, and question how the use of extradiegetic sources impacted on that process. In what follows I wish to create a space for reconsidering Hollywood's relationship to other cultural forms, investigating whether the methods employed in adaptation had any wider implications for the industry. Former accounts of the era suggest that the structure of the industry during this period led to largely homogenous form of artistic expression. Yet through a study of adaptations it may be possible to establish how the industry was intrinsically linked to the wider cultural landscape of 1930s and 1940s America, borrowing and appropriating conventions from multiple sources to advance the medium.

Do the adaptation practices employed in this period coincide with what we already know about the era? How did wider industrial determinants affect the selection and production of adaptive texts? Using archival material, I intend to examine films that express the richness and complexity of one of the most influential periods of film history, raising issues surrounding agency, authenticity and cultural value. Although ambitious in scope, this study does not aim to be exhaustive or all-encompassing: the study of any historical period can never include everything. Yet what I do want to do is offer a re-evaluation of adaptation practices in this period which will allow new ideas to be explored. Furthermore, it is hoped that together with the filmography created for the study, this research will provide a springboard for further investigations of these complex fields.

Notes for Approaches, Archives and Structure

¹ Cartmell, *A Companion to Literature, Film and Adaptation*, 128.

² Cartmell, *A Companion to Literature, Film and Adaptation*, 128.

³ Scholz, *From Fidelity to History*, 3.

⁴ Chapman, *Film and History*, 2-3.

⁵ Chapman, Glancy & Harper, *The New Film History*, 7.

⁶ Chapman, Glancy & Harper, *The New Film History*, 7.

⁷ Chapman, Glancy & Harper, *The New Film History*, 7.

⁸ Chapman, *Film and History*, 30

⁹ Street, *British Cinema in Documents*, 2.

¹⁰ Perkins, 'Must we say what they mean? Film criticism and interpretation', 4.

¹¹ Harper, *Picturing the Past*, 1.

CHAPTER ONE:

Survey of the Hollywood Studio System and Adaptation from 1930-1949

In order to understand the scope of Hollywood adaptations of British literary works, a database was compiled to include production data on adaptations made between 1930 to 1949. This chapter uses this data to explore how the structure of the industry, technological advances and a changing cultural landscape affected both story selection and modes of adaptation from 1930-1949. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the combination of historical enquiry and adaptation criticism is a new and underdeveloped method of study. Successive waves of methodological self-examination and detailed textual analyses have meant that adaptation studies are a site of rigorous theoretical debate, but very little is known about the creative process of adapting literary texts in any distinct historical period. In response to this gap in existing research, this chapter uses statistical data and qualitative analysis to build an overview of adaptation practices in the 1930s and 1940s, examining the processes by which industrial forces assumed, revised and projected literary sources for broad consumption into the commercial marketplace. Data collected for this chapter covers a period which saw some of the greatest changes the film industry had ever seen. This chapter discusses how these changes affected the production of adaptations, examining how commercial viability, attitudes to the industry, and changing tastes prompted the studios to alter the selection of source material and the way they adapted texts for a mass market.

Very little is known about the criteria the studios used in selecting literary properties for adaptation, or why different types of texts were adapted at different times. The 1930s and 1940s featured vast technological advances, changing social attitudes, a World War, and

one of the greatest economic recessions of modern history. Through an investigation of British nineteenth-century texts adapted in this period, this chapter seeks to examine how these issues impacted on story selection, and question whether the practices employed in the adaptation of literary texts corresponded with wider industrial trends. Key patterns that I will explore include the proliferation of controversial films in the pre-code era, the move towards a more 'clean' screen in the mid-1930s, and the development of war propaganda in the 1940s.

The primary source material used for this chapter is data compiled from the *American Film Institute's Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, covering every film produced by the American film industry which used a British nineteenth-century text as its source between 1930 and 1949 (see Appendix 1). This includes a range of information on adaptation production in the period, detailing the work of individual studios, source texts, and authors, as well as key production personnel such as producer, director, screenwriters, and stars. This information will be referred to throughout every stage of this thesis. However, the intention of this first chapter is to undertake an in-depth analysis of the data, detailing which studios were producing adaptations of nineteenth-century texts, and who were involved in their production. I shall then be able to assess some of the issues affecting adaptation practices in the period and discern key patterns of production. Though broad in its remit, this chapter aims to provide an overview of adaptation practices in the Hollywood studio era, and thus create the contextual underpinning for further investigations of the period.

Pre-Code Hollywood and the adaptation of Gothic Literature

As Peter Lev states in 'How to Write Adaptation History,' during the Hollywood studio era each of the eight largest studios aspired to release approximately fifty film per year. This created an urgent and continuing need for story material.¹ However the data collected for this study reveals considerable variations in production output of adaptations based on British nineteenth-century texts. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the wider contextual issues affecting film production in this period. In the 1930s the Great Depression affected both the structure of the industry and the stories it chose to produce. In this early and unstable stage of the studio era, filmmakers fought against the economic recession with controversy; defying traditional values in an attempt to attract depleting audiences. As Thomas Doherty argues in *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema* (1999), during a time of social and economic instability, fast-talking and sexually-liberated contemporary films found popularity with a society disillusioned with the American way of life. Known as the pre-code era, the early 1930s was a period when censorship was lax and the studios took advantage of it. They flouted regulations on the depiction of sex, violence and morality in order to lure audiences that had a reduced amount of discretionary income.² With huge advances in technology and visual style, the studios showcased sexual liberation with films such as *Unashamed* (Beaumont, 1932), *Blonde Venus* (Von Sternberg, 1932) and *She Done Him Wrong* (Sherman, 1933), and challenged authority by depicting an organized crime subculture in *Little Caesar* (LeRoy, 1931), *The Public Enemy* (Wellman, 1931), and *Scarface* (Hawks, 1932). The popularity of these films was due to their ability to engage with feelings of social discontent, encouraging audiences to question the status quo. In such conditions conservative tales of Victorian Britain failed to fulfil an important cultural function, and accordingly, it is evident from the data that there

was a relative scarcity of such adaptations in this period.

As shown in Appendix 1, there were a range of studios producing adaptations in the first years of the 1930s but production was significantly lower than later in the decade. At the smaller studios, an adaptation of Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) was produced at Liberty Productions under the title *Ex-Flame* (Halperin, 1930), Metropolitan Studios made *Alice in Wonderland* (Pollard, 1931), and Monogram Pictures, the largest on Poverty Row made *Oliver Twist* (Cowen, 1933) and *Black Beauty* (Rosen, 1933). However, at a time of severe economic recession, many of these studios appear just once in the data having been bought out by larger studios or choosing to specialise in other areas. For example, filmmaker James A. FitzPatrick formed his company FitzPatrick Pictures in 1925, and whilst he had released a series of shorts in the 1920s entitled "Great American Authors", he appears to have made just one attempt at adapting a British nineteenth-century text with *The Lady of the Lake* (1930) based on Sir Walter Scott's poem. After this he and his studio limited themselves to documentary travelogues with *Travel Talks* newsreels.³ Similarly, Monogram Pictures produced a number of films at the beginning of the decade concentrating on low-budget features and westerns. However, unable to survive on its own, it was one of six other Poverty Row studios that merged in 1935 to form Republic Pictures.

When looking to the major studios, Appendix 1 shows that, despite having more economic strength, few made adaptations from British nineteenth-century texts in this early period. Paramount made five films based on British nineteenth-century novels in the first half of the decade, *Rich Man's Folly* (Cromwell, 1931) based on Charles Dickens' *Dombey and Son* (1848), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Island of Lost Souls* (Kenton, 1932) *Alice in*

Wonderland (McLeod, 1933) and *Peter Ibbetson* (Hathaway, 1935). However, the studio had varying degrees of success with these adaptations. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was a hit with both audiences and critics, with the star Frederic March winning the Oscar for best actor, and the film receiving nominations for cinematography and screenplay. However, despite an all-star cast including W. C. Fields, Edna May Oliver, Cary Grant and Gary Cooper, *Alice in Wonderland* was such a flop that no live-action adaptation was again attempted until 1972. This suggests that many of the studios found it difficult in that economic climate to convert nineteenth-century literature into successful adaptations.

Despite this there was one studio that successfully married nineteenth-century texts with the public appetite for dark, dangerous and distressing themes, spawning a whole new cycle of films. Between 1931 and 1936, Universal produced five films based on nineteenth-century Gothic literature amalgamating the literary pedigree of Gothic fiction with the potent themes of social and emotional discontent. These films were new and unnerving, drawing in large audiences who preferred the thrills of a fictional terror to the increasing anxieties of everyday life. The first of this cycle of pictures was *Dracula*, a story with brand name fame and notoriety thanks to its success on stage.

In the late 1920s Count Dracula toured the theatrical stages of both Britain and America in *Dracula, The Vampire Play* (1924) by Hamilton Deane. Universal purchased the rights to both the novel and Deane's stage adaptation in June 1930 for \$40,000.⁴ As was the case with most story departments in this era, the play was passed through a number of scenarists, including Fritz Stephani, Louis Stevens, Louis Bromfield and Dudley Murphy who each provided treatments and scripts of various lengths for consideration. According to the AFI

Catalog, it was Dudley Murphy's script that was selected, however it was edited by Garrett Fort who received sole screen credit.⁵ In many cases this method of creative collaboration worked effectively, with multiple writers and directors working together to develop dialogue, narrative structure and continuity. However, in the case of *Dracula*, the finished screenplay was disjointed and underdeveloped with a number of key plot points occurring off-screen. Critics such as Tom Weaver, Michael Brunas, and John Brunas suggest that the film's main problem was its faithfulness to the stage production, with director Tod Browning failing to use the full potential of the cinematic medium.⁶ But arguably it was the film's visual style that was its redeeming feature.

The distinct style of *Dracula* was primarily created by the film's cinematographer Karl Freund, a German Jewish filmmaker best known for his work on *Metropolis* (Lang, 1927). Freund was one of a number of German filmmakers under contract at Universal in the 1930s who had left Germany due to the rise of Nazism and constraints in UFA. The expressionistic style these filmmakers employed included strange and distorted perspectives in a film's set design, the use of high-contrast chiaroscuro lighting and experimental framing. This is especially obvious in the first reel of *Dracula*, which features the wilder gothic setting of Castle Dracula with its tall arched windows and the shadowy crypt of Carfax Abbey. When Renfield first meets Dracula at the turnpike, dressed as the coachman, the camera cuts sharply to an extreme close up of his face and the contrast of the white of his eyes in the darkness is at once startling and terrifying. These expressionistic techniques function to create a sense of mystery and doom, however it is important to note that to an audience in 1931 the novelty of this approach would have proved a significant attraction.

According to Bryan Senn, the making of *Dracula* was beset with competing creative visions between director Tod Browning and cinematographer Karl Freund.⁷ Yet despite these difficulties, the production was finished only six days over schedule, \$14,000 under budget, and outperformed almost everyone's expectations nearly doubling its investment with a gross of almost \$700,000.⁸ *Time* magazine labelled the film an 'exciting melodrama,'⁹

whereas *Variety* applauded its 'remarkably effective background of creepy atmosphere.'¹⁰ The first of a highly lucrative cycle of films, *Dracula's* unique visual style and tone provided the blueprint for future adaptations such as *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man* (Whale, 1933) and *The Raven* (Landers, 1935). After the release of *Dracula* Universal turned almost immediately to Mary Shelley's novel, seeking to replicate its success.

Year	Title	Producer	Director	Writer
1931	<i>Dracula</i>	Carl Laemmle Jr	Tod Browning	Garrett Fort
1931	<i>Frankenstein</i>	Carl Laemmle Jr	James Whale	Garrett Fort
1933	<i>The Invisible Man</i>	Carl Laemmle Jr	James Whale	R. C. Sheriff, Philip Wylie
1935	<i>Bride of Frankenstein</i>	Carl Laemmle Jr	James Whale	William Hurlbut
1935	<i>Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>	Edmund Grainger	Stuart Walker	John L. Balderston, Gladys Unger
1936	<i>Dracula's Daughter</i>	Carl Laemmle Jr	Lambert Hillyer	Garrett Fort, John L. Balderston
1939	<i>Son of Frankenstein</i>	Rowland V. Lee	Rowland V. Lee	Willis Cooper
1940	<i>The Invisible Man Returns</i>	Ken Goldsmith	Joe May	Curt Siodmak, Lester Cole
1942	<i>The Invisible Agent</i>	Frank Lloyd	Edwin L. Marin	Curt Siodmak
1944	<i>The Invisible Man's Revenge</i>	Howard Benedict	Ford Beebe	Bertram Milhouser

Table 1: Adaptations made of Gothic literature at Universal, 1930-1949

Table 1 exposes the elements of the horror cycle with the repetition of source texts and a number of key creative personnel. Names that occur multiple times include the producer Carl Laemmle Jr., director James Whale, and writers Garrett Fort and John L. Balderston. Similar to the crime and sex films that were popular with Depression era audiences, the pre-code horror film popularised by Universal in the early 1930s gave free reign to psychic turmoil and social disorientation. However, this formula dwindled when the Laemmle

family lost control of the studio in 1936 and only a few more adaptations appear on the survey including *The Son of Frankenstein* (Lee, 1939), *The Invisible Man Returns* (May, 1940) and *The Invisible Agent*. However, none of these sequels used the same filmmakers originally hired by Laemmle, or had the same success. This suggests that alterations to the production formula and a changing cultural landscape, which I will cover later in this chapter, caused the emerging horror genre to stagnate.

Adaptations as star vehicles

Whereas the analysis of Universal's horror cycle has shown that the studio selected story material to explore contemporary concerns, a further analysis of the data reveals an alternative pattern of selection employed by the other studios. In the early years of cinema, stars were not identified by name, but by the studio era, the actors held under contract were a studio's leading assets. Through them the studio garnered publicity, attracted loyal audiences, and reaped big profits. Therefore, the impact of star power on Hollywood's mode of adaptation requires consideration. The data shows a range of big names including, John Barrymore, Marlene Dietrich, Cary Grant and Laurence Olivier. In 1936 Warner Brothers

made *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (Curtiz, 1936), starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, one of only three adaptations the studio made from British nineteenth-century texts. United Artists adapted *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (Cromwell, 1936) with child star Freddie Bartholomew, and Twentieth-Century Fox made *Under Two Flags* (Lloyd, 1936) featuring the popular English actor Ronald Colman. Each bought their own unique qualities to the adaptation of literary texts.

Ronald Colman was a product of Hollywood's 'star system' whereby studios would select actors and create personas for them, putting an emphasis on the image rather than the acting of a performer. Studios held their stars under stringent contracts, dictating how they were to appear in public, covered up scandals, and in some cases invented new names, such as Cary Grant (born Archie Leach), Joan Crawford (born Lucille Fay LeSueur), and Judy Garland (Frances Ethel Gumm). However, in the case of Ronald Colman, and with the advent of sound, there was an additional asset the studio was able to capitalise on, 'his beautifully modulated and cultured voice.'¹¹ Ronald Colman's voice communicated the unique characteristics of the star and provided the clear identity markers of nationality and class. As Mark Glancy argues, 'while the leading American stars of the decade often embodied the traits of the 'common man', [...] Colman was uniquely well spoken. His characters had grace, dignity and a worldly charm.'¹²

As Hollywood's leading English actor, Colman was the star of five adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts produced in this period. In the data of Appendix 1, his name appears as the lead actor in *Raffles* (D'Abbadie D'Arrast, 1930), *A Tale of Two Cities* (Conway, 1935), *Under Two Flags*, *The Prisoner of Zenda* (Cromwell, 1937) and *The Light that*

Failed (Wellman, 1940). Twentieth-Century Fox capitalized on Colman's image by casting him in an adaptation of Ouida's novel *Under Two Flags* in 1936. The story combined the elements of adventure and melodrama perfectly suited to Colman's screen persona. Set in the exotic location of Algeria, the Foreign Legion becomes the proving ground of Victor's masculinity and honour, and whilst the story of Cigarette's unrequited love is tragic, Victor remains the perfect gentleman and hero of the story, joining up to protect his brother and sentenced to death because he dared to defend the honor of Lady Venetia. Frank Nugent praised Colman in his review, 'Sergeant Victor, that jaunty and romantic Englishman who speaks with the voice of Oxford and fights with the fist of Mars, is handsomely represented by Ronald Colman.'¹³ As one of the most popular embodiments of the British 'gentleman' onscreen, Colman's portrayal represented a model of refined masculinity. I would suggest that unique attributes of Colman steered Twentieth-Century Fox's selection of texts in the mid-1930s. *Under Two Flags* was specifically chosen to showcase his persona.

Following the success of *Under Two Flags*, Twentieth-Century Fox turned to a British nineteenth-century text again in the following year, adapting *Wee Willie Winkie* (1888) by Rudyard Kipling. This adaptation also centered on an exotic military outpost, but this time the studio's objective for adapting Kipling's story was to create a vehicle for one of the biggest stars of the age. Shirley Temple had found international fame at just six years old with the release of *Bright Eyes* (Butler, 1934), a feature film that had been specifically designed for her talents. In 1935, she was contracted by Twentieth-Century Fox to star in four films a year. Initially these films were made on small budgets but once Temple's popularity was established Twentieth-Century Fox's head Darrel F. Zanuck increased the budgets and production values of her films.

Wee Willie Winkie was the first of these larger productions, with John Ford hired as the film's director. Loosely based on a story by Rudyard Kipling, the screenwriters changed Temple's role of Percival Williams, the young son of Colonel Williams who saves Miss Allardyce from 'native' Indians, to Priscilla Williams, a young girl who moves to a remote military outpost in northern India to live with her stern Grandfather. As was the case for most of Temple's films, Priscilla soon wins the hearts of all the soldiers, her grandfather, and even the enemy Khoda Khan so that at the film's climax she is able to bring about the end of the war. *Wee Willie Winkie* attracted huge audiences in both America and Britain, with the *Kinematograph Weekly* in Britain labeling Shirley Temple as the 'most popular and consistent star' of 1937,¹⁴ and for four years in a row (1935–38) Temple was voted as the top box-office draw.¹⁵

After the success of *Wee Willie Winkie*, Twentieth-Century Fox continued to select and adapt stories for the young actress, such as *Heidi* (Dwan, 1937), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (Dwan, 1938) and *Just Around the Corner* (Cummings, 1938). In 1939 Zanuck secured the rights to the children's novel, *A Little Princess* (1905) by Frances Hodgson Burnett, believing it would be an ideal vehicle for Temple. With a budget of \$1.5 million, it was one of the most expensive films made with the child star, altered to make it relevant for both Temple's talents and contemporary concerns. Whilst the film maintains the novel's Victorian London setting, it uses the Second Boer War and the Siege of Mafeking as a backdrop to the action. Unlike the original novel, Sara Crewe is thus recast as an orphan of war at a time when Europe was at the brink of conflict. At the film's climax, Sara does not

inherit a fortune but finds her missing father in a hospital of wounded soldiers creating a rousing patriotic happy ending. According to *Variety*;

Transposition of the Frances Hodgson Burnett several-generation favorite, Sara Crewe, is accomplished most successfully. The fairy-tale story is still saccharine to the nth degree, but once the basic premise is established, it rolls along acceptably. And, while the story has been changed for screen purposes, the general line is close enough.¹⁶

A Little Princess (Lang, 1939) was a critical and commercial success with Temple's persona now at its peak. However, critic Graham Greene argued, 'the owners of a child star are like leaseholders—their property diminishes in value every year.'¹⁷ By the end of the 1930s Temple's popularity had begun to fade and ultimately the actress failed to make the transition to adulthood with her career intact.

In the case of Ronald Colman and Shirley Temple star power was the motivating factor behind the selection of adaptable texts at Twentieth-Century Fox. Rather than marrying available story material with contracted stars, stories were actively sought out and adapted to match the talents and qualities of a studio's bank of actors. This was an industry-wide practice as can be seen in the *Motion Picture Herald's* lists of story purchases. *The Light That Failed* (Kipling, 1891) was secured by Paramount in 1935 'for Gary Cooper,'¹⁸ *Heidi* (Spyri, 1881) was purchased 'as the next Shirley Temple picture' in November 1936,¹⁹ and *Lorna Doone* (Blackmore, 1869) was purchased by Goldwyn Productions 'for Merle Oberon, Frederic March and Herbert Marshall.'²⁰ The popularity of these stars offered the studios a measure of security, with the studios creating products for existing fan bases. In the mid-1930s the studios increasingly used this security to create big-budget features, instigating a production trend known as the 'prestige' picture that would dominate film production for the rest of the decade.

Prestige Pictures and Classic Literature

As Tino Balio notes in *Grand Design*, the ‘prestige picture’ was not a genre but a term used to describe a ‘big budget special based on a pre-sold property, often as not a “classic” and tailored for top stars.’²¹ With its huge roster of popular stars and a reputation as the leading exponent of high-quality films, MGM dominated this style of filmmaking in the 1930s, adapting a number of highly prestigious works of literature, such as Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (Brown, 1935), and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (Cukor, 1936) into prestige pictures. In order to create these lavish spectacles huge sums were spent on direction, production design, costuming and art direction. Thomas Schatz’s work provides a table of production costs for both *David Copperfield* and the contemporary crime thriller *Manhattan Melodrama* (1934) released in the same year. For the adaptation of *David Copperfield* the sets alone cost \$104,038, for *Manhattan Melodrama* they were just \$32,969.²² As the most complicated and costly type of film production, prestige films required a greater investment but when successful provided greater returns.

It is evident from the data collected for this thesis that the producer David O. Selznick was instrumental to the development of prestige pictures in the mid-1930s. His first venture into adapting a nineteenth-century novel was *Little Women* made at Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO). This film was perhaps the first sophisticated adaptation of a ‘classic’ novel made in this period and ‘one of the most important pictures ever produced by the studio, [...] driving most of the Hollywood companies into a mad scramble to acquire similar material.’²³ Following his move to MGM later that year, Selznick proposed an adaptation of Dickens’ famed novel *David Copperfield*. As Thomas Schatz notes, whilst the producer had control

over story selection, at this time the New York Office ‘was adamant in its opposition to literary adaptations, particularly highbrow period pieces.’²⁴ Selznick fought hard against this view, sending a memo to the sales and distribution executives in February 1934 stating ‘there is no question in my mind that the public has finally decided to accept the classics as motion picture fare.’²⁵ The executives were exasperated further by Selznick’s insistence that the film would not be a star vehicle for child star Jackie Cooper, but an ensemble piece with an unknown young actor in the title role. As a testament to Selznick’s status at the studio, production went ahead as planned in 1934.

As I shall explore in Chapter Three, from Selznick’s correspondence it is clear that the producer envisioned *David Copperfield* as an ambitious and costly film. In a memo sent to Arthur Loew, he asked for the vice-president’s reaction to filming the production in England, with director George Cukor and himself preparing the script in Hollywood and then casting and shooting it entirely in England.²⁶ He goes on to outline the economic benefits of such an undertaking, writing that ‘Mayer and Mannix share my belief that it should add hundreds of thousands of dollars to British Empire gross while still giving us a picture that would be as good for this country.’²⁷ Whilst the decision to film in England was scrapped after Cukor claimed that the cliffs of Malibu were ‘whiter and cliffier’ than the cliffs of Dover,²⁸ Selznick’s prediction on the film’s appeal was correct. Whilst I was unable to gather financial data on all the adaptations in the database, out of the ten prestige pictures I was able to find figures for, including *Treasure Island*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Pride and Prejudice*, *David Copperfield* was the most successful. Despite a budget of over a million dollars, the film had a domestic gross of \$1,512,000, a worldwide gross of \$1,348,000, earning a profit of \$686,000.²⁹

Year	<i>Film Title</i>	Author	Studio
1935	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	Charles Dickens	MGM
1935	<i>David Copperfield</i>	Charles Dickens	MGM
1935	<i>Peter Ibbetson</i>	George Du Maurier	Paramount
1935	<i>Becky Sharp</i>	William Thackeray	RKO
1935	<i>She</i>	H. Rider Haggard	RKO
1935	<i>Bride of Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	Universal
1935	<i>Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>	Charles Dickens	Universal

Table 2: Adaptations of British nineteenth-century literature produced in 1935

The years following the release of *David Copperfield* were the most prolific for producing adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts. In 1935 a further seven were produced including *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Peter Ibbetson* (Hathaway, 1935), and the industry's first full-length Technicolor, *Becky Sharp* (Mamoulian, 1935) based on William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (see Table 2).

The traditional explanation for the increase of prestige pictures in this period is the pressure placed on the industry in 1934 by the Legion of Decency and their 'Better Pictures Campaign' for a 'clean' screen.³⁰ Examining the effect films had on public opinion in 1937, Martin Quigley, editor of the *Motion Picture Herald* wrote:

That the motion picture has had a profound effect on world opinion as well as upon the public opinion of this nation is a fact of general acceptance. It may be disputed whether the effect has been great in the most important affairs of the day or upon the thoughts of genuine leaders, but it may not be successfully denied that the millions of the public whose attention is held hour after hour by the characters depicted and by the stories told upon the screen are given impressions which influence their thought and their action.³¹

Of particular concern was the role the cinema was playing in the lives of American children at a time when there were no age restrictions on film attendance. *Children, Cinema and Censorship: From Dracula to Dead End* (2005) by Sarah Smith charts the development of censorship and illustrates that the controversy surrounding children and the cinema was at its height in the 1930s. She states ‘at one extreme, moral watchdogs prophesized the doom of a generation corrupted by the influence of the silver screen. At the other, champions of the cinema declared its positive educational and social value to young people.’³² In a convergence of commercial and educational interests, American educators sought to incorporate films into the American school curriculum with the development of motion-picture appreciation guides. Originally developed by William Lewin, *Photoplay Studies* were a collection of volumes published alongside the release of popular adaptations that enabled students to gain a greater understanding of both the novel and film with suggested activities, discussions and research questions. Advocates of film education were consistent in suggesting that children, who had obtained some experience studying cinema in their schools, could and would make the ‘right’ choices in selecting their screen entertainment.

As I explored in ‘Edgar Dale’s Film Appreciation Program: An Early Education in Adaptation’ (2017), many of the adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts adapted in the 1930s had accompanying *Photoplay Studies* guides. This included *Treasure Island* (Fleming, 1934), *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Captains Courageous*, and *A Christmas Carol* giving an indication of the cultural value that was assigned to these texts. As Wurtzler writes, ‘pedagogical efforts surrounding the popular US film most often focused on adaptations of the generally agreed-upon canon of great literary works, like *Copperfield*.’³³ In the guide to *A Tale of Two Cities*, the novel is labelled as ‘one of the great

classics of our language' and as a further justification, under the heading 'The Appeal of the Novel' a number of famous critics and novelists are quoted praising the work including, George Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy, who labels Dickens as the 'greatest English novelist.'³⁴ The guide includes a section on the novel's suitability for adaptation, and at the end a number of essay questions are provided. These range from the more technical, such as 'Could you tell that the bridge of the Bastille was to fall within three inches of the countersunk camera?',³⁵ to broader questions of fidelity, such as 'Point out the where the film is particularly successful in capturing the spirit of the book.'³⁶ These questions are followed by suggested readings that include works such as *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge* (1845) by Alexander Dumas, Hilaire Belloc's *Highlights of the French Revolution* (1915) and *Ninety-Three* (1874) by Victor Hugo. Thus American school children were being taught to be discerning filmgoers, discerning readers and critically adroit.

According to Stuart Selby, the US film industry's primary trade organisation, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), provided partial financial support for these published materials to be used when teaching film appreciation during 1933 and 1934.³⁷ Such a partnership benefitted the industry since it provided a culturally valorised justification for film attendance in the immediate aftermath of widely publicised critiques. A literary source like Dickens' novel offered not only a recognisable narrative commodity that could provide the basis for a film, but also the novel's status offered MGM an opportunity to elevate the prestige of the studio through producing an adaptation. Therefore, the release of Hollywood adaptations of literary classics and the incorporation of film-going into the school curriculum represented a convergence of commercial and educational interests.

The 'Better Pictures' campaign instigated in the mid-1930s had a huge effect on the industry, leading to a conservative production trend that dominated the industry for the rest of the decade. In a review for *Trouble for Two* (Walker, 1936), published by *Time Magazine*, the trend for adapting nineteenth-century texts is commented on with the reviewer stating that 'browsing among the classics of nineteenth-century fiction has lately proved an inexpensive and richly rewarding occupation for Hollywood story departments.'³⁸ Some of the most critically and commercially successful films of the decade were prestige adaptations, including Warner Brother's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Furthermore, the trend also worked in the reverse. In a 1938 Gallup survey of twenty 'Best-Sellers and Classics,' five were British nineteenth-century novels and four were adapted for the screen.³⁹ This suggests that the production of adaptations in Hollywood had a significant bearing on popular reading tastes.

William Wyler's *Wuthering Heights* is perhaps the apex of adaptations made from British nineteenth-century texts in this period. The film received no less than eight Academy Award nominations, the highest amount of nominations any adaptation of a British nineteenth-century text received during this period. Produced by United Artists, the film starred Lawrence Olivier and Merle Oberon and drew together a crew that was the model of creative competence and intelligence available in the Hollywood during the late 1930s. Whereas George Bluestone lamented the film's lack of fidelity in 1957 and claimed that the filmmakers turned the story into a simple tale of stable boy and lady,⁴⁰ John Harrington is far more adulatory in his assessment. He proposes that 'the strength of the Wyler version is in the handling of the tools of the cinema rather in the verbal translation from print to screen

[...] Wyler and Toland used cinematic rhetoric creatively to interpret and present the brooding world of Emily's Bronte's novel.⁴¹ Seemingly, critics in the 1930s read the visual rhetoric of the film in much the same way. In *Variety*, the reviewer proposes that the film 'retains all of the grim drama of the book [...] Direction by William Wyler is slow and deliberate, accenting the tragic features of the piece.'⁴² *Time* magazine also celebrated the adaptation stating:

Before making the picture, Producer Goldwyn, a stickler for detail, landscaped 540 California acres into a Yorkshire moor. He imported eight British actors, a dialect expert to see that their accents matched, 1,000 panes of hand-blown glass for interior shots and 1,000 heather plants for outdoors. He did not attempt to send for Emily Bronte. In spite of this oversight, there is not much she could have done to improve this screen translation of her masterpiece.⁴³

However, although *Wuthering Heights* was a critical success, by the end of the 1930s the popularity of prestige pictures began to dwindle. Two films mark this decline, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. *A Christmas Carol*, directed by Edwin L. Marin and produced by Joseph Mankiewicz, exemplified all the costly production values and technical creativity of a major Hollywood studio at its height. This included several of the studio's senior artistic personnel, such as composer Franz Waxman, and art director Cedric Gibbons who had previously worked with Selznick on the production of *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. However, the film received mixed reviews. Frank S. Nugent reviewing the film for *The New York Times* claimed 'it is good Dickens, good cinema and good for the soul.'⁴⁴ Yet in a particularly damning assessment published in *Time* magazine it was stated that it leaned 'too heavily on the assumption that cinemaddicts' eyes [...] will not be able to keep away from watering over Charles Dickens' famed classic.'⁴⁵

A similar amount of talent and money was invested into the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (Leonard, 1940), starring Greer Garson fresh from her success in *Goodbye Mr Chips* (Wood, 1939). Responsible for the novel's translation to the screen was the English novelist Aldous Huxley and former RKO director Jane Murfin. However, Huxley notes the difficulties he faced translating Austen's distinctive voice for the screen:

I work away at the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* for the moment – an odd, cross-word puzzle job. One tries to do one's best for Jane Austen; but actually the very fact of transforming the book into a picture must necessarily alter its whole quality in a profound way.⁴⁶

Examples of these transformations include simple historical transpositions which shift the story's time period, such as Mrs Bennet's reference to the Battle of Waterloo, which occurred two years after the publication of the novel, to significant changes in the novel's plot, such as the transformation of Lady Catherine, played by British Hollywood institution Edna May Oliver, from a strident foe of Elizabeth and Darcy's match to its secret ambassador. Linda A. Robinson's article 'Crinolines and Pantalettes: What MGM's Switch in Time Did to *Pride and Prejudice*' (2013) interprets these changes as a 'an act of authorship helping not only to fit *Pride and Prejudice* into the generic requirements of cinematic romance but to adapt *Pride and Prejudice* to MGM's house style.'⁴⁷ The changes made in the adaptation process of *Pride and Prejudice* are so glaringly obvious that it reminds us that sometimes the goal was not to translate the novel to the screen, but to mould the raw material of the novel into a product that fit within the parameters of what constituted a successful Hollywood film.

However, these inaccuracies are also due in part to the use of Helene Jerome's play *Pride and Prejudice: A Sentimental Comedy in Three Acts* as a further source text. This

dramatisation of the novel played on Broadway in 1935 and in London in 1936, starring Celia Johnson as Elizabeth Bennet. A review published in the *Times* in February 1936 outlines the difficulties Jerome had in both condensing and translating the novel to the stage, calling attention to the ‘muddle of the last act’ and the ‘highly unorthodox expedients’ the playwright was driven to after removing Darcy’s letter from the story. However, the critic goes on to concede that the common errors of adaptation have been ‘decently shunned.’⁴⁸ Successful in both England and America, this play provided a blueprint for how to successfully condense the novel by omitting certain scenes, and gave an indication of what elements of the novel would be particularly popular with a contemporary audience.

Pride and Prejudice was not received well critically, and was just a moderate success at the box office thereby failing to recoup the costs of its production and made a loss. *Variety* provided the clearest assessment of its failings, claiming:

Any novel which survives more than a century possesses unusual qualities, and *Pride and Prejudice* qualifies chiefly because of the characterization of Elizabeth Bennet (Garson), eldest of the eligible sisters and a rather daring young woman with ideas of feminism far in advance of her contemporaries. In the screenplay she is trimmed to fit into a yarn about a family, rather than about an unusual and courageous girl. In consequence, the film is something less than satisfactory entertainment, despite lavish settings, costumes, and an acting ensemble of unique talent.⁴⁹

The trend for prestige pictures based on canonical literary novels had dominated adaptation practices in the mid-1930s, leading to some of the most notable films of the period. However, the failure of *Pride and Prejudice* forced the studio to reassess its mode of adaptation and selection of texts. Subsequently, MGM turned its attention to novels with macabre elements and adventure, including a remake of Paramount’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr*

Hyde, *The Invisible Agent*, and *The Canterville Ghost* (Dassin, 1944). The popularity of big-budget prestige pictures based on classic texts had ultimately stagnated.

War and the development of an adaptation franchise

America joined the War in December 1941, and as table 3 illustrates, the production of adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts dropped significantly. In this unstable period very few of the major studios invested money in large scale prestige productions. Exceptions include *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *Jane Eyre*, starring Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine. Like many films produced in the war years, *Jane Eyre* had a turbulent start as priorities in the industry changed from cultural valorization to war propaganda. Produced by David O. Selznick, the script was developed with director Robert Stevenson and writer John Houseman throughout 1941, with key creative personnel and stars signed. However, as Houseman laments, Selznick had no intention in making the film himself offering it instead as a package for a ‘fabulous’ sum to other studios.⁵⁰

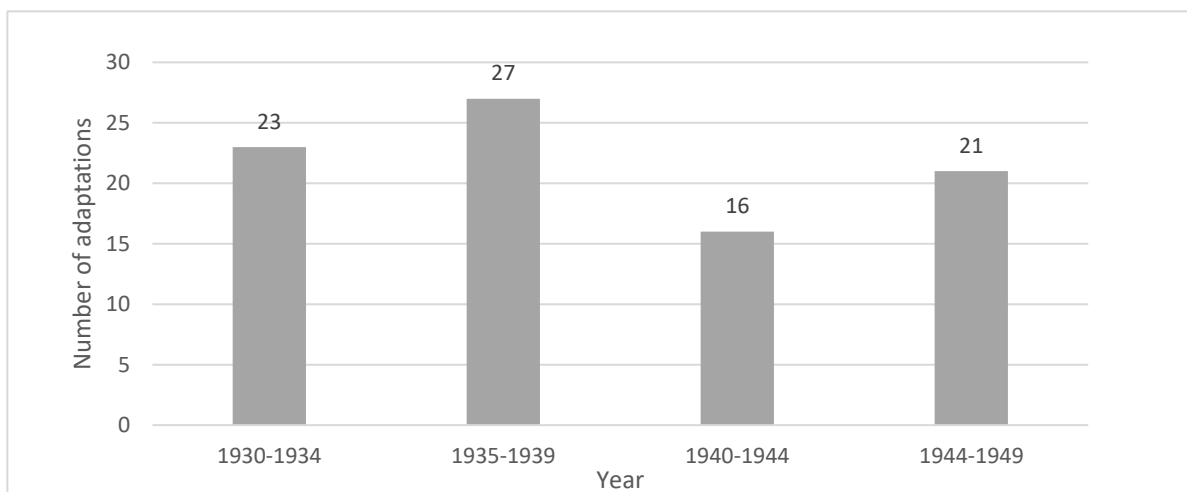


Table 3: Number of Adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts in the 1930s and 1940s

The package Twentieth-Century Fox bought from Selznick in November 1942 had been carefully crafted to promote the American ideals of individualism and democracy at a time when the whole country was embroiled in a bitter fight to defend them. In Brontë's novel, the focus is very much on perseverance through hardship, a concept that would have been pertinent to audiences who had made it through the depression and economic reforms only now to be at war. Despite Selznick's suggestions that the film needed an extensive program of retakes, *Jane Eyre* fulfilled Zanuck's prediction that, thanks to the boom of the war years, 'the picture will do business, and because business is phenomenal, it will recoup its costs.'⁵¹ However like MGM's *A Christmas Carol* the criticism was divided. *Variety* Magazine claimed that 'Charlotte Brontë's Victorian novel, *Jane Eyre*, reaches the screen in a drama that is as intense on celluloid as it is on the printed page.'⁵² However, *Time* magazine argued that '*Jane Eyre* is a florid, somewhat disappointing cinemadaptation [with] little success in capturing the Brontëan intensity of atmosphere and of character.'⁵³ Following the release of the film, Twentieth-Century Fox made just three more adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts during the 1940s, including *Black Beauty* (Nosseck, 1946), *Bob, Son of Battle* (King, 1947) and *The Fan* (Preminger, 1949), apparently heeding *Time* Magazine's advice in 1944 that 'Movie goers [...] do not want to be uplifted, edified, harrowed or sermonized. They just want to be entertained.'⁵⁴

In a reverse of procedure, by the beginning of the 1940s the smaller studios and independent producers begin to appear in the data again. Columbia appears on the list four times, making three adaptations of Robert Louis Stevenson's stories, including *The Black Arrow* (Douglas, 1948), *Adventures in Silverado* (Carson, 1948) and *The Secret of St Ives* (Rosen, 1949), and Monogram Pictures adapted another Stevenson story, *Kidnapped* (Beaudine, 1948), starring

popular English child actor Roddy McDowall. However, like the beginning of the 1930s, it is Universal who appears on the survey most frequently in the 1940s.

As was highlighted earlier in the chapter, Universal Studios appears on the survey of adaptations in two distinct periods, the early 1930s when the studio was controlled by the Laemmle family who created popular formula pictures out of Gothic adaptations, and after 1936 when the Standard Capital Corporation foreclosed on its loans and seized control of the studio. The studio's fortunes rose again in the 1940s with a series of films based on Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes. In February 1942, following negotiations with the Doyle estate, Universal Studios acquired the rights to twenty-one stories in the canon and signed contracts with Rathbone and Bruce to reprise their roles, after two films made with Twentieth-Century Fox, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Lanfield, 1939) and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. The contract stipulated that the company had to make three films a year, but only two had to be adaptations of Doyle's stories.⁵⁵

Produced by Howard Benedict and directed by John Rawlins, the studio's most distinctive choice in adapting Holmes was to update the stories to a contemporary setting. In the first film *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* Holmes chases Nazi spies, delivers patriotic speeches, and generally appears as the only man who can save Britain from chaos. The film begins with a title card and an explanation as to why Holmes and Watson are now battling Nazis. It states, 'Sherlock Holmes, the immortal character of fiction created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is ageless, invincible and unchanging. In solving significant problems of the present day he remains – as ever – the supreme master of deductive reasoning.' The use of a title card played into a popular stylistic feature of adaptations during this era. Films such

as *David Copperfield*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice* all begin with a title card that has the opening lines of the novel on which it was set, or what the filmmakers hope the audience will presume is the opening lines of the novel. In *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, the filmmakers use the same stylistic feature to imbue their film with a literary heritage, but this time they use their own voice and from this authoritative position they justify their modernization of Holmes. Reviews of the film were favourable, with the *Motion Picture Herald* claiming that the filmmakers, ‘and their screenwriters, have accomplished deftly the transplantation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s characters, “Sherlock Holmes” and “Dr Watson,” from their bindings to the present day of the war between the United Nations and the Axis.’⁵⁶ A further twelve films were made in this series, all of which were produced by Benedict and ten of which were directed by Roy William Neill.

