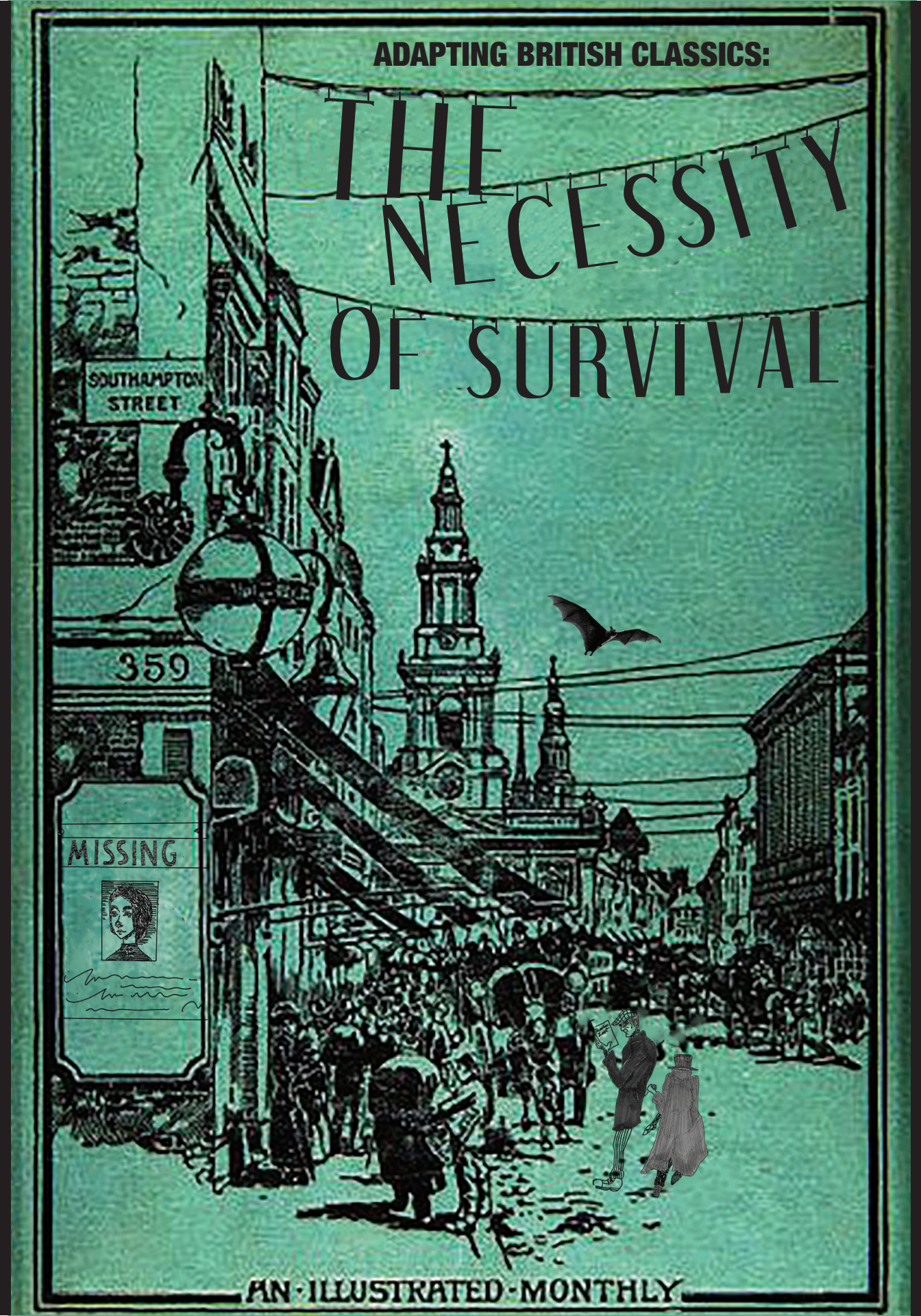
ADAPTING BRITISH CLASSICS:
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Table of Contents

A Word from our Professor:

You know you're going to have a great class when, during first-day introductions, one student does a perfect backflip and the other recites the Batman/Joker interrogation scene from *The Dark Knight* word for word.

Adapting the British Classics was indeed a great class because of the students whose work is represented here. From the very first day, they asked interesting questions and made super-smart observations about the books we read and the adaptations we saw. And, like any good class, we had our rhythms: Hannah would always bring up costuming; Danny would always make a comparison to a TV series or film that most of us had never seen; Nia would somehow work in something about Sherlock Holmes; and at least five of us, including me, would curse at least once during any given class.

Adaptation is a fascinating phenomenon, partly because it involves so many potential mediums. For this book, adaptation allowed students to explore the conventions and characteristics of Victorian novels alongside the conventions and characteristics of a wide range of mediums, including films, TV miniseries, radio, graphic fiction, children's literature, and musicals. Students thought deeply about genre and historical context. Many of them studied cinematography. Some used this as an opportunity to learn about a wholly new topic, such as the Edison films of the early 20th century and the Lux Soap Radio Program. Their essays were fascinating, and a pleasure to read.

I will miss these students—their wonderful faces, their energy, their intelligence. But I have this wonderful book to remember them by.

Nancy West

Summary of Works

Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

The modern depiction of vampires all call elements from Dracula. Bram Stoker's story, told from the diaries and letters of several characters, tells of a vampire traveling throughout late 19th century Europe as he feeds on the living. Jonathan Harker, a young salesperson, travels to Transylvania in order to sell land in London to the mysterious Count Dracula. As Jonathan realizes he's been captured by a vampire, he fears for his fate and the fate of others.

As Harker's friends, including his girlfriend Mina, worry for him back in England, he manages to escape Dracula's castle only to find that Dracula has left for London as well. As Harker and his friends band together to stop this creature, they realize Dracula's motives lie in turning Mina into a vampire.

Will Dracula turn Mina into a vampire? Or will Jonathan Harker and his team put an end to the undead reign of the vampire once and for all?

Stoker's tale has been retold time-after-time in hundreds of adaptations. Dracula has inspired generations of vampire stories and exists as the ultimate vampire story.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

In one of history's most iconic and influential monster stories, Mary Shelley allows readers to question freewill and life itself in her classic, Frankenstein.

Frankenstein follows the woes of Doctor Victor Frankenstein's past as he tells a story of his scientific successes and failures to Robert Walton on a ship headed for the North Pole.

Doctor Frankenstein rejoices at first when he reanimates a dead body but later feels guilt for his actions. When his creation escapes, it learns how it came to be and also learns it is rejected by society, including his creator. As the monster lives and learns running from a hateful society, it vows to seek revenge on Frankenstein's family in order to requite its own sorrow.

Will Frankenstein's monster find and destroy his creator? Or will Doctor Frankenstein himself fall victim to his own guilt?

Shelley's original story has been altered and adapted into many forms of media leading up to the modern era. Frankenstein has invoked emotion deep into the lore of classic literature and still blurs the line between heroes and villains within it's spine.

Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*

Originally written in a serialization format, Charles Dickens first crafted Oliver Twist

in 1838. Oliver Twist begins life as an orphan as his mother dies from the labors of childbirth. and thus Oliver grows up in the corrupt workhouse he was born into.

Oliver defies a common place rule and is auctioned off to be an apprentice, but this position does not last long. With food taken from the house, Oliver walks to London and falls into favor with a band of pick pockets, but they allow him food and shelter in return for his aid.

During his first outing, Oliver is wrongfully convicted of a crime, and a gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, decides to take the sickly boy in. Unfortunately, the pick pockets wish for Oliver back and thus kidnap him, in order to obtain him as a bargaining chip.

Will Oliver escape the life of the pickpockets? Or will he learn to be a gentleman and move on from his orphan life?

Dickens's witty style and ability to capture real-life emotion makes Oliver Twist a classic. It has been adapted into plays, musicals, and more and has still kept the author's charm through time.

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*

Jane Eyre chronicles the life of a young woman, orphaned and raised by a vicious aunt and cruel cousins. The author, Charlotte Bronte, was able to capture real-life experiences and caused inspiration for the life and struggles of Jane Eyre.

After being sent off to school, Jane finds her comfort in the world of school and her talent for art. After finishing her education, she stays at the school to teach before sending an advert out advertising as a governess. She moves to Thornfield Hall, to be the governess of a young girl under the care of Edward Rochester. Over the course of her time at Thornfield she begins to fall in love with Rochester, but he has a terrible secret.

Will they overcome their differences and what keeps them apart to make their love work?

Bronte's classic has been adapted into many works. The struggles of Jane Eyre have been captured very differently over the course of time but the character remains as one of the strongest willed characters in literary history.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*

The witty and egotistical detective that nearly anyone can recognize was first crafted by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887. The canon of Sherlock Holmes stories includes fifty-six short stories and four novels that follow the great detective Sherlock Holmes through the narration of his good friend, Dr. John Watson.

Holmes acts as a consulting detective, solving cases that range from murder, to grand theft. He often is not wrong, but when pitted against Irene Adler, he loses. Holmes' archenemy Professor James Moriarty is a criminal genius who has orchestrated a large ring of criminals. It would be Holmes' crowning achievement if he is able to take him down, as long as he doesn't let his ego get in the way.

Will Holmes be successful? Will the two make it out alive?

Conan Doyle's masterful writing has inspired hundreds of Sherlock Holmes adaptations. The character is recognized by many and has been enjoyed generation after generation from one Holmes to the next.

Frankenstien
By Mary Shelley

"Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it."

Frankenstein vs. The Hallmark Channel: Adaptation on the Small Screen

Carolyn DeVivo

Plot Summary

Through a series of flashbacks, Victor Frankenstein tells the horrific tale of a murderous creature. The flashbacks commence after being rescued in the artic by ship captain Robert Walton. Victor recalls his early childhood in Geneva and what provoked his interests in death and the reanimation of life.

The early life of Victor was quite a peaceful and loving upbringing. His family was key to his education and encouraged his learning. After the death of the family dog in a tragic accident, Victor was distraught and angered by the limitations of modern medicine. His interest in science and human life continued into early adulthood where he soon decides to further his education at a university in Ingolstadt. His childhood friend, Henry Clerval, decides to accompany him to university where they both begin their studies.

Victor is compelled to learn all he can at university and plans to devote himself to the study of chemistry, the science of life. He becomes consumed by his work and is soon entranced by the power of electricity. He begins his reanimation studies with bringing a frog back to life by electric shock. The experiments only expand from there and soon Victor is robbing a grave for human body parts.

Victor succeeds at human reanimation and is soon horrified at his accomplishment, and abandons his creature. The creature then, left to his own devices tries, to survive on his own, only to realize he is an abomination to society and despised by the human race. The creature seeks out Victor for revenge, and demands to know why his creator discarded him. The chase intensifies and ultimately leads Victor into the artic landscape where he brings his story back to present day with Walton.

Context

Originally airing on the Hallmark channel in 2004, the two-part miniseries titled after Mary Shelley's classic novel, Frankenstein, was received as an authentic adaptation of the original text. Starring Alec Newman as Victor Frankenstein, and Donald Sutherland as Robert Walton, the miniseries begins on a suspenseful note. It originally aired in two parts: each portion about 100 minutes, and the total airtime was 204 minutes.

Directed by Kevin Conor, most notable for his fantasy/adventure films such as The Land That Time Forgot (1974) and At the Earth's Core (1976). He has also directed numerous other miniseries, such as North and South: Book II, The Return of Sherlock Holmes, Great Expectations, and Liz: The Elizabeth Taylor Story. With a background in film and television, Kevin Conor brings an interesting perspective to the adaptation. Most of his work with television has been period films or adaptations of relished classics.

This adaptation was revered as a true interpretation of the infamous novel. Reviewers saw this miniseries as a faithfully retelling of a 19th-century gothic novel (Lowry). Other reviews argued that although the adaptation was very close to the original novel, it left little for interpretation and had several dry patches. According to David Kranz, "By adaptation,

the great works live in anther medium and reach more minds and souls than can the printed word." Hallmark wanted to play it safe for this rendition, and carefully follow the original source for guidance and information.

As with other Hallmark channel movies and series, the main draw to their screens are big name stars, with small screen cameos. Most of the characters in this film were unknown to the acting world, but they did bring in some bigger names, such as Donald Sutherland, to attract viewers. Also, by keeping this a period piece, they immediately gained some new attention to the project.

The Hallmark Channel has a history as a family friendly network, and their content is mostly seen as uplifting and somewhat spiritual. Although in years past, the average viewers were women in their 50s, it has now been brought to my attention that their audience is diversifying. Ratings are growing fast among 18- to 49-year-old women, and a growing number of men are tuning in as well. Hallmark productions usually are feel-good, no sex or gore, and provide the audience with a happy ending (Long).

Miniseries adaptations have increased in popularity in recent years because they provide a more lengthy in-depth option to the traditional feature film. They add visual representation of our beloved classics, such as Frankenstein. The novel's plot is long and somewhat complicated, so with the miniseries there is more time to expand on the ideas of Mary Shelley. With this medium, it is easier to include everything, and not cut out important characters or scenes from the original text.

The miniseries has advantages, such as more time to develop a novel's plot into a workable on-screen production. This adaptation was broken up into two parts, which also helped divide the story and make it easier to process and understand. It originally aired as a two-night event, which also created automatic suspense. Since most miniseries are presented on television, they might lack the star power of A-list Hollywood actors, but they make up for it in the details of production, such as costuming, sets, and dialogue.

Analysis

Major Actors on the Small Screen

As stated previously, the Hallmark channel has a history of combining unknown actors with bigger names to draw audiences to their productions. Donald Sutherland, who portrays Robert Walton in the miniseries adaptation, makes numerous appearances during the flashback sequences with Victor Frankenstein. I believe his part was dramatized in order for Sutherland to have a more major role. The flashback sequences are not necessary to the framework of the adaptation. Also, Sutherland's performance adds to the production value. His portrayal of Robert Walton is interesting, due to the fact that in the novel Walton is not nearly as old as Donald Sutherland.

The adaptation was focused more between Walton and Frankenstein's relationship, which was emphasized in the multiple flashbacks sequences. The film also starts out with a close up shot of Sutherland's face and we recognize him and easily see him as an important part of the miniseries. Walton's role in the novel is not nearly as lengthy or important as it is for Sutherland in the adaptation. The director obviously wanted to use Sutherland to full advantage, but it was at a price to the overall concept and plot.

The Science of Frankenstein

Throughout the novel, one of the most intriguing aspects of the monster is that his design and production are left scientifically ambiguous. Victor does not delve into the details of his scientific discovery, and that is what makes the novel eerie and adds to the gothic atmosphere. In the miniseries, there were a lot of details that went into Victor's reanimation process. He builds his own laboratory and workshop with university equipment. His chemistry professor at the university is a key advisor for Victor's experiments, and was supportive in his scientific endeavors.

Once at university Victor decides to study chemistry, the science of life. His studies revolve around the reanimation power of electricity. Once he brings a frog back to life with an electric shock, Victor is enthralled by the potential power to reanimate a human form. In the adaptation, there is a lot of time focused around Victor's time at university and what he actually learns while in class. In the novel, Victor's education while attending university is mostly unknown to the audience.

During the miniseries, there is a true focus on Victor during his time at university, because this is a main turning point for him. This becomes an essential learning and developmental point in his life. It is at university where he is truly alone and in charge of his actions. Although, Clerval is present at some times, there is no one watching over Victor or aiding him in his experiments. It is at university that Victor has a turn for the worse and creates the horrendous monster. After watching the miniseries, I now have a harsher look at Victor's education process and the fact that no one saw what he was capable of creating or cared enough to find out.