In producing a low-budget franchise out of Conan Doyle’s popular detective in the first half of the 1940s, Universal had tapped into changing audience tastes following the huge social upheaval of the Second World War. According to the new Audience Research Institute (ARI), developed by the American pioneer of public polling George Gallup, the depiction of war rose sharply in the ratings in the weeks that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor. As Susan Ohmer notes in her work on the ARI:

ARI found that war films appealed to filmgoers who were most likely to be drafted – men, young people, and low-income groups – but that even young women found pleasure in imagining their husbands and boyfriends taking part in some of the more adventurous scenarios. Many men expressed a blunt desire for revenge. “Anything we see where the Nazis are blown up appeals to us” one said.⁵⁷

Such comments demonstrate the appeal of Universal’s Holmes which saw the detective battle Nazi aggressors in the first three films of the franchise, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice*

of Terror, Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (Tummel, 1943) and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (Neill, 1943). The modernization of Holmes was a clever tactic employed by Universal in which the studio appropriated the popularity of the Victorian detective whilst creating a figure of modern day relevance. However after the war Universal was forced to incorporate the popular Gothic elements pioneered in former horror films into the latter films, retreating into what Amanda Fields labels the ‘ghosts-and-ghouls chillers.’⁵⁸ Whereas *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was gothic and eerie, the latter films by Universal took the franchise into new territory, reverting creating a more visceral horror with severed fingers, poisonous spiders, mad doctors and deformed killers. By 1946 Rathbone became frustrated with the role stating that the ‘first picture was, as it were, a negative from which I merely continued to produce endless positives of the same photograph.’⁵⁹ The last film that Rathbone starred in, and ultimately the end of the series was *Dressed to Kill* (Neill, 1946) based on *The Adventure of the Dancing Men* (1905).

As the Universal series came to an end in 1946, the death knell began to sound for the Golden Age of Hollywood. Whilst the data lists show fifty-one adaptations for the 1930s, after America joined the Second World War only thirty-two adaptations were made from British nineteenth-century texts. Furthermore, these adaptations were predominantly a mixture of more popular genres, such as crime, adventure and children’s films. In the last year this survey covers, five adaptations were produced, *The Secret of St Ives*, a Robert Louis Stevenson adaptation by the smaller studio Columbia, *The Secret Garden* (Wilcox, 1949) one of MGM’s ‘Children’s Matinée’ films, *The Fan* a modern day adaptation of *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1893) by Oscar Wilde, and Disney’s *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr Toad* (Kinney, 1949), a two-part animated film based on *Wind in the Willows* (Grahame,

1908) and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Irving, 1820). However, in what could be termed a swan song, MGM attempted one last prestige picture with *That Forsyte Woman* (Bennett, 1949) starring Greer Garson. The film had been in planning since the studio bought the rights to the novel in 1937, intending to make an all-star picture with producer Joseph L. Mankiewicz at the helm. However, long past the heyday of prestige pictures, the 1949 film earned the studio a loss of \$574,000.⁶⁰

On 4 May 1948 in an Anti-Trust suit known as the Paramount case, the U.S. Supreme Court specifically outlawed block booking, and with it the Hollywood studio era effectively came to an end. As I suggested in the Introduction to this thesis each corporation adopted slightly different production practices, but in the end all were inexorably linked by essential arrangements in distribution and exhibition. Under block booking, independent cinema owners were forced to take large numbers of a studios' pictures without having a chance to select them. Those studios could then parcel out second-rate product along with A-class features and star vehicles, which made both production and distribution operations more economical. The Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that the conglomerates were in violation of antitrust and suggested the complete separation of exhibition interests from producer-distributor operations.⁶¹ Cutting the ties between large profit-generating theatre chains and production studios led to complete restructuring of the industry and huge reductions in production. Newly unemployed artists began pursuing careers in television and as popular movie actors transitioned from the silver screen to the television screen, viewers followed their favorite artists to the new medium.

Conclusion

At the onset of this chapter, it was suggested that the Hollywood studio era was a complex period of film history with technological advances and changing social attitudes. Though many historical enquiries treat the period as one unified and stable era of film history, the industry went through huge changes in this twenty-year period from the innovation of the sound period, to the social upheaval of war. Economic instability played a large part in driving innovation as the industry struggled to win audiences, and at a time when America instigated vast social reforms, the industry fought to promote cinema's cultural value. Socio-cultural factors, industrial constraints and changing audience tastes all influenced the production of adaptations, creating a volatile and multifaceted landscape of competing concerns.

Through the examination of data collected on adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts, this chapter has provided an overview of adaptation practices in this era of the film industry, charting the adaptations in the early days of sound film, through to its peak at the end of the 1930s, and finally the decline of the late 1940s. Data was used to show how the industry developed in the period, with the rise of the major studios in the mid-1930s, the popularity of prestige pictures when film production was at its height, and the development of low-cost formula pictures at both the beginning and end of the era.

In this chapter my aim was to question how and why stories were selected, how they were adapted and who influenced their production. The data collected for this study showed that there were clear patterns of texts, and that genres were aligned with specific studios and producers. In almost all cases these patterns begin with a film that performed particularly well at the box-office. For example, Universal's *Dracula* was a low-budget formula film

that exceeded expectations. It was followed by the acquirement of similar source material and similar success in *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Bride of Frankenstein*. Equally, costume pictures were considered unpopular by many until David O. Selznick bought *Little Women* to the screen at RKO. His successful adaptation of *David Copperfield* at MGM, bolstered his standing in the industry making it possible for him to create lavish prestige pictures throughout the decade, before undertaking the most popular adaptation of the age, *Gone with the Wind* (Fleming, 1939).

For those films that did not follow a clear pattern, star power was the mitigating factor. The data collected for this survey features a host of names used numerous times throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The discussion here focused on the work of Ronald Colman and Shirley Temple but there were many more that appeared multiple times in the data, such as Freddie Bartholomew who following his success in *David Copperfield* starred in *Captains Courageous*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *Tom Brown's School Days* (Stevenson, 1940), Basil Rathbone who played small parts in *David Copperfield*, and *A Tale of Two Cities* before finding fame as Sherlock Holmes, and the character actress Edna May Oliver who plays a sharp-tongued spinster in *Alice in Wonderland*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. Although typecast, these stars provided audiences with familiar and appealing faces. Laden with the expectations built upon prior success, stars played a pivotal role in promoting films. This provided a point of anchorage with audiences who were perhaps not familiar with the original texts. What these patterns suggest is that in many cases stories were chosen after similar material was proven popular. This fits largely with what is known about the industry as a whole, with many historians defining the period by its systematic modes of production and standardized product. Yet it also suggests that

adaptations were a driving force in the film industry. Arguably, texts weren't subsumed into the Hollywood mould, as Bluestone suggests, rather Hollywood was shaped by the texts it adapted.

However, whilst this overview has given some insight into adaptation practices, such as the difficulties of translating Jane Austen's voice for the screen and the expressionistic techniques employed in *Dracula*, a more thorough investigation of production histories is required to answer exactly how adaptations were made in this period and who influenced their production. Once a story was selected who was responsible for its translation to the screen? Did prior adaptations of the same text impact on this process? How did different production departments each leave their mark on the finished picture?

To answer some of the above questions, the next chapter will provide the first of five individual production histories, examining the story development of Universal's second horror film, *Frankenstein*. Using original screenplays drafts and former theatrical adaptations, an investigation will be made of how Mary Shelley's original Gothic novel was altered and fashioned to suit the production of a low-cost formula picture. As this overview of the industry has illustrated, Universal was a prolific and inventive adaptor of British nineteenth-century texts at the beginning of the studio era. *Frankenstein* is part of a cycle of films that spawned a whole new genre in the industry. In taking into account its hybridity the next chapter will trace the roots of its success, looking at how the work of previous adaptors mythologised the text, creating a popular commodity for future filmmakers.

Notes for Chapter One

- ¹ Lev, "How to Write Adaptation History," 665.
- ² Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood*, 2.
- ³ Geiger, *American Documentary Film*, 62.
- ⁴ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 23.
- ⁵ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 23.
- ⁶ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 23.
- ⁷ Senn, *Golden Horrors*, 14.
- ⁸ Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 147.
- ⁹ "Dracula" *Time*, February, 23, 1931, n.p.
- ¹⁰ "Dracula" *Variety*, January 1, 1931, n.p.
- ¹¹ Franklin, *Classics of the Silent Screen*, 148.
- ¹² Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 160.
- ¹³ Nugent, "The Legion Marches Again in a Dashing Revival of 'Under Two Flags,' at the Music Hall." *The New York Times*, May 1, 1936.
- ¹⁴ "Box Office Winners," *Kinematograph Weekly*, January 13, 1938, n.p.
- ¹⁵ Balio, *Grand Design*, 227.
- ¹⁶ "The Little Princess," *Variety*, December 31, 1938, n.p.
- ¹⁷ Greene, "Wee Willie Winkie," *Night and Day*, October 28, 1937, n.p.
- ¹⁸ "Story Purchases," *Motion Picture Herald*, May 18, 1935, n.p.
- ¹⁹ "Story Purchases," *Motion Picture Herald*, November 7, 1936, n.p.
- ²⁰ "Story Purchases," *Motion Picture Herald*, May 18, 1935, n.p.
- ²¹ Balio, *Grand Design*, 179.
- ²² Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 168.
- ²³ Jewell, *The RKO Story*, 68.
- ²⁴ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 167.
- ²⁵ Behlmer, *Memo from: David O. Selznick*, 72.
- ²⁶ Behlmer, *Memo from: David O. Selznick*, 72.
- ²⁷ Behlmer, *Memo from: David O. Selznick*, 72.
- ²⁸ Geraghty, *Now a Major Motion Picture*, 27.
- ²⁹ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 70.
- ³⁰ Balio, *Grand Designs*, 189.
- ³¹ Quigley, "Public Opinion and the Motion Picture," 131.
- ³² Smith, *Children, Cinema and Censorship*, 1
- ³³ Wurtzler, "David Copperfield and the U.S. Curriculum," 155.
- ³⁴ Sheridan, *A Guide to the Study of the Screen Version of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities*, 7.
- ³⁵ Sheridan, *A Guide to the Study of the Screen Version of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities*, 17.
- ³⁶ Sheridan, *A Guide to the Study of the Screen Version of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities*, 20.
- ³⁷ Selby, *The Study of Film as an Art Form in American Secondary Schools*, 80.
- ³⁸ "Trouble for Two," *Time*, August 6, 1936, n.p.
- ³⁹ Ohmer, *Gallup in Hollywood*, 95.
- ⁴⁰ Bluestone, *Novel into Film*, 99.
- ⁴¹ Harrington, "Wyler as Auteur: Wuthering Heights," 67.
- ⁴² "Wuthering Heights," *Variety*, January 1, 1939, n.p.
- ⁴³ "Wuthering Heights," *Time*, April 17, 1939, n.p.

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- ⁴⁴ Nugent, "A Christmas Carol," *The New York Times*, December 19, 1938, n.p.
- ⁴⁵ "A Christmas Carol," *Time*, December 19, 1938, n.p.
- ⁴⁶ Dunaway, *Huxley in Hollywood*, 127.
- ⁴⁷ Robinson "Crinolines and Pantalettes," 284.
- ⁴⁸ "Pride and Prejudice," *The Times*, February 4, 1936, n.p.
- ⁴⁹ "Pride and Prejudice," *Variety*, January 1, 1940, n.p.
- ⁵⁰ Houseman, *Run-Through: A Memoir*, 478.
- ⁵¹ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 331.
- ⁵² "Jane Eyre," *Variety*, January 1, 1944, n.p.
- ⁵³ "Jane Eyre," *Time* February 21, 1944, n.p.
- ⁵⁴ "Facts of Life, 1944," *Time*, September, 4, 1944, n.p.
- ⁵⁵ Barnes, *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*, 210.
- ⁵⁶ "Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror," *Motion Picture Herald*, September 12, 1944, n.p.
- ⁵⁷ Ohmer, *Gallup in Hollywood*, 139.
- ⁵⁸ Field, "The Case of Multiplying Millions," 5.
- ⁵⁹ Rathbone, *In and Out of Character*, 182.
- ⁶⁰ Troyan, *A Rose for Mrs. Miniver: The Life of Greer Garson*, 232.
- ⁶¹ Schatz, *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s*, 14.

CHAPTER TWO:

Gothic Transmutation: How Universal's *Frankenstein* was made of many parts

This first case study focusses on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, using scripts of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century theatrical productions, and the screenwriting process of Universal's 1931 film, to examine how narrative elements evolved over successive adaptations. In the previous chapter, I proposed that *Frankenstein* was selected by Universal as suitable story material because it featured similar elements to the highly successful adaptation of *Dracula*. Both were based on popular nineteenth-century Gothic novels and both had proven popular in previous stage adaptations. However, in order to uncover how Universal adapted literary texts, and how former adaptations impacted on that process, I proposed that a more thorough investigation of a specific film's production history was required. Mary Shelley's tale of Victor Frankenstein has thrilled and engrossed readers and audiences for two centuries. Since the novel's publication in 1818, the story of Frankenstein has permeated popular culture, appearing in political illustrations and theatrical productions, radio, film, and television shows. This long history of adaptation provides filmmakers with a rich and abundant source of inspiration. Therefore, the intention of this chapter is to examine both the history of *Frankenstein* on stage and the screenwriting process of Universal's adaptation in order to establish what relationship the film had with the source text and adaptations.

The most comprehensive examinations of Universal's horror cycle include John T. Soister's *Of Gods and Monsters: A Critical Guide to Universal Studios' Science Fiction, Horror and Mystery Films, 1929-1939* (2005), and *Universal Horrors, The Studio's Classic Films*,

1931-1946 (2007) by Tom Weaver, John Brunas, and Michael Brunas. These works provide brief accounts of production practices for each of the films made at Universal during the studio era and critical analyses of the cycle. Genre specific texts such as Andrew Tudor's *Monsters and Mad Scientists* (1989), *The Monster Show, A Cultural History of Horror* (1993) by David Skal, *Horror Film, An Introduction* (2007) by Rick Worland, and Alison Peirse's *After Dracula, The 1930s Horror film* (2013) also each offer broad, historical introductions to the development of the genre. However, while these histories outline the production of a film cycle based almost exclusively on Gothic novels, there is very little information about how Universal's screenwriters adapted stories for the screen. Therefore, this chapter aims to examine screenwriting as an essential function of the adaptation process

Until recently there has been little sustained scholarly work on the practice of screenwriters as adaptors during the Hollywood studio era. Brief descriptions exist in the seminal texts of Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985), Gomery (1986) and Schatz (1988), and more recently a number of journal articles have provided individual investigations. These include Claus Tieber who investigated the use of story conferences (2014),¹ and Leslie Kreiner Wilson who offers one of the few investigations of the screenwriter as an adaptor in 'Frances Marion, studio politics, film censorship, and the box office; or, the business of adapting *Dinner at Eight* at MGM, 1933' (2014). As Jamie Sherry laments: 'adaptation studies traditionally favours the analysis of fixed, canonical works over creative process, and is biased towards unified media, such as the source novel and the final adapted film, over the adapted screenplay that exists between them.'² By providing a detailed investigation of the screenwriting process of Universal's *Frankenstein*, this chapter aims to question how much

influence a screenwriter or screenwriters had on the story, structure, characters and tone of an adapted film.

Jack Boozer argues in *Authorship in Film Adaptation* (2008) that: ‘the composition of the screenplay illuminates the evolution of ideas that will determine the film production’s relationship to its source text.’³ In this chapter, I intend to expand Boozer’s methodology, beginning with an analysis of the earlier stage adaptations *Presumption; or, the Fate of Frankenstein* (1823) by Richard Brinsley Peake, and Peggy Webling’s *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1927). This will be followed by a comparative analysis of the original screenplay drafts by John L. Balderston, Robert Florey and James Whale. The findings from these archival materials will be examined throughout this chapter, highlighting key additions, emissions and alterations. In doing so, this chapter aims to demonstrate not only how the evolution of ideas determines the film production’s relationship to its source text, but also to establish the permeability of adaptations as they respond to a series of past interpretations and readings.

Stage Adaptations

Mary Shelley’s novel was published anonymously in 1818 and is today generally considered to be a landmark work of Romantic and Gothic literature. Critics such as Harold Bloom and M. A. Goldberg praise its use of philosophical sources, its structural complexity, and thematic oppositions. However, the initial critical reception of the book was mostly unfavorable, compounded by confused speculation as to the identity and gender of the author. The *Quarterly Review* described it ‘a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity,’⁴ whilst the *British Critic* exclaimed, ‘if our authoress can forget the gentleness of her sex, it

is no reason why we should; and we shall therefore dismiss the novel without further comment.⁵ Yet there were those who were favorable, including Sir Walter Scott who wrote that ‘upon the whole, the work impresses us with a high idea of the author's original genius and happy power of expression.’⁶ With such conflicting reviews, it is perhaps unsurprising that the novel was a commercial success, and thanks to its dark tone and sensational sequence of events, proved itself an attractive property for Georgian theatrical producers.

Frankenstein enjoyed almost an immediate success as a stage adaptation, with the first, *Presumption; or the Fate of Frankenstein* by Richard Brinsley Peake being staged in 1823, just five years after the novel’s publication. In a letter addressed to the critic Leigh Hunt, Mary Shelley remarked on her own experience as a spectator, ‘But lo and behold! I found myself famous. “Frankenstein” had prodigious success as a drama.’⁷ Attributing her own fame to the play, her review captures the excitement and popularity of Peake’s adaptation, and whilst ‘the story is not well managed,’ she praises it for stirring ‘a breathless eagerness in the audience.’⁸ Labelled as a ‘new Romance of a peculiar interest,’ the play was produced at the English Opera House and starred the actor T.P. Cooke, who had gained considerable popularity just a few years before playing Lord Ruthven in an adaptation of John Polidori’s *The Vampyre*.⁹ Peake’s play is arguably the blueprint of nearly all subsequent adaptations of Shelley’s novel, forming the source of key omissions and additions that appear in several adaptations including Universal’s 1931 film. These include the addition of the character Fritz, the elimination of the story-within-a-story structure, and crucially, the removal of the creature’s subjectivity.

In Shelley's novel the heterogeneous narrative is a structural device that allows Victor Frankenstein and his creature to raise opposing voices, and as Peter Brooks highlights in his examination of the text, it is through the Monster's use of language that the novel poses its most important thematic questions.¹⁰ Taking a Lacanian reading of the text, Brooks suggests that the creature realizes that to enter human society he must move beyond the imaginary order into the symbolic order by acquiring language. Whilst the creature is monstrous and repulsive, through his mastering of language he is able to partly overcome his outsider status, and develop a relationship with his creator and, more importantly with the reader. However, as Emma Raub argues in her article 'Frankenstein and the Mute Figure of Melodrama' (2012) it is Peake who was responsible for transforming the character from an articulate being who defines himself through Milton to 'the bolt-headed half-man, half-machine monster of the film tradition.'¹¹ In a significant departure from the novel, Peake's play greatly reduced the creature's subjectivity by beginning a long tradition of casting him as a mute character.

Denying him the ability to speak and reason greatly limited the sympathy an audience might have for the creature and as Kyle Dawson Edwards argues, Peake's legacy to the adaptation of Shelly's novel ensured that 'instead of a literary vehicle for exploring moral accountability, *Frankenstein* became an opportunity for the display of physical destruction.'¹² Throughout the play, key characters pause to offer duets and solos, creating musical interludes to the action. The creature's love of music, and his remarkable responses to it, is retained from Shelley's tale, yet he is never given any music of his own and this serves to further separate and alienate him from the other characters in the drama. The play does recreate the monster's relationship with the De Lacey family, however, the creature's

sudden bursts of violence and anger and his inability to articulate his feelings ensure he is a creature to be feared more than pitied. Whereas Shelley's novel was a social critique that encompassed complex allegories about education and the state, Peake's adaptation was transformed into a popular spectacle designed to shock and entertain its audience. The resulting play was a mixed sort of production that combined elements of music, high and low comedy.

An examination of the theatrical conventions in the early nineteenth-century reveals the motives behind these changes. In the early years of the nineteenth-century, restrictions of the Licensing Act allowed plays to be shown at only two patented theatres in London, at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. To escape the restrictions of the royal patents, non-patent theatres interspersed dramatic scenes with musical interludes in order to escape regulation. Initially this created a divide in the theatre with musicals and light comedy reserved for the masses in illegitimate theatres, and 'high art' productions such as opera and Shakespeare reserved for the refined classes of the patented theatres.¹³ However, a huge growth in demand for theatrical entertainment in the early nineteenth-century blurred these distinctions. Designed for presentation in what was then considered an 'illegitimate' theatre, it was necessary for Peake to include elements that would safeguard the production from claims that it infringed on the prerogatives of 'patent' theatres.¹⁴ Peake's adaptation had to include music, as well as elements of spectacle, however these changes had far-reaching consequences, with elements of Peake's adaptation appearing in Universal's film over a hundred years later.

Following the success of *Presumption; or the Fate of Frankenstein* in Europe and America, numerous other theatrical adaptations were produced throughout the nineteenth-century. These included a number of French versions, such as *Le Monstre et le Magicien* (1826), and *Le Petit Monstre et l'Escamoteur* (1826), as well as burlesque, comedies and farces, including *Hungumption; or, Dr. Frankenstein and the Hobgoblin of Hoxton* (1826), William and Robert Brough's *Frankenstein; or, The Model Man* (1849), and the musical comedy *Frankenstein; or, the Vampire's Victim* (1887).¹⁵ Moving through such a range of genres over the course of a century ensured the continuing popularity of *Frankenstein* and attests to the text's permeability. Steve Earl Forry's examination of these plays concludes that, 'Pre-Karloffian dramatizations played an important role in disseminating popular conceptions—and misconceptions—of Mary Shelley's novel.'¹⁶ Whilst these early adaptations simplified the complexity of *Frankenstein's* original structure and thematic ambiguity, they made Shelley's story and its characters available to a broad international audience and opened them up to a number of meanings, interpretations and cultural applications. Thus, the myth of *Frankenstein*, made up by an assortment of elements both original and transformative, became a diversified construct of the emerging popular culture of the nineteenth-century.

Peggy Webling's *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* (1927)

As this history of early *Frankenstein* adaptations has shown, there was a rich and diverse collection of sources that Peggy Webling could draw on when she wrote her play in 1927. However, very little information exists on the writer or her work. Born in London in 1871, Webling was a British playwright, novelist and poet whose career spanned the First World War, and the rapid modernization of Britain in the 1920s. As the author of a number of plays

Webling was approached by Hamilton Deane to write a version of *Frankenstein* in the mid-1920s as an accompaniment to his successful adaptation of *Dracula*.¹⁷ The last surviving copy of this play is now held at the British Library and all comments on the work are based on my own interpretation of the text.

From an examination of the original script it is evident that *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, replicates elements that can be traced as far back as Peake's original stage version, including the comedic character of Fritz and simplification of the novel's narrative structure. However, as Lester Friedman and Allison Kavey note in *Monstrous Progeny: A History of the Frankenstein Narratives* (2016), 'Webling's play strikes different notes from previous stage adaptations due to the general disillusion following World War I and preceding the Great Depression.'¹⁸ Contrary to former adaptations, Webling did not cast Frankenstein's creation as a mute, vengeful monster. Instead the creature is taught to speak, befriends and accidentally kills Frankenstein's sister, Katrina, and ultimately commits suicide in order to seek redemption. This shows how Webling selectively and creatively responded to the material of former adaptors and the source novel.

The death of Katrina is a transformation of one of the key narrative points in Shelley's novel; the murder of Frankenstein's young brother. William is described in Shelley's novel as 'the most beautiful little fellow in the world [whose] lively blue eyes, dimpled cheeks, and endearing manners, inspired the tenderest affection.'¹⁹ He is the figure of innocence, and the creature longs to take him as his companion, believing he will be unprejudiced and too young to have 'imbibed a horror of deformity.' However, William's response to the creature suggests that his innocent appearance is false: he is already socialized, disgusted and

frightened by the creature's appearance, and educated in family pride. He threatens the creature with punishment and calls him names that the creature says 'carried despair to my heart.' Finally, when the boy tells him who he is, the creature, filled with rage at his creator's indifference and neglect, kills him proclaiming 'Frankenstein! you belong then to my enemy - to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim.'²⁰ The creature proposes that Frankenstein has made him a monster by abandoning him to a life where he will only know social exclusion. He argues: 'Believe me, Frankenstein: I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity: but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow-creatures who owe me nothing? they spurn and hate me. [...] Shall I not then hate them who abhor me?'²¹ Writing in a time of great social and political upheaval, Shelley positions innocence as fragile and ultimately unsustainable, and the themes she explores with the death of William correspond to those explored by other earlier Romantic works such as William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789), and *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge. Based on a Rousseau-esque notion of childhood, Blake's collection of poems juxtaposes the innocent, pastoral world of childhood against an adult world of corruption and repression, providing an account that would become standard in other works of Romanticism. Both William and the creature have been corrupted by their respective experiences. Society has taught William to spurn the creature, and it is this very response that corrupts the creature's natural benevolence, forming a catalyst for the tragedy that ultimately follows.

In the original text of Webling's play the death of Katrina, Frankenstein's younger sister, functions in much the same way as the death of William in the novel. Her death sparks a

manhunt for the creature and leads to the play's climax in the mountains. However, Webling chooses to afford the creature much more sympathy by turning the murder of the innocent into a tragic misunderstanding rather than a passionate crime. In *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, Katrina is described as a 'bright and heavenly spirit, innocent but wise.'²² Cast as the epitome of virtue and purity, she first encounters the creature harassing Elizabeth in the house at Belrive to which he has followed Frankenstein. However, rather than being fearful, she calmly approaches him and persuades him to release her. She then takes Elizabeth out of the room, telling the creature that she will return in a moment. Whilst waiting alone in the room, the creature comes across Katrina's pet doves. He proceeds to take one out of its cage in wonder, yet accidentally crushes it in his hands when distracted by something outside. Not understanding that it is dead he throws it from the window commanding it to fly. When Katrina re-enters she is saddened by what he has done yet doesn't reproach him. Instead she talks with him, and shows him kindness which he has been unaccustomed to up until now. They then exit together to go on her boat and retrieve the bird that has fallen into the river below. Later in the play, the monster reenters carrying the soaked body of Katrina in his arms. Bewildered and unaware of what he has done he explains to the others:

I wanted – to see her like the bird – on the water. Oh! Oh! She cried. Then I pressed her down – under the water. Beauty – beauty – her hair – her face – under the water – [...] Down – down. I held her. Long time. Down! Then – then – I took her out. She was still – still - - like that - (pointing to her).²³

Once the others explain to the creature that she is dead he breaks down in grief and remorse, crying 'What – does it mean? I am hurt – I am hurt – Pain – Pain – but not with my master's blows. Help me, men! Is there – no one – in the world – to help me?'²⁴ The curtain falls on

the figure of the creature crumpled on the floor weeping, providing a tragic and dramatic climax and decisively provoking the audience's sympathy.

Rather than the violence of former adaptations, such as *Presumption*, Webling's treatment reverts back to the thematic concerns of the original novel, and depicts the creature's innocence. The creature is the play's antihero, yet like Shelley's novel, cast so by ignorance rather than any innate malevolence. Blending elements from Peake's version of the novel, including the omission of the story-within-a-story structure and dramatic spectacle, Webling's treatment of Shelley's novel was a simplification of the story and its thematic concerns. However, she removes nearly all elements of violence, turning the story of Frankenstein and his creation into a tragic melodrama. Her adaptation was both sentimental, and melodramatic, designed to heighten the audience's emotions.

Universal's acquisition of *Frankenstein*

Produced by the theatre producer Hamilton Deane, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in Macabre* premiered in Preston, Lancashire, just after Christmas in 1927, playing with *Dracula* in a double-bill paring of the two titles. After successfully touring for two years, it transferred to London in February 1930, where it ran for 72 performances, thus proving itself a familiar and popular attraction for widespread audiences.²⁵ After the success of adapting *Dracula* from Hamilton Deane's popular stage play, it is therefore unsurprising that Universal turned to Webling's version of *Frankenstein* in April 1931.²⁶ According to director Robert Florey, 'Universal was looking for a follow up on *Dracula* for Lugosi.'²⁷ However, despite spending \$20,000 for the rights, and marketing it as an adaptation of Webling's play, Universal's finished product shows little correspondence with the adaptation examined above.

Therefore, it is necessary to undertake a comparative analysis of the film's screenplay drafts to reveal how the story evolved, and thereby establish what relationship the film has to former adaptations of *Frankenstein*.

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, screenwriting has not received the same amount of academic focus as other areas of film production in this era and this is especially evident when looking at former historical enquiries of *Frankenstein*. Previous examinations of the film focus almost entirely on casting and production design, with particular attention paid to Jack Pierce's iconic make-up designs. David Skal devotes much of his analysis to the history of designing Frankenstein's make up, detailing the history of its development and influences from a Bauhaus aesthetic to *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920) and *The Golem* (1920). Skal notes how Pierce conducted months of research into areas such as anatomy, surgery, criminology and electrodynamics to create his design. The result was a machine-age aesthetic which, by 1931, had become the dominant force in applied arts. Whilst Skal and many other critics charted the influences of *Frankenstein*'s aesthetic, there was far less interest in charting how the story developed.

Although little information exists on Universal's story department structure, from a glance at the industry as a whole it is evident that screenwriters occupied one of the lowest positions in the industry. Before the establishment of the Screen Writers Guild in 1933, writers were underpaid and afforded little creative agency. Writing about his experiences at Goldwyn Pictures, Elmer Rice states in his autobiography: 'All story material was channeled through (Jack) Hawks (story department lead), who vetoed every innovation with the comment that it was not pictures. Everything went into the old sausage machine and it all came out looking

and tasting alike.’²⁸ Unlike other forms of creative writing, where the author’s words are sacrosanct, the screenwriters’ ideas were always subject to a number of competing agencies and concerns, be that economic imperatives of production, studio politics, censorship issues or directorial input. As I discussed in the first chapter, when *Dracula* was purchased from Hamilton Deane, it was passed through a number of scenarists who each provided treatments and scripts of various lengths for consideration. The script that was selected was then edited by Garrett Fort who received sole screen credit.²⁹ This system both mitigated and concealed the work of screenwriters during the Hollywood studio era.

Due to the nature of screenwriting during this period the story development of *Frankenstein* is complex and unclear. Differing accounts of this early stage of the film’s production exist in both secondary material and retrospective accounts by the film’s creative personnel. According to David J. Skal, once the studio obtained the rights to Webling’s play, they abandoned many elements of it, instead turning to a treatment written by French director Robert Florey who was originally assigned to the project. Florey’s treatment eliminated all pathos and cast the creature as a silent and terrifying monster. A letter to Rudy Behlmer in 1977, I consulted at the Margaret Herrick archive, confirms this account, with Florey claiming to have never seen either Peggy Webling’s play or the Americanization of it by John L. Balderston.³⁰ However, Philip Riley, editor of the published *Frankenstein* scripts, conducted an interview with Florey in 1971 in which he states ‘The only guidelines I had was the Balderston play written in April of 1931 and my own devices.’³¹ This conflicting account highlights the issues of authorship when multiple screenwriters were involved on one project, yet through a further examination of the succeeding screenplay drafts it may be possible to assign agency.

Dated 10 April 1931, just two days after the purchase of Webling's play by Universal, the history of Balderston's adaptation of *Frankenstein* is undocumented. For this chapter I was able to source a copy of both Balderston's and Florey's screenplays from Bear Manor Media, who print on request previously unpublished scripts. According to the introduction by Philip J. Riley, *Frankenstein; A Play* by John L. Balderston and Garrett Fort (1931) was an Americanization of Peggy Webling's play with Balderston reputedly hoping to repeat the success of his adaptation of *Dracula*. Like Webling's adaptation, the play opens with Frankenstein's experiments in Inglostadt, but in Balderston's version, Fritz and Henry are shown working together during a thunderstorm before being interrupted by Victor and Dr Waldman. Balderston's setting is described as having 'a litter of bottles, retorts, pestles and mortars, burners and other paraphernalia of a laboratory. A skull on one of the shelves, the bones of a hand on the other.'³² With lightning strikes and electrical sparks, Balderston's opening allowed for far more spectacle than Webling's drawing room drama. This indicates that Balderston's adaptation intended to be a more animated and dramatic rendition of the story that would work well on stage or screen. Other key differences between the two versions include the addition of a love triangle between Elizabeth (renamed Amelia), Clerval and Frankenstein, and subtle changes to the monster's reaction to Katrina's death which impact on the play's climax. The death of Katrina remains largely the same in each version. However, it is when the creature brings her body back from the river and discovers that he has killed her that Balderston's version begins to differ thematically from Webling's original. Finding he has accidentally killed his only friend, the creature shows anger towards Frankenstein, exclaiming 'Not tell me shin-ing wa-ter kill', and when Frankenstein threatens to kill him, he snarls back 'i...kill mas-ter'.³³ Though subtle, the addition of angry retorts

resumes the pattern of violence and resentment seen in former adaptations and culminates in the play's final scene.

Like the novel, the creature's response and solution to his isolation is for Frankenstein to make him a mate. Balderston's play therefore does not end on a manhunt for the creature, but with an additional scene set six months later. This scene opens in a laboratory high up in the Swiss mountains, where Frankenstein is being held prisoner by the creature and forced to continue his experiments in order to make him a companion. In this final scene Waldman, Amelia and Victor discover him and persuade him to abandon his work. However, when the creature enters and sees that Frankenstein has destroyed his machinery he murders him in a fit of rage, snapping his neck and throwing him out of the window. The play concludes with the same religious high note introduced by Webling with Dr Waldman's preaching. The creature breaks down in grief at the thought of forever being alone, sobbing 'Master – master – not mean kill, Master – not hate you! Woman – no woman for Frankenstein – Alone.'³⁴ Waldman stands before him with a crucifix in hand showing no fear. The creature enquires about the significance of the cross and they begin a theological discussion in which Waldman explains the notion of the soul and the afterlife, and urges him to pray. As he does the creature falls back against the broken machinery and is struck by lightning. Waldman provides the play with its concluding statement, 'There was no other way. The machine that brought him to life has killed him. This was God's answer – His voice was in the thunderbolt.'³⁵

As my analysis of the script reveals, Balderston's adaptation of *Frankenstein* borrowed narrative and thematic elements from both Webling's play and Shelley's novel. However,

like former adaptations of *Frankenstein*, his version is a simplification used for the display of melodrama, spectacle and violence. Balderston's involvement in the script development of *Frankenstein* was short-lived. Nonetheless, twenty years after the release of the film, both Balderston and the estate of Peggy Webling attempted to sue Universal for a portion of *Frankenstein's* profits. Weaver, Brunas and Brunas' account of the legal battle, and the existence of two separate versions of the play, suggests that both Webling and Balderston's compositions were purchased. Indeed, the credits to the film attest to this complexity with five people being listed for the story's development. They state, 'based on a composition by John L. Balderston, From the novel by Mrs Percy B. Shelley, adapted from the play by Peggy Webling.' Universal finally settled for a sum believed to be in excess of \$100,000, despite the film bearing little resemblance to either former adaptations.³⁶

Robert Florey's *Frankenstein* (23 May 1931)

Born in France, Florey was a French director who was known in the industry for his work with The Theatre du Grand-Guignol de Paris, a small theatre in Paris which specialized in sadistic, shocking, explicit, and violent melodramas. Moving to the United States in 1921, he worked initially as a journalist for *Cinemazine* however, by the mid-1920s he had moved into film production as an assistant director at MGM. As Weaver Brunas and Brunas note, Florey was approached by Richard Schayer, head of Universal's story department, to adapt *Frankenstein*.³⁷ However, the resulting draft dated 23 May 1931, shows very little resemblance to either of the plays Universal originally acquired as possible sources. Rather it is clear from an examination of his early screenplay draft that Florey envisioned a far more violent, expressionistic and thematically simplistic rendering of Shelley's original story.

Whilst previous stage adaptations begin at Frankenstein's laboratory or home before moving swiftly onto the creation sequence, Florey opted to begin his with a chilling and expressionistic opening far more appropriate for the cinematic form. The initial directions state:

The sun has just set behind a line of poplars which stand sentinel-like, in silhouette against a cloud-streaked sky. At the summit of the hill are four rude crosses, tilted at crazy angles, giving the suggestion of a small and ancient cemetery. Towards these crosses slowly toils a band of peasants about eight in all. Four of which bear a coffin upon their shoulders [...] The pall-bearers are stalwart peasant types, in central European garb: the others are bent with age, their sharp hawk faces seamed and lined like withered apples.³⁸

The camera moves into a medium shot, and then swiftly forward to a close shot of Henry Frankenstein who is described as 'evidently of a high type of intelligence, but with the glittering eye of a fanatic.' The camera then pauses on 'the pinched face of a dwarf [who] appears below his shoulder level.'³⁹ Both Henry and his dwarf assistant Fritz, wait for the mourners and gravediggers to leave before setting about exhuming the corpse. The scene then dissolves to reveal Henry and Fritz wheeling the body along a road in the moonlight before coming across 'the figure of a hanged man, swinging slightly from the gibbet.'⁴⁰ Henry commands Fritz to climb the gibbet and cut the body free, the dwarf hesitates, fearful, but Henry goads him 'Well fool! Are you afraid?' He then severs the rope with his blade and 'there is a thud as the body strikes the ground'. Henry examines the body but tells Fritz 'No use – the neck's broken.'⁴¹

By including this scene before the creation sequence, the audience's anticipation of first encountering the monster was greatly enhanced. However, despite its marked difference to

what had been staged before, a comparison with earlier scripts reveals Florey drew inspiration from scenes recounted in earlier adaptations but never staged. A key source for this scene is Balderston's composition, in which Henry relates to Victor and Dr Waldman how he sourced materials for his experiment. He states 'my task was horrible, horrible. I have profaned the resting places of the newly-dead. With my own hands I have dragged bodies to my workshop.'⁴² However, he explains that many of them were of no use having died from old age or disease so he turned to those who had died of a 'violent death.' It is at this point that Dr Waldman exclaims 'That thief, who was hanged in chains on the gibbet above Goldstadt! The body disappeared!'⁴³ Henry confirms his suspicions, admitting that he stole the body, but explains 'strangulation defeated me. When the spinal cord is snapped, and the chain of nerves that connects the brain and the body is broken, I can do nothing.'⁴⁴ By dramatizing what was merely narrated before, Florey was able to begin his adaptation with a disturbing sequence of events that effectively sets the tone for the rest of the film.

As Skal notes in *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, Florey 'developed a script in which the monster emerged as a pure brute, devoid of even the half articulated pathos that Balderston and Webling had given it.'⁴⁵ One of the ways he achieved this was to revert back to Peake's silencing of the creature and attribute the monster's characteristics to Henry's use of a criminal brain. Additionally, rather than the one morally ambiguous death in Webling and Balderston's treatment of the story, Florey inserts four violent murders into his adaptation. The most disturbing of these is the massacre of an entire family, omitted from the final film. Even by today's standards, 'Sequence J' is shocking, depicting an unprovoked murder and implied rape. However, like the opening sequence, a comparative

analysis of former drafts shows that the scene was a transformation of an event narrated in Balderston's adaptation of the novel.

In Balderston's play, the monster confronts Frankenstein at his home and relates how he watched a family in a cottage and learned both language and social customs. He describes and mimes looking in on them in their cottage whilst Frankenstein narrates: 'for weeks you watched. You heard these people, who didn't suspect the horror that was listening, talking about their daily life, you saw how men eat and sleep, ideas came to you.' The creature nods and then replies 'I saw man... wo-man... man... mate, bed. You Fran-ken-stein's God... Frank-en-stein- in pray – God give mate.'⁴⁶ In just a few lines of dialogue the whole narrative of the creature and De Lacey family is shortened and simplified. Like Shelley's novel, the creature witnesses companionship and therefore recognizes his own social exclusion. Yet, whereas Mary Shelley's creation 'shows himself to be a supreme rhetorician, who controls the antithesis and oxymorons that express the pathos of his existence,'⁴⁷ Balderston reduced his monster to little more than a Peeping Tom, voyeuristically watching an intimate scene.

Like the graveyard sequence, Florey again uses Balderston's composition as inspiration, dramatizing a scene previously narrated, except in the case of Johann and Gretel he assigned it a far more violent and horrifying outcome. 'Sequence J' follows the monster's escape from the laboratory and the murder of Dr Waldman. Set in the interior of a peasant cottage, the audience is afforded a simple family scene, peppered with a little sexual suggestiveness. Johann and Gretel are getting ready for bed, we see Gretel check in on her two sleeping children, 'two and three years old respectively – curly-haired adorable looking youngsters,'

before looking to her husband 'with an intimate smile.'⁴⁸ The camera then gives a brief shot of the exterior where the monster appears and moves towards the cottage, building dramatic tension. Back inside Gretel is shown partially undressed, combing her hair which 'hangs in flaxen luxuriance almost to her waist. Although pretending to be oblivious to Johann's presence, she is keeping an eye on him in the mirror.'⁴⁹ Florey describes how Johann is hardly able to keep his hands off her and begins to remove the straps of her chemise, before taking her towards the bed. In a quick cut to the window the audience is shown the monster's eyes widening as he watches them. The camera offers a number of suggestively placed close ups of the end of the bed and items of clothing, 'there is the sound of the bed spring squeaking,' 'the chemise is flung into camera,' before focusing in on 'just the two faces of Johann and Gretel, very large and filling the screen, one above the other.'⁵⁰ Suddenly, the monster bursts into the scene, grabbing and killing Johann before turning to Gretel. She attempts to escape but he catches her and in the struggle the lamp is smashed, casting the scene into darkness. We hear a number of screams from Gretel before a faint moan and silence. The scene then ends with a flash shot of the children. They are 'sitting bolt upright in bed, arms around each other, trembling with fright, wide-eyed, listening, too terrified to utter a sound.'⁵¹

By including this final and highly disturbing image of fear, Florey perhaps envisioned his audience similarly clutching each other in terror. Although shocking, before the advent of censorship such violence and suggestiveness was commonplace. As Thomas Doherty notes in *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema*, 'in pre-Code Hollywood, even what the spectator *doesn't* see is more nakedly suggested.'⁵² However, according to a number of memos sent between the Universal producer Henry

Henigson, and story department manager Dick Schayer, this sequence would never have made it into the final film. On 11 June 1931, Henigson writes, ‘Sequence J. is a long sequence built for the purpose of getting the monster out on his first of a series of ravages. I am wondering whether this entire sequence cannot be eliminated and in an Impressionistic way [...] get over everything we want to.’⁵³ This was obviously passed on to the script writers since a memo to Schayer from Garrett Fort two days later offers a reply to Henigson’s misgivings. Fort proposes that Sequence J ‘can be cut down to a possible five or six impressionistic shots’ but attempts to persuade them of the merits of the scene, ‘to show a nice, light little scene of family life to point up the horror of such an unexpected horror stalking abroad.’⁵⁴ He obviously felt quite passionate about its inclusion since he states ‘I feel the sequence is not only sound but damned interesting dramatically and will be ok when cut down a little.’⁵⁵

Aside from comments about the use of ‘Teutonic’ language, scientific references and shot compositions, Henigson’s assessment of Florey’s script was largely positive. He summarises in his memo, ‘all in all, I consider the script an exceptionally good one and with some comedy relief, has every good quality.’⁵⁶ However in an unfortunate play of studio politics, Florey was replaced by the British director James Whale. This change is well documented by other critics. According to David Skal, James Whale’s first film at Universal, *Waterloo Bridge* (1931), had so impressed Carl Laemmle, Jr. that the producer offered Whale the pick of any project to which the studio owned rights, and he chose *Frankenstein*.⁵⁷ Unfortunately for Florey, his one-picture contract did not stipulate a specific title, so he was reassigned to shoot *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932). However, as this

chapter has shown thus far, his contribution to the production was extensive, providing a solid framework for the final film.

James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)

A number of critics now lament the lack of credit Florey's contribution to *Frankenstein* received. As Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas argue, 'Florey's script outlines virtually every scene in the release print, with some minor adjustments.'⁵⁸ However on examination, those 'minor adjustments' had a major impact on the tone of the finished film. For his adaptation, Florey had injected some excitement that could fully utilise an expressionistic style. However, his script had taken a demonizing approach to the monster itself. As has been examined in this chapter, an integral part of Shelley's novel, and the popular conception of *Frankenstein*, is the sympathy the reader feels for the creature, which though hideous, is innocent and desperately seeks companionship. All but Florey's script work with this theme to one degree or another, with Peake even showing the monster's sensibility to music. According to James Curtis it was Whale who was responsible for reinserting these themes back into the production. He writes: 'Where others regarded their monsters as menacing plot devices, Whale considered his as fully-dimensional characters and invested them with the complexities of human emotion.'⁵⁹ By investing a degree of sympathy in the monster Whale was able to recreate the spirit of the novel. His joint role as screenwriter and director meant that he was able to elevate the horror genre and to manipulate the audience on an entirely new level.

When visiting the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles, I found that no shooting script of *Frankenstein* survives so my reading of Whale's contribution has been taken from the

finished film. The scene where a change in tone is most discernable is the murder of the little girl Maria. As it has been illustrated throughout this chapter, the death of the innocent has always been a crucial moment in the narrative of *Frankenstein*. In the novel and in Richard Brinsley Peake's play, it is the murder of William that sparks the tragedy that will follow. Webling and Balderston constructed a similar scene with the death of Frankenstein's sister Katrina, however they opted to attribute her death to a tragic misunderstanding rather than a morally ambiguous murder. However, when Florey wrote his screenplay draft, he changed the death of the innocent into a cold-blooded murder in tune with the demonizing approach he had taken to the monster.

The Maria scene in Florey's adaptation directly follows the murder of Johann and Gretel as examined above. It begins with a number of shots of people celebrating the marriage of Frankenstein in his village before dissolving through to an exterior shot of a mountain cabin. This is used to geographically and temporally situate the scene whilst forming a stark contrast to the horror the audience has just witnessed. Outside the cabin a man 'Ludwig' swings a little girl in the air before placing her on a bench outside the hut and telling her to wait while he checks on his bear-traps. As he leaves the directions describe how 'she slides down from the bench and stands watching him, with a little pout.'⁶⁰ After a little while she gets up and wanders aimlessly down to the lake in the background and begins to pluck flowers by the shore. A little further along the audience sees the monster. 'He is hot and disheveled. He gets down on his hands and knees and starts to drink from the lake like an animal.'⁶¹ After quenching his thirst, he spots Maria, rises to his feet, and starts slowly towards her. However, her reaction to his presence is one of surprise rather than horror, signifying her innocent and trusting nature. Smiling timidly at him she says 'I am Maria'.

The monster looks down at her with an ‘odd expression on his face’ and as the directions state:

EXT. MED. CLOSE SHOT.

Maria looks up at the monster, a little puzzled by his silence. He hasn’t moved, but still stands regarding her as if he’d never seen anything quite like her before. She holds up an iris and says:

MARIA

“Would you like one of my flowers?”

EXT. CU MONSTER,

His eyes dropping from Maria’s face to the flower she is holding up for him. Without changing the expression on his face he starts to advance towards her

EXT. CU MARIA

Holding up the flower smiling. The monster’s shadow falls across her face – then his two hands come into CU, reaching towards her.

FADE OUT ⁶²

In Florey’s adaptation, Maria’s death is a case of unprovoked violent murder devoid of any pathos or moral ambiguity. Although the monster pauses before killing the girl, it could be argued that Florey intended this not as a moral dilemma on the monster’s part, but merely as a device to heighten the sense of tension. It is this scene that is replicated in Whale’s film, in order to instigate the film’s climax. However, Whale alters its tone and outcome considerably, and from an analysis of the finished film it is evident that he amalgamated elements from both Florey and Webling’s adaptations to reinstate Shelley’s original theme of sympathy into the text without altering the narrative excessively.

Most of the film is marked by two styles, the expressionistic for the monster’s rampages and the more naturalistic for Frankenstein’s personal life away from his experiments. Andrew Tudor proposes in *Monsters and Mad Scientists* (1989) that this was characteristic

for the period, 'in which the orderly world of the known is stylistically counterpoised to the disordered and threatening domain of the unknown.'⁶³ However, the scene with the child Maria breaks with this pattern. The scene is shot in daylight with the mountains in the background, the little girl Maria is kneeling in the sunshine on the grassy bank of a large lake. The monster comes upon Maria, and despite his size and appearance, she shows no fear. She asks if he will play with her and takes his hand. Offering him a bunch of flowers, a close up of the monster's face shows that he is evidently delighted with the first small act of kindness he has ever received. Maria begins to throw the blooms in the water to illustrate how they float. The monster does likewise with great excitement until he runs out of flowers. He then takes Maria into his arms and throws her into the water. As he turns round to face the camera the audience is afforded a view of his terror and regret at having inadvertently killed the child before he runs away. This scene shows a marked similarity to Webling and Balderston's treatment of Katrina. The circumstances are very similar: the emphasis on natural beauty, the water, the creature's fascination with floating, and the accidental drowning of an innocent girl. If Whale had afforded the monster a voice, he would no doubt have exclaimed 'Not tell me shin-ing wa-ter kill.' Instead the audience reads the monster's panic and remorse in his face. No longer is there a lengthy and heavy scene in which the creature has the nature of death explained to him. Instead it is shortened and simplified and with Karloff's excellent skills of expression, the moral ambiguity of his offense is reinstated.

According to an interview with Marilyn Harris, the child who played Maria, the scene proved difficult to shoot. She recalls how the first time the Monster threw her in, she couldn't get underwater: 'I had too many clothes on! I tried to get under, but I just couldn't, because of the petticoats and stockings, and shoes, and what little girls wear.'⁶⁴ According to the

interviewer Gregory Mank, Marilyn never knew that Karloff then tried to convince Whale that the 'dear old Monster' need not kill Little Maria at all. The crew, emotional about the child's death scene, sided with the actor, but Whale insisted on the drowning: 'You see, it's all part of the ritual,' he argued.⁶⁵ This suggests that Whale was acutely aware of the importance of the scene to the film's overarching themes. Like each of the adaptations before it, the death of the innocent forms both the turning point in the narrative of *Frankenstein* and underpins its philosophical leanings.

The Maria scene is in many ways the crux of Whale's *Frankenstein*. However, after an unsuccessful preview in Santa Barbara, in which one reviewer exclaimed 'I won't forgive Junior Laemmle or James Whale for permitting the monster to drown a little girl before my very eyes,'⁶⁶ Universal executives sought to trim the scene. According to David Lewis, the proposal was to end the scene before the drowning, but without it the audience was left to imagine what he had done before he drowned her. Couple this with the later shot of the little girl carried through the streets with her tights torn, and the implication was that he had raped her.⁶⁷ According to actress Marilyn Harris:

I was told after the preview that the reason they cut out the scene where I go into the water was because many women fainted. It was the shocking thing of the day. But before they cut it, I saw it, and the expression on the Monster's face, and his hands trying to find me in the water, showed he didn't mean to do what he did. He thought I would float like the flower, and was as shocked as anybody that I didn't.⁶⁸

Whale fought for the scene's inclusion, arguing that without it the audience's perception would be the reverse of what he (and Mary Shelley) had intended.⁶⁹ He won, but his victory was short-lived. State censors in Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania cut it anyway and in 1938 when the film was reissued, stricter censorship codes saw the scene cut from

the negatives. For fifty years, *Frankenstein* was not the film James Whale made and it is difficult to imagine another film whose essential theme was so dramatically altered. In 1985 the scene was rediscovered and reinstated from an original release trim.

Despite the controversy that surrounded its release, *Frankenstein* was a success receiving largely favourable reviews and earning \$1.4 million in box office rentals by June 1932.⁷⁰ *Variety* proposed that the film looked like ‘Dracula plus, touching a new peak in horror plays and handled in production with supreme craftsmanship.’⁷¹ Similarly, *Time* described the doctor’s laboratory as ‘amazingly macabre’ and praises Whale for directing the film in the ‘Grand Guignol manner, with as many queer sounds, dark corners, false faces and cellar stairs as could possibly be inserted.’⁷² Additionally, particular mention is made of the Maria scene with the reviewer writing simply: ‘Good shot: Karloff sitting down with a little girl, later shown as a corpse, to play with flowers.’⁷³ However, as this chapter has illustrated, James Whale’s creative agency was both limited and influenced by former conceptions and misconceptions of Shelley’s original novel.

Conclusion

Universal’s finished product shows an unequal and selective response to the adaptations the studio owned, or the novel on which it was based. However, a closer examination demonstrates that whilst Whale’s film differed narratively and thematically from what had gone before, it was still intrinsically linked to former adaptations. My examination of former theatrical productions from 1823 to 1927 has revealed how the narrative of *Frankenstein* evolved over the course of a century, with each replicating and changing elements to appeal to contemporary audiences. By 1931 Florey sought to create both a simplistic and

demonized view of the creature, but he did so by selectively extracting passages from former adaptations, and altering them to further his thematic aims. In contrast to this, Whale made only minor adjustments to Florey's screenplay. However, with just minimal changes he transformed the way an audience related to his monster and highlighted the moral ambiguity that lay at the heart of Shelley's original story.

As this chapter has revealed, the death of the innocent forms both the turning point in the narrative of *Frankenstein* and emphasises its philosophical leanings. It is the circumstances of the death, and the creature's response to it, that decides both the outcome of the narrative and how the audience will identify with the creature. Each of the writers, from Peake to Whale, chose to transform and adapt this incident in different ways and this in turn transformed the relationship the audience had with the creature. From the malevolent monster of Florey's screenplay draft to the pitied and tortured soul of Webling's melodrama, the death of the innocent exposes the inherent characteristics of each writer's creature, and their relationship to Shelley's original varies accordingly.

In the case of an iconic text like *Frankenstein*, film adaptations are merely one kind of treatment in a continuing succession of cultural transformations undergone by a text after its publication and dissemination. Whilst an examination of the intertextual nature of successive adaptations has indeed illuminated the evolution of ideas, the inherent differences between each adaptation also suggests that in the case of Universal's *Frankenstein*, each writer possessed and asserted a degree of autonomy. This in turn contradicts what we understand about Hollywood's mode of standardization during this period. At the heart of *Frankenstein* is an amalgamation of competing creative visions that

say more about how each writer related to Shelley's original story rather than any particular industrial concerns.

However, the adaptation of *Frankenstein* was very much of its time. Like the politicians and bankers responsible for the horror of the Great Depression, the story of unbridled ambition which unleashed forces that preyed on innocent people possibly played into the general public's feelings of resentment – except in *Frankenstein*, mankind had the added satisfaction of tracking down and killing the monster. The film furthered the popularity of horror trend, driving innovation and the selection of similar story material. However, despite the popularity of such films, the horror cycle was relatively short-lived, with conservative criticism gaining ground by 1934. The mid-1930s ushered in the prestige picture, and a different mode of adaptation. Consequently, the next chapter will present an investigation of MGM's *David Copperfield*, examining how the amalgamation of high production values and literary prestige was used to elevate the cultural status of the industry.

Notes for Chapter Two

¹ Tieber, "A Story is not a Story but a Conference," 225.

² Sherry, "Adaptation studies through screenwriting studies," 13.

³ Boozer, *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, 1.

⁴ Croker, "Frankenstein by Mary Shelley," 379.

⁵ "Frankenstein," *The British Critic*, 432-38.

⁶ Scott, "Frankenstein," 613-20.

⁷ Raub, "Frankenstein and the Mute Figure of Melodrama," 437.

⁸ Raub, "Frankenstein and the Mute Figure of Melodrama," 437.

⁹ Stephen, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 98.

¹⁰ Brooks, "Godlike Science/Unhallowed Arts," 592.

¹¹ Raub, "Frankenstein and the Mute Figure of Melodrama," 438.

¹² Edwards, "Corporate Fictions," 117.

¹³ Rice, *British Music and the French Revolution*, 50.

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- ¹⁴ “Novel into Drama and onto the Stage,” *Presumption: or, the Fate of Frankenstein, Romantic Circles*, last modified August 2001, <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/peake/apparatus/drama.html>.
- ¹⁵ Forry, “Dramatizations of Frankenstein, 1821-1986: A Comprehensive List,” 63.
- ¹⁶ Forry, “Dramatizations of Frankenstein, 1821-1986: A Comprehensive List,” 63.
- ¹⁷ Skal, *The Monster Show*, 97.
- ¹⁸ Friedman and Kavey, *Monstrous Progeny*, 86.
- ¹⁹ Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 37.
- ²⁰ Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 169.
- ²¹ Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 115.
- ²² Webling, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, 21.
- ²³ Webling, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, 25-26.
- ²⁴ Webling, *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre*, 26.
- ²⁵ Bolton, *Women Writers Dramatized*, 280.
- ²⁶ Skal, *The Monster Show*, 128
- ²⁷ Letters from Robert Florey regarding *Frankenstein* (1931), April 25, 1977; America’s Favorite Movies, Correspondence 1976-1980, File 6.f-36; Rudy Behlmer papers; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ²⁸ Rice, *Minority Report: An Autobiography*, 179.
- ²⁹ Skal, *The Monster Show*, 134.
- ³⁰ Letters from Robert Florey regarding *Frankenstein* (1931), April 25, 1977; America’s Favorite Movies Correspondence 1976-1980, File 6.f -36; Rudy Behlmer Papers; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³¹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 10.
- ³² Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 8.
- ³³ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 103.
- ³⁴ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 103.
- ³⁵ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 105.
- ³⁶ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 44.
- ³⁷ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 40.
- ³⁸ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 21.
- ³⁹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 22.
- ⁴⁰ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 25.
- ⁴¹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 27.
- ⁴² Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 19.
- ⁴³ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 20.
- ⁴⁴ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 21.
- ⁴⁵ Skal, *The Monster Show*, 128
- ⁴⁶ Balderston and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 90.
- ⁴⁷ Brooks, “Godlike Science/Unhallowed Arts,” 201.
- ⁴⁸ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 133.
- ⁴⁹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 134.
- ⁵⁰ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 135-136.
- ⁵¹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 137.
- ⁵² Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood*, 11.
- ⁵³ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 194.
- ⁵⁴ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 200.

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- ⁵⁵ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 200.
- ⁵⁶ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 194.
- ⁵⁷ Skal, *The Monster Show*, 129.
- ⁵⁸ Weaver, Brunas, and Brunas, *Universal Horrors*, 40.
- ⁵⁹ Curtis, *James Whale: A New World of Gods and Monsters*, 3.
- ⁶⁰ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 143.
- ⁶¹ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 145.
- ⁶² Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 143.
- ⁶³ Florey and Fort, *Frankenstein*, 146.
- ⁶⁴ Mank, "Little Maria Remembers," 328.
- ⁶⁵ Mank, "Little Maria Remembers," 328.
- ⁶⁶ Meehan, "Frankenstein," *Motion Picture Herald*, November 14, 1931, n.p.
- ⁶⁷ Towlson, *Subversive Horror Cinema*, 40.
- ⁶⁸ Mank, "Little Maria Remembers," 328.
- ⁶⁹ Gatiss, *James Whale: a biography, or, The would-be gentleman*, 85.
- ⁷⁰ Jacobs, *Boris Karloff: More than a Monster*, 107.
- ⁷¹ "Frankenstein," *Variety*, January 1, 1931, n.p.
- ⁷² "Frankenstein," *Time*, December 14, 1931, n.p.
- ⁷³ "Frankenstein," *Time*, December 14, 1931, n.p.

CHAPTER THREE:

Animating Phiz: Victorian illustration in MGM's *David Copperfield* (1935)

This next chapter provides an examination of *David Copperfield*, revealing how filmmakers relied heavily on the original nineteenth-century illustrations of the novel to inform the film's production design. In the matter of visual paratexts, the work of Charles Dickens may be regarded as occupying a unique position. The original periodical publications present a remarkable array of illustrations, and when the countless engravings specifically prepared for subsequent book editions is remembered, it is impossible not to appreciate how illustrators such as Cruikshank and 'Phiz' imparted reality to the persons imagined by Dickens. For nineteenth-century readers, the ability to realise the outward appearances of Pickwick, Fagin, and Micawber was perhaps more indebted to those illustrations than to Dickens' own character descriptions. Yet despite their importance, very few critics have chosen to examine how, or if, the existence of original illustrations has affected how filmmakers bring Dickens' characters to life on screen. Therefore, following on from my investigation into screenwriting at Universal, the intention of this next chapter is to provide an in-depth study of the production design of MGM's *David Copperfield* (1935), examining how such visual paratexts impacted on the adaptation process.

As my database of adaptations reveals, *David Copperfield* was among the first classic literary adaptations made by MGM in the 1930s. Along with *Treasure Island* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, it signaled the beginning of what Mark Glancy identifies as the 'costumes and classics' cycle,¹ which drew on historical narratives and popular literary texts to bolster the

studio's cultural status. Such films exemplified all the costly production methods and technical creativity of a major Hollywood studio at its height. Examples produced at MGM during the 1930s, based on a British nineteenth-century text, included *Treasure Island*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Captains Courageous*, each with budgets of close to a million dollars.² These films allowed MGM to showcase its talents and technical prowess: marrying technical creativity and talent with highbrow subjects and sources.

In contrast to the low-budget formulaic picture I examined in the previous chapter, the transposition of a literary text into a prestige picture required a different approach to adaptation, with far more focus placed on a film's production values and verisimilitude. A large percentage of the budget for *David Copperfield* was spent on production design through the studio's art department, with the sets alone amounting to ten percent of its total budget.³ At MGM the head of the art department was Cedric Gibbons, who held the position of supervising art director at the studio from 1924 to 1956. MGM's own magazine *The Distributor* acknowledges the importance of Gibbons' role in a 1943 article, stating that Gibbons was responsible for 'the majority of all the thousands of dollars spent each year to make MGM pictures' and his actions impacted on the activity of '70% of MGM's 4500 studio employees.'⁴ Yet, despite its importance to the studio, both production design and the role of art director has received relatively little academic attention.

To date the most current enquiries into production design during the Hollywood studio era are Mark Shiel's chapter in *Art Direction and Production Design* (2015), Christina Wilson's article 'Cedric Gibbons: Architect of Hollywood's Golden Age' (2013), and Gabrielle Esperdy's article 'From Instruction to Consumption: Architecture and Design in Hollywood

Movies of the 1930s' (2007). However, the most exhaustive account of production design during this era is found in an earlier work, *Hollywood Art: Art Direction in the Days of the Great Studios* (1990) by Beverly Heisner. Split into examinations of individual studios and film genres, Heisner's historical account of film design positions the art director as an artist who contributed to the visual quality of a film, determining its mood, atmosphere, and ultimately success. However, when looking at MGM and the work of Cedric Gibbons, each of these former studies focus on contemporary designs rather than the work that went into recreating different historical periods.

Beyond these texts, short descriptions of production design exist in works that examine the studio system as a whole, such as the work of Tino Balio, David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, Kristin Thompson, and Douglas Gomery. Case studies of *David Copperfield* such as Steve Wurtzler's 'David Copperfield (1935) and the US curriculum' (2003) and Guerric De Bona's 'A Victorian New Deal: Dickens, the Great Depression and MGM's *David Copperfield* (1935)' (2010), also feature brief accounts of the design process. However, each of these sources only give partial insights into what was an essential element of the film's production, and vital to our understanding of the adaptation process. Therefore, the sources for this chapter are primarily derived from archival research I conducted at the Margaret Herrick library in Los Angeles, which contains production files, marketing material and historic publications such as Stefan Verk's interview with Gibbons in a 1948 edition of *American Artist*, and *A study guide to the critical appreciation of the photoplay version of Charles Dickens' novel David Copperfield* published by the National Council of English Teachers in 1934. Such sources will allow a more detailed history of the adaptation process

to emerge, looking at the creative process of transposing a Dickensian world on screen, and the cultural impact of the adapted text.

What this chapter seeks to do is evaluate the significance of art direction to adaptation in this era. Employing archival research alongside close textual analyses of key scenes, this chapter will examine how filmmakers used original illustrations to inform the film's narrative structure, set design and casting. This will include examinations of the work by Hablot Knight Browne who illustrated for Dickens between 1836 and 1861, and the proceeding illustrations by Frederick Barnard who worked between 1872-1878. The chapter will then consider critical reviews and the development of educational study guides. In my survey of the industry, in Chapter One, I noted that *David Copperfield* was produced in a period when the industry faced mounting criticism of motion picture content. Therefore, the central aim of this chapter is to question whether the filmmaker's insistence on matching characters and settings to original illustrations contributed to the film's sense of authenticity, allowing the studio to respond to changing social concerns, and bolster its standing in the industry and wider society.

Art Direction at MGM

When looking to the studios of Hollywood in the 1930s, none were more commercially and culturally successful than MGM. As Douglas Gomery notes in his assessment of the studio, 'MGM is often referred to as the Tiffany of studios – high class and elegant.'⁵ During the depression, when the industry was facing huge losses, MGM was the only studio to stay in profit, offering spectators visions of an ideal and glamorous America in which to escape. Gomery attributes the studio's success to the work of its management at Loews. Headed by

Nicholas Schenck, this group of executives supervised all corporate tasks and left film production to the studio boss Louis B. Mayer. Mayer was skilled at developing a sophisticated image for the studio, placing its stars in consistently slick productions for which MGM became famous. As John Douglas Eames notes in *The MGM Story* (1977), ‘of the 1934 total of about 4000 employees, there were 61 stars and featured players, 17 directors and 51 writers under contract.’⁶ Under Mayer's management, MGM accumulated the largest concentration of leading writers, directors and artists in Hollywood as well as investing huge sums in the studio’s facilities.

Steve Bingen’s *MGM: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot* (2011) is an illustrated history of the sound stages and outdoor sets where MGM produced many of its films. His work gives an indication of the size and investment that went into producing films at the studio. During the 1930s, MGM was a self-sufficient, self-proclaimed ‘city within a city’ built on six separate lots and spread across 185 fenced and gated acres. The forty-four acres of Lot 1 contained most of the studio’s 195 permanent buildings. These included production support offices, the publicity department, twenty-eight sound stages, laboratories, and scores of other departments essential to the production and manufacture of motion pictures. The Research Department averaged up to five hundred fact-checking questions a day to insure authenticity in scripts, costume and set design.⁷ The Property Department was the world’s largest, and maintained more than a million items from every country and historical period, and the Art Department, headed by Cedric Gibbons, was renowned for producing the most lavish and detailed sets that served to create MGM’s association with wealth and class. For the film *David Copperfield*, the sets alone cost \$104,038; amounting to ten percent of its total budget,⁸ yet set design was just one element of the art department’s involvement in a

film's production. Since the silent era, this department had influence over all aspects of the film's mise-en-scène, with a large number of experts who carried out the construction and dressing of sets, location scouting, and the supply of props. By the 1930s, these operations had grown to such an extent that the art department effectively controlled a large proportion of the studio and its outputs.

Son of a successful architect, Gibbons began his career in 1916 at the Edison studios before moving to Hollywood in 1918 to work at Goldwyn Pictures. Set designing at this time was a two-dimensional art; similar to the stage, in which flat painted surfaces were used in the background. Utilising his knowledge of architectural principles, Gibbons introduced depth and real perspective angles to set design, becoming known as the man 'who put the glove on the mantel,'⁹ a piece of social etiquette impossible to enact on film if the mantelpiece were painted. According to the writers of *The Art of Hollywood* (1979) this phrase 'became shorthand for the rapid development of practical constructed scenery in the next decade,'¹⁰ but they were also fitting symbols for Gibbons' insistence on style, quality and realism.

In 1924, when Goldwyn Pictures and Metro Pictures merged to form MGM, Gibbons was promoted to Supervising Art Director and had a clause inserted into his contract that every MGM film would carry his credit. His trend-setting began with the Art Deco films of the 1920s, and continued on into the 1930s when the introduction of incandescent lighting allowed for the development of the 'Big White Set.' Gibbons' contemporary and elegant set designs reflected a glamorous, moneyed, and ultra-modern urban America that depression-era spectators wanted to believe existed somewhere. Yet, despite the predominance of

investigations that examine Gibbons' contemporary designs, my own research suggests that the art director applied a similar ethos to his work on historical pictures.

Gibbons' insistence on both authentic and lavish designs is perhaps best seen in his designs for *Marie Antoinette* (Van Dyke, 1938), a prestige extravaganza that cost MGM \$2.3million to produce. As quoted in Tino Balio's *Grand Designs*, 'Mayer and Stromberg instructed Cedric Gibbons, the studio's head designer, to prepare the most exquisite and impressive settings that could be conceived.'¹¹ An article in the *Architectural Digest* proposed that Gibbons' designs showcased 'an improved version of Versailles.' Comparing the actual palace to what appeared on screen, the magazine enthused over the 'grand staircase that was unaccountably omitted from the original' and commented on how the 'authentic stucco moldings were too delicate to look impressive on film, so they were reproduced more boldly on the sets in order to achieve a convincing illusion of reality.'¹² Such comments imply that rather than adhering to historical accuracy, references to historical locations were used primarily to enhance the audience's enjoyment. I would argue that in making subtle changes to the representation of Versailles on screen, Gibbons was observing both the audience's expectations and their need for spectacle and excess.

However, taking into consideration Gibbons' unique contractual terms leads me to question what can be directly attributed to his agency. Mark Shiel's chapter in *Art Direction and Production Design* (2015) outlines the complex hierarchy that existed in a studio's art department, and notes that by the 1930s the department had grown to such an extent that the role of the Supervising Art Director was essentially a creative manager. At the height of the studio era, Gibbons' position entailed overseeing all the studio's productions at once,

‘approving sketches, models, plans, technical drawings, and the construction budgets and schedules proposed by each individual Unit Art Director.’¹³ Likewise, a *New York Times* article published in 1931 describes Gibbons sat in ‘sole command of his forces in spacious quarters on the second floor of one of the executive buildings on the crowded Metro lot.’¹⁴ From here he managed a department of forty staff members, which included six unit art directors, each working on one or two productions at a time.

Further publications suggest that art direction was a large-scale collaborative process that relied on the meticulous planning of budgets and careful management. Stefan Verk’s 1948 article on Gibbons details how the first step was the reading of the script:

This he carefully reads making a number of rough outs which, in private conference, are shown to the director of the picture. Gibbons explains what can and should be done and the director explains his requirements of space and movement. [...] After the initial conference, Gibbons appoints a unit art director to the picture, who is given a remarkably free hand, guided only by the wise and very experienced hand of Gibbons.¹⁵

This description of the process accords with other accounts of Gibbons’ work. In the foreword to *The Art of Hollywood*, Orson Welles comments that ‘the head of the Art Department was essentially a bureaucratic functionary and did little or none of the actual designing for which he took credit.’¹⁶ Rather than providing the designs for films himself, Gibbons had the task of marshalling the talents of other creative people to the huge task of designing the fifty-two pictures and forty shorts per year, which became the production norm for the studio by the late thirties. Therefore, since Gibbons took a supervisory role in a film’s art direction it is necessary to continue my investigation of film design and the adaptive process by turning to those who supported him.

Working in very close conjunction with the Art Department in these early stages of production was the Research Department, which was given the script ‘to ferret out every possible piece of pertinent information on the period.’¹⁷ To date, very little has been written about the research function of film production in the Hollywood studio era, despite being an essential part of the production process. One notable exception is Fred Andersen’s ‘The Warner Bros. Research Department: Putting History to Work in the Classic Studio Era’ published in *Public Historian* in 1995. In this article it is argued that such research departments contributed significantly to the production values and were responsible for increasing the historical content of hundreds of films, which were the most widely disseminated popular history of the twentieth-century.¹⁸ Andersen writes about the structure of Warner Bros. studio but there were undoubtedly some areas of similarity between Warner Bros. and MGM.

Andersen highlights that there were four main functions of the Warner Bros. research department: story development, production values, legal clearance, and publicity. Work surrounding story development tended to be primarily focused on the design and narrative features of historical pictures. The Research Department would be given an early draft of the script and then liaised with the writers on subsequent drafts. Legal clearance related to the art of not getting sued by still-living historical figures or their kin, and the promotion of historical films often needed a particular historical angle. However, as Andersen argues, the Research Department had its largest impact on a film’s production values, working with the production designers to create a sense of verisimilitude.

Using a case study of the historical film *Sea Hawk* (1940), set in the Elizabethan era, Andersen created a table of requests made to the department. This table is sub divided into types of request, such as ‘story,’ ‘dialogue,’ ‘custom and setting,’ and ‘ship construction.’ These requests are then separated into the stages of film production from ‘Story Adaptation’ to ‘Post-Production’ and allow us to build a picture of the process of research on a film’s production. Initially during a film’s story development, the predominant type of requests is ‘story’ and ‘custom and setting’. When entering the stage of pre-production, requests centering on props and sets rank the highest. Then, when the film begins production, unsurprisingly such requests drop dramatically since a well-organised production would have had everything prepared before beginning shooting. Finally, during post-production requests relating to publicity take up the most resources.

Andersen’s chart gives a coherent picture of the process of a film’s research, as well as the wider process of film production during the studio era. However, the chart also suggests that the desire for historical authenticity was principally focused on aesthetics rather than content, since most requests related to a film’s design rather than its story. Andersen gives one such example at the beginning of his article on *The Sea Hawk*. Learning of a plot to kill her uncle, the character Maria hastily summons a carriage to take her to Dover and warn him. The scene includes all the action and urgency you would expect from an Errol Flynn adventure, with the female character desperately and dramatically rushing off into the night. However, carriages were not at use during this period of the Elizabethan era, and would not become popular for another fifty years. In this case, the filmmakers decided that inaccuracy was necessary since the alternative of having her ride would not have worked and neither would sending a messenger. Every attention to detail was given on the production of *The*

Sea Hawk, from the use of playing cards in Spain to examples of men's costumes. However, as a work of entertainment and not pedagogy, the dramatic needs of the filmic form took precedence.

Like Warner Bros., MGM's Research Department at its peak could handle up to 500 queries a day to provide accuracy, inspiration and authenticity to films in production.¹⁹ According to *MGM: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, the material gathered in this department was used by most of a film's production personnel including, art directors, production designers, set decorators, prop men, costume designers, writers, and producers. The largest of all movie studio research libraries, the department housed everything from nineteenth-century travel guides alongside department store catalogues, to carefully maintain scrapbooks on fashions of the French Revolution.²⁰ Every production was influenced by the books and picture files held by the department, which in turn depicted every period in world history.

Almost no information survives about the structure of the Research Department at MGM, however when surveying fan magazines of the period I was able to find a 1931 article on the department's head, Natalie Bucknall. According to Frank Shaw of *Picturegoer*, during the 1930s Natalie Bucknall was the head of the department and is described as a 'walking encyclopedia series.'²¹ Shaw proposes that Bucknall knew everything from 'the cut of William the Conqueror's favorite suit to the approved way of handling spaghetti at a Czecho-Slovakian banquet.'²² Whilst the *Picturegoer* was a fan magazine used primarily for marketing rather than rigorous journalistic enquiries, the article offers interesting insights into the process of film research and MGM's head researcher. Born in Russia, Bucknall relocated to Southern California in 1926 and after meeting Irving Thalberg was

persuaded to take a position at MGM. According to Shaw, initially she was hired as a script reader but was transferred to the fledgling research department after just two weeks. Whilst other critics have labeled the research library as Gibbons brainchild, Shaw's 1931 article suggests it was Bucknall that built the department, creating reputedly the biggest and best-equipped research facility in Hollywood.

***David Copperfield* Pre Production**

From the research I have conducted at the Margaret Herrick archive it is evident that Bucknall and her team worked collaboratively with the filmmakers of *David Copperfield* to gather the necessary materials for production, including historical detail, Victorian illustrations and photographs of locations.²³ From the outset, David O. Selznick, the film's producer envisioned an ambitious project at odds with the studio's policies. Reminiscing in Rudy Behlmer's *Memo from: David O. Selznick* (1972), Selznick declares that *David Copperfield* was one of his most difficult experiences while at MGM, facing persistent opposition from the studio despite his success at RKO with *Little Women*. He states 'I am sure that the opposition to filming *David Copperfield* was based largely upon the fact that both classics and costume pictures had been taboo in the industry for a long time.'²⁴ Initially his answer to this opposition was to prepare, cast and shoot the film in England, and he proposes in a memo dated 17 March 1934 to Arthur Loew 'that it should add hundreds of thousands of dollars to British Empire gross while still giving us a picture that would be as good for this country, and at the same time do wonders for the entire standing of our British company.'²⁵ Selznick's reference to 'our British company' was what would become MGM British, a British production base being planned at the time. The desire to produce films in England was due in part to the proposition by the British government of an Ad Valorem tax

on the importation of American films. As early as June 1934, when Selznick was planning *David Copperfield*, articles appear in the *Motion Picture Herald* that report that an Ad Valorem duty of thirty-three percent was being proposed in the House of Commons.²⁶ Setting up a studio base in Britain would not only avoid such taxes, but allow the studio to recruit Britain's leading filmmaking talents, and crucially for *David Copperfield*, develop new stars.

Arguably, it was the search for a new star that was one of the driving forces of *David Copperfield's* pre-production. Initially, the studio tried to put pressure on the producer to hire the popular child actor Jackie Cooper, yet as Selznick states in one of his memoirs, 'I felt very strongly that we needed an English boy, and one of the most infinite charm and of the greatest dramatic talent.'²⁷ Therefore, in May 1934, Selznick, the director George Cukor, and writers Howard Estabrook and Hugh Walpole formed a research party and went to Britain to search for a boy to play young David, scout for locations, second unit shots, and conduct research. In an interview conducted on his return, Selznick informed the press that:

We spent about a month over there going to all the places mentioned in the book, taking transparency shots which will be used for actual backgrounds, and making thousands of still photographs to be used in constructing sets. Never before have such pains been taken in a single picture.²⁸

However, it is evident that at some point between March and June 1934, the plan to shoot the picture entirely in England had failed, probably due to a number of political, economic, and artistic determinants. In a statement given by the director George Cukor, it is stated that both the director and producer were unimpressed with the English countryside, discarding many of the shots taken in England in favour of reconstructions. However, it is evident from the film itself that some location material collected on the research trip to England was used

on the production. These included exterior shots of young Copperfield walking through Canterbury, though always shot from behind, as well as countless images taken of Blunderstone, Yarmouth, Broadstairs in Kent, Dover and London which went on to inform the film's set design.

Whilst the research trip to England was fruitful in providing background stills and location shots, archival material suggests that the greatest source for the design of *David Copperfield* was not actual historical locations, but those drawn by the original illustrators of Dickens' work. In an interview Howard Estabrook gave to British magazine *Film Weekly* in June 1934, the screenwriter notes the importance of original illustrations to both the novel and the film's design and casting. He states,

Fortunately, we have a reliable guide to assist us in visualizing the physical appearance of these people, in addition to Dicken's own descriptions. The series of drawings and illustrations of "Copperfield", made by "Phiz" (Hablot Knight Browne), were created under the supervision of Dickens, and we know that the final results were approved by him [...] It may be difficult to find actors who look exactly like the "Phiz" drawings, but we shall do our best to approximate the affect.²⁹

Contained within the files prepared by the Research Department are the original illustrations by Hablot Knight Browne, and Frederick Barnard who brought Dickens' characters to life for generations of readers.³⁰ Throughout the file each illustration is printed and annotated with the character depicted. The inclusion of these illustrations in the research file attests to their status as a fundamental aspect of Dickens' original texts, and the importance of incorporating them into the adaptive process. Although no archival material exists on how they were incorporated into the film's design, a comparative analysis of the finished film and selected illustrations clearly indicates how much these paratextual sources influenced production.

Our Pew at Church

This use of illustrations is most noticeable in the set design of Blunderstone Church. *Our Pew at Church*, drawn by Phiz in May 1849 is one of the first steel etchings for the novel, following the book jacket and title page, and is recreated in the film to introduce the character of Mr Murdstone. In the novel, the scene is described thus:

Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! With a window near it, out of which our house can be seen, and is seen many times during the morning's service, by Peggotty. . . But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, and frowns at me, as I stand upon the seat, that I am to look at the clergyman.³¹

Written from David's perspective Dickens' description of the scene is simple and undetailed, conveying a short and insignificant memory of the character's childhood. However, Phiz's illustration takes us beyond the retrospective narration of the written words to include a drowsing congregation, reminiscent of an earlier satire of the church by William Hogarth entitled *The Sleeping Congregation* (1736), and a gentleman intently watching the young widow in the Copperfield family pew (see Fig. 1). There is no mention of Murdstone in this early chapter of Dickens' text, yet Phiz strategically positions him in the illustration near the empty font and the children, suggesting that he is perhaps already contemplating marrying the pretty widow and having a child by her. Therefore, the overall effect is one of foreshadowing rather than simply metaphor, with Phiz recreating and making additions to his image for dramatic effect.