Gothic Themes Represented on Screen

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is a true gothic novel, and the tone of the novel is perfectly set. There were several aspects to the miniseries adaptation that lent themselves to the gothic nature of the story. Sound played a key role in depicting suspense and drama at the beginning of the film. There was a lot of non-diegetic sound such as a suspenseful sound track and Victor's commentary. Both diegetic and non-diegetic sounds set the gothic tone for the miniseries.

Throughout the rest of the film, and especially the end, there was major use of low-key lighting, which made for an intriguing visual effect. Low-key lighting was mostly broken up by the stark contrast of light that Victor's love interest, Elizabeth, always brought with her. Whenever there was a scene of pure bliss or true happiness from Victor, there would be high-key lighting. By contrast, whenever Victor would be conducting an experiment or trying to locate the monster, there would be almost little or no light. The only light that seemed important was the flash of lighting or electricity that would sometimes appear during a dimly lit shot.

Another characteristic of the miniseries to note is that most of the dialogue was kept faithful to the novel. Dialogue added authenticity to the period piece, along with exquisite costuming and visual effect. Fidelity is achieved both through the direct importation of language and the transformation of metaphors into visual effects of which the film medium is most capable (Kranz). For those who have read the novel, it was nice to see some famous lines brought to life on screen. The dialogue was beneficial to the period drama and was a good way to characterize. Overall, this adaptation had numerous characteristics that developed throughout the entirety of the miniseries and brought to life the novel that started it all.

1910's Frankenstein: Reinventing an Industry

Nathan Ford

Plot Summary

Edison's Frankenstein, released in 1910, opens with Frankenstein leaving for college. The film then jumps forward two years later to Frankenstein at college, studying, when he discovers the secret to life and death. After this discovery, Frankenstein writes to his sweetheart, telling her he is going to create the most perfect human being to ever exist. Frankenstein begins to create his creature, but as the card prior to the creation scene states, he doesn't create the perfect human being. Rather, the evil that lives in Frankenstein leads to him creating a monster. Frankenstein's creation process is shown as a cauldron that is superheated, from which the monster emerges. Upon seeing his horrific creature, Frankenstein collapses and the monster flees. After regaining consciousness, Frankenstein returns home and the monster follows him. The monster becomes jealous of Frankenstein and his companion, and attacks Frankenstein, but after the monster sees his reflection in a mirror, he is horrified and flees. The film then cuts to Frankenstein's wedding night, where the monster lets his existence be known to Frankenstein's sweetheart. She faints, and Frankenstein chases the monster. The card prior to the scene says that the monster was overcome by love and flees. The monster is seen running into a mirror, the same mirror in which Frankenstein then sees his own reflection, temporarily, as the monster.

Historical Context

"The twentieth-century's dominant art form was born out of the nineteenth-century predilection for machinery, movement, optical illusion and public entertainment" (Parkinson 7). Early cinema can be traced back to one man, Thomas Edison. Edison and his aptly named company, the Edison Manufacturing Company, were responsible for producing many films in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with over 850 films being released by 1900. These early films were shown on Edison's kinetoscope, a big wooden box with a screen and mechanical guts that would show early films on a loop. These kinetoscopes were put in places like arcades and in people's own parlors, and the early films they would show were less of an art, and more of an entertainment spectacle. Eventually however, tinkers were able to take the mechanical guts of these kinetoscopes and make a projection system that allowed for collective viewings of these films, which were quickly a big hit among a public that was beginning to grow tired of the kinetoscope fad.

Edison quickly was able to claim this projection system as his own, due to the patents he owned on his kinetoscope, and his company was known to be very protective of its hold on the film industry in the early days. The Edison Manufacturing Company, for all intents and purposes, *was* the film industry before the 1900s.

The first studio The Edison Company owned was known as The Black Maria, and was in Orange, New Jersey. The films made here were simple, and consisted mostly of performances by dancers, jugglers, strongmen, and boxers fighting one another. These films were weren't considered entertainment as much as science experiments. Soon enough, they started

to bore audiences, and the Edison Company, whose prime directive was to make money, began to make more graphic films with scenes such as dog fighting. These films were seen as cheap novelties by the more affluent, who still chose the theatre when enjoying the arts. In the early 1900s, a second studio was opened in New York in the Bronx, which was done not only to expand the company, but to get closer to all of the performers who resided in New York. Films and film theaters became increasingly popular, and Edison eventually decided that films should become more morally upright, which meant less dog fighting and elephant electrocution, and more literary adaptations.

The first of these films made under Edison's stricter moral guidelines was *Frankenstein* . It was directed by J. Searle Dawley and starred Augustus Phillips as Frankenstein, Mary Fuller as Frankenstein's sweetheart, and Charles Ogle as Frankenstein's monster. Dawley, while credited as a director, oversaw practically everything for the production of *Frankenstein,* from makeup to writing the screenplay to even production costs. Edison Company operated a lot like a factory, churning out multiple entire films a week. *Frankenstein* however was an exception. The complicated sets that Dawley used, as well as the advanced cinematography, led to filming of *Frankenstein* alone to take a full week. The extra attention to detail can be attributed to *Frankenstein* being the first of the Edison Company's films to be made under the new morally upright standards set in place. On March 18th, 1910, *Frankenstein* was released.

The film was released to positive critical reviews, with *The Moving Picture World* writing "It is safe to say that no film has ever been released that can surpass it in power to fascinate an audience" (Wiebel 191-192). Such positive reviews dominated the newspapers at the time of the film's release, however, the film industry of the 1910s was very different from the film industry of today. Edison Company alone released over 100 films just in 1910, and once other studios are considered as well, *Frankenstein* left very little impact on the public and the film industry as a whole.

Analysis

Compressing Frankenstein To Fit a Moral Agenda

Edison's *Frankenstein* compresses much of Shelley's original novel. The film isn't afraid to let the viewer know this from the offset either, with the opening slate reading "Frankenstein; A Liberal Adaptation From Mrs. Shelley's Famous Story." The film tries to take the spine and the spirit of Shelley's original novel, and not only compress it, but simplify it as well. However, the Edison Company's need to be morally upright bleeds into the film as well, and turns the dark tale of *Frankenstein* into something very simple, and twists the spine of the original for its own agenda.

In Edison's *Frankenstein* , the moral is very clear: love conquers all. This is a moral that is largely absent in Shelley's novel, with love really just being present as something to be leveraged against Victor. Choosing to have love be the *deus ex machina* of Edison's *Frankenstein* is very unsurprising however, as *Frankenstein* was designed to be The Edison Company's first morally upright film. In fact, many of the things that are removed for the film can be drawn to this need to be morally upright. There is no death in Edison's *Frankenstein* ; Shelley's novel, on the other hand, features a lot of murder by Frankenstein's monster. These murders would not have fit the goal of the film, and considering the film was being made to appeal to a large audience and make a lot of money, it makes sense that these aspects were removed. Removing

William and Clerval makes sense, which means a good portion of the novel is already gone just by keeping to the morally upright agenda of the film.

Edison's *Frankenstein* also removes an important part of Shelley's novel, the framing. Walton and his letters are removed, and so is the monster's tale of becoming literate. Walton and his letters add too much complexity to a twelve-minute film, and removing these aspects make sense when a film has to be as simple and as concise as possible. Ultimately, Walton doesn't add to the narrative emphasis on Frankenstein creating a monster that represents his evil side, or the equally important theme that love can conquer this evil. The same goes for Frankenstein's monster being literate. It isn't something required for what the film is trying to say, and overcomplicates a film that needs to be simple.

Ultimately, the changes made for *Frankenstein's* first film debut can be described as simplification and moral cleaning up. *Frankenstein* as a novel is dark and dreary, which doesn't work well for Edison Company's new agenda of being morally upright. By removing so much from the novel, Edison's *Frankenstein* ends up being its own twisted version of Shelley's original novel, with very simple morals and an overall simpler story.

Using Frankenstein to Bridge the Worlds of Spectacle and Narrative

"What precisely is the cinema of attraction? First, it is a cinema that bases itself on the quality that Leger celebrated: its ability to *show* something" (Gunning 64). Tom Gunning's wonderful *The Cinema of Attraction* is very relevant to the early history of film, and by extension, Edison's *Frankenstein* . Early film was all about novelty, and as film evolved from pure spectacle to more narratively driven works of art, filmmakers couldn't help but indulge in shocking and sensational moments. Edison's *Frankenstein* is no different, with nearly three minutes of the twelve minute runtime being dedicated to the creation of Frankenstein's monster. For a film that needs to be as simple and concise as possible, dedicating one fourth of the film to one scene is pure indulgence. The creation scene in Edison's *Frankenstein* is bizarre, and almost surreal. Frankenstein is seen throwing a powder like substance into a vat before closing a door. The rest of the scene adopts the point of view of Frankenstein, as he would see it through a peephole in the door. The monster is seen emerging from the cauldron as an amalgamation of lava-like material that is surreal, and fairly horrific. Especially considering the film's agenda of being morally upright, this scene feels a little out of place. It feels much more inline with other Edison Company films, which looked to shock audiences and show them things that could only be seen in Edison films. By adapting *Frankenstein* Edison company is able to take a half step forward in their moral agenda, while still being able to create a spectacle

that attracts moviegoers. When a company is releasing over 100 films in one year, each film they create needs its own unique draw. This even includes *Frankenstein* , whose draw was the horror depicted in this scene especially.

The Edison Company's description of *Frankenstein* ends with "The formation of the monster in a cauldron is of blazing chemicals is a photographic marvel" (Wiebel 188). This photographic marvel is ultimately the draw of the film, and gets audiences into theaters. In a hugely saturated market, a company who produces films like a factory has to indulge in spectacle in order to sell their product. The evolution to include a narrative however puts Edison's *Frankenstein* in a unique place where spectacle isn't the only draw, but is still there to satisfy audiences who only want that. Edison's *Frankenstein* can easily be described as a spectacle film, but this is oversimplifying its position as a bridge between the spectacle film and the narrative film.

Frankenstein's Cinematography

Cinematography is extremely important to a film, and when trying to be a simplified version of a complex novel that is also bridging the worlds of the spectacle and the narrative, bad cinematography can lead to a confusing mess. Edison's *Frankenstein* is not a confusing mess, and arguably, excels as a film. The glue that holds all the moving parts of Edison's *Frankenstein* together is the cinematography, and the end result is a film that was critically well received despite being a rather new innovation in an industry that desperately needed change.

Edison's *Frankenstein* needed to be a lot of things, including a faithful adaption of a novel, a spectacle, a narratively attractive film, and a morally upright film. It needed to be simple and complex at the same time, which is a seemingly impossible task. Dawley however is able to accomplish every single goal however, and is able to do so primarily though the cinematography. Keeping the spine of the novel mostly in tact s accomplished almost entirely through cinematography. One of the most compelling wonders of the film is the end, where Frankenstein's monster goes into a mirror, only to have Frankenstein look back at his creation and realize it was a manifestation of his own inner evil. This scene by modern standards isn't too impressive; however, in 1910 this was remarkable. This scene is able to convey the central message of the film, that love conquers all, as well as capture the novel's more complex theme of Frankenstein and his monster and the doppleganger-like quality that the monster shares with his creator. This scene also does wonders for the narrative, ending the film in an organic way that feels thematically satisfying. All of this through the use of one character looking into a mirror seeing another.

The spectacular creation sequence, while very obvious the film indulging into the cinema of attraction, also doesn't feel terribly out of place in the narrative. The hellish scene fits into the theme of the evil doppelganger, and the deliberate choice of the intense heat and the lava like creature makes the spectacle fit with the narrative theme and allows it to exist without feeling out of place. If Dawley chose another method of creation, assuming he stuck with the spectacle would have felt out of place. The monster has to be the reflection of Frankenstein's evil heart, and the hellish atmosphere of the creation scene fits this theme entirely.

Edison's *Frankenstein* did everything it needed to do. And while it twists the spine of Shelley's original work, there are still themes present from the novel. Through the use of his cinematography, Dawley is able to create a memorable work of art in an era of spectacle that bridges the gap between this spectacle and the world of narrative film nicely. And even when the film indulges into this spectacle, the way it goes about it fits the film thematically and organically, creating exactly what was needed from the Edison Company at the time.

Victor Frankenstein (2015)
A Classic Tale through New Eyes
Oliver Getch

Plot Summary

The film begins with the story of a hunchbacked circus attraction (Daniel Radcliffe) and his struggles to find meaning in his world. Told through Igor's (Radcliffe) point of view, people rarely think he has any intelligence, so when an accident happens at one of the shows and this man runs in to help, everyone is astonished that he has the brains to fix the broken collarbone of a fellow performer (Jessica Brown Findley). His medical knowledge catches the eye of one man in particular, Victor Frankenstein (James McAvoy), who helped him save the life of the injured woman. Frankenstein breaks the hunchback out of the circus and brings him back to his laboratory, which is a rundown soap and tonic factory. It is there that the hunchbacked man gets his name from Victor Frankenstein: Igor Strausman. Together they put their brilliant, but twisted, minds together to create life from old body parts. They create a primate-hybrid for a presentation held at the Royal School of Medicine. This catches the eye of another student named Finnegan, who belongs to one of the richest families in England. Finnegan decides to fund Igor and Frankenstein's project of making a human sized version of their original experiment. After the presentation the London Police are after the two men. Amidst an argument between Igor and Frankenstein, Victor flees to Finnegan's estate in Scotland to finish his project while Igor stays in London to be with his love Lorelei (Findley). Igor and Lorelei go to Scotland to find Victor and to convince him not to finish the project only to find it underway. Victor realizes his huge mistake but it's too late and the monster begins destroying everything and everyone in its way, only to have Igor and Victor eventually take down the monster. The film ends with Lorelei and Igor falling in love while Victor is on the run, possibly trying to continue his medical research into the reanimation of life.

Context

Victor Frankenstein was released in 2015 and takes place in London. The use of electricity was still a new concept at the time of the film's setting, which provides historical context for when the film is set to take place. A paraphrased quote from the film is that electricity was only invented 20 years ago, and since electricity was invented in 1879, we are to assume the time frame is right at the turn of the 20th century. Paul McGuigan, who has directed other films and TV shows such as *Lucky Number Slevin,* and the critically acclaimed TV series *Sherlock,* was born and raised in Scotland, so it would make sense for him to direct this movie, being from the UK. Reception of the film in the public eye was mediocre at best, ranking #146 in box office revenue in 2015 (Box office Mojo). Another example of the public's mediocre opinion of *Victor Frankenstein* is the score on IMDB, which holds it at a 6.0/10 (IMDb).