The same scene is recreated in the film with a high degree of accuracy (see Fig. 2). The opening shot of the church is an establishing shot of the interior that lingers to allow the audience to take in all the detail of the church and its inhabitants. We see the same arched

roof with two tiers of churchgoers, the ornate wooden pulpit reached by a set of stairs, plaques and statues on the walls and sleeping parishioners. Each character is placed exactly in the same position of Phiz's original drawing. The next shot features David, his mother and Peggoty in their family pew. Much like the description in the novel, David is bored and chastised by Peggoty when he fidgets. The camera gives a close up of his wearied face before taking David's point of view to focus in on various characters in the church. This includes a high angled shot of the priest delivering his sermon, and then as if quoting the novel itself, in which David states 'I look at a boy in the aisle, and he makes faces at me. I look at the sunlight coming in at the open door through the porch, and there I see a stray sheep', the camera focuses on each character and David's reaction to them in turn. Finally, David's eyes fall upon Mr Murdstone, and he fearfully questions his mother about him.

In this recreation of Dickens' scene, the filmmakers obviously took pains to adhere to the novel, with the camera following the narration and descriptions of the characters. However, overall when making the decision to show fidelity to the illustration or original text, it was



Fig. 1 *Our Pew at Church* by Hablot Knight Browne (May, 1849)



Fig 2 Image taken from *David Copperfield* (1934)

the visual representation that took precedence. Although, Dickens did not introduce Mr Murdstone until later in the chapter, the filmmakers of *David Copperfield* used Phiz's vivid image of the church scene to introduce the character earlier in the narrative so that the scene is not merely an early recollection of David's childhood, but part of a chain of events. As this analysis shows, incorporating the original Victorian illustrations of *David Copperfield* served an important narrative function, providing the filmmakers with vivid scenes to animate, and a shorthand way of determining which passages were essential components of the novel's narrative. In the case of *Our Pew at Church*, its use was extended, indicating ways of deviating from the text to enhance the story.

Casting and Costuming Mr Micawber

A further analysis of the film indicates that illustrations were also used to recreate characters from the novel. As Selznick proposed in his memoir, the studio's misgivings about the picture were 'simply that it very obviously couldn't be a star vehicle, that it was a very expensive picture to make, and would violate all the rules of showmanship that were then considered sacred and inviolable.'³² In a studio known for its star pictures, *David Copperfield* bucked the trend with a large ensemble cast of characters drawn from the novel and its accompanying illustrations. Without a big name to carry the picture, the filmmakers were entirely reliant on successfully bringing to life the iconic and well-loved characters both Dickens and Phiz had created. Therefore, extra pressure was placed on them to cast, costume, and portray each role with their audiences' expectations firmly in mind.

From memos between Selznick and the studio it is evident that the casting of Mr Micawber was a key concern. Seeking to cast a well-known actor in the role, Selznick was keen to sign

Charles Laughton to the project. In 1935 Laughton was a prominent English actor working in Hollywood having risen to fame in 1933 as Henry VIII in Alexander Korda's *The Private Lives of Henry VIII*, a British film that broke box office records in the US. In a memo sent from London to Mayer, dated 17 May 1934 Selznick writes 'must know what chance Charles Laughton for role of Micawber. Feel more than ever the vital importance of bending every effort to secure him.'³³ However, despite his vital importance the studio was unable to secure him and the role was finally given to W. C. Fields. In a rather despondent memo sent in September 1934 Selznick wrote, 'Fields would probably make a better Micawber, but we've always felt we required one important name in cast in Laughton.'³⁴

Although Fields was described in his *Life* magazine obituary as taking 'no pains to conceal that he was a prodigious tosspot,'³⁵ his role of Mr Micawber was one of his best remembered and well-loved. In a *Variety* review it is argued that 'it was almost an adventure to try to bring to the screen the expansively optimistic Micawber, but he lives again in W.C. Fields, who only once yields to his penchant for horseplay.'³⁶ The success of Fields' portrayal of Micawber was his ability to inhabit the role and this in turn was greatly enhanced by the accurate costumes that he was placed in which neatly matched into the original illustrations and Dickens' characterization.

Designed by MGM's Dolly Tree, the costumes for Micawber took the illustrations of *David Copperfield*'s other illustrator, Frederick Barnard, as their source. Whilst Phiz had portrayed Micawber in one of his etchings, it was Barnard who created a distinct portrait of the character, providing far more detailed illustrations for the *Household Edition* published in 1871. Barnard humanized the types provided by earlier illustrators and as the critic Schlicke

remarks, 'stripped them of the eccentricity which tended to emphasize the author's own trick of symbolic hyperbole.'³⁷ The degree of realism featured in Barnard's illustrations provided Tree with a more nuanced visual reference for the character and allowed the filmmakers to accurately adapt the novel by using a familiar paratextual source.

Micawber features in a number of Barnard's illustration but is most clearly portrayed in *I am presented to Mrs. Micawber* which accompanied chapter eleven; 'I Begin Life on my Own Account, and Don't Like It'. In this portrait Micawber is firmly positioned in the centre of the image, caught in an affected pose with his watch and chain in one hand and a cane dashingly held under the other arm. The positioning of other characters in the illustration means that Micawber towers over the others, including young Copperfield in the foreground, Mrs Micawber seated to his right with several young children, and their maid in the background holding a baby.

Unlike *Our Pew at Church* this scene is not directly referenced in the film. When Copperfield first goes to view his London lodgings, he meets Mrs Micawber and all the other characters, except Mr Micawber who is absent. Instead Fields makes his entrance on the street outside where all attention is diverted to him. Entering the scene, he walks jauntily along the London cobbled street past a street vendor advertising Royal Haymarket merchandise. The audience perceives the exact same outfit portrayed in the illustration, a top hat with a thick dark band, a high starched white collar and cravat, double breasted jacket (uncomfortably tight around the middle), slim breeches and white socks and slippers (see Fig. 4). In his hand is the cane and attached to his coat the watch. Even the way he walks captures the subtle characterization Barnard etched into his work.



Fig. 3 *I am presented to Mrs. Micawber* (1872) Fred Barnard



Fig. 4 W. C. Fields as Mr Micawber in *David Copperfield* (1934)

In the following shot the filmmakers take the opportunity to add a little spectacle and slapstick comedy to the introduction. In an attempt to avoid debt collectors waiting outside his door, Micawber takes to the roof of the property to access his lodgings. His progress along the roofline is farcical. Precariously making his way across a thin section of wall he slips and drops his package, turning around he readjusts his hat yet manages to place it on the end of his upturned cane. Confusedly looking around for it, he is momentarily unaware it is dangling above his head. He finds it, replaces it and attempts to get up but in doing so dislodges his shoe. Throughout the scene St Paul's Cathedral looms large in the distance, creating a visual spectacle and reminding the audience of the story's historical setting.

This is perhaps the one instance in which Fields yielded to his penchant for horseplay, but changing the setup of the scene served an important function in adapting the character for the screen. Firstly, by allowing him such an absurd entrance, the filmmakers showcased

both the slapstick talents of Fields and of the character he was portraying, exaggerating his comedic persona. It is arguable that such exaggerations were necessary since the novel and its subjective narration develops the character gradually as David gets to know him, a luxury the filmmakers could ill afford. Secondly it allowed for a little spectacle with the filmmakers presenting an iconic British landmark, and a large exterior set.³⁸ Consequently, in bringing Mr Micawber to life the filmmakers of *David Copperfield* successfully identified the elements of Dickens' text that could be altered and those that had to be rigorously adhered to. Like *Our Pew in Church* it was the visual reference that again took precedence, though in the case of Barnard's illustration it was the portrait of the character rather than the scene that was of particular value.

As Gueric De Bona notes in *Film Adaptations in the Hollywood Studio Era*, writing about film adaptation tends to think of the 'precursor text' in purely literary terms, not recognizing that every movie is conditioned by a vast set of influences from other media. Likewise, Brian McFarlane and Robert Stam are amongst those critics who remind us of the intertextual issues at stake in adaptation, arguing that 'the stress on fidelity to the original undervalues other aspects of the film's intertextuality.'³⁹ As this analysis of original illustrations and film design has shown, paratextual sources are an integral aspect of the adaptation process. Genette defines paratext as those things in a published work that accompanies the text, things such as the author's name, the title, preface or introduction, or illustrations. He states that:

More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a threshold [...], a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that ... is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.⁴⁰

Such a notion problematizes traditional ways of viewing adaptation from a purely literary antecedent. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to adaptations, the filmmakers of *David Copperfield* based their film not simply on a written text, but on a Victorian visual culture. In doing so they broke down the false dichotomy that exists between the source and adaptive text, and significantly narrowed the gap between the novel and the film for its audience. The success of this strategy is evident in the film's commercial and critical reception.

The Critical Reception of *David Copperfield*

David Copperfield was released in January 1935 and achieved consistently favorable reviews, the most positive appearing in New York where the film premiered at the Capitol Theatre. In the *New York Times*, particular emphasis was placed on the 'immortal people of "David Copperfield"' who 'troop across the Capitol's screen like animated duplicates of the famous Phiz drawings.'⁴¹ In its assessment of Micawber, the critic was especially enthused stating: 'Being himself pretty generally a spiritual descendent of Mr Micawber, W. C. Fields manages with the greatest of ease to become one with his illustrious predecessor according to the directions laid down in the text and the drawings of Phiz.'⁴²

Although many critics used the names of Dickens' illustrators interchangeably, they consistently note the film's fidelity to original illustrations. Margaret Lloyd of the *Christian Science Monitor*, is particularly astute in her review, writing, 'every reader creates his own picture as he reads, and thereafter he is adverse to accepting any other... was it the preparation of 'Drawings by Phiz' that allows us to accept the immortal characters as they are now presented?'⁴³ Despite there being significant omissions in the film's narrative,

including all of David's schooling and early relationship with Steerforth, the reviewers championed the film as a faithful adaptation. As Richard Watts Jr wrote in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, 'of course, it does a bit of plot telescoping here and there, [...] but on the whole it is not only so faithful but so intelligent in its fidelity.'⁴⁴ Therefore, judging from the reviews it was the filmmaker's insistence on matching characters and settings to original illustrations that contributed greatly to this sense of fidelity.

Just as Selznick had predicted, the film was a huge box office success, both in the US and abroad, grossing just under \$3 million in the eighty-six weeks it was in theatres.⁴⁵ In successfully adapting *David Copperfield* for the screen, David O. Selznick had made a shrewd assessment of both market forces and American culture. Guerric De Bona's chapter on the film examines the popularity of Dickens in the beginning half of the twentieth-century, proposing that the author had an almost folkloric appeal for Americans, which was most pronounced during the Great Depression when Roosevelt's New Deal relied on a very traditional rhetoric to introduce unprecedented reforms. As De Bona remarks, Dickens was 'a traditional yet popular British writer who suggested Victorian stability, and spoke of the need to reform without revolution'.⁴⁶ Therefore, *David Copperfield* exemplified what Pierre Bourdieu calls 'symbolic capital' during the Great Depression, an ideological importance and cultural value perfectly suited to the political and industrial conditions of its time.

This idea of cultural value is most pronounced in the film's incorporation into the American school system. As is noted in Chapter One, during the mid-1930s American educators sought to include films in the American school curriculum with the development of motion-picture appreciation guides. These guides provided a culturally valorized rationale for film

attendance in the aftermath of widely publicised critiques of the roles movies played in the lives of American children. A literary source like *David Copperfield* offered not only a recognisable narrative commodity that could provide the basis for a film, but also the novel's status offered MGM an opportunity to elevate the prestige of the studio.

Similar to the reviews of the film, the study guide for *David Copperfield* praises the film's design, commenting on its authenticity and fidelity to source. Available on the online repository Internet Archive,⁴⁷ much of the first section of the guide is devoted to exposing the film's production design, particularly where notions of accuracy and historical detail are concerned. A whole subsection of the guide centres on 'Research Work for the Production' and under this heading the writer Mary Allen Abbott writes,

In filming *David Copperfield* the research department of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Company was aided by ten research workers located in England. The original green-backed paper pamphlet edition of *David Copperfield*, with its original drawings by "Phiz" (H. K. Browne) was consulted for costume and other details.⁴⁸

Providing such information before the students viewed the film allowed them to view it with a critic's eye. Rather than being passive spectators, through Abbott's guide students were encouraged to actively engage with and question what they were consuming. The guide functions by 'laying bare the device,' thereby exposing students to the mechanics of filmmaking and championing the film form. Unlike later guides in the series, such as *A Guide to the Study of the Screen Version of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities* that used the film as an introduction to literary studies, *A study guide to the critical appreciation of the photoplay version of Charles Dickens' novel David Copperfield* was a resource that was intended to create a new generation of educated and influential consumers who would reward Hollywood economically for making better films. Abbotts' guide promoted the film

as a superior text, and the basis of this judgment was not just the cultural value of Dickens, but the aesthetics created by its design team.

As I suggested in Chapter One, production trends emerge after particular films outperformed expectations at the box office. After *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, Universal adapted a number of Gothic novels into expressionistic films seeking to replicate their success. The same process is discernable in the proliferation of prestige pictures in the mid-1930s. Following the success of *David Copperfield*, the industry invested heavily in production design to bring famous literary stories to the screen. Some of the costliest films produced in this period were based on canonical texts, including *Anna Karenina*, *Les Misérables*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Like *Frankenstein*, *David Copperfield* revealed a preference for familiar story material, and provided a production formula for further successful adaptations.

Conclusion

It has been established throughout this chapter that the designers of *David Copperfield* relied heavily on the original illustrations by 'Phiz' to transpose a Dickensian world onto cinema screens. By looking at how these designers incorporated Victorian illustration into the film's production design, this chapter has addressed two key concerns. Firstly, I have shown that the use of visual paratexts in the design of *David Copperfield* narrowed the gap between the novel and film, breaking down the false dichotomy that exists between the original and adaptive text, and secondly, I proposed that the use of such references contributed to the film's commercial and cultural significance.

As this chapter has shown, high production values and verisimilitude was used in the production design of *David Copperfield* to further the studio's commercial and cultural agenda at a time of increasing conservative criticism. However, it was not adherence to the written text that made *David Copperfield* a successful adaptation, but the innovative replication of its illustrations. The adaptors of Dickens' work understood that the images created by Hablot Knight Browne were so imbedded in the readers' minds that any success lie with accurately recycling them. This suggests that widening the view of a source text to incorporate paratextual elements increases an understanding of how a text is consumed and how an audience relates to it. In the case of *David Copperfield*, illustrations contributed to the film's sense of authenticity, allowing the studio to respond to changing social concerns, and bolstering its standing in the industry and wider society.

In the previous chapter I explored how Universal created a new and innovative film out of the story of *Frankenstein* in 1931, spawning a production trend that would continue throughout the decade. A similar strategy was introduced by MGM following the success of *David Copperfield*, with prestige productions dominating adaptation practices in the late 1930s. Therefore, in the next chapter, I intend to provide a more nuanced analysis of these different modes of adaptation by comparing two interpretations of the same original text. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was produced twice in the Hollywood studio era. The first adaptation was made by Paramount in the pre-Code era. MGM adapted the novella a second time in 1941. These films will be used as a cultural barometer, examining how anxieties altered and shifted over the course of a decade, and questioning how these manifest in the films themselves.

Notes for Chapter Three

- ¹ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 74.
- ² Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 70.
- ³ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 168.
- ⁴ Hambley, & Downing, *The Art of Hollywood*, 59.
- ⁵ Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System*, 63.
- ⁶ Eames, *The MGM Story*, 8.
- ⁷ Bingen, *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, 59.
- ⁸ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 168.
- ⁹ Verk, "Designer for the Screen," 36.
- ¹⁰ Hambley, & Downing, *The Art of Hollywood*, 53.
- ¹¹ Balio, *Grand Design*, 198.
- ¹² Bingen, *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, 139.
- ¹³ Shiel, "Classic Hollywood 1928-1946," 53.
- ¹⁴ Shiel, "Classic Hollywood 1928-1946," 54.
- ¹⁵ Verk, "Designer for the Screen," 38.
- ¹⁶ Hambley, & Downing, *The Art of Hollywood*, 3.
- ¹⁷ Verk, "Designer for the Screen," 38.
- ¹⁸ Andersen, "The Warner Bros. Research Department," 54.
- ¹⁹ Bingen, *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, 59.
- ²⁰ Bingen, *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*, 59.
- ²¹ Shaw, "A Very Knowing Woman," 8.
- ²² Shaw, "A Very Knowing Woman," 8.
- ²³ *David Copperfield* – photographs circa 1934, File 6.f-57; Howard Estabrook Papers; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ²⁴ Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 91.
- ²⁵ Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 106.
- ²⁶ "Ad Valorem Duty Move Up," *Motion Picture Herald*, June 13, 1934, n.p.
- ²⁷ Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 91.
- ²⁸ "More Production In Great Britain Seen by Selznick," *Motion Picture Herald*, June 16, 1934, n.p.
- ²⁹ Estabrook, "Bringing "David Copperfield" to the Screen" *Film Weekly*, June 8, 1934, n.p.
- ³⁰ *David Copperfield* – photographs circa 1934, File 6.f-57; Howard Estabrook Papers; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³¹ Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 11.
- ³² Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 91.
- ³³ Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 107.
- ³⁴ Behlmer, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 109.
- ³⁵ "W.C. Fields," *Life*, January 6, 1947, n.p.
- ³⁶ "David Copperfield," *Variety*, December 31, 1934, n.p.
- ³⁷ Schlinke, *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*, 209.
- ³⁸ Known as 'Copperfield Court', this set was built especially for *David Copperfield* on the studio's backlot. It featured a block of English townhouses, shops and a cobbled stone road. Due its expense the studio incorporated it into a number of future productions. It was used as a Dickensian location again in *A Christmas Carol* in 1938, as an exterior

set for *Pride and Prejudice* in 1940 and was still in use in 1960 for the film *The Time Machine*. See Bingen, Stephen. *M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot*. Solana Beach: Santa Monica Press, 2011.

³⁹ De Bona, *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*, 51.

⁴⁰ Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, 1-2.

⁴¹ Sennwald, "The Capitol Presents a Distinguished Screen Edition of *David Copperfield*," *New York Times*, January 19, 1935, n.p.

⁴² Sennwald, "The Capitol Presents a Distinguished Screen Edition of *David Copperfield*," *New York Times*, January 19, 1935, n.p.

⁴³ De Bona, *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio era*, 53.

⁴⁴ George Cukor personal clippings; Scrapbook #1 1924-1935, File 62.f-899; George Cukor Papers; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.

⁴⁵ Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, 169.

⁴⁶ De Bona, *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio era*, 40.

⁴⁷ Abbott, *A study guide to the critical appreciation of the photoplay version of Charles Dickens' novel David Copperfield*, 1-10.

⁴⁸ Abbott, *A study guide to the critical appreciation of the photoplay version of Charles Dickens' novel David Copperfield*, 6.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Sadism and Censorship in the Adaptations of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)

This third case study charts how the introduction of censorship had an impact upon MGM's remake of Paramount's 1931 adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by making a comparative analysis of the two adaptations made in the studio era. So far, this thesis has shown that changing industrial and social concerns forced the industry to make pervasive changes to its modes of adaptation. For this chapter I intend to make a more focussed examination of these contextual factors. Stevenson's novella has been selected because it was one of the few source texts in my database that was produced twice in the Hollywood studio era, both before and after the introduction of the Hays Code in 1934. This allows for a comparative analysis of how censorship impacted on the adaptive process. Therefore, using original scripts, production records and censorship files found in the Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood office files and Paramount Pictures Script Collection at the Margaret Herrick Library, I intend to compare the production of these two adaptations, and determine how industrial regulations, studio house styles and changing social attitudes effected the adaptation process.

The most sophisticated of Robert Louis Stevenson's narratives, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an imaginative exploration of social and moral dualism, known for its vivid portrayal of a split personality. Since its publication in 1886 it has inspired dozens of stage and film adaptations. However, as Irving S. Saposnik argues in 'The Anatomy of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' (1971), this popularity has both mitigated and altered Stevenson's original story. From its very first adaptations for stage and screen, writers have added fiancées,

prostitutes, love relations and sexual sadism, whilst making Jekyll young, good-looking and sexually repressed. Taking its cue from the popular conventions of theatre and film, the adaptations of Stevenson's allegorical novella have morphed the story into a tale of depravity, lust, and horror.

The adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is the subject of a number of different studies, with the most exhaustive history appearing in Brian A. Rose's *Jekyll and Hyde Adapted* (1996). Rose proposes that the adaptations of Stevenson's work reveals certain shifts in cultural attitudes, with adaptors infusing the story with their own concerns about race, class and gender. In 1931 Paramount made the first sound film adaptation with the renowned director Rouben Mamoulian. Produced in the Pre-Code era the film was sexually explicit with a provocative portrayal of 'Champagne Ivy,' a prostitute Jekyll meets when he first transforms into Hyde. A decade later MGM bought the rights to Paramount's adaptation and created a version of their own. However, this was made after the introduction of strict censorship guidelines, therefore its portrayal of sexual desire was muted. Through a comparison of these two adaptations this chapter seeks to question how the attitude to sexuality shifted throughout the decade.

Paramount's film is notable for its technical innovation. Many critics, such as S. S. Prawer, David Lührssen (2013) and Angela M. Smith (2011), focus on the transformation sequence, which includes the use of first person point-of-view camerawork and polarizing filters. However, it was found that only a few texts focus on the film's characterisation of Ivy and the representation of her sexuality, including 'Looking at Ivy Looking at us Looking at Her' (1983) by Peter Lehman, George Turner's 'Two faced Treachery' (1999) and, more

recently, ‘Camera Grammar: First Person Point of View and the Divided ‘I’ in Rouben Mamoulian’s 1931 *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’ (2015) by Eric Austin Thomas. These critics suggest that the director was innovatory in his use of first person point-of-view shots, and they focus on the way in which this technique resulted in instances of direct address that are particularly pertinent in scenes with the prostitute Ivy.

Void of technical innovation or sexual intrigue, MGM’s 1941 interpretation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has received much less attention from critics. A brief account exists in Michael Sragow’s *Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master* (2013) and Abigail Bloom’s *The Literary Monster on Screen* (2010). These critics outline how MGM adapted *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* into a prestige picture that shows a strong religious focus at a time when Europe was at war. However, I was unable to find any work that examines the film’s sexual themes or Ivy’s characterisation in-depth. In order to rectify this, this chapter draws conclusions from original archival evidence found at the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles. These include the original treatment and scripts, a number of drafts of the transformation montage sequence of Fleming’s adaptation, and crucially the censorship records which offer minute detail on what was and was not acceptable to Joseph Breen’s Production Code Administration.

The aim of this chapter is to expand conventional analyses of adaptations by exploring how technical advances and ancillary institutions impacted on the adaptation process. However, as with my chapter on *Frankenstein*, it is necessary to begin by briefly outlining how *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was adapted prior to 1932. This will help me ascertain where adaptors

in the Hollywood studio era obtained their inspiration, and to question why the novella was suitable story material.

Early adaptations and technical innovation

In literary history the origin of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a well-known tale. As William Gray outlines in his biography of the writer, for most of his life Stevenson was a sick man, continually suffering from haemorrhages and running a high temperature.¹ His sleeps were fitful and he took an intellectual interest in his frequent dreams. In his essay 'A Chapter on Dreams' (1888), Stevenson outlined how these dreams provided fruitful inspiration, arguing that creative impulses were at work in his sleep, and 'have not the rudiment of what we call conscience' nor 'prejudice against supernatural.'² Stevenson conceived the central incidents of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in one of these dreams. Initially he was said to have written the tale as he had dreamt it, only to find that it was pure sensationalism. He eventually redrafted it as an allegorical tale that explores the duality of human nature; an essential inner struggle between good and evil.

Today Stevenson's novella is commonly associated with the Victorian concern over the division of public and private spheres. Saposnik's assessment of the text suggests that the work is a fable of Victorian anxieties with a piercing description of the fundamental dichotomy of the nineteenth-century - outward respectability and inward lust. In the original work Hyde is represented as pure evil, yet it should be noted that the form this evil takes is kept tantalizingly ambiguous. By exploring a range of critical texts on the work, I found that critics have provided a number of different readings of the novella. The allegory of the tale has been interpreted as the id or Freudian unconsciousness,³ the self-destructiveness of

patriarchal society,⁴ homosexuality,⁵ and Jekyll's (middle-class Victorian) hypocrisy.⁶ Moreover, unease and uncertainty has been attributed to the nature of the men who are called upon to tell the story and bear witness, all of whom are unmarried and emotionally stifled. As Charles Campbell highlights the tale is strangely devoid of any female characters, and those that are present are represented as inhabitants of a city outside the bachelor interiors of the novella.⁷ The style of the novella's narration therefore calls into question the reliability of the events that unfold.

In the novel, the reader follows the lawyer Utterson through the foggy labyrinth of Victorian London, but they must see beyond Utterson's self-censored perspective to gain their own reading of the 'strange case.' However, on stage or screen much of the ambiguity is lost, since rather than the complex and often blurred identity of the Jekyll-Hyde character, audiences of adaptations perceive two separate entities, Jekyll *and* Hyde. Saposnik proposes that such populist changes have reduced the novel's complexity, arguing that the story has 'distorted into a myth of the good-evil antithesis, a simplistic dichotomy rather than an imaginative exploration of social and moral dualism.'⁸ However, I would argue that such a transformation was necessary since, when it came to translating Stevenson's tale into terms of images and sounds, adaptors had to come up with inventive ways to externalise the horror of the tale.

Technical innovation has been linked to the adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* since the novel's first adaptation on stage in Boston, 1887. Written by Thomas Sullivan and starring Richard Mansfield, the play began the long tradition of casting Jekyll and Hyde alongside two women, enhancing what one reviewer of the play termed 'the inherent lack of dramatic



Fig. 1 *Richard Mansfield* (1887) by Henry Van der Weyde.

force’ of the novel.⁹ However, the play is perhaps best remembered now for a photograph that was taken of the actor to promote the production (see Fig. 1). This double exposure photograph has become an iconic image in the study of *Jekyll and Hyde* and its adaptation.

Prefiguring the later film versions of Stevenson’s work, it shows the transformation, from the upright and respectable Dr Jekyll to the stooped, violent and malevolent Mr Hyde. As Martin Danahay outlines in his article ‘Richard Mansfield, *Jekyll and Hyde* and the History of Special Effects’ (2012), the use of such intermediary technology as ‘trick’ photography was to represent visually the story of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Mansfield, in posing for the image, was not trying to demonstrate the possibilities of ‘illusive photography’ but to

document his performance and publicise his play.¹⁰ However, despite the actor's protestations, the image spawned widespread speculation as to whether Mansfield was using special effects to produce his transformation on stage.

On screen, it was Sullivan's play that formed the basis of many early cinematic adaptations including *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1912) produced by the Thanhouser Company, and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1920), Hollywood's first adaptation of the novella with the then popular actor John Barrymore in the lead role. Although it is stated that Barrymore's transformation into Hyde was achieved with no effects, as Hyde reverts to Jekyll, one of his prosthetic fingers can be seen to fly across the screen.¹¹ By 1931, Mamoulian's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* had been preceded by at least 10 silent film versions including an unauthorised version by F. W. Murnau entitled *Der Januskopf* (1920). Therefore, I would argue that from the first *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'s transference onto stage and screen, technical innovation and populist themes have become conventional aspects of the novella's adaptation.

Pre-Code *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931)

As my data presented in the first chapter revealed, the early 1930s featured a highly lucrative cycle of films based on Gothic literature. Like *Frankenstein*, released a month earlier, the story of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* tapped into a public taste for dark and distressing themes by focusing on a young ambitious scientist whose experiments create a monster. However, in Paramount's contribution to the cycle, sexual immorality was foregrounded. In the decade leading up to its release, America was swept up by the 'roaring twenties,' where the flapper drank, smoked, and flouted social and sexual norms. The film industry itself contributed to this sexual liberation with actresses such as Theda Bara and Mae West starring as early

femme fatales. As outlined in numerous histories of the period including *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality and Insurrection in American Cinema* (2013) by Thomas Patrick Doherty and *Complicated Women: Sex and Power in Pre-Code Hollywood* (2014) by Mick LaSalle, the Hays Code was introduced in 1930 in an attempt to curb the production of ‘sex films,’ but the industry played little heed to conservative complaints in the short years before it was enforced. Throughout the early 1930s, Hollywood continued to produce highly popular films with sexual innuendo, promiscuity, prostitution, infidelity, and violence. From the onset, Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* intended to exploit this appetite for risqué themes rather than closely adapt Stevenson’s original novel. To do so, it cast Jekyll between two female characters; his fiancée Muriel and a prostitute named Ivy.

This chapter examines the portrayal of Ivy, since it is her evolving characterization that highlights how Paramount’s adaptation explored themes of sexual desire, morphing from mild titillation to sexual sadism. In an early treatment of the film by Heath and Hoffenstein, dated 11 June 1931, the audience first encounter Ivy who is described as a ‘street walker’ and ‘professional entertainer’ on the street where she falls to her knees whilst crossing a road.¹² Jekyll and his friend Lanyon help her up and she turns away from the men in modesty to examine her knees, but the audience and two men are afforded a thrill as she is reflected in the shop window lifting her skirts. However, it is evident from changes to the proceeding screenplay that someone had decided that this initial introduction to Ivy was not nearly racy enough for contemporary audiences.

Dated 23 June 1931, most of the action in the second script plays out in Ivy's bedroom while Jekyll's companion Lanyon waits downstairs. There is no ambiguity over Ivy's profession, a neighbour explains to Lanyon when he asks what happened, 'Ow, hit's honly one hof Ivy Parson's customers tryin' to swindle 'er, she made a row an' 'e give 'er what for. The toff's carried 'er hupstairs.'¹³ Upstairs the screenplay outlines Ivy's intentions, describing a close shot where 'she glances up towards Jekyll, and takes in the fact that here is a handsome young man of the upper class [...] with the idea of increasing his interest, she deliberately pulls her skirt above her knee.'¹⁴ She tells Jekyll that he is kind to look out for her claiming, 'Now, you're the kind a woman would do somethin' for.' Again the directions set the tone, describing how 'her speech is accompanied by posturing and eye work of the most provocative kind – intended to compel him to take her into his arms.'¹⁵ When he suggests she should go to bed and rest she begins to undress in front of him before the scene cuts away to Lanyon talking to a constable outside. It is evident from this early draft that Heath and Hoffenstein's characterisation of Ivy became increasingly more promiscuous with each draft. Rather than turning modestly away from the gentleman, the writers created an erotic character intent on seducing Jekyll. In contrast to the seemingly modest girl in the first draft, this portrayal of promiscuity was designed to correspond with the themes of other popular films of the period.

For the film's director, Paramount chose the renowned theatre director Rouben Mamoulian. Dubbed 'part of the Theatre Guild's collection of Very Bright Young Men' by the *New York Times*, Mamoulian occupied a strong position in the industry.¹⁶ When approached by the studio in 1929 to direct *Applause*, he refused to sign a long-term contract. As David Luhrssen explains in his work on the director, 'Mamoulian's profile on Broadway was high

enough for Paramount moguls Jesse Lasky and Walter Wagner to agree to the demands of a man who had never set foot on a sound stage.¹⁷ Mamoulian signed a contract to direct one picture with the studio, and after the success of *Applause* negotiated further one-picture contracts for *City Lights* (1931) and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931). In an interview conducted in 1971, the director explains what attracted him to the medium of film. He states: ‘my interest in the camera was in the fantastic and marvellous things you can do with it: angles, dollying, dissolves, the props and the framing.’¹⁸ In each of Mamoulian’s films the director employed this ethos, inventing innovative and stylistic methods of production.

It is clear that from the very first shots of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, until its penultimate scene, Mamoulian used extensive stylistic devices to further the film’s themes and narrative. In a significant departure from mainstream cinematic styles of filming, the entire opening sequence is shot from the protagonist’s first-person point-of-view, and it is clear that Mamoulian understood the spectatorial implications of such a technique. The use of point-of-view shots in Mamoulian’s adaptation complicates the protagonist’s identity much as Stevenson’s ambiguous use of personal pronouns in the original text, which highlighted Jekyll’s fragmented sense of self. In employing this highly innovative and stylistic technique, Mamoulian created a filmic device to communicate the subjectivity of the novella’s narration while engaging his audience. His mode of adaptation was not intent on replication, but on using the tools of the film medium so as to develop similar themes and concerns.

The scene where this device has the most profound effect is when the audience first meets Ivy. A major consequence of using point-of-view shots is that when the action involves

interaction with other characters within the diegesis, those characters are required to address the camera directly. This gaze back becomes all the more problematic when Ivy looks into the lens. As Heath and Hoffenstein indicated in the screenplay, when Jekyll takes Ivy to her room she flirts with him and begins to undress before the camera cuts away to Lanyon downstairs. However, Mamoulian's use of point-of-view camerawork makes this striptease all the more daring. Although she asks Jekyll to turn his eyes away, the camera cuts to a long lingering shot of Ivy, who looks directly into the camera. She smiles and bends to lift her skirts. The camera tilts downward so that just her legs and skirts are in the frame whilst she kicks off her shoes and pulls off her garter. As it tilts back up she flings the garter at the camera before giggling and proceeding to remove her stockings. She throws the second garter and the camera quickly cuts to it landing at Jekyll's feet before returning to Ivy who has slipped under the covers. Although the merest flash of skin is seen, the audience perceives she is naked.

Ivy's provocative look back at the camera is profound as it is clearly aimed at a male viewer. The work of feminist film theorists label the 'male gaze' as the act of depicting the world and women in the visual arts as objects of male pleasure; men are the active observers, and women the observed. However, I would argue that this pattern is subverted in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Ivy breaks the 'fourth wall' with a hypersexualised gaze back through the cinema screen, and the silence punctuated by her teasing laugh only adds to the tension. The audience is enticed to keep looking, but reminded of their position as mere spectators. As stated in the screenplay's directions, actress Miriam Hopkins uses 'posturing and eye work of the most provocative kind.' Yet thanks to the use of first person point-of-view shots, this erotic gaze is intentionally directed straight at the film's audience.

Peter Lehman's assessment of the scene in 'Looking at Ivy Looking at Us Looking at Her: The Camera and the Garter' (1983), associates Ivy's look at the camera with erotic recognition and goes as far as to argue that the scene aligns itself with the cinematic principles of pornography. He states:

Actresses in pornographic films frequently look directly into the camera lens and even speak directly to the [assumed male] viewer. . . . Certain kinds of pornographically erotic contexts hinge, in short, on a breaking down of the presumed barriers of separation between the audience and the characters on the screen. It is precisely such a breakdown that occurs in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. That garter thrown at the camera is quite an invitation of its own.¹⁹

Lehman ultimately dismisses the scene as an anomaly within the film, a highly eroticised set piece intended to attract depression-era ticket buyers with the promise of risqué material and flaunt censorship guidelines. However, I would argue that if we take into account Ivy's demise, a more significant reading could be made of the destruction of female sexual power.

Unlike Dr. Jekyll, Hyde has no conscience, no restrictions, and no boundaries; he is free to do what he pleases. Therefore, when Jekyll turns into Hyde he consistently seeks out the girl who originally enticed him. Going to the music hall where Ivy works, he offers to tend to her financial needs in return for her company, manipulating her into accompanying him by being violent and controlling. Eventually, Ivy goes to visit Dr Jekyll and begs him for poison, however, when he next transforms into Hyde he goes straight to Ivy in a rage. Hyde confronts Ivy about her betrayal and in his anger admits that he is Jekyll. Terrified, she attempts to escape by running through to the bedroom. Hyde catches her beside the bed and proceeds to strangle her, holding her in an embrace and sneeringly calling her 'my little sweet, my little bride', and asks 'isn't Hyde a lover after your own heart.' The scene is

highly sadistic and as Hyde pushes her to the floor and climbs on top of her the camera stays in place to create a moment of irony with an important cultural quotation. Behind the two characters is a replica statue of *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss* (1787) by Antonio Canova. Beneath it, Hyde seals Ivy's death with another kiss. Through the use of subtle symbolism and lingering camerawork, Mamoulian makes the demise of Ivy shocking and disturbing. Yet conversely, by providing such a violent end, the film was fulfilling the dictate of censorship requirements. According to the censorship guidelines in place in 1932, Ivy, as a promiscuous woman who commits immoral transgressions, is suitably punished.

As this analysis of Ivy suggests, Paramount's adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was specifically tailored for a contemporary audience, using an already established tradition of sexual intrigue and technical experimentation to create a film that matched the appeal of the then popular horror genre. Technical innovations punctuated Mamoulian's career, from his first film *Applause* (1930) in which he developed a two track recording system, to *Becky Sharp* (1935) the first feature-length film to employ the three-strip Technicolor process. The critical reception of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* only contributed to his reputation as a pioneer. Most reviewers focused on the film's camerawork, particularly in the opening scene and the transformation sequence. However, it is the reception of Ivy and the film's sexual themes that are especially interesting. In my survey of film reviews I found a number of derogative terms used to describe Ivy, from a 'music hall girl,' and 'trollop,'²⁰ to a 'London soiled dove.'²¹ Such observations hint at the anxiety that surrounded the film's promiscuity, and in England where a National Censorship Board held more control than the MPPC, the film was heavily censored. In an article published in the *Motion Picture Herald*, both *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Universal's *Frankenstein* were singled out as adding to the 'horrors which

sex soaked celluloid had already struck to the hearts of the British censors.’²² The British Board of Film Censors subsequently cut over a 1000 feet from *Jekyll*.²³ However, such concerns did nothing to halt the popularity of the film and the questions over its suitability and warnings to juveniles only intensified interest. With a budget of just \$535,000, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* garnered an estimated \$1.25 million at the box office, taking a place amongst the top box office draws of 1932.²⁴

MGM’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1941)

Throughout the first half of the 1930s, and at a time of economic uncertainty, it is perhaps unsurprising that the film industry flouted censorship guidelines and turned to themes that were more reliably profitable. The trade paper *Variety* stated that ‘over 80% of the world’s chief picture output was [...] flavored with bedroom essence’, that ‘strongly favored the theme of perversion.’²⁵ As I explored in Chapter One, during a time of social and economic instability, fast-talking, and sexually-liberated contemporary films found popularity with a society disillusioned with the American way of life. Despite this, 1933 saw the creation of a formidable opponent to the industry with the establishment of the conservative group the Legion of Decency. The Legion allowed local religious leaders to determine which films to protest and spurred several million Catholics across the U.S. to boycott films with immoral content. With mounting conservative opposition and diminishing returns, the industry finally conceded defeat on 13 June 1934, establishing the Production Code Administration (PCA). With devout catholic Joseph Breen acting as its chief, the new office imposed rigorous standards of morality on the studios and required all films to obtain a certificate of approval before being released. *Liberty Magazine* wrote in 1936 that Breen’s appointment gave him ‘more influence in standardizing world thinking than Mussolini, Hitler, or Stalin’

with his office shaping the content of American motion pictures for the next two decades.²⁶ Therefore, by the time MGM released their version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the political and cultural climate of the film industry had altered dramatically.

As the previous chapter to this thesis demonstrated, MGM was the leading producer of prestige pictures in the 1930s, bringing together large budgets, big stars, and some of the industry's most acclaimed filmmakers. MGM acquired the rights to Paramount's film in March 1940 and began developing its own version of the story with some of the leading talents of the era, including director Victor Fleming and actor Spencer Tracey. Fleming was a critically acclaimed director, having won the Academy Award for Best Directing for the decade's most successful adaptation, *Gone with the Wind* in 1939. His work at MGM included a number of prestige productions, including two adaptations of British nineteenth-century texts, *Treasure Island* and *Captains Courageous*. A strong indication of the position Fleming held at this time was the terms of the contract he signed with MGM in 1940. His contract stipulated that contrary to studio policy no producer credit would appear on his films, leaving the director with the most senior position on a production.²⁷

According to Michael Sragow, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was initially intended as a vehicle for English actor Robert Donat, the critical and popular favorite who beat Gable's Rhett Butler for the 1939 best actor Oscar with his performance in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (Wood, 1939).²⁸ However, the escalation of war in Europe forced the filmmakers to find an alternative. In choosing contracted-star Spencer Tracy, they found an actor to match the prestige of Fleming. Known as the actor's actor and noted for his natural style and versatility, Tracy's career flourished with a series of hit films in the latter half of the 1930s.

In 1937 and 1938 he won consecutive Oscars for *Captains Courageous* and *Boys Town* (1938), and by the 1940s Tracy was one of the studio's top stars. In assigning Fleming and Tracy to the project, MGM sought to capitalize on the status of the director and actor and imbue the film with a sense of cultural value.

Many critics accuse MGM of merely remaking Mamoulian's earlier adaptation, with an account by Gregory Mank of how the studio obtained all copies of the 1932 production in order to replicate it with impunity.²⁹ I found no evidence of this in the Turner/MGM scripts collection or the Production Code Administration records and it is possible that the rarity of Mamoulian's version is due to a re-release in 1935, after the introduction of the Hays Code, that would have seen much of the film censored. However, whilst MGM credits Paramount's original writers, Percy Heath and Samuel Hoffenstein. MGM's style of adaptation differed significantly from what had gone before, suggesting that the latter film was a re-adaptation that borrowed elements from both previous adaptations and the original text.