As for critical reception, the film critic Glen Kenny of rogerebert.com said, "For all the enthusiasm brought to bear, and again, despite the brio of the young cast (McAvoy makes his "let's create life" speeches with spittle-projecting eagerness), the movie's a bloody mess, and a needlessly loud one as well" (Kenny Review). This review praises James McAvoy, the actor who played Victor Frankenstein, for his interpretation of the mad scientist. Other than that, the

critic finds the movie to be a loud mess. According to him, the script was all over the place, jumping from one story line to another, and there were too many storylines occurring in one film. Andrew Barker of *Variety* said, "Director McGuigan does deserve some credit for crafting a fantastical but never too-Steampunkish 19th-century London on a modest budget, and he pulls off a nifty visual motif in which anatomical sketches are superimposed onto the bodies of passers-by" (Barker). This is a more generous review than Kenny's. Barker praises the fact that the film felt like it was in the 19th century but had a modern touch added by McGuigan, which helped add relatable features to the film. Overall reception of the film is very middle-of the-road due to its many storylines and the overall loudness that was unnecessary to tell the tale from Igor's perspective. Although much respect was given to McGuigan for the new perspective of the story, many film critics gave the film sub-par reviews, including a 36/100 on Metascore. The significance of the historical context of the film is important to telling the story of *Frankenstein* because it becomes unbelievable if the story is too modernized. Therefore, by keeping the plot in the late 19th century, the set is much more accurate and similar to the original story.

Telling the story from Igor's perspective gave a refreshing take on the story, even though the mad scientist's assistant wasn't in the original story. Igor's character was first seen in the adaptation film of *Frankenstein (1931).* He was originally named Fritz and his hunchback is where the public perception of Igor originated. The lab assistant named Igor didn't begin until the sequel of that film *Son of Frankenstein (1939).* The character of Igor was taken from a bunch of different previous films before his first appearance as the hunchbacked assistant named Igor in Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein (1974).*

Analysis

Religion vs. Science

There is an ethical and moral dilemma involving the quest to play God in Mary Shelley's book *Frankenstein;* the same is true of Paul McGuigan's *Victor Frankenstein*. In the book, the monster compares himself to the biblical character Adam. He says, "Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being of existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition, for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me" (Shelley 15. 154). This line occurred when the monster was reading *Paradise Lost*, which is

an epic poem about the downfall of man. It is symbolic because the monster didn't ask to be created and was made by man. He is incredibly misunderstood because of the way he looks and is later described as a "fallen angel" which is another nod to Satan in a biblical reference.

This line is key to the film's adaptation. Throughout the film, Victor Frankenstein is insistent that God does not exist and, in fact, a few times tells Igor he is like God for creating life from nothing. The line in the film that resonates most clearly with the line above comes when Detective Turpin captures Lorelei in Scotland and tells her that Victor Frankenstein is "In an allegiance with Satan, and must be stopped.". The mention of Satan in both versions of the story is important, because in the book, the monster considers himself similar to Satan, while in the movie, the title character is perceived by others as similar to Satan. So the real point of this comparison is the question of who the real monster is: the creator of the monster, or the monster itself. Mary Shelley wanted to make sure the audience knew the monster was the way he was because of Victor Frankenstein; and McGuigan and his production crew made Victor Frankenstein the real monster that would stop at nothing to achieve his scientific research. So McGuigan's choice to keep the similarities in the debate of religion versus science was the correct one because readers of *Frankenstein* can connect the descriptions of the two characters from the book to the film. Later on in the film, when the final showdown between Officer Turpin, Frankenstein, Igor, and the monster happens, Frankenstein and Turpin exchange more words of religion and science. Turpin says, "'This isn't science, this is the work of Satan himself' Victor laughs before replying: 'There is no Satan, no God, only humanity, only me!." This was my favorite exchange of dialogue because it truly shows what Frankenstein thinks of God and science. It is revealed that he was the reason for his brother's death when they were younger and right then and there he planned on coming up with a way to reanimate people who have died so no one had to feel the pain that he did when his brother died. He claims God made him the way that he did, but it was a childhood trauma that truly made him lose all religion.

Igor as the Narrator/Main Character

After reading the novel we all know that Igor was not in the original story by Mary Shelley; in fact Igor's character wasn't around until the 1930's. So why use him as the narrator and one of the main characters in a film? Well According to Alexis Weedon, "Adaptation studies focus on the postmodernist notions of intertextuality and hybridity resulting from the circulation of multiple versions of a text" (111). This describes exactly what McGuigan and his coworkers did in their adaptation. By realizing that the character of Igor has been engrained into the minds of the public as Victor Frankenstein's hunchbacked assistant, McGuigan made his own hybrid version of the story. Not only was Igor included in this adaptation of the story, but also his point of view was the main narration of the film. According to Linda Cahir, one criteria of turning a book into a film is that "The film must demonstrate the audacity to create a work that stands a world apart, that exploits the literature in such a way that a self-reliant, but related, aesthetic offspring is born" (99). This is exactly what having Igor as the main character does for the film. We had the familiar character of Victor Frankenstein and the monster (eventually), but now we have the background story of how Igor and Victor met, and how they became mad scientist partners together. The addition of the back-story of Igor and how he got roped into Victor's destiny was always something people have been curious about, and the foresight to include this into the film was brilliant. Although the novel didn't have Igor as a

character, since Frankenstein didn't have a lab assistant, some may refer to this film as 'unfaithful' to the original novel, but one can look at it the other way and say that the addition of Igor was just that, an addition. The novel of *Frankenstein* was in no way perfect, and would have benefited from a strong central narrator instead of jumping around as much as it did. The film took advantage of the fact that there was still a character to narrate without ruining the insanity or mysteriousness of Victor Frankenstein if he was made narrator.

Love (Familial/Passion)

The theme of love is also present in both versions of this story, both the absence of it for the monster and the romantic love between the scientists and their respective fiancees. The main reason why the monster becomes the monster is because he is angry that there isn't a counterpart for him that accepts him for who he is instead of how he looks. One type of love that plagues the monster in the novel is the lack of companionship; whenever he wants to meet anyone, he is rejected. People just run away from him, such as the family in the cabin with the three children: Felix, Agatha, and Safie. A type of companionship that the monster also longs for is that of his creator Victor Frankenstein. All the monster wanted was to be accepted by Victor instead of Victor being repulsed at his creation. This translates nicely into the film when Victor and Igor have successfully made the monster at Finnegan's estate. When the monster escapes his shackles and is on the loose, Victor confronts him and tries to tell the monster that they are brothers. He says, "I am your brother" and begins to realize that they monster has no emotions and exclaims, "Oh my brother Henry, forgive me! This is not life!!" This is all because the night Victor's brother died still haunts him, and he wanted to create life from nothing in hopes of making a duplicate of his brother one day. Victor's father blames Victor for the death of his brother and all he wants is his father's acceptance, much like the monster in the book who craved Victor's love. This was important for McGuigan to include because it is a nice parallel and nod to the original book. There is a scene in the movie when Victor's father comes to visit him, after he learns of Victor being kicked out of medical school. It is a hard scene to watch for readers of the original novel because it recalls how lonely the monster was in the book. Many of the problems in the book could have been avoided if people looked past the looks of the monster and tried to help him. In the film, this happens as well because if Victor's father hadn't blamed him for the death of Henry, then he wouldn't have spent the rest of his medical career trying to stop a tragedy like this from happening again.

A Modern Monstrosity

Amanda Hollomon

Plot Summary

At Engle State University, the brilliant Victoria Frankenstein is experimenting with the latest biomedical technology of the twenty-first century, weeks away from the title she covets: Victoria Frankenstein, MD. Her unparalleled ambition and passion for science often take her research to reckless heights, as her project partner Iggy DeLacey and advisor Dr. Abraham Waldman have attempted to warn her. Supported by her close friends (and occasional test subjects) Rory Clerval and Eli Lavenza, Victoria documents her research in a series of video blogs, addressing her viewers directly. Tragedy strikes, however, when a devastated Victoria relays the news that Robert Walton, the unseen cameraman and editor, has been in a fatal accident. Consequently, Victoria combines the scientific breakthroughs she studied previously with the ultimate goal of restoring life to Robert's body. Although she is successful in reviving the body, the being she creates is not Robert—it is an entirely new life, and a monstrous one. The Creature escapes the lab in a panic, resulting in the death of Rory Clerval and triggering Victoria's steely resolve for a new purpose: find her creation, and destroy him. She is joined by Eli Lavenza, who gradually becomes a love interest, with tragic repercussions;Victoria's creation finds them, kills Eli in a rage, and leaves Victoria alone to contemplate the grim consequences of her hubris.

Context

Frankenstein MD is a contemporary adaptation of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein—specifically, a webseries produced by Pemberley Digital in partnership with PBS Digital Studios. It consists of 24 episodes, each approximately 5-7 minutes long. The series premiered via Youtube and Pemberley Digital's own website in August 2014, and concluded in October of the same year. The medium was not entirely unprecedented for Pemberley Digital, which gained popularity two years previously with its Pride and Prejudice-inspired webseries, The Lizzie Bennet Diaries. Literature-inspired webseries such as these are part of PBS's effort to continue providing family-friendly, educational entertainment that foster interests in the sciences, history, and literature. Pemberley Digital leads the literature outreach, primarily targeting teenagers and young adults. Several of their past projects bear the influence of Hank Green and other notable content creators that cater to a young adult demographic.

Created by Bernie Su, Lon Harris and Brett Register, the series stars Anna Lore as the titular Frankenstein. Therein lies the twist: Frankenstein MD dives headfirst into the novel's overwhelming themes of masculine arrogance and ambition by writing Frankenstein as a young woman, and allowing her to be just as brilliant, and just as flawed, as her predecessor. This idea proved to be a success, and the series quickly amassed fans. While it doesn't quite meet the bar set by its predecessor, The Lizzie Bennet Diaries, there is much that deserves examination within Frankenstein MD. Gender-swapped Frankenstein stories are rare, and this one in particular goes above and beyond to bring relevance to the story in the twenty-first century.

Analysis

A Monster for the Twenty-First Century

Standing in stark contrast to the eighteenth-century setting of Mary Shelley's original Frankenstein novel, Frankenstein MD offers viewers a twenty-first-century perspective, in content as well as production. The solid grounding in modern times lends the story a certain realism, with emphasis on the element of science in the first few episodes. Here, Victoria Frankenstein sets up her research on all the biomedical advances she will later use to adapt Robert's body into her own creation. She calmly brings the reader up-to-speed on synthetic blood, restoring function to frozen tissue, etc.—advances that keep the show feeling relevant, although it is worth noting that it may not age well, as science in the "real world" progresses. Frankenstein adaptations through the years have used a variety of unique approaches to the science—or pseudoscience, rather—of the story. Hitchcock notes "It's ironic that the version of Frankenstein sponsored by the so-called father of electricity should in no way rely on lighting or on any electrical apparatus to dramatize how the monster comes to life. The 1910 monster's creation was strictly chemical, suiting the popular science of the time. No longer was electromagnetism the science of the future, as it was when the novel was written. Now biochemistry seemed to promise unimaginable advances" (132). Viewers are invited to see Victoria as a hallmark figure of the times, a young woman in the STEM field, achieving great things through her own drive and intelligence. She exemplifies the kind of role model young women, especially those in the series' target audience, actively seek out, and it underscores her brilliance. Grossman coins the term "elastext" to describe adaptations with an elastic quality about them such as this one—in other words, stories that change through a process: "In this digital 'elastext,' Victoria Frankenstein, a medical student, obsessively works to try to make her name in science and medicine, tapping the highly charged contemporary debate about women in STEM fields" (22).

The modernization of the story also gives it relevance in that death is still very much an obstacle today, almost as much as it was when Shelley's Frankenstein was published. Modern medicine can combat it, stave it off for a time, but ultimately one must succumb. Victoria Frankenstein, meanwhile, cannot bring herself to accept that. This proves to be a significant factor in her motivation, as it makes Robert Walton's death into a genuine handicap for her emotional health, paralleling the original Dr. Frankenstein's madness fueled by arrogant ambition. Now, she has the final push she needed: the justification, the credence it gives to her fervor to reverse death and revive her friend. This burst of benevolent determination, however, is soon tinged with an undercurrent of the motive carrying her through college: "My work doesn't need marketing. Once people see this cadaver living and breathing and walking around, they'll know the importance of what I've done…they will study my findings and they'll duplicate my results and then they'll have to admit that a girl, just like the ones they ignore and ostracize and belittle, unlocked the mysteries of life and death" ("Frankenstein, MD: Birth").

Now, to consider the monster—or the Creature, as he is often referred to in the show. In the novel, he is a vastly significant character, blessed with coherent speech and even an element of untrained intellectualism, if the books he read to learn about the world are any indication: "They consisted of Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch's Lives, and The Sorrows of Werter. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight" (Shelley 114). In the modernized adaptation that is Frankenstein MD, perhaps the writers feared to stretch a generation of cynical minds' suspension of disbelief too far. The resulting explanation for the Creature's

inhibited speech and motor skills in the webseries is that the cadaver had sustained brain damage in the accident, consequently preventing full function in the revived body. On the surface, this is just another hitch in the experiment, creating a communication barrier between Victoria and her Creature. The true effect, however, runs far deeper. While the Creature is far from the first on-screen Frankenstein creation to have been stripped of his powers of speech, it enhances the sense of other-ness surrounding him. The monster of the webseries, like his predecessors, is a creature of liminal existence; he walks a line between man and monster, between primitive, infant-like instincts and matured physicality, between science and pure science fiction. This decision also highlights the uniqueness of the adaptation: Dr. Frankenstein and his monster are frequently examined as mirror images of one another, with both characters bringing their own perspective, their own interiority, but Victoria's monster is a stepping-stone within her story; his wordless presence pales in the spotlight thrown upon a female Dr. Frankenstein. As expressed by Hodges, "Like the monster, woman in a patriarchal society is defined as an absence, an enigma, mystery, or crime, or she is allowed to be a presence only so that she can be defined as a lack" (162). In the original novel, this description certainly applied to the female characters that are scattered around the fringes of the conflict between Frankenstein and his monster; in the webseries, Victoria pushes back against this concept. She refuses to play absence to a man's presence—perhaps all the way down to the not-quite-man she has given an uncanny life.

Essentially, the modernization of the story makes it easier for a large portion of the target audience—pre-teens and high-school students—to contextualize. College isn't far away for some of them, and the science labs they may have experienced in school take on a new depth as places where people like Victoria solve problems. Although that age range is fully capable of immersing themselves in the literary past, adaptations like Frankenstein MD are intended to be appealing, digestible media—the modern setting allows them to begin processing the story in its barest form.

Young (Victoria) Frankenstein

PBS Digital chooses an interesting approach to another key aspect of the Frankenstein story: it focuses in on Dr. Frankenstein's time at university, where it may be argued he gained much of his drive to succeed through his conflicts with his professors, and where the foundation for his subversive research was laid. Here, he became the quintessential "mad scientist": "More, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (Shelley 42). Capitalizing upon this character development, the webseries adaptation places the full journey within the science labs of Engle State University (a thinly-veiled reference to Ingolstadt, where the original Victor Frankenstein studied). Viewers see Victoria, so close to graduating, so close to having the whole world at her feet once her experiment is successful, and just like her predecessor, her trajectory is so mesmerizing that viewers cannot help but watch even when the cracks in her armor of success and stability show through.

Condensing the plot to the time spent at university, and exploring the development to be found there, is another clever move for maintaining the fanbase. Most young readers and viewers prefer media that centers on protagonists close to their age range, and Frankenstein MD delivers. The series spends a significant amount of time setting up character relationships, conflicts, adding a dose of collegiate banter (this is where lab partner Iggy shines, true to his

role as an homage to the Igor character in earlier film adaptations of Frankenstein), and bringing relatability to the series with worries about grades and social interactions. Hutcheon makes a case for the popularity of adaptations, of which this is no exception, being due to "the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise" (4), and while this is not the sole driving factor, it does play a great role in making an adaptation approachable. It does not always allow for a smooth transition back into the weightier matters in the show, but the transitions are made regardless.

Those same serious issues are what endear this adaptation to its young-adult viewers, particularly those with some level of familiarity with the novel. It is impossible to note Victoria's prominent position without the added element of her age: being young, and a woman, in the STEM field means she has to fight twice as hard to be recognized, to be taken seriously. This puts her character evolution on a unique track as far as Frankenstein adaptations go. While Frankenstein in the novel is hindered by his potential madness and the sheer enormity of what his pride has compelled him into doing, Victoria is fighting wars on three fronts: conflict with older, influential male figures in her field, failures and defeats that beset her project, and herself—with maintaining her motivation and keeping her end goals in sight. After all, she is Victoria Frankenstein, MD. She also accepts her responsibility for her creation far more quickly than Frankenstein in the novel: "The crimes of which the novel is a catalogue are committed not by him but by the Monster, and even when he is inclined to name himself as their author by proxy, there are others to dissuade and reassure him" (Small 173).

The presumably older male administrators in the school are quick to censure Victoria, once word of her reckless behavior within the lab begins to spread. Dr. Waldman defends her to them, but privately, he chastises Victoria because gender notwithstanding, he is concerned for her. Victoria, however, has spent so long with her defenses up, fighting for her recognition, that she interprets his lecture as just another obstacle, another person telling her what she—and science—are and are not capable of achieving. She has claimed pushing the boundaries of science as her turf, and no-one will be able to stop her, an attitude strongly reminiscent of her predecessor in the novel.

Something curious happens as the adaptation's plot progresses, checking off key events in the novel: exactly as the original monster did, Victoria's creation demands a companion, a second creature to ease his existential loneliness of being the only one of his kind. "The monster is "made," not born; as the product of the unnatural coupling of nature and the imagination, it is trapped in the cortex of death that characterizes both" (Poovey 337). In the novel, the monster wishes for a mate—ostensibly a female creature, and that is what Dr. Frankenstein intends to build before second-guessing himself. The webseries monster does not specify a gender for his companion. Victoria procures another male cadaver before she acknowledges that she cannot bring herself to commit another horrendous act of bringing life where it should not exist. In the feminization of the story's leading role, and the gender-swapping of many side characters, the blatant dichotomy posed between male and female in the novel has been toned down. The monster simply wants another being like himself to coexist with in a world that has no place for them. "Such critical rethinking demands, among other things, a renewed attention to the historical specificity of the construction of masculinity and a recognition that masculinity, as much as femininity, is created by cultural negotiations and contestations. It insists that brokenness has no necessary or exclusive connection to the feminine—witness Frankenstein's

self-exhibition as "a miserable specimen of wrecked humanity" (London 261).

Blogging in the Face of Death

Making a webseries in recent years almost guarantees a young demographic of viewers, especially in the age of regularly-updated Youtube channels and livestreams that give fans temporary access to their content-maker of choice, in real-time. Frankenstein MD taps into that with its decision to have Victoria and her friends play the part of video creators and editors, opening each episode with Victoria cornering the camera with her riveting stare and breaking down a new biomedical concept to let her audience in on her game-plan for the day. Much like a typical Youtube series, the show is designed to be bite-sized, easily entered and exited, although for viewers who flocked over from the previous Pemberley Digital hit The Lizzie Bennet Diaries, it lacks some of the charm—which may ultimately be due to the subject matter. It is important to not lose sight of the fact that Victoria Frankenstein is a contemporary adaptation of Victor Frankenstein himself, the original mad scientist—and not in the quirky, appealing way pop culture prefers to depict the trope. Sealing this ruthless nature in a young, modern, female persona does not soften it, nor should it. Victoria is not necessarily a likeable protagonist, nor is she intended to be, but the sheer improbability of the odds she faces has a certain way of making viewers cheer for her, very much unlike Shelley's Victor Frankenstein. She gives her viewers an unflinching look at her projects, but when things go amiss, her calm practicality becomes almost inhuman. Her coldness makes the character who inspired her unmistakable, her hubris shines out like a deadly beacon, the moments of unhinged passion for her work and her belief in its possibility are intended to be a red flag to the audience. She possesses elements of the unreliable narrator—audiences are supposed to weigh the ethics of her choices, decide if they agree with her or not. This adaptation lends itself well to interaction, and the creators did not hesitate to run with the idea. They went the extra mile to curate fan involvement, setting up social media accounts for the character to further the story between videos and create an immersive feeling around it. It also offers a solid tribute to their social-media-savvy fanbase. Within the series itself, Victoria's level of involvement with it, indeed, is what makes the series feel personal. She video-blogs her experiments for the benefit of campus officials, scientific documentation, her peers—and her audience falls somewhere in between.

Bearing in mind Leitch's caution that viewing adaptation theory through binaries is dangerous (105), the complexity of the plot is somewhat limited by this format. A perceptive viewer could read between the (spoken) lines, particularly if they were already familiar with the novel, but the adaptation focuses heavily on the most basic elements of the original. The on-camera interactions are limited by the implication that to talk to "us," the viewers, Victoria must first set up her camera, prepare her experiment, then edit and publish the video. Again, it detracts from the interiority of the monster as well—although the camera is pointed at both of them, we get the sense that we are still only seeing him through Victoria's eyes. Instead of the iconic image of the Monster as Frankenstein's other self, his doppelganger, this Creature becomes a reflection merely of Victoria's disastrous success. Some would argue that this gives the audience a better chance to align themselves, if possible: "We are thus able to form a detached attitude which makes it possible to sympathize with both antagonists when we come to realize their respective dilemmas. The only draw-back here is that while one of the two antagonists is given the floor, the other is almost lost to sight" (Shater 28). The choice to keep Robert Walton

hidden until after his death was a bold move that paid off: since Robert's body becomes the foundation of Victoria's creature, it allows the Creature to stand as his own character, not the dim ghost of another. It preserves the spirit of the novel much better than it could have if done any other way, and keeps viewers from becoming attached to Robert as a character in his own right, leaving them free to be deeply intrigued by the monster and not distracted by grief.

Ultimately, the tragic pattern of the story has not changed. Always, Dr. Frankenstein must pay the price for arrogance, watching the innocent become victims to it as well. This new Frankenstein, however—Dr. Frankenstein as a brilliant student, a young woman who believes in the advancement of science for the good of others, without the blatant excuse of hopeless naiveté, poses an intriguing answer to the themes of masculine ambition that have surrounded the story for years. Hutcheon states that "the end result of the act of adapting does indeed bear the marks of the process itself (40), and the truth of that statement stands out in Frankenstein MD, as a work that seeks to make a classic story resonate with those who experience it today.

Frankenstein Vs. Frankenweenie: Tim Burton's Reimagining

Taylor Largent

Plot Summary

Frankenweenie (Burton 2012), a remake of a 1984 short film by the same name and again directed by Tim Burton, follows the story of a young boy named Victor Frankenstein (voiced by Charlie Tahan) whose dog suddenly dies. Inspired by his science teacher, Mr. Rzykruski (voiced by Martin Landau), Victor uses electricity to bring his dog back to life. As the dog who has only recently come back to life is slowly discovered by more and more people, Victor must convince his friends (voiced by Atticus Shaffer and Winona Ryder) and his parents (voice by Catherine O'Hara and Martin Short) that Sparky is the same dog they all knew and loved before he died. With the school science fair approaching, some of the other children from New Holland find Victor's notes on how he was able to bring sparky back to life. However, their experiments do not go nearly as well and their own beloved pets wreak havoc on the town and its inhabitants. The real struggle is whether or not the town can be saved.

Context

Frankenweenie was directed by Tim Burton and based on his original story of the same name that was turned into a short film of the same name in 1984. Frankenweenie (2012) was released in 2012 by Disney. Burton wrote the story and directed the orginal short film while he was employed with Disney. As soon as it was finished, however, Disney let Burton go and he went on to direct other films. Disney thought this film was a little too morbid and scary for the audience it was intended for. However, after Burton's success with other films such as Beetlejuice (1988), Batman (1989), and Edward Scissorhands (1990), it was decided to release Frankenweenie (1984) straight to home video in 1992. As said in an interview, Tim Burton himself does not consider the 2012 version of this film to be a remake of the original because of the different mediums, one being live action, the other being stop motion animation. Stop motion animation, according to filmsite.org, is "a special-effects animation technique where objects, such as solid 3-D puppets, figures, or models are shot one frame at a time and moved or repositioned slightly between each frame, giving the illusion of lifelike motion." Stop motion films take almost unimaginable hours of work to complete. For example, Frankenweenie took thirty-three animators one week to produce only about five seconds worth of film. Stop motion is now common in films like Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) and The Corpse Bride (2005), Henry Selick's Coraline (2009), or Nick Park's Wallace and Gromit series. Since Frankenweenie's (2012) release, there has been speculation by fans that this film and Tim Burton's two other stop motion films, Nightmare Before Christmas and The Corpse Bride, all take place in the same universe and are connected to each other.

Frankenweenie (2012) was not the most popular film with the public. At the box office, it only brought in $11.4 million on opening weekend. Two reviewers were not pleased with the fact that Burton allowed the ending to be "Disneyfied." They thought this was a film that could have taught children a lesson about letting go, but the brave ending was lost. Other reviewers had a problem with the horror background and style of filmmaking and thought that Mary Shelly's story should be kept out of the minds of children. In addition, most reviews but not

all, whether from the public or critics, do seem to praise the use of stop-motion animation in the film. Despite the public not seeming to love it, critics were singing a different song. Christopher Orr, from The Atlantic, thought that Frankenweenie may have been Burton's best film since Edward Scissorhands 22 years before. He praises every aspect of the film, right down to the performances by Martin Short, Catherine O'Hara, and especially Martin Landau. A.O. Scott of The New York Times held the same sentiments. This critic, however believed that, while the film was perfectly a Burton film, it lacked the diversity to make it a truly good film. He laments the fact that the only non-white character is an Asian boy with an overly exaggerated accent. He calls it "campy" and says that it can really touch on anxieties and emotions, but that it is so wonderful because it is so strange, much like even the best of Burton's films. Roger Ebert, in his review, says that while it is not one of Burton's best films, it has "zealous energy" and that kids today have "seen it all," but that it hold the charm of a boy and his dog. In addition to being met by this range of reviews, it was also nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 2012 Academy Awards, but lost to Disney's Brave (Andrews and Chapman 2012).

Analysis

Frankenweenie as a Tim Burton Film

Tim Burton's films tend to be visually striking and blend potentially comedic storylines with fantasy and horror visuals. Burton is a true auteur. According to filmsite.org, the auteur theory "ascribed overall responsibility for the creation of a film and its personal vision, identifiable style, thematic aspects and techniques to its film-maker or director, rather than to the collaborative efforts of all involved (actors, producer, production designer, special effects supervisor, etc)." This idea was that directors were the true authors because they added their own style to every part of the film. Tim Burton did exactly that with every film he made and Frankenweenie was no exception. Nearly everyone can pick out a Tim Burton film, especially if they are animated. Most of his early work started with extreme effects and had aesthetics that were, as Gavin Smith writes, "equal parts joke shop, theme park, and pop" but that by the 90's, Burton had brought his stylistic approach under control. Burton also had a knack for taking the horrific and turning it into something more light-hearted.

This idea of Burton as an auteur translates well into his adaptations of horror stories. Frankenstein is not an easy text to adapt, let alone into a children's film. However, Burton's ability to make things more light-hearted works well in this adaptation. Frankenstein is a haunting text that is able to terrify the characters and the reader based on…Burton's aesthetic of the haunting shadows, the graveyard, and the elongated and willowy characters, among other things, make Tim Burton's films scary in their own ways.

Frankenweenie as a Children's Adaptation of Frankenstein

When growing up, it is always exciting for a child to get to watch their first horror film.

Little do most children know, they have most likely been watching some form of horror movie for the majority of their lives. Horror films are supposed to make audiences feel scared, terrified even. This idea is played down in children's horror films. Catherine Lester argues on page 25 of her essay on children's horror films that fear is subjective. This is entirely true. Where adults may not fear the old horror films like Frankenstein (Whale 1931), children are easier to scare. She goes on to argue that acceptance plays a major role in children's horror films, as evidenced in Frankenweenie (Lester 30). She says that confrontation often cannot happen in children's horror films due to the lack of authority figures and so often the main themes in this sub-genre are acceptance, redemption, and sympathy (29, 30). For example, at the end of Frankenweenie, the themes of acceptance and sympathy are prevalent in the scene where Sparky, the dog, dies for the second time. The audience feels sympathy as they watch it and also feel the pain of Victor's acceptance at the death. Lester argues that he is rewarded with Sparky's life after he accepts the death this time. This is where there is controversy in that life is not like that and this film is not teaching kids that, in life there will be disappointments. However, it is teaching kids that there is support for them in whatever they may be passionate about.

To Linda Hutcheon, the idea of adaptation is the same as a sort of translation. She argues, "Just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation." This means that adaptations should not and cannot follow the original and that there will always be losses and gains. People who are adapting something in one way or another are interacting with a text in the way they read it and what they take away from it. Frankenweenie is not meant to be a scary film. It is meant, more or less, to be the warning to kids today that Frankenstein was to adults when it was released. The idea that life is precious and the order of things is not something to be messed with. Frankenweenie, however, was much more kid-friendly than the text it was adapted from. Tim Burton took Frankenstein and turned it into something that children could enjoy. Not everyone could read it and think that it would make an interesting children's film, but that is part of Tim Burton's genius.

There were important parts of the text of Frankenstein that were left out of Frankenweenie purely because of the fact that it was being translated into a children's film. Frankenstein deals with the ego of Frankenstein as a scientist where Frankenweenie does not dwell very much on this idea. The Victor of Frankenstein spends a lot of time talking of his own accomplishments and then cursing his own intelligence that has manifested itself in the form of the monster. The Victor of Frankenweenie is significantly different. His creation is not a monster to him, but a beloved pet who he cares about very much. This Victor did not come up with this idea on his own, but saw it in his science class and hoped it would work. The Victor from Frankenstein decided his intelligence was to be revered and decided to create the monster on his own. Another conversa-

tion in Frankenstein was that of sexuality. This was hinted at on many levels, but mainly with Victor's obsession with his monster, even on the night of his and Elizabeth's wedding, to name one example. In Frankenweenie, any sort of hint at any type of sexuality would not have been accepted well and the film would have met much more resistance than it did to just the horror aspect.

Casting Choices in Frankenweenie

Casting choices are some of the most important aspects of film. It is the actor who brings the character to life. What would have happened if Jack Nicholson had not been cast in The Shining (Kubrick 1980), if Tom Hanks had not been cast in Forrest Gump (Zemeckis 1994), if Heath Ledger had not been cast as The Joker in The Dark Knight (Nolan 2008)? These are questions not many people like to think about. It shows that the cast can be as important to a film as the storyline. While the cast of Frankenweenie does not quite hold the same weight as some of the previously named iconic film roles, it is still important to think about the choices for each of the characters.