From the opening credits, Fleming's film shows a marked difference in style and tone from Mamoulian's 1931 film (see Fig. 2-3 overleaf). Gone is the gothic typeface and the ominous tones of Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor*. Instead the 1941 credits are minimalist yet classic with a score by Frank Waxman which features a choral accompaniment of the Lord's Prayer as Victor Fleming's name appears on screen. When the first shot appears the spectator becomes aware that this choral music is diegetic. The camera provides an aerial shot of a church, tracking down towards its doors, it then dissolves to be replaced with a priest delivering his sermon. He states:

With purity in our hearts, with right thinking in our minds, we arm ourselves with intolerance of all evil. So it is on this glorious Sabbath morning in this momentous year of 1887 we naturally turn our thoughts towards that way of life as exemplified by Victoria, our beloved Queen, for this week begins her majesty's golden jubilee.

As the camera tracks away from the priest's face the audience is able to take in the large set that surrounds him. He is shown standing at the top of an intricately carved pulpit, with two stained glass windows either side of him. The shot then dissolves again to give an establishing shot of the church scene. It is this shot that shows the spectacle of the film's design, signifying to the audience that no expense has been spared in bringing the tale to life. The congregation is dwarfed by the scale of the interior, with columns disappearing up towards the ceiling and arched windows to rival any in Westminster Abbey. Unlike the small village church with its sleeping congregation in MGM's earlier adaptation of *David Copperfield*, the opulence of the scene suggests that the attentive worshippers are far more gentrified. The camera then focuses back in on the priest giving a high angled shot from the congregation's perspective, exulting his position and furthering the scene's moralistic tone.



Fig. 2 Opening credits of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) taken from the film

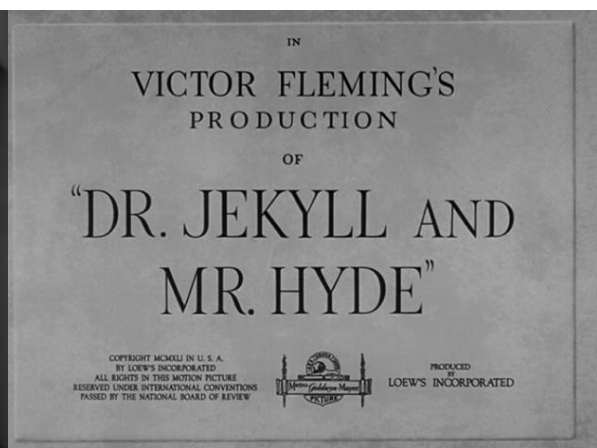


Fig. 3 Opening credits of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941) taken from the film

Eventually the quiet reserve is broken by the outbursts of a distressed man. The man stands and cackles at the priest until men come to escort him out of the church. It is then that the audience gets its first glimpse of Jekyll with the camera providing a close up as he looks at the distressed man seemingly horrified. Jekyll stands and follows the group outside, interrupting the men to examine him. He asks the man's wife if he has acted like this before and when the police arrive he tells them to take him to Camden Hospital handing out his card. The police recognize his name, signifying to the audience Jekyll's social standing and repute. All throughout the exchange Jekyll is quiet and almost detached.

With its opening sequence the film situates itself historically in the Victorian era and sets out its moral tone, emphasizing its conservative standpoint. From the textual analysis provided it is evident that unlike Mamoulian's experimental use of first-person subjectivity and gothic undertones, MGM's opening features relatively standard shot compositions and a large realist set. All the canted angles and tracking shots are used to further the film's religious undertones and exemplify the spectacle of the set. Likewise, unlike the innovative introduction to a suave, rebellious Jekyll in the earlier film, the audience's introduction to Jekyll in MGM's production emphasizes the character's social status and his easy yet professional manner. The opening sequence of the 1941 production of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* reflects the studio's house style and cultural climate with the screenwriters completely rewriting the opening to set up the film's tone of religion and order. However, it is clear from the screenplay drafts and the finished film that, despite the difference in tone, MGM lifted the audience's first introduction to Ivy directly from Paramount's earlier script.

In MGM's version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Ivy is played by Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman fresh from her success in *Intermezzo* (Ratoff, 1939). Reputedly Bergman was originally cast as Jekyll's fiancée Muriel in accordance with her established persona as a 'fresh and pure personality.'³⁰ However, fearing typecasting she fought for the role of Ivy. Much of what occurs in the scene when Jekyll accompanies Ivy to her rooms is what was outlined in Heath and Hoffenstein's original script. Yet without the point-of-view camerawork it seems strangely devoid of sexual tension. Ivy is flirtatious, taking off her top to reveal a lacy vest, yet Jekyll remains impervious to her advances. Rather than the lust of the original 'Champagne Ivy,' Bergman's performance displays a more romantic style. Frequent close ups feature her upturned face gazing and smiling at the doctor. Almost every shot of the two is canted, with Jekyll in the higher position looking down on her. When Jekyll goes to leave, she is mortified that he might think she is a whore. Unable to say the word she repeats, 'I ain't no, I ain't no' until Jekyll cuts in saying 'No I know you're not, you're a girl with a heart just where it ought to be, maybe a little too generous that's all.' There appears to be so little temptation and tension in the scene that it is almost a surprise when Jekyll seeks Ivy out after he first transforms into Hyde.

Comparing this scene to the Production Code Administration records I examined at the Margaret Herrick Library, it is evident that many of the changes between the two films were due to stringent morality codes. Before commencing filming, the studios were required to send in their scripts to Breen's office for approval. My analysis of the original censorship records shows that from the onset of this film's production concerns were raised by the PCA over the portrayal of Ivy. In a memo dated 12 November 1940, Breen wrote 'page 33: great care will be needed with the characterization of the girl Ivy, to avoid characterizing her as a

prostitute.³¹ Even the garter that Jekyll seemingly accepts under duress was deemed indecent, with Breen advising ‘this scene with the girl taking off her stocking must be done inoffensively, and without undue exposure. Please do not over emphasize the garter in this scene.’³² Unlike Mamoulian’s film, made a decade earlier, any hint of nudity was out of the question. Handwritten notes by the censor who viewed the final cut frequently refer to Bergman’s ‘unduly exposed’ breasts.’ Even a swinging bare leg, shown at the end of the scene in the earlier film, had to be omitted. However, interestingly the same care was not extended to the portrayal of violence. Whilst Hyde’s beating of Carew was termed ‘unduly gruesome,’ Breen suggested that it could be included if done ‘by suggestion.’³³ Likewise, little attention was paid to Ivy’s violent murder, Breen simply wrote ‘care should be taken when Ivy strangled. Particularly sound effects.’³⁴

Such stringent controls on the representation of sexual themes meant that the filmmakers had to find an alternative method for portraying Jekyll’s sexual desires. One way they did this was with the inclusion of a hallucination sequence when Jekyll first transforms into Hyde. In the film, the sequence begins after a highly dramatic set of shots edited in such a way as to exploit as much tension as possible. Close ups of various bottles are interspersed with close ups of Jekyll’s face in intense concentration. He takes the potion in one gulp and then sets about measuring his pulse as it takes effect. However, he only makes it half way through a sentence, before his writing hand convulses and he breaks the pencil. Jekyll crashes to the ground, knocking over his equipment, with the camera thus providing extreme close ups of chemical bottles spilling on the floor. The camera focuses in on the back of Jekyll’s head as he lies face down before dissolving into the beginning of a montage sequence.



Fig. 4 Spencer Tracy, Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1941)

As the sequence commences, Jekyll's eye fills the screen alongside multiple exposures of water lilies and swirling liquid. Two such lilies come to the surface of the water one by one. One dissolves to become Beatrix shot from above with her long blonde hair trailing behind her. The second is Ivy smiling upwards, yet in a moment panic flashes across her face as she is sucked down into thick mud. Another cross dissolve then features Jekyll shot from below thrashing a whip across two horses, one light, one dark. They too dissolve into Beatrix and Ivy with terrified faces. The camera zooms in on Jekyll's crazed face as he lashes them repeatedly (see Fig. 4). Though not shown in the same shot, it is clear that it is the women who he is whipping with a sadistic grin across his face. A final dissolve takes us back to the lab where Jekyll has begun to stir, with just the trace of the whirlpool remaining on screen for a moment.

This transition montage is replete with sexual imagery. The two lilies, representing female sexuality, are defiled by sinking mud. When the two girls are transformed into horses

whipped by a sadistic Jekyll, it is as if he is both punishing and drawing pleasure from dominating them. Designed by Peter Ballbusch in the studio's montage department, the hallucination sequence is both experimental and highly symbolic. The original draft script for this sequence found within the Turner/MGM Scripts collection and dated 6 February 1941 outlines Ballbusch's intention:

Instead of showing the devastating work of Jekyll's "potion" in an outer fashion... change of hands, face etc. I propose to treat this transition Montage in a Freudian, symbolic explanation of Jekyll's suppressed desire, which actually force him into his search for the separation of "Good and Evil"³⁵

From this statement, it is clear that Ballbusch envisioned a highly original and stylistic rendering of the film's inciting incident. However, a closer examination of the draft scripts shows that he initially proposed a bolder choice of symbolism than what appears in the finished film.

The script, written at the beginning of February 1941, begins after a number of auditory flashbacks. Jekyll hears ringing in his ears and the dialogue from an earlier dinner party, 'Aren't you rather presumptuous in assuming there's evil in all men?' and Jekyll's reply 'Of course there's evil in all men.'³⁶ By this time the ringing sound has reached shrill proportions and just as Dr. Marley is heard to say 'Really Jekyll this is quite alarming,' we see the first spasms of pain grip Jekyll's face and hand. Jekyll and the audience continue to hear Dr. Courtney's condemnation as the potion takes effect.³⁷ During this the camera rises to Jekyll's face distorted in pain. As his face bends back in spasms the camera continues to rise until it comes directly above Jekyll's face in what Ballbusch terms a 'Christ on cross-effect.'³⁸ Over this we still have the ringing sound which has become nearly unbearable and

numerous voices yelling above it including Ivy. It is with Ivy's line that the process finally reaches a climax. There is a crash and a strong electrical discharge as Jekyll falls to the floor.

It is the shot of Jekyll lying on the ground that signals the beginning of the montage sequence with a super-imposed whirlpool appearing across the screen. Ballbusch's script is programmatically set out with a number of points. The first is of the water lilies blooming at the surface of the water, the second a close up of a particular lily and third, that lily dissolving into the face of Beatrix. Yet, after this point Ballbusch's original sequence begins to differ from what eventually appeared on screen. He writes:

4. Swoop in close up of violin, the bow playing lightly, then going into hacking, passionate strokes. The water surface effect which blended also over the playing violin, dissolves into an effect of fiery, billowing smoke. (stock-shot: Slow Motion) Then as the smoke billows up, the violin dissolves into:
5. The naked back of Ivy and the scraping bow blends into her arm, rubbing across her back as if to show Jekyll where the thug bruised her.
6. Swoop-up to close-up of Ivy's head looking up seductively over her bare shoulder. Cut to:
7. Huge close-up of Jekyll's eye filling the entire screen looking down at Ivy as if to murder her or ...³⁹

Ballbusch's original characterization of Ivy differs dramatically from what was in the finished film. In this original treatment Beatrix is a blooming water lily, whilst Ivy is a violin which suffers the harsh and passionate strokes of a bow. Ballbusch is explicit in his intentions and Jekyll's reaction to Ivy's invitation makes his sadistic impulses unmistakable. The last points of the script are overtly sexual. Point 19 has Jekyll holding a huge pestle and pushing it down fiercely. However, the accompanying shot is not a mortar but Ivy who is laughing mockingly the more furiously the pestle crashes down. In the last shot Ballbusch writes that 'this phallic effect is sucked up into a whirlpool' dissolving back into the lab.⁴⁰

Ballbusch's script underwent a number of changes throughout February 1941 and it is not until 19 February that horses became a feature in the montage. In an interview related in Sragow's biography, Victor Saville, the film's producer, took the credit for the hallucination sequence stating:

Robert Louis Stevenson, in his short story, talked about Plato's 'Twin Horses of the Soul.' I had read and reread Stevenson looking for something I could clue into the film. So, I materialized Plato's thought of the Twin Horses. We made a montage of fantasy with Tracy as a charioteer with lash, driving in harness Bergman and Turner, with windswept manes. It was a good piece of symbolism—Life magazine reproduced, in its two center pages, each frame of the montage.⁴¹

The twin horses to which Saville refers is a dialogue taken from *Phaedrus*, Plato's rhetoric on love, which attempts to explain the tripartite nature of the human soul. Through the allegory of a chariot drawn by a black and white horse, Plato contended that there were different factions to the soul in competition. The black horse represents the mortal, it is deformed and obstinate. The white horse represents the immortal, which Plato describes as 'clean-limbed, high-necked, hook-nosed, white in colour, and dark eyed; [...] an ally of true glory.'⁴² In the driving seat is the charioteer who must guide the disparate steeds towards heaven, since the black horse wishes to return down to earth and the white one to rise upwards. If he is able to get them into sync he will succeed, but if he is unable to pilot the chariot he will plummet to his death.

It is unclear from the montage scripts whether it was Saville who was responsible for the addition of horses, since no memo has survived between Ballbusch and the producer that details its reception. However, its use in the montage furthers the story's central themes, symbolizing the ongoing conflict in a man's soul, and transforming the Platonic image into a metaphor for the unleashing of Jekyll's desires for sexual possession and domination.

According to Sragow, Fleming told the movie's publicists that he set out to make a version more realistic than the 1932 Rouben Mamoulian production. The hallucinatory images, though highly stylized, adds to this sense of realism, functioning as a stream of consciousness that explores Jekyll's individual subjectivity. Moreover, furthering the story's complex sexual themes through Freudian symbolism allowed the filmmakers to bypass stringent censorship control. In the PCA record the only objection raised was that Jekyll shouldn't be shown whipping the women.⁴³ However, the filmmakers merely separated the characters into different frames.

Unsurprisingly, the film's attempt to introduce Freudian symbolism into mainstream cinema was met with mixed reviews. The *Life* magazine two-page article about which Saville boasted wrote: 'As one of the first attempts to introduce Freud into a U.S. movie, *Jekyll* has no serious value. Nor is it a good picture. But pictorially it is well worth a look at.'⁴⁴ Likewise, Strauss in the *New York Times* was scathing in his review of the montage, writing:

In a daring montage or two, which must have caught the censors dozing, a weary Freud is dragged in by the coat-tails. [...] Faced with the choice of creating hokum unabashed or a psychological study of a man caught in a mortal conflict with himself, the producers have tried to do both – and failed by nearly two hours of pompous symbolism.⁴⁵

Ultimately it was a *Variety* tradeshow review that summarized the inherent problem at the heart of MGM's adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. It writes: 'in striving to make Jekyll a "big" film, by elaborating the theme and introducing new characters and situations some of the finer psychological points are dulled. [...] It may be that Fleming, keeping closer to the literal than to the spirit of the text, missed some of the subtler points.'⁴⁶ Similarly, *Time* magazine's view of the film lamented MGM's style of adaptation stating that: 'this unfortunate portrayal is the result of actor Tracy's and director Fleming's refusal to play the

hoary fable for its horror. They have dressed it up with overtones of Freud [...] The result of this phantasmagoria is boredom.⁴⁷ The reviewers of *Variety* and *Time* therefore outline the inconsistencies of MGM's production. The key to a successful adaptation was not necessarily fidelity, but considerations of cinematic form and its contemporary audience: in trying to replicate the literary prestige of the original, the filmmakers of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* alienated their audience and created an unbalanced film in both style and tone.

Conclusion

As this chapter has revealed, both Rouben Mamoulian's 1932 adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Victor Fleming's 1941 version were subject to prevailing trends in filmmaking, industrial regulation, and social anxieties. This created a melting pot of competing visions and influences. In the case of Mamoulian's 1932 version, industrial determinants such as technological advances in camerawork, and the liberal cultural climate of pre-Code Hollywood, led to a bold and innovative film. However, when the same text was adapted by Victor Fleming in 1941, industrial and regulatory factors were far more restrictive. Whilst the film's production values were higher, the house style at MGM dictated a more conservative mode of production for their adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Whereas Mamoulian's film used Stevenson's novella as a vehicle for spectacle, pushing the boundaries of filmic style, Fleming's version was made in order to fit into the studio's tried and tested formula of prestige pictures. This formula dictated the style of the film, its cast, and crucially audience's expectations. Yet as this chapter has shown, this

conservatism extended beyond stylistic considerations, with the introduction of strict censorship guidelines restricting the representation of sexuality.

Throughout the history of adapting *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* sexual desire has been a central theme, yet in 1941 there were stringent controls on the representation of sex on screen, with Breen's office heavily policing all motion picture content. In order to evade censorship, MGM attempted to explore such themes through a Freudian hallucination sequence. Whereas innovation and risk paid off in Mamoulian's production, it did quite the opposite in 1941, inciting almost every critic to denounce the film. MGM's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was marketed as a literary prestige picture, but as this chapter has shown, introducing a dream-like sequence that suggested sadomasochism severely disrupted that formula.

MGM's studio ethos, changes to censorship, and the replication of elements in the previous adaptation led to a lack of visual coherence in Fleming's film. However, perhaps the essential failing of Fleming's film was due to the cultural climate in which it was released. As was suggested in the first chapter, by the beginning of the 1940s the popularity of the prestige picture had dropped dramatically. As I shall explore in the next chapter, the shift in popular tastes during the 1940s had a huge impact on the selection of story material and the industry's mode of adaptation. As *Time Magazine's* suggested in 1944, by the 1940s moviegoers did not want to be 'uplifted, edified, harrowed or sermonized. They just want to be entertained.'⁴⁸

Notes for Chapter Four

- ¹ Gray, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Literary Life*, 18.
- ² Stevenson, *Across the Plains*. 230.
- ³ Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, 73-93.
- ⁴ Veeder, "Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy," 106-107.
- ⁵ Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 107.
- ⁶ Saposnik, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, 93.
- ⁷ Campbell, "Women and Sadism in Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," 309.
- ⁸ Saposnik, "The Anatomy of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," 715-731.
- ⁹ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Boston Post*, May 10, 1887, n.p.
- ¹⁰ Danahay, "Richard Mansfield, Jekyll and Hyde and the History of Special Effects," 54-72.
- ¹¹ Silver, *More Things than are Dreamt of*, 77.
- ¹² *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Script dated June 11, 1931, File 247.f-D-500; Paramount Pictures Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ¹³ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Script dated June 23, 1931, File 247.f-D-500; Paramount Pictures Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ¹⁴ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Script dated June 23, 1931, File 247.f-D-500; Paramount Pictures Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ¹⁵ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Script dated June 23, 1931, File 247.f-D-500; Paramount Pictures Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ¹⁶ Lührssen, *Mamoulian: Life on Stage and Screen*, 51.
- ¹⁷ Lührssen, *Mamoulian: Life on Stage and Screen*, 44.
- ¹⁸ Silke, *Discussion No. 2: Rouben Mamoulian 'Style is the Man'*, 9.
- ¹⁹ Lehman, "Looking at Ivy Looking at Us Looking at Her," 59-63.
- ²⁰ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Time*, January 11, 1932, n.p.
- ²¹ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Variety*, December 31, 1931, n.p.
- ²² "Trade-Supported British Censors on Trial for Life, Bars 34 Films," *Motion Picture Herald* March, 5 1932, n.p.
- ²³ Trade-Supported British Censors on Trial for Life, Bars 34 Films," *Motion Picture Herald* March, 5 1932, n.p.
- ²⁴ "Film World," *The West Australian*. October 19, 1934, n.p.
- ²⁵ Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood*, 104.
- ²⁶ Wu, Tim. *The Future of Free Speech* (blog). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. November 14, 2010. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Future-of-Free-Speech/125326/>
- ²⁷ Sragow, *Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master*, 357.
- ²⁸ Sragow, *Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master*, 360.
- ²⁹ Mank, *Hollywood Cauldron*, 28.
- ³⁰ Selznick, *Memo from David O. Selznick*, 136.
- ³¹ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde 1940-1948*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³² *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde 1940-1948*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³³ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde 1940-1948*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.

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- ³⁴ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde 1940-1948*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³⁵ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³⁶ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³⁷ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³⁸ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ³⁹ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴⁰ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Montages by Peter Ballbusch dated February 6, 1941 to February 19, 1941, File 759.f-D-930; Turner/MGM Scripts; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴¹ Sragow, *Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master*, 370.
- ⁴² Plato, *Oxford World's Classics: Phaedrus*, 38.
- ⁴³ *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde 1940-1948*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴⁴ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Life*, August 25, 1941, n.p.
- ⁴⁵ Strauss, "Spencer Tracy Essays Dual role of 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' which opened yesterday at the Astor," *New York Times*, August 13, 1941, n.p.
- ⁴⁶ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Variety*, January 1, 1941, n.p.
- ⁴⁷ "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Time*, September 1941, 88.
- ⁴⁸ "Facts of Life, 1944," *Time*, September 4, 1944, n.p.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Textual Evolution: Adapting the Image of Sherlock Holmes 1899-1947

For this next chapter an examination of the iconography of Sherlock Holmes in illustration, theatre and film will be provided, culminating in a close textual analysis of the use of props in the 1940s. The previous chapter of this thesis was, in the main, focussed on contrasts, charting how contextual factors created differences between adaptations of the same text. In this chapter I will be looking not at the erasures, gaps, and fissures between adaptive texts but at their similarities. According to my database, Sherlock Holmes was adapted sixteen times in the Hollywood studio era. By examining the early adaptations of Sherlock Holmes from 1899 to 1947 alongside illustrations and theatrical productions, the intention of this chapter is therefore to chart the development of visual iconography and to question the function of visual cohesion between adaptations of the same text. Like the work on *Frankenstein* presented earlier in this thesis, this chapter will demonstrate how the adaptation of popular texts alters according to different cultures and contexts; yet by preserving key visual conventions, each version can be seen as part of a chain of influence that stretches back to the original source text.

Arthur Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes first appeared in the pages of *The Strand Magazine* in the nineteenth-century as a private detective with a talent for observation and an expertise in forensic science. From 1887 to 1927, Conan Doyle produced four novels and fifty-six short stories featuring the character. Though not the first fictional detective, today Sherlock Holmes is arguably the most well-known. Widely considered a British cultural

icon, the character and stories have had a profound and lasting effect on mystery writing and popular culture as a whole. Due to the abundance of material that adaptors have drawn on over the years, critics such as Thomas Leitch, Amanda Field and Roberta Pearson use the term ‘franchise’ to refer to the body of work by Conan Doyle and adaptations based on the character. I will be employing the term in the same way throughout this chapter.

Throughout the twentieth-century, the enduring popularity of Holmes has resulted in a wide variety of adaptations with varying degrees of fidelity to the original characters, stories, and setting. Consequently, a vast array of scholarship exists on the franchise. However, unlike the scholarship on other nineteenth-century texts, a great deal focus on contemporary readership and appropriation, attesting to the text’s status in popular culture. Critical works include Sam Naidu’s *Sherlock Holmes in Context* (2017), *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle: Multi-Media Afterlives* (2013) by Catherine Wynne, and *Sherlock Holmes for the 21st Century: Essays on New Adaptations* (2012) by Lynnette Porter, which demonstrates how Holmes is continually revived to comment on contemporary social issues. Furthermore, in the past decade a number of studies have been published on Holmes fandom, such as *Fan Phenomena: Sherlock Holmes* (2014) edited by Tom Ue and Jonathan Cranfield and *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom: Essays on the BBC Series* (2012) edited by Louisa Ellen Stein and Kristina Busse. These works explore the cultural intersections and fan traditions that converge in fan communities and they position Sherlock Holmes as an international transmedia figure with continued cultural impact.

As I will be taking a historical perspective on the franchise, much of the existing criticism on contemporary readings is insufficient for my analysis. Sherlock Holmes first appeared

on stage in 1899, with a play written by, and starring, the American playwright William Gillette. Holmes' portrayal in film is almost as old as the medium itself, with the first adaptation *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* appearing in 1900. However, few critical accounts examine the early history of adapting Sherlock Holmes despite his prominence on stage and screen. Exceptions include Henry Zecher's *William Gillette, America's Sherlock Holmes* (2011), 'The Meaning of Mystery: Genre, Marketing and the Universal Sherlock Holmes Series of the 1940s' (2005) by Mark Jancovich, a chapter of Thomas Leitch's work *Film Adaptation and its Discontents* (2007), and *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Cinema* (1996) by Scott Allen Nollen. Nollen's work is a broad chronological history of the adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle's work in cinema, from the detective's first portrayal on screen in *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* to television series in the late 1990s. In it he provides essential information on early adaptations which I have drawn on for this chapter. However due to its scope, Nollen's work does not answer the specific questions I want to address, such as how and why adaptors selected visual tropes from the Holmesian canon. *William Gillette, America's Sherlock Holmes* (2011) by Zecher provides a detailed examination of Holmes' first portrayal on stage through his biography of the actor and playwright William Gillette. Zecher argues throughout that Gillette's portrayal of Holmes helped create the modern image of the detective. His use of the deerstalker cap and the curved pipe became synonymous with the character. Furthermore, Zecher reveals that it was in Gillette's play, and not in Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, that Holmes first used the term 'elementary.' Zecher's work indicates that a more in-depth historical investigation of Gillette's play would reveal the origins of visual cohesion in the franchise.

Whereas the aforementioned studies provide both surveys and historical investigations of Holmes adaptations, Thomas Leitch's analysis of the detective in *Film Adaptation and its Discontents* is an intertextual and intermedial examination of the franchise. In it he investigates how Holmes adaptations freely mix elements from both inside and outside the canon. Leitch argues that like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the adaptations of Sherlock Holmes are hybrid texts, which 'depart from their putative originals at any number of points, often choosing to instead to remain faithful to unauthorized later versions.'¹ Leitch's work is insightful, and raises a number of issues surrounding authorship and fidelity. However, what I intend to do is foreground the development of iconography in this debate. Sherlock Holmes adaptations provide an abundant source of analysis because of the frequency and diversity of their adaptation, yet arguably this diversity is only made possible by having a recognizable set of visual conventions. The aim of this investigation is therefore to present a history of the image of Sherlock Holmes, and using archival research, to examine how his iconography evolved in the first half of the twentieth-century.

For this chapter four archives were consulted: the New York Public library, the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts, the Conan Doyle Collection held at the Portsmouth Central Library and the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles. At the New York Public Library, I was able to source the original script of Gillette's play with handwritten notes by producer William Starrett, and an original prompt book with illustrations of the stage layout. These provide essential information about the play's set and costume design. At the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts I was able to consult a wide range of images, from theatrical stills and promotional material to original illustrations by illustrator Frederic Dorr Steele. These are used in this chapter to examine how the visual icons of Sherlock Holmes were developed.

In Portsmouth, the Conan Doyle Collection brings together books, photographs, objects, documents and memorabilia chronicling the life of Conan Doyle. Information gathered here pertained to the Arthur Conan Doyle estate and outlined a set of determinants that led to Universal's ownership of the rights to Sherlock Holmes stories in the 1940s. Finally, the Margaret Herrick Library holds original censorship records for Universal's adaptations of the franchise which were consulted to determine the industrial restraints put on films during the war years.

In this chapter, a number of early adaptations will be examined, including the Gillette's adaptation, and the silent film parody *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (1916) in which Holmes is recast as 'Coke Ennyday', a haphazard detective who resorts to cocaine at every opportunity. In popularizing certain conventions, I will ask whether these early adaptations created a system of signification, a visual shorthand that allowed future adaptors to broaden its audience by recontextualising Holmes in a number of different guises. This chapter will then focus on the films of the Hollywood studio era, looking primarily at Basil Rathbone's portrayal of Holmes at Twentieth-Century Fox and Universal. I will examine how these two different studios took two different approaches to the character whilst maintaining familiar visual conventions. In doing so, this chapter intends to establish the power and significance of iconography in the adaptation of popular texts.

Holmes on Stage and Silent Screen

Today Sherlock Holmes is an instantly recognizable character, thanks to countless portrayals on stage and screen. As Thomas Leitch notes in his examination of the detective on screen, the Internet Movie Database lists seventy-six movie portrayals of Holmes, though

it fails to include early depictions such as Maurice Costello (1905), George Tréville (1912), H. A. Saintsbury (1916), and the unknown performer who first brought the detective to the screen in *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* (1900).² The first official adaptation of the franchise was an American play staged in 1899, starring William Gillette. At this time, theatre producers sought to earn large profits from sentimental and sensational plays for a burgeoning middle-class audience. William Gillette who had previously written the hit melodramas *Held by the Enemy* (1887) and *Secret Service* (1895), had already demonstrated his capability for prefiguring public tastes when he turned to adapting Conan Doyle's work in 1899. As Georg W. Schutter proposes, he knew that the wide popularity of detective fiction and the Sherlock Holmes stories would almost assure the play's success. However, Gillette built on this already established popularity by creating a new type of hero on stage, the gentleman-detective, fusing elements from three unrelated stories and adding a love interest to the plot. *Sherlock Holmes, or The Strange Case of Miss Faulkner* (1899) opened on November 6, 1899 in New York and ran there for more than 260 performances before touring the United States. It then moved on to London's Lyceum Theatre in September 1901.³ The play was well suited to the conventions of the Edwardian stage and as one reviewer put it 'the very crème de la crème of Sherlock Holmes.'⁴

The role of Sherlock Holmes, with his quiet manner devoid of overstatement, suited both Gillette's style of acting and the latter nineteenth-century's theatrical conventions. From my research of historical reviews for the play, it is evident that this style of acting was preferred by critics. Observing Gillette in 1900, theatre critic Lewis Strang commented that 'he rarely gesticulates, and his bodily movements often seem purposely slow and deliberate. His composure is absolute and his mental grasp of a situation is complete.'⁵ One of Gillette's

greatest strengths as an actor was his ability to say nothing at all on the stage, relying instead on an involved, inner contemplation of an emotional crisis to hold the audience intent. Moreover, from an article written about the actor in 1915, it is evident that this dramatic style was in line with a general movement that sought to bring greater fidelity to the stage.

At this time:

Theatres were made smaller, the empty stage was crowded with people, properties were refurbished, realisms multiplied. Asides went out; soliloquies died. Having ceased to get effects by bawling, actors ceased to bawl! Restraint and repression came in [...] The details of stage-setting also took on a new purpose. The furniture had begun to act, properties to play parts.⁶

From the evidence I gathered from the Performing Arts Research Collections at New York Public Library and the Billy Rose Theater Division of Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts it was clear that the archival material would help me to draw conclusions about the practice and style of Gillette's play. In the original prompt book, the stage directions were given in minute detail, and describe exactly how the set was to be dressed. The Chesterfield sofa was to be scattered with a 'violin, tobacco pouch, loose music, two or three pipes, tobacco tin, violin bow,' whereas the mantelpiece had 'two tin boxes, clock and ornaments, jar of tobacco, wax matches, hypodermic syringe in case, small phial, several pipes.'⁷ Additionally, an early version of the play, heavily edited by theatre producer William Starrett, demonstrates that a comparable level of attention was also paid to costume. In the opening of second act handwritten notes describe how Gillette was to appear in his Baker

Street rooms:

Dark colored fancy silk or satin dress
Gown very large satin faced
Large side pockets
Cord or band not fastened at waist, hang each side
Black velvet vest cut high
Black satin flat tie scarf (filling up space)

(White collar same as act one – amethyst scarf pin in tie)
Black dress trousers of Act I
Black silk socks (ribbed but all black)
Fancy slippers (dark tone)
Gold headed pencil – left upper vest pocket
6 or more revolver cartridges- left pocket dressing gown
Watch – with usual left vest pocket
(but watch not used this act)

Legs crossed
Left hand holds pipe bowl – right resting on or over right knee
Eyes downward forward L

Manage easily to have pipe out of mouth for speaking
Pipe out of mouth right hand with a little move or Flemish of air. ⁸

From this evidence, it is apparent that whilst the level of detail put into creating the play's mise-en-scène contributed greatly to its sense of verisimilitude, the selection of carefully considered props and costume choices also characterized Holmes visually, with their inclusion indicating everything from social class to habitual character traits. From the above description, it is clear that the audience would have been subliminally instructed about Holmes' wealth. His costume comprised of expensive articles, such as the amethyst scarf pin, gold headed pencil and now characteristic smoking jacket. The smoking jacket was a distinctly genteel item of clothing, intended to absorb the smoke from a gentleman's cigar or pipe and protect his clothing from falling ash. An editorial in *The Washington Post* in 1908 gave the opinion that the smoking jacket was 'synonymous with comfort.'⁹ Therefore, by appearing attired in a large satin faced gown with his pipe in his right hand, Gillette depicted Holmes as a wealthy gentleman at ease.

Many historians agree that it was Gillette who first introduced the curved or calabash pipe to the image of Holmes, instead of the straight pipe pictured by illustrators. Most of the

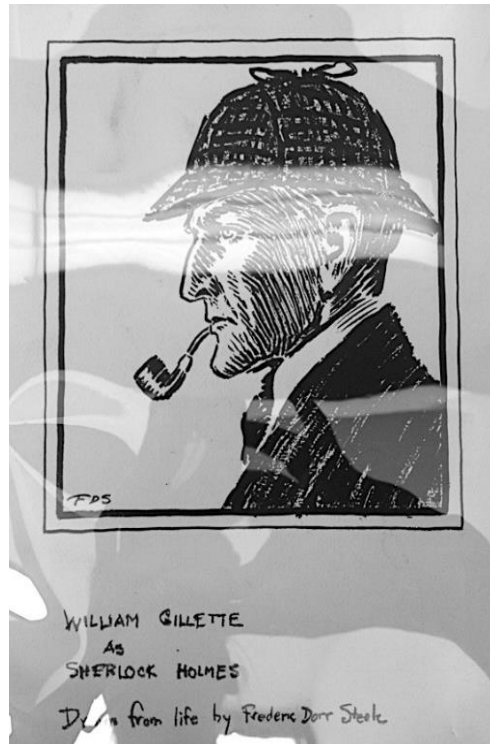


Fig. 1 Original illustration at the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts, New York

original stories, particularly ‘The Adventure of the Copper Beeches,’ describe Holmes as preferring a long-stemmed cherry-wood or a clay pipe. However, Gillette used a large calabash pipe on stage supposedly so that his face was easier to be seen by the audience.¹⁰ In this period tobacco pipe smoking was seen as a genteel or dignified pastime, therefore the pipe became a visual cue for Holmes personality traits of contemplation and quiet reserve. In an interesting example of back-formation, following Gillette’s portrayal on stage the American illustrator Frederic Dorr Steele began to depict Holmes with a curved pipe in illustrations for Conan Doyle’s later publications, creating a reverse exchange in the traditional order of adaptation. Figure 1 is a sketch I found in the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts. Contained within a file of promotional material for the play, the sketch depicts William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes, ‘drawn from life’.¹¹ Although no date is given,

I would speculate that Steele produced this sketch in order to prepare for future illustrations he would draw for the *Collier's* magazine from 1903 to 1917.

However, the pipe was not the only prop to be popularised by Gillette's depiction. Another key costume choice made for Gillette's play was the inclusion of a deerstalker cap, which is also depicted in Figure 1. Holmes is never described as wearing a deerstalker by name in Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. However, Watson describes him as wearing 'his ear-flapped travelling cap' in 'The Adventure of Silver Blaze.'¹² As the deerstalker was the most typical cap of the period, Sidney Paget's original illustrations for the stories began the detective's association with the hat by depicting Holmes in one. In Gillette's play this familiar image is recreated in the play's third act when Holmes is pursuing the criminal in Stepney Gas works. Although many critics argue that the cap was not an appropriate headwear for a gentleman in an urban environment, to contemporary theatrical audiences the deerstalker was not an empty symbol. Typically used for stalking deer, it suggested to the audience that Holmes was a gentleman stealthily pursuing the perpetrator.

As Scott Allen Nollen proposed in *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, it was the pipe and the deerstalker hat 'that would become an integral part of the public profile of Sherlock Holmes.'¹³ However, there are other conventions that had less of an impact in the history of Holmesian adaptations due to shifting social attitudes, such as the syringe and violin. The first wave of cocaine use occurred in the second half of the nineteenth-century with a number of cocaine enthusiasts, including scientists and medical practitioners, writing pamphlets and essays about the miraculous properties of the 'divine drug.'¹⁴ In Conan Doyle's stories, Dr. Watson first mentions cocaine in *The Sign of the Four* (1890). At that

time Holmes was injecting a seven percent solution intravenously three times a day. Holmes admits that cocaine is bad for him physically but finds it ‘transcendentally stimulating and clarifying to the mind.’¹⁵ Used only to dispel boredom when he had nothing to do, Holmes was therefore not depicted as a compulsive drug addict, and though its recreational use was frowned upon, its prescription by medical practitioners was common practice in Victorian times.¹⁶ However, by the turn of the century attitudes began to change and it was this controversial convention of the Holmes franchise that was parodied by Douglas Fairbanks in 1916 with the release of his film *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (1916).

The Mystery of the Leaping Fish, produced long before the establishment of the major Hollywood Studios, was an unusually broad comedy for matinee idol Fairbanks. As a *Motion Picture News* review of the film stated:

Douglas Fairbanks goes in for pure farce here, his role being that of a ‘nut’ detective, whose characteristics are well described by his name — Coke Ennyday. It is near slapstick, without a trace of the heart interest which Fairbanks handles with such distinction, and in fact is a burlesque of Fairbanks’ own style of acting, to a degree, and more emphatically, a burlesque of the know-it-all scientific detective and his methods.¹⁷

Although the review does not state explicitly that the film is a parody of Sherlock Holmes, a close textual analysis of the film's opening scene uncovers a number of visual tropes that suggest that it was Conan Doyle's character that provided the primary inspiration for the hero (see Fig. 2). In the opening scene, Coke Ennyday is shown seated in his apartment pondering something whilst stroking his moustache and smoking a curved pipe. Dressed in a striped smoking jacket, he has strapped across his chest a series of syringes that he injects sporadically into his arm, following each action with a hearty laugh. After being made a cocktail of narcotics by an assistant, the title card appears 'Even the Secret Service was often forced to appeal to Coke Ennyday.' This is shortly followed by the entrance of a police officer who brings a note asking for Ennyday's assistance on a case. After injecting a few more syringes and plunging his head into a cloud of cocaine, he agrees to the officer's request and proceeds to dress. The assistant brings out a large suitcase labelled 'Disguises' and a jacket while Ennyday removes his dressing gown and stands to reveal checkered trousers. The assistant places a checkered deerstalker hat on Ennyday's head and assists him with putting on a long-checkered cloak before they both exit the scene.



Fig. 2 Douglas Fairbanks as Coke Ennyday in *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (1916).

Unfortunately, no record exists of how well this film performed at the box office, however as this analysis of the opening scene illustrates, even at this early stage a number of now familiar visual tropes were employed to denote the character of Sherlock Holmes, namely the pipe, the smoking jacket, the deerstalker hat, and Holmes' 'Seven Point Solution.' The use of these tropes is exaggerated in the film for comedic effect. In the original stories Holmes appropriately dons a deerstalker when chasing down the hound of the Baskervilles in the English countryside, yet in *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (1916) the hat forms part of a ridiculous and entirely conspicuous 'disguise.' Holmes use of cocaine however is pure satire. *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* was released just one year before the Harrison Act was enacted imposing restrictions on 'all persons who produce, import, manufacture, compound, deal in, dispense, sell, distribute, or give away opium or coca leaves, their salts, derivatives, or preparations, and for other purposes.'¹⁸ This change in attitudes towards narcotics effectively ended almost any reference to Holmes' use of cocaine in subsequent adaptations until the 1970s when society began to take a more liberal view. In 1974 Nicholas Meyer penned his pastiche of the detective, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* which recounts Holmes' recovery from cocaine addiction with the help of Sigmund Freud. The novel was subsequently adapted by Universal in 1976, receiving two academy award nominations, and reinstating Holmes' public association with narcotics.

As this historical investigation has shown, the first adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes stories took pains to visually depict the character with a high level of realism, using props and costumes to elaborate on the character's social standing and personality traits. Whilst Gillette played the part with quiet reserve and absolute composure, the use of key props and

costumes furthered this portrayal, depicting Holmes as a contemplative and dignified gentleman suited to Edwardian ideals of a genteel society. The repetition of this image of Holmes is seen in illustrations by Frederic Dorr Steele in 1908, and film parodies produced while Gillette was reprising the role in the early 1910s. Whilst some parodies chose only to employ the name of Sherlock Holmes in a hope to entice audiences, such as *Miss Sherlock Holmes* (1908), *A Squeedunk Sherlock Holmes* (1909), and *Sherlock Holmes, Jr.* (1911), there were many who used the curved pipe and deerstalker cap as visual icons to denote the character, such as *Trailing the Counterfeiter* (1911) and *The Flag of Distress* (1912).¹⁹ As Steve Hecox notes, what made such films successful is the fact that audiences were already ‘familiar with Sherlock Holmes and recognize him even when he appears under different names.’²⁰ Therefore, in popularizing certain conventions, Gillette created a system of signification, a visual shorthand that allowed future adaptors to broaden its audience by recontextualising Holmes in a number of different guises.

However, this investigation has also demonstrated that there were other conventions that went on to occupy lesser positions in the canon of Holmesian icons. As was shown, changing attitudes towards the use of narcotics made it difficult for adaptors to reference Holmes’ use of the seven-per-cent solution past 1917. Likewise, his fondness for playing the violin was frequently omitted from later adaptations, perhaps in a process of simplifying his idiosyncrasies. After the First World War audiences sought a sense of stability and normality. Holmes’ drug addiction, musical taste and strange moods stood in contrast to this. Though subtle the omission of the needle and violin had as much an effect on how Holmes was depicted in future adaptations as to what was included, since they removed some of the more artistic and eccentric elements of his personality. As Nollen laments in his

assessment of the play by Gillette, ‘the fascinating and occasionally irritating personality quirks that Conan Doyle so brilliantly invented are lost.’²¹ Ultimately, this morphed Holmes into the distinctively detached and rational detective seen in later Hollywood productions of the stories.

Holmes in Hollywood

By the time that Holmes appeared in his first talking picture adaptation, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1929), his image had become a readily flexible commodity used for everything from a pipe advertisement to a card game.²² Amanda J. Field’s (2012) study of Holmes in advertising examines how manufacturers appropriated the image of Holmes to promote their products, using ‘elements of Holmes’ visual iconography to create an instant identification with consumers’. She argues that from an early date ‘the most common visual symbols used are the deerstalker, inverness cape, pipe and magnifying glass.’²³ The repetition of these symbols in a range of contexts rendered Holmes a sort of floating signifier by the 1930s, with all known Holmes films featuring a setting contemporaneous with the films’ release.

Sherlock Holmes (1932), was an adaptation of William Gillette’s play purchased by Fox Film Corporation in 1932. Like the 1929 adaptation *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, the film starred Clive Brook who chases criminals through the foggy streets of London in motorcars. However, visual cohesion is maintained through the depiction of key costume choices and props. When Alice Faulkner visits Holmes in his Baker Street rooms, the mix of contemporary settings and traditional Holmesian milieu is pronounced. The detective is depicted in the customary smoking jacket with a curved calabash pipe much as William

Gillette had been thirty years earlier. However, Alice is depicted in contemporary dress with bobbed 1930s hair-do and cloche hat. Together with page boy Billy they discuss how motorcars are responsible for the increase in crime since they allow criminals to make a quicker escape. Holmes demonstrates an invention he has devised ‘The Motor Wrecking Ray’ that emits an electromagnetic ray to destroy the car’s engine. Rather than invent a faster car to catch criminals, Holmes articulates some key contemporary anxieties in this scene. As I suggested in previous chapters, the early 1930s was a period of vast social upheaval, with transformations on social, sexual and economic levels. As an unchanging icon, the detective actively seeks to destroy a key symbol of modernity and thus uphold a sense of safety and stability.

In 1939, Twentieth-Century Fox revived the franchise with one of the earliest known Sherlock Holmes films to be set in the Victorian period of the original stories; *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939). The film was part of a collection of ‘British’ films produced at Twentieth-Century Fox by Darryl Zanuck during the latter half of the 1930s.²⁴ Part of an industry-wide trend, Mark Glancy defines the term ‘British’ as a film made by an American company, based on British source material or set in Britain, and having a significant number of British personnel among the credits. At Fox such films included biopics, adventures, and romance that displayed a reverence for British culture. Unlike MGM who turned to literary classics, Fox utilized literary sources for these films that featured more popular conventions including the romance *Under Two Flags* (1936), adventure novel *Kidnapped* (1938) and children’s novel *A Little Princess* (1939).

In an article published in the fan magazine *Photoplay*, critics comment on how Hollywood's trend for anglophilia reached its peak in the late 1930s, writing:

Here come the British with a bang, bang! Not since the Oxford accent invasion after the talkies came in has Hollywood gone so suddenly and sensationally English as in the first merry month of nineteen hundred and thirty-nine.²⁵

Examples given include the casting of Vivien Leigh in *Gone With the Wind*, the nearly all-British cast and crew of *Wuthering Heights*, and the naming of the ten best pictures of the year 'as if London was the movie capital instead of Hollywood.'²⁶ Visiting the film set of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* the reporter states 'not a citizen of the U.S.A. gets a break in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous Bloodcurdling exploit of that Genius G-Man of the nineties, *Sherlock Holmes*.'²⁷ At a time of increasing political tensions in Europe, Hollywood's celebration of a shared Anglo-American heritage increased. Glancy proposes that this was not necessarily politically motivated, these films satisfied a fascination with English culture when many eyes were aimed back at the old country.²⁸ Through them, American audiences could revel in the antiquated images of Victorian England, whilst appreciating that their forefathers had left an unstable region.

In selecting Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Twentieth-Century Fox blended this popularity for English culture with horror, mystery and romance. Whilst Holmes stalks the moors for the killer of the murdered Sir Charles Baskerville, Baskerville's young heir, Sir Henry, woos his beautiful neighbor Beryl Stapleton. Directed by Sidney Lanfield and produced by Gene Markey, the film exaggerated the British setting with a foggy London, gothic moors and grand manors whilst adhering to Arthur Conan Doyle's original story. Whereas former adaptations had fused various elements from the whole

franchise, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was set in the Victorian period of the original novel and is often applauded by critics as being a faithful adaptation of Conan Doyle's work.²⁹ Yet what is evident from a close textual analysis of the film's opening scene is the deference it paid to what had become key conventions in the adaptation of the Holmes franchise.

The Hound of the Baskervilles opens on a foggy night in an English country garden, but rather than this being a quaint introduction to rural England as seen in many other 'British' films, it is the scene of a murder. After a brief sequence at a country coroner's inquisition, the action shifts to London and a series of key shots establishes the scene. Firstly, the audience is given a wide shot of Big Ben on a foggy night chiming midnight. The camera then cuts to a sign for Baker Street before panning downwards to the number 221B. The next shot is a close up of a newspaper with the headline 'Sir Henry Baskerville arriving from Canada' before finally giving the audience the first glimpse of Watson discussing the article with Holmes.

However, despite Holmes' presence in the scene, the filmmakers choose to tease the audience by beginning with only partial shots of the famous detective, building suspense and expectation. Initially, Holmes walks into the frame, pacing up and down between Watson and the camera while Watson laments about having cut out clippings of 'this Baskerville fellow.' Yet the shot is framed in such a way as to give the audience a view of Holmes' lower half only. What they can see however, is that the character is wearing a smoking jacket. The audience then sees Holmes' hand tap his curved pipe on the corner of the desk while he replies that he has an idea that 'young Henry isn't very long destined for this world.' Watson looks up and the camera finally falls on Holmes' face, in profile, with



Fig. 3 Basil Rathbone in *The Hound of the Baskerville* (1939)

his hand raising the calabash pipe to his mouth. He replies to Watson with emphasis ‘my conjecture is that he’ll be murdered’ before looking off to the side in deep thought (see Fig.3).

Whilst this introduction to Holmes and the world he inhabits ties into the Hollywood studio era’s conventions of the prestige picture, what is interesting is that it also begins by using iconic ‘Holmesian’ signs established by previous adaptations in a reverential way. Furthermore, from the reviews of the film it is evident that such signs were no longer just recognizable, but after almost forty years of repetition across media, were expected by audiences. When visiting the film while it was in production, the fan magazine *Photoplay* reported that Basil Rathbone had mistakenly picked up a straight-stem pipe to smoke, when ‘Sherlock was strictly a curved-stem man.’³⁰ Therefore, to be considered authentic the film had to adhere to the image of Holmes as he had appeared on stage and screen and not necessarily as he was described in Conan Doyle’s stories.

As Nollen argues, Rathbone remains the ‘quintessential cinematic Sherlock Holmes, and his appearance accurately reflects the vision of Conan Doyle and Sidney Paget: in scenes set in London, he dons formal coat and top hat, while he switches to an Inverness cape and deerstalker for his sojourn in the country.’³¹ However, despite Nollen’s praise of fidelity, the Inverness cape was a new addition to the canon of Holmesian icons. No mention is made of a cape in the original stories and, previous to this depiction, many had paired their deerstalker cap with a tweed jacket such as William Gillette, John Barrymore and Clive Brook. Some critics such as Lynette Porter (2016) and Sarah C. Rich (2012) attribute the cape to original illustrations by Sidney Paget, yet from examinations I have made of all the illustrations that accompanied Doyle’s original work the closest in resemblance is an image drawn for the story ‘Silver Blaze’ which depicts Holmes in what Conan Doyle described as a ‘long grey travelling cloak.’³² Therefore the addition of the now recognisable cape in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was not to recreate the visual shorthand that stood for Sherlock Holmes, or return to its original source, but to add a new element to the character.

The history of the Inverness cape itself suggests that rather than trying to replicate accurate descriptions of attire in the novel, or former depictions of Holmes on stage and screen, the filmmakers of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* constructed a new visual trope by introducing the cape as an easily recognizable historical article. As Annette Lynch and Mitchell D. Strauss state in their encyclopedia of fashion in the United States, near the end of the nineteenth-century and into the early twentieth-century, the Inverness cape was a popular addition to the male wardrobe across many social strata.³³ Paired with the deerstalker it became a vital aspect of the Victorian gentleman's hunting ensemble. Its use in the film contributed to a reflectionist adaptation of Conan Doyle’s work, marrying historical

verisimilitude with audience expectations. By underpinning the established image of the detective that contemporary audiences had come to know and love with a popular historical costume *The Hound of the Baskervilles* created both a seemingly faithful depiction of Conan Doyle's detective, and an additional icon to the popular conception of Sherlock Holmes.

Following the initial success of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Twentieth-Century Fox began planning their sequel *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* as early as June 1939, just three months after the initial film's release. As discussed in Chapter One, Fox was formulaic in its approach to adaptation, selecting story material to suit its stars under contract and tried and tested generic formulas. In turning to a second Holmes film shortly after the release of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, they hoped to repeat their success. Based on Gillette's play, which the studio had purchased in 1932, the film was again set in the original Victorian London setting and recast Rathbone with a 'calabash and a swirl of fog standing by for its entrance cues.'³⁴ However, from notes Darryl Zanuck wrote after the film's first story conference, screenwriters faced difficulties maintaining Holmes' unique persona. Zanuck complained that the 'traditional character of Sherlock Holmes is lost [...] not only must he be drawn more cleverly, but he must come through as the traditional fascinating Holmes personality – full of wit – nonchalant – confident of himself at all times.'³⁵ Such issues were evidently addressed, as the *Variety* review of the film claims that 'with the two key characters thus capably handled, the film has the additional asset of being well conceived and grippingly presented.'³⁶ However, despite its success, this was the last Holmes film made by Twentieth-Century Fox.

In 1942 the Conan Doyle estate sold the rights to all the Sherlock Holmes stories to Universal. In the Conan Doyle Collection at Portsmouth, I found a number of documents relating to unpaid taxes the Conan Doyle Estate was being pursued for by the American government. This suggests that the estate was forced to sell the rights to the stories to meet these costs. Yet Fox's films had reinvigorated the franchise and arguably created the final and definitive image of Holmes. Like Gillette's use of the pipe and deerstalker hat, the Inverness cape was used to characterize the detective for generations to come. Evidence of this can be seen in the statues erected in Edinburgh in 1991 and London in 1999. Despite being over fifty years old, both bear a striking resemblance to Rathbone's Victorian Holmes, appearing with the deerstalker cap, a curved pipe and the Inverness cape.

Universal: Sherlock Holmes versus the Nazis

As this chapter has shown so far, a franchise like Sherlock Holmes provides fertile ground for the analysis of multiple modes of adaptation because of the frequency and diversity of its adaptation. Ever since its first official adaptation in 1899, when Conan Doyle was still penning his tales, Sherlock Holmes has been appropriated in multiple ways, from his first outing on stage with an emphasis on realism and melodrama, to parodies that engaged with contemporary issues. Transforming Holmes into a recognizable icon for cinematic audiences was much more easily achieved by recreating definitive visual features than trying to single out any essential qualities of the original text. Furthermore, by the 1940s the prominence of these icons in the public perception of Holmes allowed adaptors an extraordinary level of flexibility when approaching the task of adaptation, since they gave filmmakers the freedom to recontextualise Holmes in a number of different roles and settings. This is especially evident in the adaptations by Universal, which was a series of

twelve contemporary films with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson battling Nazi spies, femmes fatales and murderous phantoms.

David Davies proposes that Twentieth-Century-Fox's decision to withdraw from further productions of the Sherlock Holmes franchise was due in part to the Second World War which meant that 'foreign agents and spies were much more typical and topical than the antiquated criminal activities of Moriarty and the like.'³⁷ As I explored in the previous chapters, this move away from the prestige mode of adaptation is also consistent with the period. While the Twentieth-Century-Fox adaptations had high production values and big budgets, the Universal films changed the approach of the series, and aimed to create 'B'-pictures with much lower budgets, returning the franchise to contemporary settings. The deal that Universal negotiated with the Conan Doyle estate stipulated that the studio had to make three films a year, two of which had to be adaptations of the original stories.³⁸ However, an examination of the films shows that Universal treated this notion of adaptation as a rather loose concept.

The first in the series *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (1942) combined elements of the Arthur Conan Doyle's story 'His Last Bow,' in which Sherlock Holmes comes out of retirement to help trap a German spy on the eve of the First World War, with the real-life activities of traitor Lord Haw-haw who broadcast pro-German propaganda throughout the Second World War. For Universal's film the action is transported to modern-day England, where Sherlock Holmes is invited by the British Intelligence to help identify and silence the 'Voice of Terror,' a series of cryptic radio broadcasts that spread panic throughout the

country. What ensues is the usual deductions but with a modern twist, featuring guns, gangsters, espionage and a large dose of wartime propaganda.

Produced by Howard Benedict, who would work on all thirteen of the films in the franchise, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* blended generic and contemporary elements to bridge the gap between the Holmes and Watson of the original stories and a subject of modern-day relevance. Borrowing conventions from other literary adaptations of the period who often used decorative title cards to introduce the story, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* begins with a pre-emptive justification for its modernization with an explanation as to why Holmes and Watson are now battling Nazis. The title card states, ‘Sherlock Holmes, the immortal character of fiction created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is ageless, invincible and unchanging. In solving significant problems of the present day he remains – as ever – the supreme master of deductive reasoning.’ The filmmakers visually further this argument with a silhouette of Holmes’ head and his characteristic curved pipe in the background to the card, reminding the audience of Holmes distinctive image. With the backdrop of a world at war, Holmes is presented as a timeless hero who represents stability at a time of economic and political uncertainty. Yet it is how *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* used iconography to communicate this sense of timelessness that is significant in the history of Holmesian adaptations, since modernizing the stories greatly affected the way in which familiar visual icons could be used.

Whereas Holmes was customarily perceived as Victorian, by 1942 it was far more difficult for the studio to move him entirely into the contemporary without audiences feeling they had lost the ‘real’ Holmes. As Amanda J. Fields notes, Universal sought to achieve a balance

by creating the perception of a ‘bubble’ within which Holmes and Watson operated, representing an idealized Victorian world that drew on nostalgic notions of the past. This ‘bubble’ was ‘conveyed through the depiction of the spaces they inhabit, the clothes they wear and the way they behave – all of which was slightly out of step with the contemporary.’³⁹ Quoting the executive producer Howard Benedict, the characters would only encounter the modern world when they stepped outside their rooms at 221B Baker Street: inside it would continue to be the nineteenth-century.⁴⁰

In order to make this commercial balancing act of Doyle’s Victorian creation and a contemporary figure of modern espionage, the filmmakers of *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* turned once again to those same familiar visual tropes established by previous adaptations, since it was this iconography that allowed the filmmakers to navigate a space between nostalgia and modernity. Holmes is depicted throughout the film in contemporary attire; even his hair has been given what one *New York Times* reviewer described as ‘a sort of wind-blown hair-do.’⁴¹ However, in the beginning of the second scene of the film, Holmes is depicted sitting in his smoking jacket at 221B Baker Street, smoking his pipe, and making deductions about his new case. In the shot, it is impossible to see anything that could be considered contemporary, except the radio he is listening to. With a Victorian interior, scattered with old hardbacks and chemistry sets, Holmes and his customary milieu remain unchanged. The walls are wood-panelled and in the centre of the room an ornate fireplace can be briefly seen. Holmes listens to Beethoven’s Symphony No Fifth with intense contemplation whilst Watson cleans his gun and chats with the housekeeper Mrs Hudson. This quiet calm is interrupted by a messenger who is stabbed in the back at Holmes’ door, instigating the dramatic events and pursuit that will follow.

However, before Holmes and Watson rush off the filmmakers seem to display a little irony. Holmes picks up his deerstalker hat in order to put it on. Watson chastises Holmes saying, ‘No no no, you promised’ and Holmes reluctantly puts on a trilby instead.

Though brief, these small instances indicate to the audience that this is the same Sherlock Holmes they are familiar with, although halfheartedly moving with the times. The film deals with conventions in an almost parodic way and, as Leitch proposes, Holmes is remarkable not only for the number of parodies he has inspired [...] but for the unusually thin line between parodies and pastiches of the great detective.⁴² The way the filmmakers use familiar visual conventions in *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* is self-reflexive, making reference to their familiarity and iconic status. Furthermore, it could be argued that such self-conscious and light-hearted references made the audience complicit in the liberties the filmmakers were taking in updating Holmes.

Clearly however, updating Holmes was not merely a device to create an amusing play with conventions, but had significant political implications. On the eve of Pearl Harbor the industry was under investigation by the Senate for promoting Britain’s cause and articulating an anti-German rhetoric.⁴³ Hollywood’s role in politics changed dramatically when the Americans joined the Second World War. By the time *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* was produced the government had established the Bureau of Motion Pictures as a branch of the Office of War Information (OWI). As cited in Richard Maltby’s *Hollywood Cinema* (1995), the manual published by this government body posed such questions to filmmakers as ‘will this picture help win the war?’ and ‘what war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize or interpret?’⁴⁴ Arguably, this set of guidelines

was far more problematic for Universal than any presumed responsibility they had in faithfully adapting the work of Conan Doyle.

Whilst Universal cast Holmes as the man who saves England from disaster, from my examination of the MPAA report files at the Margaret Herrick library it is evident that enlisting Holmes into the Second World War was not without its complications. Firstly, the Hays Office advised strongly against the title, offering alternatives such as ‘Sherlock Holmes saves London’ and ‘Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Voice.’⁴⁵ Secondly, they objected to the insinuation that Kitty was a prostitute and advised the filmmakers removed inferences to Kitty’s affair with Meade.⁴⁶ However, it is their advice on British politics that is particularly interesting. According to Glancy, the Hays Office was in frequent consultation with the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC).⁴⁷ Though beyond their remit, the PCA passed on advice to the studios on what and wouldn’t be acceptable to the BBFC. In the case of *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* they suggested that ‘undue brutality to English by Gestapo should be avoided otherwise it might be cut by some political censor boards.’ They also stated that local authorities would cut the sound of the siren from the air raid scene.⁴⁸ Despite these recommendations, the film had a delayed release in Britain, and BBFC records state it was cut to obtain the A rating. However no information is given as to what these cuts were.⁴⁹

In producing a modernized adaptation of the Holmes franchise, the filmmakers of *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* had to negotiate both the adaptation of a popular literary character and increasingly restrictive industrial regulation. However, at the film’s conclusion these two constraints came together. Having just captured the Nazi spies,

Holmes and Watson remain behind in the ruins of a bombed medieval church, a potent and nostalgic symbol in the representation of English identity. They wander over to the window where Watson remarks that it 'a lovely morning.' Holmes replies to him, 'There's an East wind coming, Watson;' yet Watson protests stating, 'I don't think so. Looks like another warm day.' It is at this point that the modern Holmes gives a speech that has clear ties to contemporary events:

Good old Watson. You are the one fixed point in a changing age. But there's an East wind coming all the same, such a wind as never blew on England yet. It will be cold and bitter, Watson, and a good many of us may wither before its blast. But it's God's own wind nonetheless. And a greener, better, stronger land will be in the sunshine when the storm is cleared.⁵⁰

Whilst this speech is in fact a direct quotation from Conan Doyle's 'His Last Bow,' it also conveniently functions to turn *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* into a politically-orientated entertainment film. Through this speech the filmmakers were showing their support for the war and America's allies. Indeed, it could even be argued that they placed Holmes in an exalted position, prophesizing on the outcome of the war, yet they did so whilst faithfully adapting one of Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, by lifting this passage from the text of Conan Doyle and inserting it into a contemporary film, the filmmakers answered the remit of creating an adaptation of a Conan Doyle story, however loose, whilst fulfilling the OWI agenda.

Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror was the first of twelve films made at Universal between 1942 and 1946. Each of the first three, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* (1943), and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (1943) had Holmes contribute to the war effort, giving rallying speeches, and strengthening

American support for the Allied cause. The films received mixed reviews, the magazine *Modern Screen* gave *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* a three out of four star rating,⁵¹ and *Photoplay* claimed it was pretty average fare.⁵² The trade magazine *Motion Picture Herald* reviewed *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* claiming that the Universal films followed ‘the kind of Sherlock that your book readers expect,’ and ‘audiences liked this one.’⁵³ However, Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* was scathing in his review, claiming that the studio took ‘cheap advantage of the present crisis to exploit an old, respected fiction character [...]. The late Conan Doyle, who obviously never wrote this story, as Universal claims, must be speculating sadly in his spirit world on this betrayal of trust.’⁵⁴

Despite these mixed reviews the franchise did not end with the war. Instead, by 1944 the franchise and its mode of adaptation was firmly established. This is reflected in the titles for the films. Whereas the first four each began with the name ‘Sherlock Holmes,’ such as *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*, and *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* (1943), the latter films omitted the name entirely. This suggests that the franchise had reached a level of popularity that allowed them to dispense with the name without incurring a loss, the casting of Rathbone and Holmes was enough to attract audiences. Furthermore, from data collected for this thesis it is evident that following the release of *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* in 1943 the film’s crew was also consistent. Roy William Neill directed the rest of the franchise, Bertram Milhouser wrote five of the next ten films, and lesser known actors were repeatedly used, such as Mary Gordon who played Mrs Hudson in eight films, and Dennis Hoey who played Inspector Lestrade in six. However, whilst the formula of their production was stable, its generic conventions were not.

As Mark Jancovich and Amanda Field note, the latter films of Universal's series made use of the horror genre to maintain the popularity of the franchise.⁵⁵ As I explored in my chapter on *Frankenstein*, Gothic horror films became the hallmark of Universal in the 1930s. However, in the 1940s, the studio had to alter its practices to conform to current trends. The later adaptations of Sherlock Holmes included visceral elements such as the poisonous spider in *The Spider Woman* (1944), and dismembered fingers in *The Woman in Green* (1945). Such films were stylistically unsophisticated, and fulfilled the remit of low-budget B-pictures. Furthermore, the popularity of crime films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Leave her to Heaven* (1945) introduced a new figure of fear: the femme fatale. Universal responded by introducing audiences to Andrea Spedding, the 'female Moriarty' in *The Spider Woman*, and Hilda Courtney a darkly beautiful, ruthless crime boss in *Dressed to Kill* (1946). Holmes loses most of his Victorian milieu in these later films, and the pipe remains the only prominent icon. The series finally ended when Rathbone became frustrated with the role, claiming that the 'first picture was, as it were, a negative from which I merely continued to produce endless positives of the same photograph.'⁵⁶

Universal's adaptation of Sherlock Holmes took Hollywood's mode of adaptation into a new territory with the balance between faithfulness and relevance tipped firmly in the favour of contemporary concerns and trends. Throughout the Hollywood studio era, Holmes' relationship to his Victorian milieu had wavered considerably. Though Universal's films are distinctive for the creative liberties they took with Conan Doyle's stories, the studio had merely continued the long running convention of updating Holmes. Indeed, in this early history of adaptation, it is Twentieth-Century Fox's Victorian setting that could be viewed

as exceptional. When Universal resurrected the detective in 1942 he was an immortal hero ‘ageless, invincible and unchanging’ and perfectly suited to the uncertainties of war. Yet communicating this was reliant on the inclusion of subtle tokens of his nineteenth-century roots. The visual shorthand, a collection of Holmesian symbols drawn from multiple sources, perpetuates this sense of timelessness. Therefore, by resurrecting the popular conception of Holmes, Universal employed a construct developed out of multiple variants, and like all other adaptors of the detective, utilized a familiar and flexible cultural icon to address contemporary society.

Conclusion

By the 1940s, Holmes had been a transmedia figure for more than forty years, and when Basil Rathbone took the role, he was the 23rd actor to play the part.⁵⁷ This meant that audiences had a pre-conceived notion of how Holmes should look and behave which filmmakers had to carefully negotiate in order to make a commercially successful picture. Talking about Holmes alongside other mythopoetic characters such as Frankenstein, Dracula, and Mr Hyde, Christopher Frayling argues:

Not one of these re-creations came directly from the original stories on which they were based: successive publics have re-written them – filling in the gaps, re-directing their purposes, making them easier to remember and more obviously dramatic – to ‘fit’ the modern experience.⁵⁸

At the outset of this chapter I stated that the intention of my investigation was to question the function of visual cohesion over multiple adaptations. I asked whether the examination of a franchise as diverse and plentiful as Holmes would provide a rich ground for analyzing the nuances of adaptation, demonstrating what types of sources were employed and how previous adaptations impacted on that process. This analysis has shown that the Holmes

franchise draws its references not merely from his literary origins, but a mixture of visual texts, from illustrations to earlier theatrical productions and from film versions. The mixture is so varied that as André Bazin said of *Les Misérables*, Holmes enjoys an almost ‘autonomous existence of which the original works are no longer anything more than accidental’.⁵⁹ Holmesian adaptations take as their primary referent, not the particular story on which they are supposedly adapting, but the franchise as a whole.

From the first official adaptation of Holmes on stage, props were selected to elaborate on character traits and lend a sense of realism to the portrayal. Observing theatrical conventions, Gillette initiated subtle changes to Holmes milieu, introducing the curved pipe so audiences could perceive his face and wearing the familiar deerstalker cap whilst pursuing criminals. Through the popularization of Gillette’s portrayal on stage these props became conventions of Holmesian adaptation, repeated in multiple film versions and the subject of parody. By the time Holmes appeared in the Hollywood studio era he had been re-written countless times, detached from his Victorian setting and was freely available for use. Two different studios took two different approaches to this freedom. Twentieth-Century Fox chose a revisionist text, tapping into the public tastes of anglophilia and nostalgia to create a prestige picture that resituated Holmes in his Victorian setting. Universal’s subsequent films took the franchise in an opposite direction at the outbreak of the Second World War, enlisting Holmes in the war effort by having him battle against Nazi Spies and deliver rallying speeches.

However, in each of these adaptations the use of familiar visual icons was equally essential. For Twentieth-Century Fox, maintaining the use of Victorian props in a film with a

Victorian setting was simple, yet the studio still incorporated a new icon into the canon, the Inverness cape. For Universal, updating Holmes to a contemporary environment whilst maintaining the Victorian perception of the character was a balancing act. Yet it was a balancing act made possible by the visual references that surrounded Holmes, since it was these icons that allowed adaptors to navigate the space between the antiquated detective and a modern-day backdrop.

In 2010 Kate Newell provided a case study on the adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1900) claiming that ‘Oz adaptations are unique in that each assimilates the iconography of earlier adaptations in ways that signal fidelity.’⁶⁰ As this chapter has demonstrated, this practice is not unique, but is a common process in the adaptation of classic texts. Filmmakers incorporate iconography into their adaptations as a way of validating their work, while subtly manipulating that iconography in order to fulfill a particular cultural or creative agenda. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, iconography played a key role, creating an instant identification with audiences. Through successive adaptations visual signs became visual conventions and it is these popular conventions that made Holmes malleable.

Notes for Chapter Five

¹ Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 208.

² Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 207

³ Riley & McAllister, *The Bedside, Bathtub & Armchair Companion to Sherlock Holmes*, 60.

⁴ Dale, “Alan Dale Reviews the New Gillette Play, Sherlock Holmes.” *New York Journal and Advertiser*, Nov 7, 1899, n.p.

⁵ Strang, *Famous Actors of the Day in America*, 178.

⁶ MacFarlane, “The Magic of William Gillette,” *Everybody’s Magazine*, January to June, 1915, 265.

⁷ *Sherlock Holmes; a drama in four acts, being a hitherto unpublished episode in the career of the great detective and showing his connection with the strange case of Miss*

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- Faulkner* by William Gillette dated May 16, 1916, File NCOF+*ZC-647; Performing Arts Research Collections; New York Public Library, New York, NY.
- ⁸ *Sherlock Holmes; a drama in four acts, being a hitherto unpublished episode in the career of the great detective and showing his connection with the strange case of Miss Faulkner* by William Gillette dated May 16, 1916, File NCOF+*ZC-647; Performing Arts Research Collections; New York Public Library, New York, NY.
- ⁹ "The Joy of Slippers." *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1908.
- ¹⁰ Zecher, *William Gillette, America's Sherlock Holmes*, 344.
- ¹¹ Sherlock Holmes, Photos, File A; Arthur Conan Doyle and William Gillette; Billy Rose Theatre Division; Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts; New York Public Library; New York, NY.
- ¹² Doyle, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, 14.
- ¹³ Nollen, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, 25.
- ¹⁴ "Sherlock Holmes's Addictions," The Victorian Web, last modified December 13, 2013, <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/doyle/addiction.html>.
- ¹⁵ Doyle, *The Sign of Four*, 3.
- ¹⁶ "Sherlock Holmes's Addictions," The Victorian Web, last modified December 13, 2013, <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/doyle/addiction.html>.
- ¹⁷ "The Mystery of the Leaping Fish," *Motion Picture News*, July 15, 1916, n.p.
- ¹⁸ Musto, *Drugs in America: A Documentary History*, 253.
- ¹⁹ "Conan Doyle on Screen," The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopaedia, last edited on 4 February 2018, https://www.arthur-conandoyle.com/index.php?title=Conan_Doyle_on_screen#Conan_Doyle_as_a_character
- ²⁰ Hecox "Sherlock Holmes Pastiches," 2159.
- ²¹ Nollen, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, 55.
- ²² "The Sherlock Holmes Pipe," *Popular Mechanics*, April, 1908, 147.
- ²³ Field, "The Case of Multiplying Millions," 23.
- ²⁴ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 133.
- ²⁵ Wade, "We Cover the Studios," 54.
- ²⁶ Wade, "We Cover the Studios," 54.
- ²⁷ Wade, "We Cover the Studios," 55.
- ²⁸ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 4.
- ²⁹ Nollen, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, 126.
- ³⁰ Wade, "We Cover the Studios," 55.
- ³¹ Nollen, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, 126.
- ³² Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, 76.
- ³³ Lynch and Strauss, *Ethnic Dress in the United States*, 156.
- ³⁴ Nugent, "Fog-Bound Thriller Is Roxy's 'Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, With Basil Rathbone as the Sleuth,'" *The New York Times*, September 2, 1939, n.p.
- ³⁵ Behlmer, *Memo from Darryl F. Zanuck*, 24-25.
- ³⁶ "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," *Variety*, January 1, 1939, n.p.
- ³⁷ Davies, *Holmes of the Movies*, 69
- ³⁸ Barnes, *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*, 214-215.
- ³⁹ Field, *England's Secret Weapon*, 6.
- ⁴⁰ Field, *England's Secret Weapon*, 6.
- ⁴¹ Crowther, "Holmes Up-to-Date". *The New York Times*. September 19, 1942, n.p.

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- ⁴² Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 211.
- ⁴³ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 64.
- ⁴⁴ Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, 374.
- ⁴⁵ *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴⁶ *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴⁷ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 66.
- ⁴⁸ *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, File 61.f-970; Motion Picture Association of America Hollywood Office Files; Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA.
- ⁴⁹ "Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror," BBFC. Retrieved February 5, 2018.
<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/releases/sherlock-holmes-voice-terror-film>
- ⁵⁰ Doyle, *His Last Bow*, 307.
- ⁵¹ "Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror" *Modern Screen*, December, 1942, n.p.
- ⁵² "Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror" *Photoplay*. December, 1942, n.p.
- ⁵³ "Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon" *Motion Picture Herald*, March 13, 1943, n.p.
- ⁵⁴ Crowther, "Holmes Up-to-Date". *The New York Times*. September 19, 1942, n.p.
- ⁵⁵ Jancovich, "The Meaning of Mystery: Genre, Marketing and the Universal Sherlock Holmes Series of the 1940s," 34-45.
- ⁵⁶ Macnab, "Friday review: Crime and Punishment: Sherlock Holmes might have been created for the cinema. But playing him cost at least two actors their careers" *The Guardian*, July 12, 2002, n.p.
- ⁵⁷ Field, *England's Secret Weapon*, 6.
- ⁵⁸ Frayling, *Nightmare: Birth of Horror*, 13.
- ⁵⁹ Leitch, *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*, 208.
- ⁶⁰ Newell, "We're Off to See the Wizard (Again)," 81.

CHAPTER SIX:

Jane Eyre (Stevenson, 1943): Adaptation and agency in a liberal landscape

This final case study considers the intersection of radio and cinema, examining Orson Welles' and John Houseman's radio adaptation of *Jane Eyre* and their subsequent involvement in the Twentieth-Century Fox adaptation. Throughout this thesis I have kept a focused view on Hollywood's major studios, charting the way in which changes within organizations affected the adaptation process. This has encompassed technological advances, censorship, and production practices. However, in this final chapter I want to widen my consideration of the film industry and cultural output of the 1940s, by looking at an adaptation produced, in part, outside the studio system. In the data collected for this thesis, *Jane Eyre* (1943) occupies a unique position. Produced independently by David O. Selznick who handled the film's pre-production and scripting, the project was sold to Twentieth-Century Fox as a package before filming began with John Houseman as scriptwriter, Robert Stevenson as director, and Orson Welles cast as Rochester. In this chapter, I want to question whether changes to the film's management structure affected issues of agency. John Houseman and Orson Welles dramatized *Jane Eyre* in 1938 and 1940 for their radio series *Mercury Theatre on Air*. This final chapter will examine this early radio adaptation and explore the contribution of Houseman and Welles on the later film adaptation, examining whether inconsistent leadership afforded Houseman and Welles greater creative autonomy.

Jane Eyre is a renowned nineteenth-century novel, but unlike the work of Dickens and others of that era, it focuses on a heroine who is rebellious and unconventional. Since its publication in 1847, the novel has been subject to a number of adaptations for film, radio, television and theatre. During the Hollywood studio era, it was adapted on stage, film and radio, cementing its place in popular culture. A film version was produced by minor studio Monogram Pictures in 1934, starring Virginia Bruce, Katharine Hepburn starred on stage as the heroine in 1937, and in 1938 *Mercury Theatre on Air* produced a radio adaptation of the novel. By the time David O. Selznick began planning his own adaptation of the novel in 1940, the novel consistently appeared on a list of bestsellers.¹ But arguably no producer, but Selznick, had fully understood the potential of cinema to bring the story to life.

As befits its status, Stevenson's 1943 adaptation has attracted a great deal of academic consideration since its release sixty years ago. Early adaptation critics, such as Lester Asheim, focused on issues of fidelity and the limitations of film form. Asheim proposes that throughout the film the dialogue is 'rewritten wherever contemporary connotations may interfere with the sense of the original words.'² Part of a wider sociological study of the adaptation industry, Asheim's criticism of the film was based on an analysis of content, recording the omissions and alterations made in the adaptive process. Kate Ellis and E. Anne Kaplan's later work (1981) took a different approach, focusing on the film's feminist themes and questioning how patriarchal codes and naturalized male dominance influenced the film representations of Jane and Rochester. They propose that throughout the film, the writers masked Brontë's critique of patriarchal structures in order to reframe the novel within Hollywood's classic narrative model of romantic love. Their work blended close textual analysis with detailed examination of the original novel, and provided a feminist reading of

the film. Their contribution is drawn on in this chapter to supplement my own analysis of the adaptation, particularly when it intersects with wider notions of the film's independent production.

More recently, articles have begun to emerge that engage with the film's agency and aesthetics, such as Jeffrey Sconce's 'Narrative Authority and Social Narrativity: the Cinematic Reconstruction of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*' (1995) and Gardner Campbell's 'The Presence of Orson Welles in Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*' (2003). Campbell's work is of particular interest to this study, since it is this work that explores the film's complex arrangement of creative personnel. *Jane Eyre* was initially produced by David O. Selznick who assigned director Robert Stevenson to the project, screenwriter John Houseman, and cast Orson Welles as Rochester. However, once the project was sold to Twentieth-Century Fox, Welles reputedly began contributing to the film's direction. Campbell's analysis of the film is an attempt to assign agency to Orson Welles, arguing that 'Welles' presence as an uncredited producer/co-director complicates an apparently simple Hollywood narrative and manages to reinscribe Jane's narrative authority in interesting and important ways.'³ What I wish to contribute through this chapter is additional evidence, looking at the way in which Welles and Houseman created an earlier radio dramatization of the novel, before examining both the screenwriting process and use of innovative cinematography.

For this chapter I have drawn on the 1940 radio production of *Jane Eyre*, an original draft script, memos from producer David O. Selznick, and critical reviews. Whilst these records do not create a complete picture of the film's adaptation process, they will allow me to provide an account of the film's production and speculate on the key concerns affecting the

novel's adaptation. Both Welles and Houseman had previously adapted the novel, creating a blueprint they could draw on for their contribution to the film version. Furthermore, both were known for their left-wing politics, creating radical and progressive plays that challenged the status quo at a time of increasing anxiety. Therefore, beginning with an examination of Houseman's and Welles' career prior to the adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, I want to consider the contextual factors affecting cultural expression in the late 1930s and 1940s, and establish their respective working styles. It is hoped that this contextual information will allow me to build a more informed picture of the adaptation process on *Jane Eyre*, and establish the contribution Houseman and Welles made to the finished picture.

Liberal leanings in 1930s American Culture

As this study has shown thus far, the Victorian novel has long been an indispensable source for the film industry. With the rapid development of the twentieth-century, historical works have enabled the industry to showcase the glamour and elegance of a bygone era. Yet, these adaptations more often than not portray a rigid class-bound society. Therefore, the question arises as to why these films were so popular with American audiences. *Jane Eyre* was one of many adaptations made in the studio era that was popular with both audiences and critics. Like *David Copperfield*, it existed in the nexus of both conservative and democratic concerns. The novel's selection as suitable story material was the result of conservative attitudes towards cinema and the industry's desire to bolster its cultural status. But it was also bought about by the desire to free 'high' culture from the elite and make it accessible to all social classes.

When the Democratic Party came to power in 1933, a huge political and social reform commonly referred to as the 'New Deal' was instigated. One of the largest projects funded by the newly created Works Progress Administration (WPA) was the Federal Project Number One, the collective name for a group of cultural projects bringing art, music and theatre to the masses. Jane De Hart's 'Democratizing Culture' provides a history of the New Deal's cultural programs stating that the aim of the reform was not just the promise of 'economic and social justice but also of cultural enrichment – in short, "Arts for the Millions."⁴ Denied access to 'high' culture, it was thought that the masses 'subsisted on the aesthetically deficient pap served up as entertainment, [...] by the 1930s the nation had become addicted to mass culture: movies, radio, and the tabloid newspaper. Predictably, 'high' culture had suffered.'⁵ As Barry Whitman states in his study *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study* (2003), the project 'was a unique and influential experiment in American theatre; not just for its outspoken politics, but because it reimagines the very way that theatre was produced in the United States.'⁶ The program's primary goal was employment of out-of-work artists, writers, and directors, yet controversy surrounded the project from the outset. Sympathizers hailed it as a bold experiment in democratic art, whilst critics attacked it as New Deal propaganda.