Frankenweenie is categorized on IMDb as animation, family, and comedy. It is hard to imagine any sort of retelling of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein as a comedy, but this is where the casting choices come in—in addition to the treatment of it as a child's film as mentioned before. The first actor to talk about is Martin Short as Mr. Frankenstein. Martin Short is, first and foremost, a comedic actor. In roles such as Jiminy Glick and on Saturday Night Live, it is hard to imagine Martin Short as any sort of serious character. While Mr. Frankenstein is not the most serious character, he is definitely not the comedic role that audiences are used to and, in most cases, expect from an actor such as Martin Short. Catherine O'Hara is much the same. Audiences are used to seeing her in roles much the same as Martin Short. She is known most for her role as the mother, Kate McCallister, in Home Alone (1990) and its sequel (which also stars Daniel Stern who played the original Mr. Frankenstein in the 1984 short). However, she also is fairly well-known in the "children's horror film" genre, as well, with roles in The Nightmare Before Christmas, A Series of Unfortunate Events (Silberling 2004, Welch 2017), and Monster House (Kenan 2006). Burton had worked with her before on a number of occasions, as well. These comedic actors taking part in an adaptation of Frankenstein makes it a little more thrilling for viewers.

Winona Ryder and Martin Ladau, however, are different stories altogether. Ryder voices Victor's friend Elsa Van Helsing (a name that is important in the horror film genre as Van Helsing was an important figure in Bram Stoker's Dracula). Ryder has an interesting career that ranges from Edward Scissorhands, to Black Swan (Aronofsky 2010) to Drunk History (2013) to Stranger Things (2016-present). Her diverse background makes her an interesting choice for a children's movie, but it also gives her what is needed to make it not only a comedy. Martin Landau is one of the most interesting actors to be cast in the film. He really does have a prolific and diverse background that contains comedies, thrillers, dramas, and just about anything else. He has been nominate for three Oscars as a supporting actor, but one when he was nominated for portraying Bela Lugosi in Ed Wood (Burton 1994). The fact that both of these actors are capable of comedy but have an intense background in dramatic and horror films, as well, makes Frankenweenie not just a film for children to laugh at, but one for both children and adults alike to watch a feel a little chill knowing that the actors behind it can be intense actors.

Frankenstein: The Story of a Child

Abigail Montgomery

Plot Summary

On a dark, stormy night, scientist Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret to life when he brings life to his very own creature. However, a terrified Victor soon abandons the monster when he discovers the horrible mistake he has made. Meanwhile, the monster roams the forest, learning what it means to be alive. Though the monster stands over eight feet tall and has the appearance of a man (albeit, a horrifying one), he has the brain of a young child. The monster, who comes to call himself Frankenstein, after his creator, faces many trials as his desire for human affection is denied by all those who are frightened of his appearance. Frankenstein decides to seek revenge on the man who created his unlovable form. He begins his reign of terror by murdering Victor's youngest brother. After Victor does not comply with his demands to build him a wife, he murders Victor's closest friend and new bride. Victor and his monster engage in a hunt to the death, as Victor follows Frankenstein to the North Pole in the hopes of killing him. However, Frankenstein is strong and cunning, and Victor is finally rescued by a ship, freezing and moments from death. Now, the monster lives on, but will find no more joy in Victor's suffering, for he has lost the only person who ever had the potential to love him.

Context

Thomas Leitch writes, "The desire to transfer a story from one medium or one genre to another is neither new nor rare in Western culture. In fact, it is so common that we might suspect that it is related to how the human imagination creates" (114). Frankenstein: A Stepping Stone Book, was published in 1982 by Random House Books for Young Readers. The book was adapted from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's 1818 novel Frankenstein by children's author Larry Weinberg and was illustrated by Ken Barr. Frankenstein was one of many original books and adaptations written by Weinberg between the early 1980s and early 2000s. Weinberg wrote for children of all ages, with audiences spanning infants to middle-school children. Like Frankenstein, many of Weinberg's other projects fall under the categories of adaptations or horror. He is known for adapting several children's books from the Star Wars film series, as well as for his original book series Ghost Hotel. While both of these series play to audiences in elementary or middle school, Weinberg's Forgetful Bears series and his adaptation Learn with E.T.: The ABC's are meant for children from infancy to kindergarten who are building their cognitive skills through illustrations or who are just beginning to read.

Frankenstein attracts children between the range of ages Weinberg wrote for, specifically children between the ages of six and eleven who read at a first to fourth grade level. While the vocabulary used in the book is fairly simple, its themes are more complex. Novice readers

are able to understand the plot of the book and use it to improve their reading skills, while more advanced readers are able to begin dissecting the lessons and meaning behind what they are reading. This explains one reason why the book is able to lend itself to such a wide audience of young readers. Another is its use of illustrations, which is a popular characteristic of children's literature. The illustrations not only explain what is going on in the story and allow readers to visualize the world of Frankenstein, but keep readers entertained and attentive as well. The presence of chapters serves a similar function, as they break the book up into sections that are more feasible for young children to read. Chapters are also popular among elementary school readers because they introduce them to the layout of lengthier novels and build a greater sense of competence in their ability to master reading.

Because this book is such a useful educational tool, it has been extremely popular among teachers. Elementary educators have been cited using Frankenstein as a resource in their classrooms since the year it was published, and continue to use it today. In a world where children's literature is becoming a genre where creativity and entertainment are just as important to a book as its ability to educate, Frankenstein is able to capture children's attention while simultaneously introducing them to literary classics. This is the purpose of many other books in the Random House Stepping Stone Book series as well, and is yet another reason why Weinberg's adaptation of Frankenstein has been so well received among teachers.

While the Stepping Stone Book series includes several different genres, including history and fantasy, its collection of classics is quite extensive. In addition to Frankenstein, young readers can enjoy Dracula, Jane Eyre, Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, and Little Women, just to name a few. These books are able to give children an early appreciation for both British and American literary classics that they otherwise would not have been exposed to until high school. Since prior knowledge is proven to be a greater asset in the classroom than intellectual talent or ability, these Stepping Stone Book classics, Frankenstein included, are setting children up for a deeper and more meaningful understanding and appreciation of literature in their years to come.

Characteristics of Children's Literature

Because the reading habits of children and adults are so closely related, children's literature can be studied by comparing it to literature written specifically for adults. For example, one basic difference between children's and adult literature is the overall simplification of children's texts, from the vocabulary to the expression of ideas, to the directness of relationships among characters ("What is children's literature?"). While simplified texts are easier to read, especially for beginning readers, they also allow stories to be condensed, which serves children's habits of having short attention spans. Another key difference in children's and adult literature is the use of illustrations in children's books. As Pamela Harer writes, "An important key to making a children's book a successful learning tool seems to be the presence of pictures or diagrams. In the beginning, it made little difference whether the pictures were relevant to the text and often they weren't." Illustrations serve several purposes in children's literature, the most basic being holding a child's attention and triggering his or her imagination. In books for infants and toddlers, illustrations in picture books, especially those with color, can help promote cognitive development. The most important purpose illustrations serve, however, is

further impressing ideas and lessons into children's minds. The addition of a visual aid further explains the concepts represented in a text and helps make them much more memorable in children's minds (Harer). Because adult literature tends to be lengthier and more advanced in vocabulary and style, the use of illustrations can reinforce what the text is trying to express.

Another way to assess children's literature is to look specifically at how the purposes of both entertainment and education are achieved through children's books. Education has been a main priority since the beginnings of children's literature, but questions must be asked about what it is exactly children's literature is trying to educate children about. While the authors of individual stories and books may have short-term goals of increasing a child's knowledge about a certain subject or teaching them an important moral lesson, one of the major long-term goals of children's literature is to encourage the development of children into fully functioning citizens. As Václav Stejskal writes in "Children's Literature and Education," "Real art, if it is to be comprehensible to children, requires something more…as long as art which is geared for children aims at forming the man, then it must know what that man should look like and what circumstances he will live in" (1).

Another long-term goal of children's literature is to inspire a lifelong, meaningful appreciation of literature in children. Seth Lerer writes, "It [children's literature] charts the makings of the literate imagination. It shows children finding worlds within the book and books in the world" (1). The earlier children are exposed to the joys of reading, the more they are likely to read during their adulthood. They are also more likely to find deeper meaning in the literature they read, as they will have had ample practice experiencing literature and using both their imagination and critical thought to extract the joys and lessons from each book. Reading specific works at an early age can also lead to a greater appreciation of that work and its genre throughout adulthood. Authors of children's literature have been aware of this for centuries and have, therefore, often targeted adults through children's literature. As Jacqueline Banerjee writes, "Children's writers have always been very much aware of the adults reading over children's shoulders. Then, books that enthralled in childhood stayed with their readers into adulthood." This is one of the main reasons why children's adaptations of adult novels—like Larry Weinberg's adaptation of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein—are such a success. They introduce children to literature they would not otherwise have seen until an older age and align those works with a feeling of nostalgia. However, as C.M. Hewins explains, "There is only one danger,—that young readers will be satisfied with abridgments, and know nothing in later years of great originals." This is the exact phenomenon series like Stepping Stone Books are attempting to prevent.

Analysis

Essential Adjustments

Larry Weinberg's children's adaptation of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein remains true to the spirit of the novel in many ways and serves as an excellent example of how children's literature can foster a love of reading within its audiences. The adaptation captures the essence of both Victor Frankenstein and his creation and is able to recreate their world much in the way Shelley described it. However, though this adaptation is a celebration of Shelley's work, it also acts as an adjustment: a quality necessary for translating an adult novel

into a children's book. The many changes include shifting the focus of the story from Victor to his monster, deemphasizing the minor characters, and emphasizing the role of the child in the parent-child relationship that exists between Victor and his monster. While some of these adjustments are more successful than others, they all serve to translate Shelley's complex novel into a classic that can be enjoyed by readers of all ages.

The first of many essential changes to the novel is the elimination of Robert Walton and his letters. In Shelley's Frankenstein, Walton serves as the narrator of the novel and spends the entire book recounting the story Victor tells him. Weinberg's Frankenstein, on the other hand, eliminates the excess of Walton's letters and accounts of his journey and gets straight to the story by having Victor narrate it himself. Weinberg's adaptation begins, "My name is Victor Frankenstein. I am the one who made the monster. I am to blame for everything." This alteration simplifies the construction of the novel for its young readers and makes Victor's story all the more powerful by allowing it to come from his voice. It also helps condense the novel, as a children's book the length of Shelley's original novel would quickly lose most children's attention. As Siddhant Kalra writes, "Adaptation is a form of translation and all acts of translation have to deal with untranslatable spots," (2). Walton's letters would not have translated well into children's literature and would likely have been impossible to recreate successfully. It is best that they were left out of Weinberg's Frankenstein all together.

The adaptation continues its leap straight to the point by eliminating Victor's lengthy backstory in the beginning of the book. While Shelley spent the first few chapters of her novel describing Victor's family, home life, studies, and experience at Ingolstadt, Weinberg chooses to jump straight into the creation scene in the first pages of his book. This is a successful strategy because it delves into the part of the story children are most likely to be interested in. Children reading a version of Frankenstein for the first time are likely to be somewhat familiar with the monster, but most likely are unaware and unconcerned with the story of his creator. Part of the draw of Frankenstein is its elements of horror and excitement, as it is, in fact, part of the horror genre. The building of the monster and the creation scene is where the horror factor first comes into play. While adults may appreciate Shelley's exhibition of her literary skills in the form of Walton's letters and detailed discussions of academia that so cleverly tie into the book, children are much more likely to be hooked by the initial excitement of a monster being brought to life.

With that being said, Weinberg's adaptation did an excellent job of mimicking the creation scene from Shelley's novel. Though this scene began the book and is one of the defining moments in the Frankenstein story, it was short and concise and was not overly dramatic, as many of the film adaptations of Frankenstein are. However, though Weinberg's creation scene maintains a strong sense of fidelity to Shelley's novel, the illustrations done by Ken Barr show evidence of influence from previous film adaptations of Frankenstein, including James Whale's 1931 version, in which Henry (Victor) dons a white lab coat and a hysterical demeanor (Whale). Illustrations of Victor during the creation scene and in his labs depict him as the mad scientist modern film has made him out to be. By drawing both from Shelley's novel and from popular films, Weinberg is able to give children a well-rounded base on which to build their understanding of Frankenstein on. As John Ellis writes in "The Literary Adaptation," "The adaptation trades upon the memory of the novel, a memory that can derive from actual reading, or, as it is more likely with a classic of literature, a generally circulated cultural mem-

ory," (1). Weinberg's adaptation draws from Shelley's Frankenstein, the classic book Weinberg is attempting to introduce beginning readers to, and the popular culture that they are likely much more familiar with. Together, these influences provide children with a sense of familiarity to guide them into a brand new literary experience.

Another important alteration in the novel that draws influence from film adaptations of Frankenstein is the time spent focusing on each of the main characters. While Shelley's novel spends much time following Victor's activities, then pauses for an account of what his creation has been doing in the meantime, Weinberg's adaptation does the opposite. Before the reader can even find out what happens to Victor after Henry Clerval rescues him, he cuts in by saying, "But you must want to know what happened to my Creature. And so I will tell you. Later, if I am still alive, you shall learn how I found out," (Weinberg 21). This marks the beginning of one of the most distinct differences between Shelley's Frankenstein and Weinberg's adaptation. Shelley's Victor is incredibly self-consumed, and the majority of the novel is spent allowing Victor to recount stories about himself. Weinberg, on the other hand, chooses to focus the majority of his book on Victor's monster, who comes to name himself 'Frankenstein' after his creator. The pace of the book slows here as Victor dictates Frankenstein's story. This account takes up much of the book's page count and allows children to further investigate and understand the monster. Whale's 1931 film adaptation of Frankenstein takes a similar approach on the monster, spending much of its time following it on its journeys (Whale). Whale's strategy, however, serves another purpose. Keeping the story focused on the monster emphasizes the elements of horror in the film. Like Weinberg's adaptation, one of its main goals is to maintain audience attention, as the monster is the main reason people are usually drawn to Frankenstein, whether it be Shelley's original novel or adaptations. Both Whale and Weinberg were aware of what their audiences wanted to see or read about and, therefore, gave them what they wanted.

The Elimination of Minor Characters

Because Weinberg spends so much of his book focusing on Frankenstein, there is little room left to develop the minor characters included in Shelley's novel. Several minor characters, including Victor's professors, members of the De Lacey family, and Shelley's narrator, Robert Walton, are left out of the novel entirely. Others are present, but hardly ever mentioned, and certainly not given the opportunity to develop or be significant to the story. For example, while Elizabeth Lavenza is mentioned throughout Shelley's novel and given her own background and voice, her name is mentioned only a few times in Weinberg's adaptation. There is also extremely little attention given to Alphonse Frankenstein, William Frankenstein, and Justine Mortiz in Weinberg's adaptation, with each of their names being mentioned briefly and most of their stories eliminated. Most prominent of all is the simplification of Henry Clerval's character, who serves many important purposes in Shelley's novel. Not only is he a key part of the story, but he serves as a generous and benevolent contrast to Victor's pride and egocentrism as well. His importance is noted in the very beginning of Shelley's novel when Victor explains, "In this description of our domestic circle I include Henry Clerval; for he was

constantly with us…and we were never completely happy when Clerval was absent," (Shelley 21). Clerval is so important to Victor that he is considered part of the Frankenstein family, and, yet, he is almost entirely disregarded in Weinberg's adaptation.

Though Weinberg's book is successful in many ways, it suffers from the almost complete elimination of minor characters from its story. The minor characters in Shelley's Frankenstein not only serve to move the plot along, but are excellent foils to Victor's character. The absence of Clerval is just short of devastating, as he had the potential to contribute several moral lessons to the children's book. He exhibits upstanding character and showcases many excellent examples of prosocial behavior, but, most importantly, he serves as a role model for friendship. In Shelley's novel, Victor's relationship with his beloved Elizabeth pales in comparison to his rich friendship with Clerval. In a children's book that aims so much at highlighting the moral lessons of Shelley's story, Weinberg missed out on an important opportunity to not just show children what poor character looks like, but to contrast that character with a positive role model.

Linda Hutcheon writes, "A primary reason that adaptation study remains obsessed with fidelity as a criterion for evaluation is that adaptations raise questions about the nature of authorship that would be difficult to answer without the bulwark of fidelity," (1). While fidelity is not the most important criteria to consider when assessing adaptations, it is important to consider when assessing Weinberg's strategy for developing his characters. He spends so much time developing Victor and his self-named monster, Frankenstein, that he leaves little room for any of Shelley's other creations. In fact, in the sections of the book between the account of Frankenstein's journey and the moment at which he and Victor reunite, the pace of the book quickens quite significantly to rush past the accounts of any other characters as quickly as possible. While the other adjustments he made to translate Shelley's complex and eloquent novel into a chapter book for elementary school readers are quite brilliant and often improve the story further, the role of characters in the adaptation was one area in which he could have benefited from staying true to Shelley's work.

The Child Within the Monster

The failures and successes of Weinberg's adaptation aside, the most brilliant alteration he made in translating Frankenstein into a children's book was highlighting the monster's child-like nature and his specific role in he and Victor's parent-child relationship. While there are many different themes in Frankenstein, such as the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions and the consequences of meddling with nature, some of the most important themes center around the subjects of child development and the debate over nature vs. nurture. While these themes are certainly present in Shelley's novel, they are slightly underplayed by the excess of attention given to Victor. Weinberg, on the other hand, turns his focus toward Frankenstein and, in doing so, shines a new light on how childlike the monster really is. This is an especially brilliant technique for a children's book because presenting the monster as a child allows young readers to relate to him in a way they otherwise would not be able to. Even if their recognition of Frankenstein's childish nature only occurs in the subconscious, it is still one of the most important factors when it comes to children connecting to the literary classic.

The first and most obvious depiction of Frankenstein as a child in Weinberg's adapta-

tion occurs immediately after the creation scene when he has just been "born." Frankenstein is searching out Victor who is not only his creator, but his parent. As Victor describes the interaction in the book, "The Monster! It was making noises. Baby noises! There was a smile on its frightening face. A baby smile" (Weinberg 14). This is young readers' first clue to view Frankenstein not as a frightening monster, but as a child like them. While Shelley's novel abandons the monster at this point in the story and focuses on Victor, the parent, Weinberg follows his newborn creature and spends a large proportion of his book describing his experiences and development. By jumping into Frankenstein's story right away, readers are able to connect more with the monster and empathize with his experience. Readers have just witnessed Frankenstein being abandoned by his creator and are immediately able to follow him on his terrifying journey to find love and acceptance. This technique of developing the monster's character is much more effective than Shelley's decision to share Victor's blind opinions on the child he abandons for several chapters. It also allows readers to ponder for the first time about whether the monster is even a monster at all. While this question does come up in Shelley's novel, it appears much later. This question about the monster's character, however, is something both books share that many film adaptations do not include. As Mike Timko writes, "In contrast to the movie goer who comes away with the conviction that the monster is evil, the reader of the novel is left to ponder if Mary Shelley's creature should be condemned or pitied," (1).

This question is brought up again as Weinberg delves further into Victor and Frankenstein's relationship. Shelley downplays this relationship by only focusing on Victor, the parent. Since Victor does not want to take any responsibility for his monster at all, his role in the parent-child relationship is extremely weak. Weinberg, on the other hand, gives more attention to Frankenstein's active search to strengthen this relationship. Weinberg allows us to see this relationship from a child's perspective, as the children reading his book would see their relationships with their parents. The monster even refers to himself as Victor's son, not just his creation, saying "I am your own son! But you ran from me! I want you to know what has happened to me!" (Weinberg 64). This could affect readers in one of two ways. Hopefully, readers are sympathetic to the monster's search for affection from his father figure because they know what he is searching for and what it feels like to be loved by a parent. Others, unfortunately, may relate to the monster's journey for love and attention from a parent figure because they have had the same experience in their own lives. In either circumstance, Weinberg's focus on Frankenstein's journey is a successful adjustment to Shelley's novel. By relaying the complex themes in Shelley's novel in a manner children can connect with, Weinberg has the potential to foster a further appreciation for literature in his readers, specifically for classics like Frankenstein. It is reading experiences like these that push children down a path of lifelong love of reading—a gift they will cherish forever.

Frankenstein's Greatest Monster: The Creation of Igor

Taryn Parker

Plot Summary

The 2015 adaptation Victor Frankenstein begins with the narration of a nameless hunchback who has lived his whole life traveling with the circus. During his circus acts he is known as the hunchback clown, but on the side, he serves as the circus' physician because of his extensive knowledge of human anatomy. When an aerialist falls and nearly dies, the hunchback along with a medical student spectating from the audience, rush to her aid. Together, the hunchback and the spectator, whose name is Victor Frankenstein, save her life. Frankenstein discovers the hunchback's intellect in biology and kidnaps the hunchback from the circus. Frankenstein helps the hunchback by removing his large abscess from his back and gives him the name Igor Straussman. Frankenstein utilizes Igor's expertise in the human body and requests him to perform surgical experiments on various organs. Frankenstein uses these organs and Igor's assistance to begin building a creature they name Prometheus. While Frankenstein is expelled from school due to his eccentric practices, a wealthy, arrogant classmate named Finnegan helps the two with their experiment by providing them with funds and laboratory facilities at his family's estate. When Prometheus is brought to life, there's a power surge and he attacks the two leading them to kill their creation. The next morning Igor receives a letter from Frankenstein. Frankenstein apologizes for the suffering he has caused Igor and tells him that his greatest creation was not creating life from artificial means but the creation of Igor himself.

Context

This movie came out in 2015 under the direction of Scottish film director Paul McGuigan and American screenwriter Max Landis with Twentieth Century Fox. The United States release date was November 25, 2015. The film's estimated budget was $40,000,000 making $2,350,000 in the States opening weekend and a gross income of $34,140,474 world-

wide. Prior to this film Landis worked on several films including: American Ultra, Me Him Her, Wrestling Isn't Wrestling, and Chronicle. Previously to Victor Frankenstein McGuigan also directed a number of movies including: Lucky Number Slevin, Push and Wicker Park as well as episodes of Sherlock. Because Sherlock had been such a huge hit by 2015, the making of this film only seemed fitting. The BBC television series of Sherlock first aired in 2010. This series is a contemporary rendition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective stories of Sherlock Holmes and his partner in crime Dr. John Watson. The audience went wild over this new television series. Fans were in a craze over these modern tales of Sherlock Holmes. Four actors from Sherlock, Andrew Scott (who is recognized as Moriarty from Sherlock) Mark Gatiss (known for playing Sherlock's brother, Mycroft Holmes) Louise Brealey (plays the role of Molly Hooper) and Alistair Petrie (also known as Major James Sholto) appear in this adaptation. Casting well-known icons from Sherlock help to attract a bigger audience because they will see familiar faces and hopefully bring the same enthusiasm from Sherlock to this film. The success from Sherlock has encouraged people in the film industry like Paul McGuigan to continue doing revisions of old tales. Victor Frankenstein was made when people were excited about modernizing beloved classics.

As hopeful as the filmmakers were with this contemporary spin on Frankenstein critical reviewers in Britain and America were not so impressed. The New York Times reviewed this as a "buddy movie" focusing on the "bromance" between Frankenstein and his assistant and friend, Igor, rather than Shelley's original story about monsters and the mysteries of creation (Dargis). The Telegraph in the United Kingdom says, "just when they had their worst-of-the-year lists locked down for posterity, along comes Victor Frankenstein" giving this a less-than-average review on Radcliffe's and McAvoy's performance (Collin).

Mary Shelley published Frankenstein in 1818 marking its 200th birthday in just a couple months. The newly adaptation of this nearly bicentennial story could not have come out at a more timely and relevant age in history. McGuigan incorporated Shelley's alternative title to Frankenstein "The Modern Prometheus" and gave it a deeper meaning in his revision of her novel.

Around the same time as Sherlock, there were also films released that had similar storylines to Frankenstein. The award-winning film Hugo, which came out four years earlier than Victor Frankenstein, was a major success. Hugo is like the story of Frankenstein in that both are about the dangers of creation conceived in acts of isolation and idolization of cultural icons or works by those before them. Grossman noted in her book Literature, Film, and Their Hideous Progeny that "These adaptations blend the past with the present, the living with the dead, monsters with creators, human and machine, the masculine with the feminine, fathers with sons…" (Grossman, 40). McGuigan's adaptation specifically mirrored films like Hugo by bringing into focus Frankenstein's past with his brother and his desire to create life because of the guilt he feels from his father.

Analysis

The Monster Mashed

This adaptation of Frankenstein changes Mary Shelley's beloved classic of Frankenstein considerably. Not only is this film different from the novel, but also from many other adaptations of Frankenstein. This would be a revision adaptation of Frankenstein. It has a dramati-

cally different storyline yet is distinct to the original tale. There are Frankenstein-ian qualities that make it recognizable so viewers are still able to tell it's a version of Frankenstein. One of the biggest differences is the plot change. A major plot change in this adaptation is how the monster is portrayed. This plot barely focuses on the monster himself. The entire film is centered on the growth of Igor's character and the friendship between him and Frankenstein. The Monster (Prometheus) isn't even fully introduced until the last twenty minutes of the movie, and within those crucial ending scenes the Prometheus isn't even given a consciousness or the ability to speak. We hardly get a good look at Prometheus before Frankenstein and Igor destroy it. During the creation scene, McGuigan did however, keep part of Whale's famous tight shot of the Monster's first signs of life (Whale). In Whale's 1931 version there is a tight shot of Boris Karloff's (who plays the monster) fingers twitching. Similarly, McGuigan gives a tight shot of the Monster's mouth when he exhales his first breath and then the shot switches to mimic Whale's technique showing the twitching of his hands. One of the main attractions with Mary Shelley's tale is the Monster. There is a compassion and empathy toward the Monster. The themes of motherhood and creation and ambition to become the greatest and be known in history is all strong in her story, but this adaptation directs the sympathy we have for the Monster and moves it to Frankenstein himself. The figure below is the moment when Frankenstein is talking with Prometheus as his brother. This scene is crucial to the film because it shows Frankenstein at his most vulnerable. The guilt he feels for the loss of his brother has fueled him to work for this precise moment. and seeking closure. This is the moment that determines if everything he has worked for was worth it or not. In the end Frankenstein realizes he had been chasing after the wrong motives. Nothing can bring his brother back. Not death and not life.

Adding, Subtracting and transposing of Characters

Paul McGuigan took Mary Shelley's story about Frankenstein and turned it into his own. He added several background storylines and characters to this version in hopes of making it more exciting and interesting with this twist. Victor Frankenstein adds the character of Lorelei, Police Inspector Turpin, Finnegan, and Gordon. The addition of these characters radically changes the plot. The addition of Police Inspector Turpin and Finnegan add more suspense and thriller to the plot. With Gordon as a failed experiment it shows progress that the two have made and must make to reach their goals. Adding a more dramatic love interest for Igor modernizes the story. Rarely are films produced without a love story intertwined. Whether in the background or the center plot, it's difficult to keep the attention of your audience without tension or suspense. Aside from action as a suspenseful tool, Lorelei acts as tension between Frankenstein and Igor. Frankenstein views her as a distraction for Igor. He wants Igor's undivided attention on their experiments and Lorelei is merely a setback and interruption. In Hutcheon's A Theory of Adaptation, she discusses the question of what gets adapted and how.

As adaptations evolve and transform they shift focus to look at different characters inside of a well-known story. She states, "Characters, too, can obviously be transported from one text to another, and indeed, as Murray Smith has argued, characters and performance texts because they engage receivers' imaginations through what he calls recognition, alignment, and allegiance." (Hutcheon, 11) We see characters added and subtracted, but I also believe we seem them transported into different roles. Elizabeth, Victor Frankenstein's wife is transposed in this adaptation as Lorelei who Igor has feelings for. Although her character is changed dramatically, the portrayal of a love interest is kept in this adaptation.

Igor's Perspective

One of the biggest differences with this adaptation more so than any other Frankenstein adaptation is the fact that this one is told through Igor's perspective. Most adaptations that we see of Frankenstein have Frankenstein as the protagonist. We closely follow his character throughout the film. But with this film, we follow Igor's journey. We watch him go from this disfigured animal-like hunchback who grew up in the circus to a humanized and civilized individual who uses his intellect to save his friend and himself from a behemoth of a creature. Since this is told in Igor's perspective the audience sees Victor Frankenstein differently than how this would be told without Igor. In a way, this is similar to the way Mary Shelley introduces Victor through Walton. We meet Victor through Walton's point of view, which like the novel, in the film we are introduced to Victor through Igor. The assistant of Igor is not a new phenomenon in Frankenstein. Igor has been included in the storyline dating back to the earliest adaptations of Frankenstein. He was not always given the name Igor but Frankenstein had an assistant nonetheless. In Richard Brinsley Peake's Presumption; or The Fate of Frankenstein he created a character named Fritz who was the servant of Frankenstein (Peake). Whale's 1931 version of Frankenstein was modeled after earlier plays and adaptations including Richard Brinsley Peake's Presumption and H.M. Milner's The Man and the Monster. Whale's continued the role of Fritz by including a hunchback assistant for Frankenstein. In the adaptations that give Frankenstein an assistant, the assistant is usually inferior to Frankenstein. Frankenstein is brilliant and able-bodied while his assistant is given a physical deformity like a hunchback and often portrayed as being of average or below average intelligence. This highlights Frankenstein's talents and abilities because we see him as superior to those around him. This differs from the novel greatly because Frankenstein isn't given an assistant when creating his monster (Shelley). Rather he is left alone in his insanity to obsess over his creation. Without having an assistant, we see Victor as an isolated individual whose ambition drives him to see his creation through until the end. One of Leicht's twelve fallacies in contemporary adaptations includes the fallacy that novels create more complex characters than movies (Corrigan, 111-112). With this contemporary adaptation, McGuigan challenges that fallacy by making Frankenstein's character more complex than in Shelley's novel. Frankenstein is given a history and background that illustrates what drives his ambition to create life. In the novel, we see him wanting to prove to everyone he is capable and smart almost going beyond the means of science, but in this adaptation Frankenstein's character is more three-dimensional. There are multiple reasons behind his will making him complicated. We are still able to see Frankenstein's insanity in the adaptation like when he drinks the drainage from Igor's abscess, and his determination set by guilt from his father but when we meet him, he is already a medical student at a university. McGuigan

gives him a family oriented motive rather than a scientific, educational background. According to Hitchcock's Frankenstein: A Cultural History, Victor became intrigued with alchemy through his observations of the air pump that created a vacuum inside a bell jar and the massive lightning strike he saw behind the Jura Mountains (Hitchcock, 43). It's the knowledge that there is more out there that drives Frankenstein to press on with becoming a mad scientist. Victor's character is more complex than Shelley had originated because of McGuigan's revision of the plot and the continuation of the character of Frankenstein's assistant.