Both John Houseman and Orson Welles were part of this program, working for the Federal Theatre Project from 1936 to 1937. Houseman began his theatrical career in the early 1930s, setting himself apart by cultivating a reputation for taking on non-commercial or difficult-to-stage plays.⁷ Despite the reputation of Welles today, Richard France notes that 'Houseman's importance to the career of Orson Welles remains inestimable.'⁸ In 1935 Houseman cast Welles in *Panic*, a drama concerning the fall of the world's richest man, and

forged a fruitful partnership between the older producer and his young talented protégé. When Houseman joined the Federal Theatre Project in 1936 he continued to collaborate with Welles, producing *Macbeth* at the Negro Theater Unit with an entirely African-American cast, which brought Shakespeare to Harlem, and *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937), a musical thought to have had left-wing and unionist sympathies. Both works were highly controversial, solidifying both Houseman and Welles' reputations as revolutionary producers.

Following WPA withdrawal of funding in 1937, Houseman and Welles left the Federal Theatre Project to establish their own theatre company; the Mercury Theatre. In a statement published in the *New York Times*, Houseman stated how he wanted to create a theatre that would 'arouse the interest of a wider audience,' staging plays of the past 'which seem to have emotional or factual bearing on contemporary life.'⁹ The company began with a critically-acclaimed adaptation of *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* in 1937. However, rather than simply reviving Shakespeare's account of a tyrant's downfall in Ancient Rome, the production set about arousing the passions of the audience by reflecting the chaos then overtaking Europe. In a review in *Time* it was described as a 'new, vitalizing experiment in drama [...] enacting a sinister tragedy of dictatorship.' As the more public figure of the two, credit was afforded to Orson Welles. The reviewer describes how the 'incredibly young actor-director [...] sheared the play of pomp and philippics, put the accent on pace, scuffling mobs, expanded the brief episode of Cinna, the poet, into a minor tragedy.'¹⁰ What Houseman and Welles achieved with their adaptation of *Julius Caesar* was a seamless blend of art and politics, making a play that was both commercially viable and socially relevant.

In 1989, Houseman offered a retrospective account of their partnership: ‘on the broad wings of the Federal eagle, we had risen to success and fame beyond ourselves as America’s youngest, cleverest, most creative and audacious producers to whom none of the ordinary rules of the theater applied.’¹¹ However, as their fame grew neither limited themselves to the theatre. In 1938 Mercury Theatre began a series of radio programs entitled *The Mercury Theater on the Air*. The series offered hour-long adaptations of classic plays and novels performed by the Mercury Theatre’s repertory company, including *A Tale of Two Cities*, another adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, and *Jane Eyre*. In doing so Welles and Houseman expanded the mandate of their company, and created a new form of radio drama.

The Mercury Theatre on the Air

The Mercury Theater on the Air aired on July 11, 1938 on the CBS Radio network, creating dramas specifically for the radio. According to Paul Holler, Welles was given complete creative control by CBS over the new series.¹² Initially titled *First Person Singular*, he took the lead role in each play moving seamlessly between narration and acting, to create a new mode of storytelling. As David A. Creasy notes, Welles felt that playwriting for radio ‘shouldn’t attempt to be traditional playwriting [...] Welles wanted a new kind of writing for radio that swept the listener into the narrative of the speaker, connecting the listener emotionally to the speaker’s particular plight.’¹³ However, whilst Holler and Creasy foreground Welles’ contribution to the dramatizations, the success of the series was dependent upon the careful collaboration of Houseman and Welles. In *The Medium and the Magician*, Paul Heyer describes how ‘the writing would be done by Houseman and Koch, with the assistance of Paul Stewart and the occasional outside collaborator. Welles would in turn impart his changes to the script during the final rehearsal.’¹⁴ Welles was notoriously

chaotic, often failing to read the play until a day before the show was aired, sending much of the team in a mad scramble to impart his changes last minute. In a retrospective radio broadcast aired in 1988, composer Bernard Herrmann described him as an ‘improviser’ and ‘precocious child,’ while Geraldine Fitzgerald notes, ‘he had too much talent to be careful of it.’¹⁵ Welles displayed a masterful control of the plays, simultaneously directing music, sound effects, and his performers live on air. But without the skillful adaptation and writing abilities of Houseman, their radio theatre would never have survived.

Jane Eyre was produced twice by Mercury Theatre; in 1938, and in 1940 following Campbell soup’s endorsement of the series. The earlier production has unfortunately been lost, however the latter, performed with Madeleine Carroll, is available on the Internet Archive.¹⁶ Condensed into an hour long dramatization, Welles takes the role of Rochester while Carroll narrates and acts as Jane. The broadcast begins with an introduction by Welles who states ‘tonight we bring you a revival from one of our favourite broadcasts, Charlotte Brontë’s unforgettable love story *Jane Eyre*.’¹⁷ Reading a Victorian review published in the *London Review*, Welles describes the controversy that surrounded the text upon its release; ‘the autobiography of Jane Eyre is pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition, there is throughout it a murmuring against the comforts of the rich, and against the privations of the poor [...] there is a proud and perpetual assertion of the rights of men.’¹⁸ In doing so, Welles sets the novel within his oeuvre, promoting the novel as a progressive text.

What makes this play relevant to my study is the striking similarity it bears to the 1943 film. It begins with narrated lines almost exactly the same as those used in the film; ‘My name is Jane Eyre. I have no father or mother, brothers or sisters. As a child I lived with my aunt,

Mrs Reed, at Gateshead hall. I do not remember that she ever spoke one kind word to me.’ Like the film, the play then moves to the scene in which Jane meets Mr Brocklehurst for the first time. Again, the lines spoken mirror those in the later adaptation. The only difference is the characterization of Brocklehurst who sounds kindly in the radio drama. Most of the scenes that follow are adapted in the later film, including Jane’s first meeting with Rochester on the moor, and Bertha’s attack on Mr Mason. Throughout there are instances of the same dialogue between the characters, sections of voiceover by Jane, and musical interludes by composer Bernard Herrmann. Welles’ characterization matches his later performance, acting in a gruff and brooding manner. Whilst there are some key changes, as I will explore later in the chapter, similarities suggests that both Houseman and Welles utilized the earlier script for the film version of *Jane Eyre*. Houseman used the script extensively for his later screenplay, reusing the structure of the script and lifting whole sections of dialogue from the earlier work. Welles involvement is a harder to speculate on as his contribution to the drama would have been improvised in final rehearsal, however I would argue that his characterization of Rochester has clear ties to the former work.

In *Cinema and Radio in Britain and America, 1920-1960*, Jeffrey Richards explores the relationship between Welles’ career in radio and film. He argues that the influence of his radio years can be found throughout Welles’ film work, from the personnel he hired for *Citizen Kane* (1941) to the layering of sound in *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942).¹⁹ Although no critic has sought to explore how the Mercury Theatre’s former adaptation impacted on the production of *Jane Eyre*, it is certain that the radio dramatisation influenced the later film. In addition to Welles and Houseman, the cast list reveals a number of personnel who transitioned to the screen from the Mercury Theatre, such as Agnes

Moorhead, who starred as Mrs Reed, and Bernard Herrmann who composed the score for both adaptations. However, working with David O. Selznick, Houseman and Welles were no longer able to assert the same level of creative control. Selznick was an obsessive workaholic who kept a tight grip on his productions. In an assessment of his own role, Selznick claimed that it was ‘essential for a producer to collaborate on every inch of the script, to be available for every conference, and to go over all the details of production.’²⁰ Therefore it is necessary to examine Selznick’s involvement on the film and analyse how he worked with Houseman, and director Robert Stevenson, to develop the film script.

***Jane Eyre* Pre-Production**

In 1940, Selznick assigned his story editor, Val Lewton, to assess the popularity of Brontë’s novel and according to Helen Hanson ‘Lewton’s findings were that it was consistently present on lists of ‘greatest’ and ‘most read’ novels.’²¹ Once the project was approved, Barbara Keon, Selznick’s scenario assistant, began by ‘mapping the plot of Brontë’s novel chapter by chapter and providing an analysis of the principle characters’ motivations.’²² Her work highlighted a series of vital plot points and identified the potential narratives contained within the novel. In doing so, the screenwriters isolated the narrative that would be most suitable for a successful motion picture. Predictably, the studio chose to emphasise the romance of the novel. This was not uncommon in the Hollywood studio era as the industry favoured a classic narrative model with a central romantic plot. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson’s work on this period highlights that of the one hundred films they surveyed from this period, ‘ninety-five involved romance in at least one line of action, while eighty-five made that the principal line of action.’²³ However, what this meant for *Jane Eyre* was that all other elements of the novel had to work towards a central love story, and if they did not,

then they were changed or edited out. As Michael Riley notes, the film's plot problems are fairly clear, for there are two sections of the narrative that lie outside this centre.²⁴ The first is an account of Jane's childhood, including her life at Gateshead with the Reed's, and her formative years at Lowood Institution.

Like the Mercury Theatre adaptation, the first draft of the script produced in April 1940 reduced Jane's childhood of misery and appalling living conditions to a mere two-minute montage.²⁵ However, in doing so, Houseman and Stevenson removed all reference to Jane's intellectual and moral growth. In the novel Jane offers a retrospective account of her life. Through it the reader retraces the narrator's path, and notes that her deep, often overwhelming reactions to her environment reflect her moral immaturity and then, before long, her growth. If Houseman's and Stevenson's original script had been used there would have been little sense of Jane's identity. Therefore, Selznick urged his writers to find out 'what makes Jane tick.'²⁶ He argued that what happened to Jane in her childhood had a profound effect on her future relationship with Rochester. Yet, it is not just her future romantic involvement that would have been affected by this change. Whilst the filmmakers of *Jane Eyre* emphasized a romantic plot line in accordance with the conventions of commercial cinema, they also sought to make the story relevant to a contemporary audience. Brontë's work has long been celebrated for opposing Victorian stereotypes, creating a heroine who sought to assert her own identity within a male-dominated and class-bound society. The storyline charts the progress of Jane as she starts at the bottom of the social scale as an orphan living off her aunt's charity and ends with her marriage to a wealthy aristocrat. Therefore, with her formative years removed from the script, the audience would have been unaware of just how far Jane had progressed by marrying Rochester.

Arguably, it is this ‘rags to riches’ element of the novel that would have struck a chord with a contemporary audience. Firstly, such a theme tied into key American concerns. According to Richard Bellah, Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, has long been considered the ‘quintessential American’ because he was the ‘archetypal poor boy who made good.’²⁷ Jane’s social progression, therefore, appealed to American democratic ideals. Secondly, in America severe poverty was a key concern. During the Depression relief ‘provided only the barest of food necessities, with no provision for rent, clothing, or even the wherewithal to achieve a basic level of cleanliness.’²⁸ Such conditions continued throughout the decade and America did not fully recover from the effects of the Depression until the Second World War.

A number of prominent cultural works dealt with these themes in the late 1930s. Earlier in this chapter I outlined the work of the Federal Theatre Project and suggested that Houseman and Welles produced a number of productions that dealt with progressive themes. However, the same thread was evident in contemporary literature and film. As Ina Rae Hark notes in ‘The Visual Politics of *The Adventures of Robin Hood*,’ the 1938 Warner Bros. picture ‘derives from the efforts of a charismatic individual to restore responsible government and economic stability to his country.’²⁹ Though fanciful in its approach, the film casts Robin Hood and an activist hero who makes a firm stand against oppression. Contemporary literature was equally socially conscious. Perhaps the most notable example was John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* published in 1939. The novel focuses on the Joads, a poor family of tenant farmers that seek jobs, land, dignity, and a future. According to *The New York Times*, Steinbeck’s novel was the best-selling book of 1939.³⁰ Therefore, it was vital

that the filmmaker's of *Jane Eyre* emphasized what was a significant topic in both the source text and contemporary society.

Selznick's approach to filmmaking was 'extensive, meticulous and characteristically obsessive.'³¹ At his insistence more drafts were completed throughout 1941 that extended Jane's impoverished youth, and in late 1942 Aldous Huxley was hired as an additional writer. However, the work of these scriptwriters was by no means sacrosanct. As Schatz notes, 'during the summer of 1942, Selznick and his scenario assistant Bobby Keon [sorted] through the various drafts and rewrites. She continually reassembled the script in accordance with Selznick's and her own estimations of the most effective scenes.'³² One of the most fundamental changes affected by these modifications was the introduction of Dr Rivers, a character who did not exist in the novel. In the completed film Dr Rivers appears in the first section of the narrative, offering Jane emotional support whilst at Lowood Institution. However, from my analysis of a draft script, dated February 2, 1943, found at the British Film Institute it is evident that the screenwriters affected this change in order to amalgamate two characters from the original novel; Miss Temple, a teacher at Lowood, and Jane's long-lost cousin St. John Rivers, who offers to marry Jane after she has left Rochester.

In the first section of the narrative Dr Rivers fulfils the role of Miss Temple a kind teacher at Lowood, who treats Jane with respect and compassion. Along with Bessie Lee at her aunt's house, Miss Temple serves as one of Jane's first positive female role models. However, like Jane, she is oppressed. When Jane's friend Helen describes Miss Temple's role to Jane she states 'She has to answer to Mr. Brocklehurst for all she does.'³³ This lack of authority is made clear in the scene when Miss Temple gives lunch to the girls who missed

breakfast. Brocklehurst finds out and chastises Miss Temple for her kindness. Rather than arguing with him Jane notices how she goes cold and fixed as marble, ‘especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor’s chisel to open it.’³⁴ Miss Temple is a major influence on Jane's moral development. Her name signifies the worshipful feeling Jane develops for her. Yet her failure to confront injustice directly is unacceptable to Jane.

In the screenplay, Dr Rivers is one of the few kind faces that Jane encounters at Lowood. When Helen and Jane are forced to walk outside in the rain in punishment, it is Dr Rivers who rescues them by bringing them inside. However, he is too late to save the frail Helen. After her death, Jane refuses to return to Lowood. Dr Rivers is sympathetic but asks:

You know what duty is don't you, duty is what you have to do even when you don't want to do it, I may not want to go out in a snow storm to visit a sick child but I know I have to do it, because its my duty. [...] Your duty is to prepare yourself to do God's work in the world, isn't that true? And who can do God's work, an ignorant woman or an educated one? Yes, you know the answer to that. And where can you get an education Jane? [...] so you know you have to go back to school even though you may hate the very thought of it.³⁵

Surveying the finished film, Kaplan and Ellis lament that it was now a male figure that was to have such a profound effect on Jane's development. They propose that ‘her warm, nurturing presence offsets the horror of Lowood for Jane. But even more importantly, ‘she provides a powerful model for both Jane and Helen of a principled and intelligent woman.’ However, ‘balancing the hateful Brocklehurst with the kindly Rivers mitigates an absolute condemnation of male authority.’³⁶ Their assessment of Dr Rivers' role is that he undermines Jane's independent spirit by encouraging her to conform. However, I would argue that whilst Miss Temple is downtrodden and restricted, Dr Rivers tells Jane how to ‘do God's work in the world’, and as she comprehends these words we know she interprets

this as a method of escape. Therefore, his inclusion in the adaptation served an important function, foregrounding hard work and education as a means of social progression and making patriarchy more palatable.

The other section of the narrative that lies outside the centre is what happens to Jane when she leaves Thornfield. The draft script shows that the last scenes of the film were being rewritten as late as 20 March 1943, nearly three years after the film's first draft was completed. I would argue that this suggests that the last section of the novel was the most difficult to adapt. In the novel, Jane finds long lost relatives, St. John and his sisters, inherits a fortune and it is only when she is emotionally and financially independent that she chooses to return to Rochester. As Kaplan and Ellis suggest 'it takes rather drastic events (blindness on the male side, a large inheritance on the female) to equalize.'³⁷ It is clear from my analysis of the draft script that the screenwriters sought to condense this section of the narrative. In the script Dr Rivers visits Jane while she is staying with her aunt Mrs Reed. He states that he has had an enquiry about her whereabouts from Thornfield and Jane asks him to burn the letter. Later when Jane's aunt dies, the screenwriters added an additional scene which is labelled 'Revised March 20, 1943.'³⁸ In this scene Rivers visits Jane again to tell her he has been put in charge of Lowood and asks Jane to return with him as his wife. Like St. John in the novel, Rivers' proposal is not based on love, but convenience; he claims 'If you reject my offer, it is not me you deny, it is your duty, it is the will of God.'³⁹ Jane refuses, maintaining her independent spirit and strong sense of right and wrong. However, it is clear that this latter characterization would have completely altered the audience's perception of Dr Rivers, turning him from a kind benefactor to a cold moralist.

From a comparison with the finished film, it is evident that this section of narrative was condensed further after this draft. In the film Jane returns to Gateshead Hall where her aunt lies sick, and Dr Rivers comes with a letter. However, he does not make a proposal to Jane; instead she is shown writing to Mr Brocklehurst on a wild and stormy night before hearing Rochester call out to her. In both endings Jane returns to Rochester poor and destitute. Kaplan and Ellis state that the filmmakers effected this change in order to revert to patriarchal structures. Such an alteration keeps Jane in a subordinate position. Jane is still dependent on Rochester, and by removing the story line of her inheritance and new family the film eliminates her independence. However, other readings can be applied to this change in the film's ending. Taking into account the prevailing tone of contemporary American society one could take a different stance and claim that it is Rochester and Jane's respective class positions that makes their union so significant. Without money or friends, Jane remains the lowly orphan and the antithesis to Rochester's exalted status. Therefore, maintaining these polarised positions through to the film's conclusion serves to enforce the point that it is not birth or wealth, but intellect that is the leveller.

This analysis of the script development has shown that working under the supervision of Selznick, Houseman worked with a number of other writers to complete the complex process of converting the cultural capital of the novel into the economic capital of a successful motion picture, emphasising elements that were relevant to the conventions of film and a contemporary audience. Whilst Selznick's initial attraction for *Jane Eyre* was based on the reputation of the novel, both producer and writer had to consider a number of other factors in order to make a successful film adaptation. Romance was chosen as the central plot line because it adhered to the cinematic narrative conventions of this period, and

equality and independence were selected as they tied into wider concerns of contemporary American society. However a further examination of formal elements reveals that Jane's independence was not just communicated through the narrative, but through the stylistic conventions employed in the novel and film.

***Jane Eyre* Production**

In November 1942, Selznick sold the completed script of *Jane Eyre* to Twentieth-Century-Fox along with the completed production designs executed by William Pereira, and he arranged for Twentieth-Century Fox to employ Pereira, Stevenson and cinematographer George Barnes on the picture.⁴⁰ Although Selznick had been significantly involved in pre-production he specifically asked that his name not appear in the credits, claiming 'it is a phobia of mine that I should not receive any credit for anything on which I have not done one hundred per cent of the job from original conception to final dubbing.'⁴¹ However, despite abandoning the project, original memos show that he continued to offer advice to Twentieth-Century Fox executives referring to the project as 'my deserted child.'⁴² Throughout 1943 a number of reports appeared in the *Hollywood Reporter* on the casting of the film, including speculation on the use of Margaret O'Brien and Peggy Ann Gardner. Selznick suggested Vivien Leigh's daughter for the role of young Jane emphasizing how the publicity would ensure the value of such a casting. However, it was the reports on the choice of producer that hints at a creative conflict on the project.

My investigation of trade journals and fan magazines show that although no producer is listed in the onscreen credits, in April 1943 the *Hollywood Reporter* listed Welles as the associate producer.⁴³ This was in direct opposition to the terms Selznick had set up with

Twentieth-Century Fox. Selznick responded to the news with a letter to William Goetz urging him to reconsider. He wrote 'you know as well as I do that Orson is such a personality that if he is credited as a producer, Stevenson's credit is likely to degenerate into something of a stooge status.'⁴⁴ Twentieth-Century Fox took his advice and no producer appears in the screen credits. However, the damage was done, with contemporary and modern critics alike speculating on Welles' contribution to the project. Selznick was known throughout the industry for being a strong and authoritative producer, however with his name unattached to the project, critics struggled to assign authorship to the project. In the *Hollywood Reporter* the film is referred to as 'Aldous Huxley's film adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.'⁴⁵ Later reports credit Kenneth MacGowan,⁴⁶ and the film's opening credits state 'William Goetz in charge of production.' However, according to Gardner Campbell it was Welles who was responsible for creating the more sophisticated elements of the adaptation, innovating film methods to communicate Jane's narrative authority.

In the novel Jane's individualism is primarily communicated through the use of first-person narration. In its internalisation of the action, Jane carefully situates herself in the narrative as both the narrator and character. Her narration is retrospective and through it she shows authority and self-awareness. At times she addresses the reader directly and then seamlessly moves from one tense to the other so that she appears to dissolve into different states of consciousness. As Campbell argues, Brontë's Jane 'loves the middle space, framing her own narrativity with the double frame [...] this middle space is one in which observer and creator are mingled and distinguished.'⁴⁷ This style of narration was perfectly suited to Houseman's and Welles' earlier radio adaptation, allowing the use of large sections of narration between acted scenes. However, communicating the unique and ambiguous space that Jane

commands in the novel required an innovative approach to filmmaking, using subtle shot composition to convey a voice that is so distinct and powerful.

Like the radio adaptation of the novel, the film audience is afforded snippets of voiceover that suggest Jane's narrative authority. However, the film's use of subtle shot composition and deep focus photography also portrays her control over the narrative. From my analysis of the film, it was found that there were sixty-five shots of doors in the film. Many of the exchanges between characters happen in or around a doorway or arch. The only door that appears to be shut to Jane is the one that leads to the attic. This composition subtly implies a sense of inclusion and exclusion. By finding ways in which to physically frame Jane, the filmmakers created a visual sign for the novel's style of narration. Following Jane, the audience is aware that she is framing the narrative. Jane alone chooses which door to open, she leads the audience through the narrative, and the mystery that pervades the story is the one door that remains locked. I would argue that such a technique highlights Jane's autonomy and control over the text.

Many of these camera shots and angles are described in the draft script dated 2 February 1943, suggesting that Houseman worked with director Robert Stevenson to prepare the stylistic conventions of the film. When Rochester and his guests are woken in the night by a commotion in the attic the script directions state,

LONG SHOT WITH JANE IN FOREGROUND AS BEFORE

Jane sees Rochester kiss Blanche's hand, then quickly turns into the CAMERA and (THE CAMERA PRECEEDING HER) enters the room and closes the door behind her. She stands there for a moment, bewildered and jealous, understanding nothing of what is going on.⁴⁸

Through the camera, the audience follows Jane's line of sight, sharing her disappointment and sadness. With the camera focusing on Jane's action and reaction, the spectator identifies Jane as the story's protagonist. In the script this association is furthered with the inclusion of a number of point-of-view shots. The clearest example of this is the script's first scene omitted from the final film, which features a flash-forward to Jane's flight from Thornfield. The scene begins with the note: 'Until otherwise noted the CAMERA represents Jane. All characters speak directly into the CAMERA as though they were talking to Jane. We never see her but on several occasions we see her hands just as her own eyes would see them.'⁴⁹ It then describes Jane running away from Thornfield Manor with Rochester calling out to her. The camera shows an employment agency which turns her away, and a dark country road where she comes upon a beadle who bars her from entering the village. Finally, the scene dissolves with Jane's introduction narrated in voice-over before setting the action at Gateshead Hall.

My analysis of the draft script and finished film shows that in many cases this technique was abandoned in favour of the deep-focus shot. Deep focus photography was a new technique used in this period to shoot several characters engaging with one another at the same time, 'the shot in depth constituted an equivalent of a normally edited scene. Action and reaction, cause and effect, are now shown within the same shot.'⁵⁰ Welles used this technique extensively in his production of *Citizen Kane* (1941), working with cinematographer Gregg Toland to create beautifully composed shots which tell multiple layers of the story. For example, when Kane's mother is shown signing the papers of her son's adoption, the young boy is shown perfectly framed by a window playing outside in the snow. The aesthetic possibilities brought about by the development of deep-focus

photography made films more visually engaging and narratively powerful. However, what makes this technique particularly pertinent to the narration of *Jane Eyre* is that it has been linked in critical debate to the issue of artistic autonomy. In his chapter ‘An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism’ André Bazin argued that:

the camera of Orson Welles takes in with equal sharpness the whole field of vision contained simultaneously within the dramatic field. It is no longer the editing that selects what we see, thus giving it an *a priori* significance, it is the mind of spectator which is forced to discern.⁵¹

By shooting in deep focus the spectator is less manipulated by the narrative and free to read the set of shots in front of them.

Deep-focus photography is used throughout *Jane Eyre* to suggest Jane’s double authority as a character and narrator. This is especially evident in the scene in which Jane is commanded to be present in the drawing room while Rochester entertains his guests. In this scene Jane is shot in side profile at the right of foreground, behind her, and at some distance away, is Rochester beside Blanche at the piano. Jane quietly attends to her sewing and does not directly observe the pair, but her position in the shot makes her appear as if she is framing the action. When Blanche has finished playing she instigates a conversation on the detestability of governesses, well aware that Jane can hear her. The framing is then repeated, with Blanche and a number of other ladies talking offensively about Jane’s occupation in the background while Jane appears large in the foreground. Jane’s silent authority in this scene is emphasized by her calm manner in spite of the cruelty. While she appears passive and unconnected to what is taking place behind her, her position in the frame suggests otherwise. Through the clever manipulation of shot composition, the representation of Jane’s heterodiegetic position as narrator and character is communicated. It is Jane’s

position and size within the frame that marks her out as the central figure. Additionally, throughout the scene a comparison of Blanche and Jane is privileged. Jane's sewing conveys her low status and works as a contrast to Blanche's exalted position as an accomplished and talented lady. However, whilst beauty and wealth were prized in Victorian society, it is humble Jane that the audience identifies with and values. When Blanche shows deliberate and calculated cruelty to Jane, it is affirmed to the audience that class distinctions are both unjust and groundless.

From my analysis of shot composition and mise-en-scène it can be seen that the cinematic techniques employed in *Jane Eyre* advanced the text's overall themes of equality and individualism. Whilst no conclusive evidence exists that assigns agency to Welles, one of Selznick's own lawyers later acknowledged that Welles did a great deal more producing on the picture than we had previously known. He stated 'we have been informed by [Fox] that Mr. Welles worked on the sets, changes in the script, in casting, among other things, and that he was in charge of the editing.'⁵² However, in later years Welles was reluctant to take credit, stating that he merely 'invented some shots' and 'collaborated', but never came around behind the camera.'⁵³ Whilst this chapter cannot conclusively assign agency to the use of shot composition, I would speculate that the more stylistic techniques employed in the filming of *Jane Eyre* can be attributed to Welles. The film's cinematographer George Barnes was critically acclaimed, bringing a romanticist style to the picture previously employed in Selznick's earlier adaptation *Rebecca* (1940).⁵⁴ However, the use of deep-focus photography in *Citizen Kane* is well documented, and when the themes furthered by this technique are taken into account, there is a correlation between the autonomy Jane seeks, and Welles own struggle for creative agency. In a memo from Selznick to William Goetz in

April, 1943, Selznick related how Welles had been reluctant to take the role of Rochester 'because it would "reduce" him from a producer-director-writer actor to simply an actor.'⁵⁵ From an analysis of the film I would argue that the change in management, gave Welles the freedom to assert control beyond his contracted role.

Jane Eyre was released in England on 24 December 1943, and according to a table of British Grosses in Wartime' published in Mark Glancy's work, it was Twentieth-Century Fox's highest grossing wartime release in Britain, earning \$300,000.⁵⁶ The film was released in America on 4 February 1944 to high praise. The fan magazine *Photoplay* claimed this is the best love story to be told from the screen since the picture "Love Affair,"⁵⁷ and *Screenland* labelled it 'sheer escapist melodrama.'⁵⁸ *Film Daily* lauded the adaptation as an 'overwhelmingly powerful film, an artistic triumph, a production of high distinction.' Though remarkably they claimed that the 'inescapable air of doom about this dolorous love tale is hardly conducive to the happiness of those who view it. Paradoxically, this very fact is evidence of the fine job 20th-Fox has done in putting the Bronte book on the screen.'⁵⁹ Such reviews suggest that the moody, brooding atmosphere of the Brontëan setting, and the story's romantic conventions were well received.

More discerning critics were similarly impressed, *Variety* commented on the difficulties of adapting the novel into a workable script, proposing that 'this picture has taken liberties with the novel that may be chalked off to cinematic expediency, but there is, nonetheless, a certain script articulation that closer heed to the book could possibly not have achieved.'⁶⁰ Likewise the *Motion Picture Herald*, remarked that the screenplay was 'remarkably close to the spirit and substance of Charlotte Brontë's story,' and ironically claimed 'few readers

will resent the omission of the later chapters which delayed the final reconciliation.’⁶¹ However, praise was not unanimous. *Time* magazine claimed the film was ‘a florid, somewhat disappointing cinemadap-tation of Charlotte Brontë’s story [...] As Jane, Joan Fontaine is too often merely tight-lipped and pale—perhaps because Orson Welles so seldom gives her reason to be anything else.’⁶² Therefore, like the production of the film, Welles’ presence overshadowed the contribution of others.

Conclusion

This assessment of adaptation practices on the production of *Jane Eyre* fits largely with what I have found in other films of the period. Like the other case studies presented in this work, the development of *Jane Eyre* showed clear links with former adaptations, blending the structure of the earlier radio adaptation with the conventions of mainstream Hollywood. Like *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the script was developed by multiple people who worked together to create the film’s central themes and narrative model. In the case of *Jane Eyre*, the producer David O. Selznick had final say on how this developed. Selznick urged his writers to include Jane’s childhood in the film, arguing that it would add emotional depth to Jane’s future relationship with Rochester. However, once the project was passed to Twentieth-Century Fox creative agency became clouded.

Through my analysis of the film and archival documents, I have suggested that Houseman and Welles made significant contributions to the production of *Jane Eyre*. Houseman was responsible for developing a script that showed clear ties with the cultural landscape of 1940s America. Taking his cue from the cultural practices taking place across the country, Houseman’s body of work consistently incorporated ‘high’ into ‘low’ culture, navigating a

tenuous middle ground with the adaptation of literary classics. However, steps were taken not just to bring high art to the masses, but to reinterpret that art in a way that made it relevant to contemporary society. In the case of *Jane Eyre*, pains were taken throughout the film to portray what would appeal to a contemporary audience, and if the narrative of the source text did not fit then it was changed. Welles' contribution was far more difficult to establish. Through an analysis of his earlier career I noted that his involvement on creative projects was often improvised and unstructured. Unfortunately, this mode of working tends not to provide clear archival evidence. However, through an analysis of his previous work on *Citizen Kane* and the film's stylistic features, I have suggested that Welles contributed to *Jane Eyre's* stylistic complexity, favouring deep-focus photography over the use of point-of-view shots.

Houseman's and Welles' previous successes on stage and radio were based on radical and innovative approaches to adaptation, converting classic plays and novels into socially relevant dramas. I would argue that their contribution to *Jane Eyre* is part of this body of work. *Jane Eyre* was released at a time of conflict between fascist governments and democratic ideals. By foregrounding Jane's struggle against poverty and oppression, and finding innovative approaches to representing Jane's narrative authority, they created a film with clear ties to contemporary concerns. As Jeffrey Richards notes in the introduction to his book, 'the power of films in the imaginative lives of audiences can only be properly understood when films are located within the wider cinema culture.'⁶³ Reflecting on the data presented in Chapter One, *Jane Eyre* stands at variance to the dwindling popularity of prestige pictures in the 1940s. I would argue that this is due to the film's reflection America's democratic ideals and the prevailing tone of American culture in this period. *Jane*

Eyre is the story of a principled woman who struggles to overcome poverty and prejudice. By maintaining the centrality of Jane's point of view through narrative choices and stylistic features, the filmmakers of *Jane Eyre* created a heroine modern audiences could relate to.

Notes for Chapter Six

- ¹ Hanson, *Hollywood Heroines*, 45.
- ² Ashiem, "From Book to Film: Simplification," 295.
- ³ Campbell, "The Presence of Orson Welles in Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* (1944)," 1.
- ⁴ De Hart, "Democratizing Culture," 146.
- ⁵ De Hart, "Democratizing Culture," 149-150.
- ⁶ Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project*, 1.
- ⁷ Houseman, *Unfinished Business*, 147-148.
- ⁸ France, *Orson Welles on Shakespeare*, 10.
- ⁹ "Plan for a New Theatre," *The New York Times*, August 29, 1937, n.p.
- ¹⁰ "New Plays in Manhattan," *Time*, November 22, 1937, n.p.
- ¹¹ Houseman, *Unfinished Business*, 154.
- ¹² Holler, "Orson Welles, The New Deal, and the Mercury Theatre on the Air," <http://critique-magazine.com/article/mercurytheatre.html>.
- ¹³ Crespy, *Richard Barr: The Playwright's Producer*, 18.
- ¹⁴ Heyer, *The Medium and the Magician*, 119.
- ¹⁵ "Mercury Theatre Remembered, 1988," Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/OrsonWelles-MercuryTheater1938Recordings/880000MercuryTheater88-00-00mercuryTheaterRemembered.mp3>.
- ¹⁶ Welles, "Jane Eyre," *Campbell Playhouse*, New York: CBS, March 31, 1940.
- ¹⁷ Welles, "Jane Eyre," *Campbell Playhouse*, New York: CBS, March 31, 1940.
- ¹⁸ Welles, "Jane Eyre," *Campbell Playhouse*, New York: CBS, March 31, 1940.
- ¹⁹ Richards, *Cinema and Radio in Britain and America, 1920-1960*, 29-30.
- ²⁰ Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 178.
- ²¹ Hanson, *Hollywood Heroines*, 45.
- ²² Sconce, "Narrative Authority and Social Narrativity," 146.
- ²³ Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 16.
- ²⁴ Riley, "Gothic Melodrama and Spiritual Romance," 146.
- ²⁵ Sconce, "Narrative Authority and Social Narrativity," 148.
- ²⁶ Sconce, "Narrative Authority and Social Narrativity," 148.
- ²⁷ Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 32.
- ²⁸ Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 16.
- ²⁹ Hark, "The Visual Politics of *The Adventures of Robin Hood*," 3.
- ³⁰ "1939 Book Awards given by Critics" *The New York Times*, February 14, 1940, n.p.
- ³¹ Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 327.
- ³² Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 329.
- ³³ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 50

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- ³⁴ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 63
- ³⁵ *Jane Eyre*, Revised Shooting Script of *Jane Eyre* (1943) dated February 2, 1943, File SCR-20239; Reuben Library, British Film Institute, London.
- ³⁶ Kaplan and Ellis, "Feminism in Brontë's Novel and its Film Versions," 196.
- ³⁷ Kaplan and Ellis, "Feminism in Brontë's Novel and its Film Versions," 194.
- ³⁸ *Jane Eyre*, Revised Shooting Script of *Jane Eyre* (1943) dated February 2, 1943, File SCR-20239; Reuben Library, British Film Institute, London.
- ³⁹ *Jane Eyre*, Revised Shooting Script of *Jane Eyre* (1943) dated February 2, 1943, File SCR-20239; Reuben Library, British Film Institute, London.
- ⁴⁰ "Jane Eyre (1944)" American Film Institute. Retrieved February 5, 2018.
<https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/712>.
- ⁴¹ Behlmer, *Memo From David O. Selznick*, 373.
- ⁴² Behlmer, *Memo From David O. Selznick*, 368.
- ⁴³ "Jane Eyre" *Hollywood Reporter*, April 8, 1943, n.p.
- ⁴⁴ Behlmer, *Memo From David O. Selznick*, 372.
- ⁴⁵ "Jane Eyre," *Hollywood Reporter*, December 7, 1942, n.p.
- ⁴⁶ "Advance Synopses," *Motion Picture Herald*, April 3, 1943, n.p.
- ⁴⁷ Campbell "The Presence of Orson Welles in Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*," 4.
- ⁴⁸ *Jane Eyre*, Revised Shooting Script of *Jane Eyre* (1943) dated February 2, 1943, File SCR-20239; Reuben Library, British Film Institute, London.
- ⁴⁹ *Jane Eyre*, Revised Shooting Script of *Jane Eyre* (1943) dated February 2, 1943, File SCR-20239; Reuben Library, British Film Institute, London.
- ⁵⁰ Bordwell, "Deep Focus Photography," 117.
- ⁵¹ Bazin, *What is Cinema*, vol.2, 45.
- ⁵² Welles and Bogdanovich, *This is Orson Welles*, 175.
- ⁵³ Welles and Bogdanovich, *This is Orson Welles*, 175.
- ⁵⁴ Cagle, "Classical Hollywood 1928-1946," 55.
- ⁵⁵ Behlmer, *Memo From David O. Selznick*, 373.
- ⁵⁶ Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain*, 27.
- ⁵⁷ "Reviewing Movies of the Month," *Photoplay*, December, 1943, 22.
- ⁵⁸ "Your Guide to current films," *Screenland*, January, 1944, 12.
- ⁵⁹ "Jane Eyre," *Film Daily*, February 3, 1944, n.p.
- ⁶⁰ "Jane Eyre," *Variety*, January 1, 1944, n.p.
- ⁶¹ "Jane Eyre," *Motion Picture Herald*, February 4, 1944, n.p.
- ⁶² "Jane Eyre," *Time*, February 21, 1944, n.p.
- ⁶³ Richards, *Cinema and Radio in Britain and America, 1920-1960*, 1.

CONCLUSION

This thesis had a two-fold purpose: to examine adaptation as a historical process, and to establish what relationship adaptations have with a source text and prior adaptations. It has therefore, set out to broaden our understanding of adaptation practices and problematize traditional approaches to the discourse. This conclusion seeks to reflect on the findings presented throughout this study and therein evaluate their success in examining how and why British nineteenth-century novels were adapted in the studio era. From 1930 to 1949 Hollywood adapted eighty-six texts based on British nineteenth-century literature. These included Gothic novels, Victorian serialized fiction and crime stories. Despite this, until now there has been no comprehensive study of adaptation practices in this period of film history. Therefore, one of the many original contributions this study has sought to make was to write a narrative and engage with that history, and in doing so advance the historiography of adaptation studies.

At the beginning of this study, Chapter One gave an overview of the types of texts the studio adapted from 1930 to 1949. Its aim was to examine the processes by which industrial forces translated literary sources for broad consumption into the commercial marketplace, and to reveal the adaptation strategies filmmakers employed in this period. I showed that the 1930s and 1940s featured vast technological advances, industrial regulation, changing social attitudes, a world war, and one of the greatest economic recessions of modern history. Through an analysis of the period, I revealed that each of these factors had a significant impact on the texts Hollywood adapted and the mode of practice that was employed.

Using a dataset created from the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, clear patterns of production were ascertained. In almost all cases these patterns began with a film that performed particularly well at the box-office. For example, Universal's *Dracula* was a low-budget formula film that exceeded expectations. It was followed by the acquirement of similar source material and similar success in *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Bride of Frankenstein*. Equally, costume pictures were considered unpopular by many until David O. Selznick bought *Little Women* to the screen at RKO. His successful adaptation of *David Copperfield* at MGM, bolstered his standing in the industry making it possible for him to create lavish prestige pictures throughout the decade, and set up his own production company, Selznick Independent Pictures.

From the data, I also proposed that star power was a significant factor in the selection of texts. Names that appeared across multiple films included Ronald Colman, Shirley Temple, Freddie Bartholomew, Basil Rathbone and Edna May Oliver. This represents a mix of studio stars and character actors. Ronald Colman and Shirley Temple were both leading stars in this period. As an important asset, their studio's selected literary properties to match their talents and adapted them accordingly. Edna May Oliver who played a sharp-tongued spinster in *Alice in Wonderland*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Pride and Prejudice*, was a character actor. Her inclusion in a number of adaptations did not affect the mode of adaptation but provided continuity between texts. Therefore, both types of stars played a pivotal role in promoting adaptations.

These patterns suggest that the film industry of the 1930s and 1940s employed tried-and-tested modes of adaptation practice. This fits largely with what is known about this period of film history, with many historians defining the era by its systematic modes of production and standardized product. Yet this chapter also suggested that adaptations were a driving force in the film industry. Adaptations had a persistent influence on later films. Therefore, in assessing the original contribution this overview of the period made, I would argue that texts were not subsumed into the Hollywood mould. Rather Hollywood was shaped by the texts it adapted.

As an overview, the intention of the first chapter was to create the contextual underpinning for further chapters in the thesis. From this chapter I selected five further areas that I could use to delve more deeply into production practices. These histories encompassed a number of adaptations, from Universal's horror cycle at the beginning of the 1930s to the Sherlock Holmes franchise of the late 1940s. It was proposed that this structure would allow me to map out the similarities and differences of approaches between studios, genres and time, whilst giving an in-depth analysis of key production processes. From this history of adaptation practices, I sought to examine how adaptations were made at multiple studios and determine how industrial regulations, studio house styles and changing social attitudes effected the adaptation process.

Beginning with a chapter on Universal's *Frankenstein*, the first production history presented in this thesis was used to gain a better understanding of screenwriting as a creative process, questioning how much influence a screenwriter or screenwriters had on the story, structure, characters and tone of an adapted film. Through an analysis of screenplay drafts, this chapter

showed that the screenwriting process of *Frankenstein* was a complex collaborative process. Robert Florey began the process of adapting Shelley's novel soon after the release of *Dracula*. The examination of the screenplay illustrated that Florey's version was a violent, expressionistic and thematically simplistic rendering of Shelley's original story. However, I proposed that the script was carefully crafted to meet Universal's rigid length and budget requirements, whilst providing the studio with a property that had the potential to match the commercial success of *Dracula*.

Florey was eventually replaced by director James Whale who worked with Universal screenwriter Garrett Fort to redraft the script. Although Florey's script outlined nearly every scene in the final film, it was Whale who introduced a more sophisticated interpretation of Shelley's allegorical tale. An integral part of Shelley's novel, and the popular conception of *Frankenstein*, is the sympathy the reader feels for the creature. Whale re-inscribed this theme into the adaptation and elevated the horror genre to manipulate the audience on an entirely new level. Despite being labelled a 'formula' film, at the heart of *Frankenstein* was an amalgamation of competing creative visions that said more about how each writer related to Shelley's original story rather than any particular industrial concerns. Therefore, the evidence provided in this chapter highlighted how screenwriting had a substantial bearing on the resulting adaptation and its reception.

Whereas the previous chapter was concerned with the adaptation of narrative, in the second production history provided I wanted to question the way we conceptualise visual design in adaptation. To do so I provided an in-depth study of the production design of MGM's *David Copperfield*. Through an analysis of archival records I outlined how the design of the film

was a collaborative process, with the production designers, research department, and filmmakers working together to create a detailed representation of Victorian Britain. In contrast to the low budget formula picture created by Universal, *David Copperfield* exemplified all the costly production methods and technical creativity of a major Hollywood studio at its height. This mode of adaptation was replicated countless times by MGM in the succeeding years, with the studio becoming the most prolific producer of prestige pictures during the late 1930s.

This chapter demonstrated that the transposition of a literary text into a prestige picture required a different approach to adaptation, with far more focus placed on a film's production values and verisimilitude. However, the close textual analyses provided in this chapter illustrated that it was not adherence to the written text that made *David Copperfield* a successful adaptation, but the innovative replication of its illustrations. *David Copperfield* relied heavily on the original illustrations by 'Phiz' to transpose a Dickensian world onto cinema screens. The use of visual paratexts in the design of the film narrowed the gap between the novel and film, however I also argued that the use of such references contributed to the film's commercial and cultural value. Through my analysis of the film's incorporation into the American school curriculum and critical reviews I am able to conclude that the replication of visual paratexts bolstered the film's standing in the industry and wider society. Furthermore, these findings reveal the importance of mimicking pre-existing visual designs in adaptation practices.

This mode of replicating visual design was also analysed in my chapter on Sherlock Holmes. In Chapter Five I charted the development of visual iconography in the Hollywood

adaptations of Sherlock Holmes; namely the curved calabash pipe, deerstalker hat, and Inverness cape. The aim of this chapter was to examine the use of carefully selected props and costumes, and to question the function of this visual cohesion. This chapter illustrated how two different studios took two different approaches to the adaptation of Sherlock Holmes. Twentieth-Century Fox chose a revisionist text, tapping into the public tastes of anglophilia and nostalgia to create a prestige picture that resituated Holmes in his Victorian setting. Universal's subsequent films took the franchise in an opposite direction at the outbreak of the Second World War, enlisting Holmes in the war effort by having him battle against Nazi Spies and deliver rallying speeches. In each of these adaptations I showed that the use of familiar visual icons was equally essential. For Twentieth-Century Fox, maintaining the use of Victorian props in a film with a Victorian setting was easily achieved, yet for Universal, updating Holmes to a contemporary environment whilst maintaining the Victorian perception of the character was a balancing act. Yet it was a balancing act made possible by the visual references that surrounded Holmes, since it was these icons that allowed adaptors to navigate the space between the antiquated detective and a modern-day backdrop.

The evidence provided by this research has indicated that screenwriting and production design were both essential functions in the adaptation of British nineteenth-century literature. Both had a significant bearing on the finished film and how it was received by audiences. However, in the fourth chapter on *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* I also illustrated how cinematography was used to adapt a text's thematic concerns. In the Hollywood studio era *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was produced twice. The first adaptation was made by Paramount in 1931, and the second was adapted by MGM in 1941. In both adaptations cinematography

played a pivotal role. However, technical innovation and new industrial regulations ensured that each version differed dramatically in theme, style and tone.

In my overview of the industry, I highlighted the way in which social anxieties and economic hardship at the beginning of the 1930s compounded to create a cycle of films that courted controversy. However, in just a few short years the tide changed. In June 1934, the PCA introduced the Hays Code that imposed rigorous standards of morality on the studios. To explore the effects of this change, my chapter on *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* focussed on the communication of sexual themes. Whereas Paramount's film was daring and innovative, original censorship records revealed that MGM's version was impinged by new industrial regulations. My analysis of production records illustrated that the studio attempted to evade these restrictions by exploring sexual themes through a Freudian hallucination sequence. Whereas innovation and risk paid off in Mamoulian's production, it did quite the opposite in 1941, inciting almost every critic to denounce the film. MGM's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was marketed as a literary prestige picture, but as this chapter illustrated, introducing a sexually-charged dream-like sequence severely disrupted that formula.

Following on from my chapter on *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, I provided two final chapters to explore how the war impacted on adaptation practices. In December 1941, America entered the Second World War after over two years of conflict in Europe. Shortly after the industry joined the effort, the studios used familiar faces to boost morale at home and abroad. Though antiquated, the characters of British literary heritage were not exempt. Sherlock Holmes, Jane Eyre and even Tarzan were all recruited to fulfil a propagandist agenda. As stated earlier, Universal recast Holmes in a contemporary setting, having him chase Nazi

aggressors in *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, and *Sherlock Holmes goes to Washington*. *Jane Eyre* maintained her Victorian setting, however, my chapter on the film showed how the writers carefully selected aspects of Brontë's tale to communicate the contemporary ideals of democracy and freedom.

Like Mamoulian's adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, my analysis of *Jane Eyre* explored issues of subjectivity and agency through cinematography. In the novel, Jane's individualism is primarily communicated through the use of first-person narration. However, through a close textual analysis of the film, it was found that the filmmakers employed a mixture of subtle shot compositions to communicate her agency. This included the presence of doors in a number of scenes to imply a sense of inclusion and exclusion, and composition in depth suggesting Jane's heterodiegetic position as narrator and character. Through these techniques the filmmakers advanced the texts overall themes of equality and individualism. However, this chapter also showed that autonomy was a concern on set.

My investigation of *Jane Eyre* was used as a contrast to former chapters that focussed on the production of adaptations in a studio environment. *Jane Eyre* was produced independently by David O. Selznick from 1941 to 1942, and then sold to Twentieth-Century Fox as a package. This created a conflict in the film's authorship with the film being attributed to a number of agents. In this chapter I explored this conflict and attributed the film's exploration of themes to the collaboration of screenwriters, director Robert Stevenson and Welles position as an uncredited producer. Of course such a task was hindered by limited archival material, however in addressing this problem I highlighted that the struggle

for creative autonomy on set allowed Houseman and Welles to articulate contemporary concerns.

Thus far this conclusion has outlined how adaptation operated as an industrial mode of practice. In each chapter of my thesis I have summarised how different studio departments contributed to the adaptive text, outlined how industrial regulation impacted on adaptation processes and explored the social conditions under which these films were made. However, the time has come to assess why these British literary novels were selected. As stated in the introduction of this thesis the limitation of British nineteenth-century texts was introduced in order to examine the effects of anglophilia on the industry as discussed by critics such as Mark Glancy, Jennifer Jeffers, Sarah Street and Tom Ryall. Whilst it is beyond my remit to explore anglophilia in-depth, I would like to offer some contribution to this debate.

Glancy attributes the frequency of 'British' films in this period to a number of factors, including the preponderance of anglophilia in the industry itself, a shared Anglo-American heritage, and anglophobia; the self-assurance that America had moved beyond the rigidity of class systems and social snobbery seen in antiquated scenes of British literature on film. Whilst I believe that each of these factors are valid, I believe that an examination of adaptations can add to this debate. Looking at which texts Hollywood selected in the 1930s and 1940s, it is evident that British nineteenth-century literature had a significant and long-standing cultural impact in America. In understanding why Hollywood adapted British nineteenth-century texts it is necessary to take into account the lineage of these novels. As my overview presented in Chapter One suggested, a number of British nineteenth-century texts were selected for adaptation after the success of similar source material. This pattern

encompassed Universal's horror cycle, prestige pictures, and the Sherlock Holmes franchise. However, this influence was not limited to recent film productions. Nearly every text selected in this period had been adapted multiple times on stage and screen. Therefore, this thesis has also sought to demonstrate the relationship these films had with former adaptations of the same text.

The evidence provided in this thesis indicates that former adaptations are not unrelated. They are integral to how adaptors read and reinterpret a literary text. Two chapters of this thesis dealt with this notion in depth, the production history of *Frankenstein* and the investigation of the Sherlock Holmes franchise. Each of these chapters demonstrated a link to former adaptations. In my chapter on *Frankenstein* I investigated how the narrative of Mary Shelley's novel evolved to meet changing social and production contexts throughout the nineteenth and twentieth-century. In the case of an iconic text like *Frankenstein*, film adaptations are merely one kind of treatment in a continuing succession of cultural transformations undergone by a text after its publication and dissemination. The novel was first adapted for the stage in 1823 by Richard Brinsley Peake. Following its success numerous other theatrical adaptations were produced throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Moving through a range of genres over the course of more than a hundred years ensured the continuing popularity of *Frankenstein* and attests to the novel's permeability. However it also provided Hollywood adaptors with a rich and diverse collection of sources from which to draw inspiration. Thus the myth of *Frankenstein*, made up by an assortment of elements both original and transformative, became a diversified construct of popular culture.

Whereas this chapter charted the progression of *Frankenstein's* narrative. My chapter on Sherlock Holmes looked at the evolution of visual iconography through successive theatrical productions and early cinematic adaptations. The findings of this chapter illustrated that the Holmes franchise draws its references not merely from his literary origins, but a mixture of visual texts, from illustrations to earlier theatrical productions and film versions. Holmes adaptations take as their primary referent, not the particular story on which they are supposedly adapting, but the franchise as a whole. Like the use of visual paratexts in *David Copperfield*, the filmmakers incorporated former visual interpretations into their adaptations as a way of validating their work. However, in the case of Universal's series, recycling key visual icons served an important function; it made Holmes malleable.

In the case of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* I compared two adaptations created within a much shorter time frame. Throughout the history of adapting *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* sexual desire has been a central theme. From its very first adaptations for stage and screen, writers have added fiancées, prostitutes, love relations and sexual sadism, whilst making Jekyll young, good-looking and sexually repressed. Mamoulian's film continued this tradition casting Dr Jekyll between two love interests, his fiancée Beatrix and a prostitute Ivy. In 1941 MGM purchased the script to Mamoulian's film, rather than adapting the story from scratch. Their adaptation replicated much of what occurred in the first film, yet studio style and censorship forced the filmmakers to make subtle changes to the film's sexual themes. *David Copperfield* took prior illustrations as its primary visual reference. However, as visual interpretations of the written novel, I would argue that this mode of adaptation was part of the same process of appropriation. It was not the source text that *David Copperfield* adhered to, but the popular conception of the novel made up of former interpretations. Similarly,

Jane Eyre did not solely adapt Brontë's novel, but borrowed elements from a former radio adaptation of the novel by Houseman and Welles. This included narrative structure, casting choices and key themes.

From the analysis of these adaptation practices, it is evident that the texts filmmakers chose to adapt in the Hollywood studio era were all part of the fabric of both American and British culture. Through a process of repetition and adaptation, the popular conception of classic texts became imbedded in the British and American psyche. This furthers the notion of an Anglo-American heritage as outlined by Glancy, Jeffers, Street and Ryall. However, it is important to note that the meaning of these texts was not absolute, it altered and conformed to popular tastes. I would argue that ultimately it was the flexibility of these texts that made them suitable film material. Through an ongoing process of borrowing and appropriation, the adaptation of British nineteenth-century texts analysed in this thesis maintained their relevance in a contemporary society. This is why Hollywood adapted classic literary texts in the 1930s and 1940s, and it is why they are still adapted today.

The findings of this work has far-reaching implications for the study of adaptations. The incorporation of a contextualized approach to adaptation studies constitutes a widening of the frame, making possible a consideration of how adaptation practices were determined by economic, technological, and industrial factors. By applying a historical reading to adaptations, this thesis has provided an original approach to the field, illuminating the structures and processes that have determined the nature of the medium. Through analysis of archival records this thesis has outlined how adaptations were developed via institutional hierarchies and individuals and uncovered the hybridity of the approach.

However, to a certain extent, this thesis was hindered by limited archival material. As stated in my introduction, many of the papers which form the basis of today's film archives include material relating to famous producers or directors that has been filtered to avoid issues of controversy. Many feature incomplete series of memos that require additional contextual information to tease out their meaning, and in the case of the film adaptation historian, sources often have to be sought from elsewhere, such as theatrical stills libraries or individual collections in libraries. In many cases, I was able to find draft scripts, memos and production notes edited by hand. However, there was no way of ascertaining the authorship of these notes. Therefore, assigning agency to decisions made in the adaptation process was left frustratingly ambiguous.

Despite the unevenness of evidence, this thesis has amassed considerable data on adaptation production processes and their critical reception, which has allowed me to generalize about the history of adapting British nineteenth-century texts in this period. Through a study of adaptations, I have established how the industry was intrinsically linked to the wider cultural landscape of 1930s and 1940s America, borrowing and appropriating conventions from multiple sources to advance the medium. However, the act of borrowing was not limited to the source text and contemporary trends. Hollywood appropriated inspiration with impunity. Theatrical productions, illustrations, former films, nothing was inviolable. It was the inventive way that filmmakers approached the history of texts that made their work remarkable.

In finally assessing the original contribution this thesis makes I would argue that this historical precedence for hybridity indicates that an understanding of adaptation as a historical process is imperative. It was beyond the remit of this thesis to study how Hollywood adapted British nineteenth-century texts before and after this period of film history. Likewise, this study did not consider how the industry appropriated their own literary heritage. A great deal remains to be done before we have a complete adaptation history of Hollywood, and it is only with further study that we will ascertain whether the golden age of Hollywood was the golden age of adaptation. The title of this study is therefore speculative. However, it is hoped that the data contained in this study will provide the groundwork for further investigations of the discourse.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Data collected from the American Film Industry Catalog

Table 1: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Year

Year of Release	Film Title	Year of Publication	Original Author
1930	The Lady of the Lake	1810	Sir Walter Scott
1930	Ex-Flame	1861	Ellen Wood
1930	Raffles	1899	E. W. Hornung
1931	East Lynne	1861	Ellen Wood
1931	Alice in Wonderland	1865	Lewis Carroll
1931	Rich Man's Folly	1848	Charles Dickens
1931	Dracula	1897	Bram Stoker
1931	Frankenstein	1818	Mary Shelley
1931	Trilby	1894	George Du Maurier
1932	Indecent	1848	William Thackeray
1932	Sherlock Holmes	1899	Arthur Conan Doyle
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	1886	Robert Louis Stevenson
1932	Island of Lost Souls	1896	H. G. Wells
1933	A Study in Scarlet	1888	Arthur Conan Doyle
1933	Black Beauty	1877	Anna Sewell
1933	Oliver Twist	1839	Charles Dickens
1933	Alice in Wonderland	1865	Lewis Carroll
1933	The Invisible Man	1897	H. G. Wells
1934	Treasure Island	1883	Robert Louis Stevenson
1934	Jane Eyre	1847	Charlotte Brontë
1934	The Moonstone	1868	Wilkie Collins
1934	Crime Doctor	1892	Israel Zangwill
1934	Great Expectations	1861	Charles Dickens
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	1859	Charles Dickens
1935	David Copperfield	1849	Charles Dickens
1935	Peter Ibbetson	1891	George Du Maurier
1935	Becky Sharp	1848	William Thackeray
1935	She	1886	H. Rider Haggard
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	1818	Mary Shelley

1935	Mystery of Edwin Drood	1870	Charles Dickens
1936	Trouble for Two	1895	Robert Louis Stevenson
1936	The Garden of Allah	1904	Robert Hichens
1936	Under Two Flags	1867	Ouida
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	1886	Frances Hodgson Burnett
1936	Dracula's Daughter	1897	Bram Stoker
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	1854	Alfred Lord Tennyson
1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	1899	Baroness Orczy
1937	Captains Courageous	1897	Rudyard Kipling
1937	Ebb Tide	1894	Robert L. Stevenson & Lloyd Osbourne
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	1894	Anthony Hope
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	1888	Rudyard Kipling
1938	A Christmas Carol	1843	Charles Dickens
1938	Kidnapped	1886	Robert Louis Stevenson
1939	Gunga Din	1892	Rudyard Kipling
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	1899	Arthur Conan Doyle
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	1902	Arthur Conan Doyle
1939	The Little Princess	1888	Frances Hodgson Burnett
1939	Raffles	1899	E. W. Hornung
1939	Wuthering Heights	1847	Emily Brontë
1939	Son of Frankenstein	1818	Mary Shelley
1940	Pride and Prejudice	1813	Jane Austen
1940	The Light That Failed	1890	Rudyard Kipling
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	1857	Thomas Hughes
1940	The Invisible Man Returns	1897	H. G. Wells
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	1886	Robert Louis Stevenson
1942	The Invisible Agent	1887	H. G. Wells
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	1917	Arthur Conan Doyle
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	1903	Arthur Conan Doyle
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	1893	Arthur Conan Doyle
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1943	Jane Eyre	1847	Charlotte Brontë
1944	The Canterville Ghost	1887	Oscar Wilde
1944	The Pearl of Death	1904	Arthur Conan Doyle
1944	The Scarlett Claw	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1944	The Spider Woman	1913	Arthur Conan Doyle
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	1897	H. G. Wells
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	1891	Oscar Wilde
1945	The Body Snatcher	1884	Robert Louis Stevenson
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1945	The House of Fear	1891	Arthur Conan Doyle

1945	The Woman in Green	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1946	Black Beauty	1877	Anna Sewell
1946	Dressed to Kill	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1946	Terror by Night	-	Arthur Conan Doyle
1947	Adventure Island	1894	Robert L. Stevenson & Lloyd Osbourne
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	1898	Alfred Ollivant
1948	The Black Arrow	1888	Robert Louis Stevenson
1948	Adventures in Silverado	1883	Robert Louis Stevenson
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	1841	Henry Wandsworth Longfellow
1948	Kidnapped	1886	Robert Louis Stevenson
1948	One Touch of Venus	1885	F. Anstey
1948	The Woman in White	1860	Wilkie Collins
1949	The Secret of St Ives	1898	Robert Louis Stevenson
1949	The Secret Garden	1909	Frances Hodgson Burnett
1949	That Forsyte Woman	1906	John Galsworthy
1949	The Fan	1892	Oscar Wilde
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	1908	Kenneth Grahame/Washington Irving

Table 2: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Studio

Year of Release	Film Title	Studio
1932	Indecent	Allied Artists
1948	Adventures in Silverado	Colombia
1948	The Black Arrow	Colombia
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	Colombia
1949	The Secret of St Ives	Colombia
1930	The Lady of the Lake	FitzPatrick Pictures
1931	East Lynne	Fox Productions
1932	Sherlock Holmes	Fox Productions
1933	A Study in Scarlet	KBS
1930	Ex-Flame	Liberty Productions
1931	Alice in Wonderland	Metropolitan
1934	Treasure Island	MGM
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	MGM
1935	David Copperfield	MGM
1936	Trouble for Two	MGM
1937	Captains Courageous	MGM

1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	MGM
1938	A Christmas Carol	MGM
1940	Pride and Prejudice	MGM
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	MGM
1944	The Canterville Ghost	MGM
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	MGM
1949	That Forsyte Woman	MGM
1949	The Secret Garden	MGM
1933	Black Beauty	Monarch
1933	Oliver Twist	Monarch
1934	Jane Eyre	Monarch
1934	The Moonstone	Monarch
1948	Kidnapped	Monarch
1931	Rich Man's Folly	Paramount
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Paramount
1932	Island of Lost Souls	Paramount
1933	Alice in Wonderland	Paramount
1935	Peter Ibbetson	Paramount
1937	Ebb Tide	Paramount
1940	The Light That Failed	Paramount
1947	Adventure Island	Paramount
1934	Crime Doctor	RKO
1935	Becky Sharp	RKO
1935	She	RKO
1939	Gunga Din	RKO
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	RKO
1945	The Body Snatcher	RKO
1930	Raffles	Samuel Goldwyn Inc.
1936	The Garden of Allah	Selznick International Pictures
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	Selznick International Pictures
1936	Under Two Flags	Twentieth-Century Fox
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	Twentieth-Century Fox
1938	Kidnapped	Twentieth-Century Fox
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Twentieth-Century Fox
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Twentieth-Century Fox
1939	The Little Princess	Twentieth-Century Fox
1943	Jane Eyre	Twentieth-Century Fox
1946	Black Beauty	Twentieth-Century Fox
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	Twentieth-Century Fox
1949	The Fan	Twentieth-Century Fox
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	United Artists

1939	Raffles	United Artists
1939	Wuthering Heights	United Artists
1931	Dracula	Universal
1931	Frankenstein	Universal
1933	The Invisible Man	Universal
1934	Great Expectations	Universal
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	Universal
1935	Mystery of Edwin Drod	Universal
1936	Dracula's Daughter	Universal
1939	Son of Frankenstein	Universal
1940	The Invisible Man Returns	Universal
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	Universal
1942	The Invisible Agent	Universal
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	Universal
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	Universal
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	Universal
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	Universal
1944	The Pearl of Death	Universal
1944	The Scarlett Claw	Universal
1944	The Spider Woman	Universal
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	Universal
1945	The House of Fear	Universal
1945	The Woman in Green	Universal
1946	Dressed to Kill	Universal
1946	Terror by Night	Universal
1948	One Touch of Venus	Universal
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	Walt Disney
1931	Trilby	Warner Bros.
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	Warner Bros.
1948	The Woman in White	Warner Bros.

Table 3: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Producer

Year of Release	Film Title	Producer
1931	East Lynne	A. L. Rockett, Winfield R. Sheehan
1944	The Canterville Ghost	Arthur L. Field
1934	Jane Eyre	Ben Vershleiser

1931	Dracula	Carl Laemmle Jr
1931	Frankenstein	Carl Laemmle Jr
1933	The Invisible Man	Carl Laemmle Jr
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	Carl Laemmle Jr
1936	Dracula's Daughter	Carl Laemmle Jr
1949	The Secret Garden	Clarence Brown
1938	Kidnapped	Darrel F. Zanuck
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	Darryl F. Zanuck, Gene Markey
1949	The Fan	Darryl F. Zanuck, Otto Preminger
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	David O. Selznick
1935	David Copperfield	David O. Selznick
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	David O. Selznick
1936	The Garden of Allah	David O. Selznick
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	David O. Selznick
1933	A Study in Scarlet	E. W. Hammons
1935	Mystery of Edwin Drood	Edmund Grainger
1946	Black Beauty	Edward L. Alperson
1942	The Invisible Agent	Frank Lloyd
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Gene Markey
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Gene Markey
1939	The Little Princess	Gene Markey
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	Gene Towne, Graham Baker
1939	Gunga Din	George Stevens
1948	The Black Arrow	Grant Whytock
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	Hal B. Wallis / Sam Bischoff
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	Howard Benedict
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	Howard Benedict
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	Howard Benedict
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	Howard Benedict
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	Howard Benedict
1944	The Pearl of Death	Howard Benedict
1944	The Scarlett Claw	Howard Benedict
1944	The Spider Woman	Howard Benedict
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	Howard Benedict
1945	The House of Fear	Howard Benedict
1945	The Woman in Green	Howard Benedict
1946	Dressed to Kill	Howard Benedict
1946	Terror by Night	Howard Benedict
1931	Alice in Wonderland	Hugo Maienthou
1934	Treasure Island	Hunt Stromberg
1940	Pride and Prejudice	Hunt Stromberg

1933	Black Beauty	I. E. Chadwick
1933	Oliver Twist	I. E. Chadwick
1948	The Woman in White	Jack L. Warner
1935	Becky Sharp	John Hay Whitney
1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	John W. Considine Jr.
1936	Under Two Flags	Joseph M. Schenck
1938	A Christmas Carol	Joseph Mankiewicz
1940	The Invisible Man Returns	Ken Goldsmith
1949	That Forsyte Woman	Leon Gordon
1948	One Touch of Venus	Lester Cowan
1948	Kidnapped	Lindsay Parsons
1935	Peter Ibbetson	Louis D. Lighton
1936	Trouble for Two	Louis D. Lighton
1937	Captains Courageous	Louis D. Lighton
1933	Alice in Wonderland	Louis D. Lighton, Benjamin Glazer
1932	Indecent	M. H. Hoffman
1930	Ex-Flame	M. H. Hoffman, Edward R. Halperin
1934	Crime Doctor	Merian C. Cooper
1930	The Lady of the Lake	No Producer Credit
1931	Rich Man's Folly	No Producer Credit
1931	Trilby	No Producer Credit
1932	Island of Lost Souls	No Producer Credit
1934	The Moonstone	No Producer Credit
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Pandro S. Berman
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	Robert Bassler
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Rouben Mamoulian
1939	Son of Frankenstein	Rowland V. Lee
1949	The Secret of St Ives	Rudolph C. Flothow
1930	Raffles	Samuel Goldwyn
1939	Raffles	Samuel Goldwyn
1939	Wuthering Heights	Samuel Goldwyn
1935	She	Shirley Burden
1934	Great Expectations	Stuart Walker
1948	Adventures in Silverado	Ted Richmond
1945	The Body Snatcher	Val Lewton
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Victor Fleming
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	Wallace MacDonald
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	Walt Disney
1943	Jane Eyre	William Goetz, (Orson Welles, Selznick)
1947	Adventure Island	William H. Pine
1932	Sherlock Holmes	William K. Howard

1937	Ebb Tide	William LeBaron
1940	The Light That Failed	William Wellman

Table 4: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Director

Year of Release	Film Title	Director
1931	Alice in Wonderland	"Bud" Pollard, Raymond B. Lewis
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Albert Lewin
1938	Kidnapped	Alfred Werker
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Alfred Werker
1931	Trilby	Archie Mayo
1932	Indecent	Chester M. Franklin
1934	Jane Eyre	Christy Cabanne
1949	That Forsyte Woman	Compton Bennett
1933	A Study in Scarlet	Edwin L. Marin
1938	A Christmas Carol	Edwin L. Marin
1942	The Invisible Agent	Edwin L. Marin
1932	Island of Lost Souls	Erle C. Kenton
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	Ford Beebe
1931	East Lynne	Frank Lloyd
1936	Under Two Flags	Frank Lloyd
1949	The Secret Garden	Fred M. Wilcox
1935	David Copperfield	George Cukor
1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	George Fitzmaurice
1939	Gunga Din	George Stevens
1948	The Black Arrow	Gordon Douglas
1930	Raffles	Harry d'Abbadie D'Arrast, George Fitzmaurice
1935	Peter Ibbetson	Henry Hathaway
1935	She	Irving Pichel
1936	Trouble for Two	J. Walter Ruben
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	Jack Conway
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	Jack Kinney
1930	The Lady of the Lake	James A. FitzPatrick
1937	Ebb Tide	James Hogan
1931	Frankenstein	James Whale
1933	The Invisible Man	James Whale
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	James Whale

1940	The Invisible Man Returns	Joe May
1931	Rich Man's Folly	John Cromwell
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	John Cromwell
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	John Cromwell
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	John Ford
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	John Hoffman
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	John Rawlins
1934	Crime Doctor	John Robertson
1944	The Canterville Ghost	Jules Dassin
1936	Dracula's Daughter	Lambert Hillyer
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	Louis King
1946	Black Beauty	Max Nosseck
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	Michael Curtiz
1933	Alice in Wonderland	Norman McLeod, Ewing Scott
1949	The Fan	Otto Preminger
1948	The Woman in White	Peter Godfrey
1947	Adventure Island	Peter Stewart
1948	Adventures in Silverado	Phil Carson
1933	Black Beauty	Phil Rosen
1949	The Secret of St Ives	Philip Rosen
1934	The Moonstone	Reginald Barker
1936	The Garden of Allah	Richard Boleslawski
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	Robert Stevenson
1943	Jane Eyre	Robert Stevenson
1945	The Body Snatcher	Robert Wise
1940	Pride and Prejudice	Robert Z. Leonard
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Rouben Mamoulian
1935	Becky Sharp	Rouben Mamoulian
1939	Son of Frankenstein	Rowland V. Lee
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	Roy William Neill
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	Roy William Neill
1944	The Pearl of Death	Roy William Neill
1944	The Scarlett Claw	Roy William Neill
1944	The Spider Woman	Roy William Neill
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	Roy William Neill
1945	The House of Fear	Roy William Neill
1945	The Woman in Green	Roy William Neill
1946	Dressed to Kill	Roy William Neill
1946	Terror by Night	Roy William Neill
1939	Raffles	Sam Wood
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Sidney Lanfield

1934	Great Expectations	Stuart Walker
1935	Mystery of Edwin Drood	Stuart Walker
1931	Dracula	Tod Browning
1934	Treasure Island	Victor Fleming
1937	Captains Courageous	Victor Fleming
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Victor Fleming
1930	Ex-Flame	Victor Halperin
1939	The Little Princess	Walter Lang
1948	One Touch of Venus	William A. Seiter
1948	Kidnapped	William Beaudine
1933	Oliver Twist	William Cowen
1932	Sherlock Holmes	William K. Howard
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	William Tummel
1940	The Light That Failed	William Wellman
1939	Wuthering Heights	William Wyler

Table 5: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Writer

Year of Release	Film Title	Screenwriter(s)
1934	The Moonstone	Adele Buffington
1934	Jane Eyre	Adele Comandini
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	Albert Lewing
1940	Pride and Prejudice	Aldous Huxley, Jane Murfin
1943	Jane Eyre	Aldous Huxley, Robert Stevenson, John Houseman
1931	Alice in Wonderland	Ashley Ayer Miller, John E. Goodson
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	Aubrey Wisberg
1939	Wuthering Heights	Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur
1932	Sherlock Holmes	Bertram Milhouser
1937	Ebb Tide	Bertram Milhouser
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	Bertram Milhouser
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	Bertram Milhouser
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	Bertram Milhouser
1944	The Pearl of Death	Bertram Milhouser
1944	The Spider Woman	Bertram Milhouser
1945	The Woman in Green	Bertram Milhouser
1931	East Lynne	Bradley King, Tom Barry

1933	Black Beauty	Charles Logue
1942	The Invisible Agent	Curtis Siodmak
1944	The Scarlett Claw	Edmund L. Hartmann
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	Edward T. Rowe
1944	The Canterville Ghost	Edwin Blum
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Edwin Blum, William Drake
1933	Oliver Twist	Elizabeth Meehan
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	Erdman Penner
1949	The Secret of St Ives	Eric Taylor
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Ernest Pascal
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	Ernest Pascal, Julien Josephson
1939	The Little Princess	Ethel Hill, Walter Ferris
1932	Indecent	F. Hugh Herbert
1935	Becky Sharp	Francis Edwards Faragoh
1946	Terror by Night	Frank Gruber
1931	Dracula	Garrett Fort
1931	Frankenstein	Garrett Fort, Francis Edwards Faragoh, Richard Schayer
1936	Dracula's Daughter	Garrett Fort, John L. Balderston
1930	Ex-Flame	George Draney, Victor Halperin
1934	Great Expectations	Gladys Unger
1931	Rich Man's Folly	Grover Jones, Edward Paramore Jr.
1948	One Touch of Venus	Harry Kurnitz, Frank Tashlin
1935	David Copperfield	Hugh Warpole, Howard Estabrook
1938	A Christmas Carol	Hugo Butler
1931	Trilby	J. Grubb Alexander
1930	The Lady of the Lake	James A. FitzPatrick
1949	That Forsyte Woman	Jan Lustig
1934	Crime Doctor	Jane Murfin
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	Jerome Cady
1939	Gunga Din	Joel Sayre, Fred Guiol, Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur
1935	Mystery of Edwin Drood	John L. Balderston, Gladys Unger, Bradley King, Leopold Atlas
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	John L. Balderston, Wells Root, Donald Ogden Stewart
1934	Treasure Island	John Lee Mahin
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	John Lee Mahin
1937	Captains Courageous	John Lee Mahin, Marc Connelly
1939	Raffles	John Van Druten, Sidney Howard
1933	Alice in Wonderland	Joseph L. Mankiewicz, William Cameron Menzies
1948	Adventures in Silverado	Kenneth Garnet
1940	The Invisible Man Returns	Kurt Siodmak, Lester Cole
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	Leonard Lee

1946	Dressed to Kill	Leonard Lee
1946	Black Beauty	Lillie Hayward
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	Lynn Riggs, John Bright, Robert D. Andrews
1936	Trouble for Two	Manuel Seff, Edward E. Paramore Jr.
1947	Adventure Island	Maxwell Shane
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	Michael Jacoby, Rowland Lee
1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	Monckton Hoffe, Herman J. Mankiewicz
1945	The Body Snatcher	Philip MacDonald
1933	The Invisible Man	R. C. Sheriff, Philip Wylie
1948	The Black Arrow	Richard Schayer
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	Richard Schayer, Hugh Walpole, David O. Selznick
1949	The Secret Garden	Robert Ardrey
1940	The Light That Failed	Robert Carson
1933	A Study in Scarlet	Robert Florey, Reginald Owen
1945	The House of Fear	Roy Chanslor
1935	She	Ruth Rose
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Samuel Hoffenstein, Percy Heath
1930	Raffles	Sidney Howard
1938	Kidnapped	Sonya Levien, Richard Sherman, Walter Ferris
1948	The Woman in White	Stephen Morehouse Avery
1935	Peter Ibbetson	Vincent Lawrence
1936	The Garden of Allah	W. P. Lipscomb, Lynn Riggs
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	W. P. Lipscomb, S. N. Behrman
1936	Under Two Flags	W. P. Lipscomb, Walter Ferris
1948	Kidnapped	W. Scott Darling
1932	Island of Lost Souls	Waldemar Young, Philip Wylie
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	Walter Ferris, Frank Cavell, Gene Towne, Grahame Baker, Robert Stevenson
1949	The Fan	Walter Reisch
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	William Hurlbut
1939	Son of Frankenstein	Willis Cooper

Table 6: Adaptations of British Nineteenth-Century Texts by Actors

Year of Release	Film Title	Actors
1930	The Lady of the Lake	Percy Marmont, Benita Hume
1930	Ex-Flame	Neil Hamilton, Marian Nixon
1930	Raffles	Ronald Coleman, Kay Francis

1931	East Lynne	Ann Harding, Clive Brook
1931	Alice in Wonderland	Ruth Gilbert, Ralph Hertz, Lillian Ardell
1931	Rich Man's Folly	George Bancroft, Frances Dee
1931	Dracula	Bela Lugosi, Helen Chandler
1931	Frankenstein	Colin Clive, Mae Clarke, Boris Karloff
1931	Trilby	John Barrymore, Marian Marsh, Donald Crisp
1932	Indecent	Myrna Loy, Conway Tearle
1932	Sherlock Holmes	Clive Brook, Reginald Owen
1932	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins
1932	Island of Lost Souls	Charles Laughton, Richard Arlen, Leila Hyams, Bela Lugosi
1933	A Study in Scarlet	Reginald Owen, Anna May Wong
1933	Black Beauty	Esther Ralston, Alexander Kirkland
1933	Oliver Twist	Dickie Moore, Irving Pichel
1933	Alice in Wonderland	Leon Errol, Louise Fazenda, Ford Sterling
1933	The Invisible Man	Claude Rains, Gloria Stuart
1934	Treasure Island	Wallace Beery, Jackie Cooper
1934	Jane Eyre	Virginia Bruce, Colin Clive
1934	The Moonstone	David Manners, Phyllis Barry
1934	Crime Doctor	Otto Kruger, Karen Morley
1934	Great Expectations	Phillips Holmes, Jane Wyatt
1935	A Tale of Two Cities	Ronald Colman, Elizabeth Allan
1935	David Copperfield	Freddie Bartholomew, Edna May Oliver
1935	Peter Ibbetson	Gary Cooper, Ann Harding
1935	Becky Sharp	Miriam Hopkins, Frances Dee, Cedric Hardwicke
1935	She	Helen Gahagan, Randolph Scott
1935	Bride of Frankenstein	Colin Clive, Valerie Hobson, Boris Karloff
1935	Mystery of Edwin Drood	Claude Rains, Douglass Montgomery
1936	Trouble for Two	Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell
1936	The Garden of Allah	Marlene Dietrich, Charles Boyer
1936	Under Two Flags	Ronald Colman, Claudette Colbert
1936	Little Lord Fauntleroy	Freddie Bartholomew, Dolores Costello
1936	Dracula's Daughter	Otto Kruger, Gloria Holden
1936	The Charge of the Light Brigade	Errol Flynn, Olivia De Havilland
1937	The Emperor's Candlesticks	William Powell, Luise Rainer, Maureen O'Sullivan
1937	Captains Courageous	Freddie Bartholomew, Spencer Tracy
1937	Ebb Tide	Oscar Homolka, Frances Farmer, Ray Milland
1937	The Prisoner of Zenda	Ronald Colman, Madeleine Carroll
1937	Wee Willie Winkie	Shirley Temple, Victor McLaglen
1938	A Christmas Carol	Reginald Owen, Gene Lockhart, Kathleen Lockhart
1938	Kidnapped	Warner Baxter, Freddie Bartholomew
1939	Gunga Din	Cary Grant, Douglas Fairbanks
1939	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1939	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1939	The Little Princess	Shirley Temple, Richard Green

1939	Raffles	David Niven, Olivia De Havilland
1939	Wuthering Heights	Laurence Olivier, Merle Oberon
1939	Son of Frankenstein	Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff
1940	Pride and Prejudice	Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier
1940	The Light That Failed	Ronald Colman, Walter Huston
1940	Tom Brown's Schooldays	Jimmy Lydon, Cedric Hardwicke
1940	The Invisible Man Returns	Vincent Price, Sir Cedric Hardwicke
1941	Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Spencer Tracy, Ingrid Bergman
1942	The Invisible Agent	Ilona Massey, Jon Hall
1942	Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1943	Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1943	Sherlock Holmes Faces Death	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1943	Sherlock Holmes in Washington	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1943	Jane Eyre	Orson Welles, Joan Fontaine
1944	The Canterville Ghost	Robert Young, Margaret O'Brien, Charles Laughton
1944	The Pearl of Death	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1944	The Scarlett Claw	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1944	The Spider Woman	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1944	The Invisible Man's Revenge	Jon Hall, Leon Errol, John Carradine
1945	The Picture of Dorian Gray	George Sanders, Hurd Hatfield
1945	The Body Snatcher	Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi
1945	Pursuit to Algiers	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1945	The House of Fear	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1945	The Woman in Green	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1946	Black Beauty	Mona Freeman, Richard Denning
1946	Dressed to Kill	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1946	Terror by Night	Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce
1947	Adventure Island	Rory Calhoun, Rhonda Fleming
1947	Bob, Son of Battle	Lou McCallister, Peggy Ann Garner, Reginald Owen
1948	The Black Arrow	Louis Hayward, Janet Blair
1948	Adventures in Silverado	William Bishop, Gloria Henry
1948	The Wreck of the Hesperus	Willard Parker, Edgar Buchanan
1948	Kidnapped	Roddy McDowall
1948	One Touch of Venus	Robert Walker, Ava Gardner
1948	The Woman in White	Alexis Smith, Elenor Parker
1949	The Secret of St Ives	Richard Ney, Vanessa Brown
1949	The Secret Garden	Margaret O'Brien, Herbert Marshall, Gladys Cooper
1949	That Forsyte Woman	Errol Flynn, Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon
1949	The Fan	Jeanne Crain, Madeleine Carroll
1949	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	Bing Crosby, Basil Rathbone

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ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

FORM UPR16

Research Ethics Review Checklist



Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information)

Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information		Student ID:	468046
PGRS Name:	Penny Chalk		
Department:	FMC	First Supervisor:	Dr Laurel Forster
Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)	October 2013		
Study Mode and Route:	Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MPhil <input type="checkbox"/>	MD <input type="checkbox"/>
	Full-time <input type="checkbox"/>	PhD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>

Title of Thesis:	Adaptation as an Intertextual Mode of Practice: British Nineteenth-Century Literature and the Hollywood Studio Era
Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)	71,051

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:

(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: <http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/>)

a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):	02/16-0109
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If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS):		Date:	09/04/2019
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