Sex, Evil, and Monsters: An Exploration of "Hammer Horror's" *The Curse of Frankenstein*

Alyssa R. Ripley

Plot Summary

The Curse of Frankenstein is a film, adapted from Mary Shelley's famous novel Frankenstein, that follows the workings of Baron Victor Frankenstein, a wealthy, self-sufficient British man who has a passion for blazing new paths. Awaiting execution from his jail cell, Frankenstein recounts to a priest his experiences of working with his friend and tutor, Paul Krempe, and making life where there was none. After successfully restoring the life of a dead dog, Frankenstein takes his experiments to new heights, eventually creating life from pieces of various corpses, sewn together to form the infamous Creature that will go on to commit heinous crimes. On his journey of scientific discovery, the scientist partakes in an affair, betrays his tutor and best friend, and commits murder. The audiences watch as a man, a scientist, who has everything—money, women, a future—comes face to face with his wretched creation and loses his mind to the power of playing of God.

Context

When discussing The Curse of Frankenstein, it is impossible to ignore the production company from which the film originated. Said production company is the famous Hammer Film Productions, founded in 1934 by William Hinds. Hammer Films saw most of its success from the mid-1950s to early 1970s when the company dominated British cinema—not to mention the entire horror film market— with their "Hammer Horror," a series of Gothic horror films that included Dracula (1958), The Mummy (1959), and of course, The Curse of Frankenstein (1957) as well as the movie's six sequels. During the time of Hammer's hit films, the production company enjoyed world-wide distribution and incredible financial success, which was in part due to Hammer's partnership with major American production companies such as Warner Bros.

The Curse of Frankenstein was the catalyst for "Hammer Horror" success. The movie was done on a small budget, and brought in heavy revenue. With a modest budget estimated at £65,000, the film saw more success than it could have imagined, grossing more than $7 million in the United States which is about 94 times the film's budget. This was a surprise to even the production company, as there was no indication that the British public would enjoy a new wave of classic horror (Marriott 45). The film paved the way for the success of Dracula and other subsequent films. One of the aspects that separated The Curse of Frankenstein from previous installments of horror, and even previous adaptations of Mary Shelley's famous novel, was the use of gore and colour in the film. Many scenes in horror that incorporated blood and murder did not show the act of killing and/or linger on the blood for too long after the fact. The Curse of Frankenstein has at least two scenes that show a murder: Baron Victor Frankenstein pushing his professor from the top of a stairwell and Paul Krempe shooting the creature in the head. The latter of these events is what provides the film with the most gore. The blood from the creature's gunshot wound oozes from his head and the camera

lingers on it long enough for the audience to be overwhelmed by the brilliant, visceral red of the blood. The Curse of Frankenstein was the first gothic horror film to be done in color, and this is one of the many examples of the extravagant use of color throughout the movie, which will be discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter.

Perhaps primarily responsible for the film's success, and a trailblazer in his own right, is director Terrence Fisher. Fisher worked nearly exclusively for Hammer, and directed other literature to film adaptations such as Dracula and The Hound of Baskervilles (1959). One thing that makes The Curse of Frankenstein an important film is its extravagance. It is lurid, theatrical, and fantastic. Fisher was the one who brought that creative vision to the set and, as a result, propelled The Curse of Frankenstein as the best work of gothic horror in the era. His work was unprecedented for its time, incorporating sexual overtones and explicit horror. This approach, while well-received by popular audiences (as can be seen by the exceptional profits at the box office), was not given the same consideration by critics. Bosley Crowther of The New York Times mentioned the film as a "routine horror picture" that "makes no particular attempt to do anything more important than scare you with corpses and blood." Crowther goes on to say that The Curse of Frankenstein is nothing special, and "everything that happens in their picture has happened the same way in previous films." Possibly the most famous piece of criticism comes from C. A. Lejeune in her review in The Observer, claiming that Fisher's film was "among the half-dozen most repulsive films I have encountered in the course of some 10,000 miles of film reviewing." (Hutchings 6). However, Peter Hutchings argues that while it seemed every critic was chomping at the bit to write a negative review, they were, on the whole, either indifferent to or amused by the film (Hammer and Beyond, 6).

Analysis

Women and Sexuality

Elizabeth and Justine are the two female characters in The Curse of Frankenstein, and if the two do not serve as doubles or parallels to one another, they are certainly in dialogue with one another throughout the film, their separate portrayals of women speak to a larger conversation of femininity and sexuality. When Elizabeth (played by Hazel Court) first appears on screen, she is greeted at the door by Justine, Victor's maid, and Paul Krempe. As the scene progresses, Krempe's eyes do not leave Elizabeth, evoking a rather predatory image, and although Elizabeth is kept the focus of the frame, the predatory stance of Krempe makes Elizabeth appear as the less important character. Looking at this incident from a broader lens, it establishes Elizabeth as a pawn, a tool to Baron Victor Frankenstein's selfish end-game of playing God. She is, of course, to be married to Victor, which the viewer learns in her first scene on-screen, as well. The viewer's first impression of Elizabeth becomes one of classic femininity: a woman who is to be physically admired and married, a possession.

Elizabeth's femininity is quite reminiscent of Mary Shelley's original novel, and is one of the few things this film adaptation carries over. Elizabeth is described in the novel as "possessed by an attractive softness" and her figure as "light and airy," (20). In the novel, Elizabeth acts as a motif for the passive woman, and Terrence Fisher certainly keeps this motif alive in his reimagining of Shelley's story. What changes about Elizabeth, and Justine for that matter, from the novel to The Curse of Frankenstein, however, is the overt sexuality and romantic subplots that Fisher introduces.

While one cannot speak for authorial intention, Mary Shelley likely included the character of Elizabeth only to serve as a motif for the passive woman and to highlight Victor Frankenstein's anxieties surrounding romantic and/or sexual intimacy. However, those same issues and portrayals are not seen in this adaptation to film. Hazel Court's Elizabeth is certainly feminine but there is no shying away from her sexuality. One of the prime examples of this is the costuming of her character. There are multiple occasions where she is clad in a dainty nightgown or a low plunging dress, her bosom quite exposed. This alone adds to the film's sexual overtones, but is more telling of how women are viewed as sexual possessions and tools of whatever trade they are about at the moment.

If one is to delve deeper into the romantic and sexual relationships of the character, the audience has much more to work with in the film than Mary Shelley provides in her novel. Elizabeth is visually enticing to the eye, but the real sexuality lies in the character of the maid, Justine, and her relationship to Victor. Justine and Baron Victor are having a secret affair. The two openly kiss for the camera in the refuge of a dark corridor. Justine, the mistress, asks Victor as the film goes on to stop meeting her in dark corridors and to marry her. Of course, Victor does not plan on marrying Justine,;he is engaged to Elizabeth. Justine then reveals that she is pregnant—removing any doubt of their sexual history and setting Frankenstein up to be a fool, ridiculed. The arrogant scientist cannot take that damaging wound to his moral righteousness, so what does he do? He locks Justine in a room with the Creature and leaves her to die by his creation's hands. This murder represents the fate of sexually promiscuous women, and, ultimately, the power that Victor believes he has.

Baron Victor Frankenstein

Peter Cushing's performance as Baron Victor Frankenstein is, with no doubt, the most important aspect of this film. The Curse of Frankenstein is not a monster-centered horror movie, in the sense that the disformed monster is the true evil and sees the most screen time. It is Frankenstein, the creator, who is both the protagonist and the antagonist—the evil force that drives the action in the film. Evil is a word that is commonly associated with a horror movie, and there is even an irrevocable link between "evil" and "scary." What is interesting to explore is the relationship between terms that are so often used as synonyms for scary: terror and horror. Quoted from Ann Radcliffe is an excellent example of the differ-

ence between the terms where she explains, "terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them," (Chibnall and Petley 27). The character of Baron Victor Frankenstein is one that evokes terror. His evil is quiet, subtle…one that could find itself in any viewer.

The very first line spoken by the imprisoned scientist establishes him as an arrogant, self-righteous character: As the priest comes in to visit Frankenstein in his cell, the disheveled man, lying in the hay on the floor of his cell, says "keep your spiritual comfort for those who think they need it," (CIT?). From the get-go the audience is bombarded by his arrogant spirit that hasn't waned in prison. The film spends the majority of its time exploring this facet of the scientist, and how it contributes to his overall evil. The viewer watches Victor choose his tutor, Paul Krempe, and directs him on how he will be tutored; perform scientific experiments with his tutor; and, ultimately, go against the wishes of his tutor and do what fulfills the selfish needs in his own heart. When Frankenstein begins to turn against Krempe, his mental state beings to decline from rational thought. He buys body parts from sketchy vendors and even commits murder to be able to perform the ultimate experiment of bringing a man to life. Through extreme close-ups, maniacal dialogue, and atrocious actions the psychological instability of Baron is revealed to the audience.

When there are moments of madness displayed by the scientist, the camera zooms in to his face, cutting off the outside the world. This happens in multiple instances when Frankenstein and Krempe are working, and is quite effective in solidifying the idea that this is Frankenstein's story—not the creature's. In fact, the creature himself is not shown on film until approximately the fiftieth minute. The running time is one hour and twenty-two minutes, so nearly two-thirds of the film is spent on Frankenstein's decline into madness and his transformation into a monster rather than creation of the actual creature. This is incredibly similar to Mary Shelley's novel in that the reader spends more time with Frankenstein than the creature, is fully aware of Frankenstein's mind and his psychological workings, and knows his thoughts and actions. What does change in Fisher's adaptation is the shift in Frankenstein to an inner motivation of pure evil. The viewer then gets this doubled pleasure of experiencing both the novel and the film together in a single moment, something Linda Hutcheon describes as an intertextual pleasure (A Theory of Adaptation, 116) This film is not verbatim loyal to Shelley's character of Victor Frankenstein, but it turns up to 11 the part of him (his arrogance and God complex) in order to make the best film. This is the beauty of adaptation— "when we adapt, we create, using all the tools that creators have always used: we actualize or concretize ideas; we make simplifying selections but we also amplify and extrapolate," (Hutcheon, From Page to Stage to Screen 40). Because of the ability to alter a work with liberty, the audience sees the Baron Victor Frankenstein purposefully push his professor from the top of a stairwell, murdering him, and even lock his mistress in a room with the creature with the intent to have her killed, and give a look of pure ecstasy in a close-up shot when he hears Justine's screams.

The Creature

The clearest representation of Victor's evil—and declining psychological state from an emotionally sound, responsible human being to one that disregards life itself—is his creation. Because the Curse of the Frankenstein is a movie about the creator, and not the creation, the Creature is merely an extension of the creator himself. As a "monster," Christopher Lee's depiction of a dead man brought to life commits no crime worse than the man who created him. The professor Frankenstein murders is the man from whom he gets the brain to put inside his creation. The scientist, quite literally, puts his own homicidal tendencies directly inside his creation. Furthermore, Krempe and Frankenstein even kill the Creature after they (i.e. Krempe) realize what an awful mistake the experiment was. They shoot him in the head. Frankenstein then brings the creature back to life and uses it to kill Justine. Frankenstein uses the Creature to rid himself of a problem he didn't want to deal with (Justine's pregnancy), and he does not kill the creature for good until it desires to kill Elizabeth. It is only when his reputation and "happy" life and marriage are threatened that he tries to right his wrongs, only when his self-righteous attitude kicks him where the sun doesn't shine that he admits defeat. Yet, it is too late. After all, the man is telling his story from his prison cell.

One aspect of Terrence Fisher's creature that was extremely important to the success of The Curse of Frankenstein was the make-up and overall "look." Universal Pictures—director James Whale and studio artists—had major achievement with Boris Karloff's role as the Monster in Universal's 1931 version of Frankenstein. So major that Robert Horton quotes the character as "a visual icon that would outlast all of them," (13) and Kyle Edwards dubs the monster as "Frankenstein's main attraction," (Edwards, Nowell 19). Hammer Film Productions and Terrence Fisher knew that their rendition of the famous being had to be nothing like Karloff's for the sake of not being seen as a knock-off, and for Hammer to maintain a healthy relationship with Universal Pictures. What came from this was a unique "monster" that actually appeared as though it was made by sewing various body together to make one man. Christopher Lee's height at 6'5 gave the Creature a towering, frightful stature. Although Lee's character didn't have any lines, he was convincing in his role as the embodiment of Frankenstein's obsessions; perhaps because through the Creature's eyes, the viewer can see an innocent man trapped inside, having no say of his death or reincarnation.

A fan of Shelley's Frankenstein may be upset at the depiction of the creature in this adaptation. The character does, of course, lose his literacy, his experience with the DeLacy family, and his patient game of cat-and-mouse with his creator. Readers and viewers may not be upset with the quality of the adaptation, per say, but that it "fails to reflect their vision and in that failure, loses merit," (Kalra 2). But the audience must remember that this magnificent story by Shelley is a platform for other creative thinkers to produce even more stories that are likely to stay with audiences long after their eyes leave the screen.

Oliver Twist
By Charles Dickens

"Please, sir, I want some more."

Oliver! and the Criminals Involved

Kaylee Garrett

Plot Summary

Oliver! is a film musical showing the life and struggles of Oliver Twist, a young orphan. The film starts out with Oliver in a workhouse, no mother or father to rescue him. After asking for some more food at the table, Oliver was auctioned off and sold to an undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry. Oliver eventually runs away and travels for seven days to London where he meets the Artful Dodger, a boy about his age. Dodger offers Oliver a place to stay and introduces him to Fagin, Nancy, Bill Sikes, and the life of crime. A while later, when out on a pickpocketing job with Dodger, Oliver ends up being accused for Dodger stealing a man's wallet and was brought to trial. Even though the case was dismissed, Fagin and Bill Sikes were set upon bringing Oliver back, so that he would not rat them out. Mr. Brownlow, the man whose wallet was stolen and brought Oliver to trial, decides to take Oliver home, since he is an orphan. Fagin and Bill send Nancy to retrieve Oliver and bring him back. Oliver is taken while returning some books and Mr. Brownlow inquires at the workhouse where Oliver came from, and he soon discovers that Oliver is his niece's son. With Bill and Fagin holding Oliver hostage, Nancy tries to sneak Oliver out of their sight, eventually bringing Oliver back to Mr. Brownlow, with her being killed by Bill in the end. Bill dies while trying to escape an angry mob, and Fagin and Dodger move onto a life of crime elsewhere.

Context

The musical film, *Oliver!* was directed by Carol Reed and produced in 1968 by Columbia Pictures. Lionel Bart wrote the music, lyrics, and book of *Oliver!.* The film was nominated for 25 awards, and won 12, some of the winning awards being an Oscar for best director, best picture, and best sound; Golden Globe awards for Best Motion Picture- Comedy or Musical, and Best Actor- Comedy or Musical to Ron Moody, the man who played Fagin, (IMDb). Carol Reed, the director, was known for several other films, however, according to Peter William Evans, in *Carol Reed*, the musical film of *Oliver!* was "the film that gave a boost to Reed's flagging reputation," (160). Moss states, in *The Films of Carol Reed,* that almost three years went by before Carol Reed was able to secure another assignment after his failure of *Agony and the Ecstasy,* (248). Sir Carol Reed passed away in 1976 (Moss 66), and *Oliver!* was one of his last chances at gaining a reputation back from his failures.

Unlike Reed's past films, *Oliver!* was a hit among everyone. In fact, Dianne Brooks said, "*Oliver!* (1968) was more popular in the United States than in Britain, despite its English cast, English director, English setting, and original author Charles Dickens," (114). The New York Times called it "an elaborate and faithful movie," (Canby). Roger Ebert praised Carol Reed for his ability to treat the audience as "equal participants in the great adventure, and they have to fend for themselves or bloody well get out of the way." While the New York Times called the character of Oliver, "flattened out and almost lost," (Canby), Ebert mentions that Reed did so in order to focus on the more interesting characters such as Fagin, Nancy, the Artful Dodger, and Bill Sikes.

It would be worth noting that Carol Reed took a leap of faith with *Oliver!,* considering

that this decade started the overall decline of Hollywood musicals, due to rising production costs and actors wanting to have their voices dubbed. According to IMDb, Mark Lester, who played Oliver, did not actually sing any of the songs; Oliver's singing was actually Kathe Green, the daughter of the music arranger for the film, Johnny Green.

Analysis

Fagin

Fagin is one of the most interesting characters, according to reviews; he is clearly depicted as being a criminal, however, he is not as brutal as Bill. Fagin is sneakier and more snake-like than the other criminals. In many adaptations of *Oliver Twist*, Fagin is often shown as having a fatherly side at times, and glimpses of this ideology is shown in *Oliver!*. Peter William Evans tells that Fagin "combines the straight parent's genuine concern as well as that over-protectiveness for a child that undermines conflict and independence," (165). There is no doubt that Fagin is used to his life of crime, and with all of the young boys that he houses, he seems to have no regrets of showing them lives of crime. However, Fagin is also acting as a father during this time, providing shelter and food for the boys who would have nowhere else to go. In the novel of *Oliver Twist*, Dickens did not quite convey the message of Fagin being a father figure to the boys right away, but in subtle ways Fagin showed he was the surrogate father for these young children, such as taking the boys in. Dianne Brooks makes the connection that "Fagin as a father figure and masculine model is the adult version of the Artful Dodger," (124). This proves to be true when the Artful Dodger steps in to protect Oliver, almost like family, from Bill hitting Oliver with his belt.

In the first scenes of Oliver meeting Fagin, in *Oliver!,* Fagin shows Oliver to his bed and looks at him with sympathy and almost regret in his eyes because he knows what Oliver's life will be like now that he is here, perhaps because, as Brundson states, Oliver "Is immediately recognized by Fagin as being anything but slow." That moment shows the fatherly side of Fagin because even he would wish that not everyone had to turn to the streets. Several scenes later, Fagin is deciding whether or not to leave the boys and take his "pretty things." He mentions how he cannot live a life of crime forever, and eventually will have to leave it behind. The one thing that stops Fagin, selfish or not, is that if he were to leave, he would be alone. At the end of Fagin's back and forth between himself, he decides that he would rather stay and be with the boys. Now, it does not come off as a caring motive, more of a selfish reason for Fagin, however, this allows Carol Reed to pursue the fatherly appearance of Fagin even further.

Thomas Leitch states, "Thought it takes less time for most audiences to sit through most feature films than it does for them to read most novels, films, as many commentators realized long ago, can contain quite as many telling details as novels," (109). This is shown to

be true in *Oliver!*; the idea of Fagin as a father figure made it into the movie, thus proving that minute details can still be added into the movie even when they were not the shining stars of the novel.

Bill Sikes

The character of Bill Sikes, in the novel and adaptation, is shown to be more of the hardened criminal of London that most had imagined. Fagin and Bill are on opposite sides of the criminality spectrum. Some would refer to Fagin as more of the sneaky, cunning, "brains of the operation," whereas Bill is more of the "muscle of the operation." In fact, the first two scenes that Bill is in, he does not speak at all. It is by his sheer look alone that he terrifies Fagin, and that he greets Nancy. The first words that Bill speaks are calling towards his dog, Bullseye, primarily because Bullseye was too far away to be intimidated visually by Bill.

Dianne Brooks says, "In a musical like *Oliver!,* which does not spend time developing psychological complexity or motivation, Sikes is meant to be a standard psychopathic villain, in fact the only real villain of the film," (125). Bill Sikes is meant to be the only evil and cruel villain in *Oliver!*, Fagin was portrayed as sneaky and almost fatherly, however Bill had no sympathy for Oliver at all throughout the film.

From the moment Bill Sikes made an appearance in the film, he was always portrayed as the top dog, brute of the film. Bill first appears emerging from smoke in a dark alley. His silhouette is plastered on the brick wall, and as he grows nearer the soundtrack starts to pick up. For an audience, these are key signals that someone or something bad is approaching. Another symbol of Bill being painted as the number one villain is the fact that out of all the main "criminals" of the group, Nancy, Fagin, and Bill, Bill is the only one dressed in black. This suggests his criminality and his ability to just fade into the shadows and lurk there. As Dianne Brooks mentions, "Fagin and Sikes become the figures who drive the visual and narrative action rather than either the children or Brownlow," (124).

The main point of Bill being the villain of *Oliver!* is the fact that his presence itself is what makes him so powerful. As mentioned earlier, Bill said nothing in his first two scenes of the film; it was his body language, his stare, and his outward appearance that demonstrated his dominance. In fact, during the scene where Bill takes Oliver out on a "job," Oliver is thrust through the window and ordered to go unlock the front door. As scared as Oliver was, and even though he could have easily ran up the stairs or called for help, the moment Bill Sikes flipped open the mail slot and gave Oliver that icy stare, Bill had Oliver under his control. Bill did not even have to say anything, his eyes told Oliver all he needed to put him back under Bill's thumb.

Nancy

Throughout the film, Nancy is not always seen as a criminal, in fact, before she betrays Oliver, she is seen as a mother figure when all of the boys' faces light up as she enters the room. Peter William Evans refers to Nancy in an almost biblical sense, "Here the film cuts to a shot of Dodger and the others of Fagin's delinquent band, all shocked by this act of brutality against their saintly Madonna," (166). In this film, contrast to Bill, Nancy is wearing red. Red symbolizes love, passion, and blood, all of which relate to Nancy. It is clear that Nancy is not like the rest of the criminals, however, as Angela Marie Priley suggests, the benevolence Nancy has

for Oliver is not shown as well as in the novel. Priley states, "The compassion Nancy revealed wasn't shown at all in the movie, since the scene with Rose Maylie had been forgotten and was replaced by an unfeeling scene with Mr. Brownlow," (189). In the novel, *Oliver Twist,* Nancy breaks down in front of Rose Maylie, revealing her regret and kindheartedness towards Oliver.

However, in the film, viewers only see the side of Nancy that is scorned by the upper class, (Priley).

Bill and Nancy's relationship is what draws her in to be considered a criminal. Many have speculated on the abusive relationship, even more so because a lot of feminist texts were coming out during the time period that this film was released (Evans). Peter William Evans describes that after Bill hits Nancy publicly and she sings 'As Long As He Needs Me,' "she exits in long shot, the camera remaining behind barriers of wood, in darkness, to suggest that Nancy is too trapped by social circumstances as well as by a self-destructive notion of love, preventing her from 'reviewing the situation' of relations with an abusive lover," (168). In fact, almost everything Nancy does in this film is because of her love for Bill. Nancy mentions that Fagin and Bill took her off of the streets and that the only reason she is still on the streets is because of Bill. Bill sent Nancy to retrieve Oliver, and even though she did not want to, her need to protect Bill from Oliver possibly spilling their secrets, motivated her to lure Oliver back. Right before Bill threw the sack over Oliver's head, Nancy looked away as if she might cry, it shows that she does have remorse and care for what she did to Oliver, however her blinding view on love pushed her in the wrong direction.

Ultimately, Nancy had to die at the end of both the novel and the film. She was a loose end that if she stayed with Bill the audience would not be happy, and if Bill died and she was left alone, she would not know what to do with herself. In the end, Bill killing Nancy was her way of gaining freedom because Bill murdered her out of anger when she rebelled against him. Nancy sneaked Oliver out of Bill's sight as an act of defiance. According to Evans, "She eventually finds her own strength and courage in attempting to foil Sike's plan to recapture Oliver, a moment when the actions of a Dickensian character turn her into a heroine for the emerging feminism of late 1960's Britain," (168). Even though Nancy's first act of defiance against her abuser was her last, this act set her free.

Jane Eyre
By Charlotte Brontë

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will."

Feminine Representation and the Prestige Film: Jane Eyre (1943)

Owen Brock

Plot Summary

Robert Stevenson's 1943 film adaptation *Jane Eyre* starred Joan Fontaine as the film's heroine, Jane Eyre. The plot follows Jane first at the age of ten, living a miserable life at Gateshead with her mean-spirited aunt before she complies to go to school (Lowood Institution) with a severe man named Mr. Brocklehurst. At Lowood, Jane endures the cruel punishments and humiliations given to her by Brocklehurst, before meeting a kind girl named Helen. Helen and Jane become very close only to end in Helen's death from disease. Grown at eighteen, Jane takes a job at Thornfield Hall as a governess for a young girl named Adèle. She eventually meets Mr. Rochester, the owner of the mysterious estate, who is an insensitive man that becomes charmed by Jane as they grow to know one another. Jane develops feelings for Rochester and, after some time, Rochester reveals his feelings to Jane, asking her hand in marriage. She agrees, only to discover several complications that prevent them from marrying. In response, Jane flees Thornfield and returns to Gateshead. Upon returning, Jane is informed by the maid, Bessie, of the unfortunate events that caused her aunt to have a stroke. Jane reconciles with her Aunt before returning to Thornfield due to a supernatural occurrence. Upon returning to Thornfield, Mrs. Fairfax informs Jane of the hardships that occurred since she left, leaving Thornfield and Mr. Rochester in an ill-fated state. In the end, Jane confesses her love to Rochester and they happily marry.

Context

In February of 1944 English director Robert Stevenson's film adaptation *Jane Eyre* was released in the United States under the production company 20th Century Fox (Crowther 1). The film starred Joan Fontaine as the main heroine, Jane Eyre, and Orson Welles as Mr. Rochester (Stevenson). The film's reception was critically met with mixed to above average reviews; however, it was financially successful, as it "broke box-office records in Britain" (Glancy 81). Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* criticized the acting of Orson Welles, stating "he so mumbles and macerates his words that half the time we were unable to tell what he was talking about" (Bosley 1). However, Bosley praised the creativity of Stevenson's film, stating that it was "grimly fascinating in its own right, for it does have continuous vitality as a romantic horror tale" (Bosley 1). David Lardner of *The New Yorker* also criticized Welles' portrayal of Rochester, mentioning that he "mumbles along at a tremendous clip, seldom stopping for breath and not very often saying an audible word" (60). On the adaptation itself, Lardner wrote that "the film is sound enough…There's even a fair amount of suspense to the thing, provided you haven't read the book too often or too recently." (61). The production of the film was completed in Hollywood between February 3rd to mid-April of 1943 with the screenplay written by Robert Stevenson, John Houseman, and famous British novelist, Aldous Huxley (*American Film Institute* 1).

Orson Welles was said to have taken control of some of the film, moving it in the more gothic-noir style, contrasting with Stevenson's traditional film style. Dave Kehr mentioned in

his article on the rerelease of the film to DVD in 2007 that "generations of Welles scholars have found his fingerprints all over the film" (Kehr 1). Welles was also familiar with playing the character of Rochester, contributing to his characterization of Rochester in the film, as "he had already adapted this Brontë novel twice for radio: in 1938 for "The Mercury Theater on the Air" and in 1940 for "The Campbell Playhouse"" (Kehr 1).

Jane Eyre was known for being one of the "last of the 1940s American Studio 'prestige' films based on classic British literature" (Semenza 236). Between the 1930s and the 1940s prestige films dominated screens of Hollywood, hoping to appeal to "serious critics," as they were "intended primarily to stimulate the self-respect rather than fill the purses of their makers" (*Time* 1). Examples of other prestige films include George Cukor's *Camille* which was released in 1936 and Max Reinhardt's 1935 film *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (Time 1).

Jane Eyre was also released during a period when Gothic Romance films were popular. In her journal article ""At Last I Can Tell It to Someone!": Feminine Point of View and Subjectivity in the Gothic Romance Film of the 1940s," Diane Waldman stated that between 1940 and 1948 "Gothic Romance films were produced by almost every Hollywood studio, using some of their most prestigious directors and top box-office performers" (29). Waldman describes how traditionally Gothic films embodied elements that "permitted the articulation of feminine fear, anger, and distrust of the patriarchal order" and yet also "place an unusual emphasis on the affirmation of feminine perception, interpretation, and lived experience." (29). Though Gothic Romance films typically appealed to a more female audience in the 1940s, it has also been argued that the Gothic style of *Jane Eyre* was completed so as to "draw male viewers to a film advertised as "one of the greatest love stories of all time"" (Semenza 236). Stevenson's adaptation displayed many of these Gothic stylizations, including his patterns of dark shadowy lighting and use of the "Blue-beard Motif: a certain part of the house is taboo or even closed off… [such as] the tower chambers in Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*" (Jacobs 38). This sense of unfamiliarity is heightened with the film's dark horror film-esque lighting and harshly dramatic non-diegetic sounds composed in the score.

Analysis

The 1847 novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë has been deemed by many to be one of the first truly feminist fictional works. The novel's heroine, Jane Eyre, demonstrates a fierce display of independence throughout the novel, standing up to figures of the patriarchy and discovering her own path from the beginning to the end. Now, given the compelling nature of the novel and its release in a conservative period (Victorian England), one may ask how does Robert Stevenson's 1943 film adaptation signify feminist themes in his adaptation?

Portrayal of Women

One should first look to the representation of the woman in the film, specifically those who influenced Jane's character the most. Jane's childhood best friend, Helen Burns, was one of her first mentors in the novel, as she is prompted by Helen to embrace her spirituality and look to God for guidance, while remaining true to her own destiny. In the film, however, Helen's emphasis on religion is removed and is instead replaced with a dimmed down characterization of Helen where she serves as more of a simple companion to Jane rather than that

of an influential friend, as seen in the book. In her article "Jane Eyre Transformed," Elizabeth Atkins wrote that "by degrading Helen to a simple, pretty youth, the filmmakers have imposed an antifeminist interpretation on the novel" (Atkins 1). In playing down Helen's character, it hinders the film's ability to capture both the enlightening bond the two girls shared, as well as Jane's transformation into a fierce, but less unruly young woman. In addition, another monumental character from the novel is unfortunately omitted from the movie, Miss Temple, who is Jane's teacher and a maternal figure for a young Jane at the Lowood Institution. According to Atkins, "Bronte's whole purpose of sending Jane to Lowood is to demonstrate the necessity of love and understanding in one's search for identity" (Atkins 1). In the novel, Miss Temple is a strong contrast to the cold patriarchal figure, Mr. Brocklehurst, who is Lowood's manager and financier. Miss Temple's influence over Jane prompts her to continue with her education, a feminist act in itself, and eventually trains her as a teacher at the Lowood Institution as she grew older.

However, the film does incorporate an influential character that Jane adheres to, only he is a man unconnected to the Lowood Institution, Dr. Rivers. Dr. Rivers has similar qualities to Miss Temple, as he is kind to Jane, encouraging her to continue to obtain an education after her devastating loss of Helen, and he even scolds Brocklehurst for his mistreatment of his pupils. When analyzing the substitution of Miss Temple with Dr. Rivers in the film Atkins claims that since "Miss Temple's strong moral character is given a male substitute, one cannot help thinking that this is a deliberate statement against the feminist purpose of Jane Eyre." (Atkins 1). With Dr. Rivers' presence being that of a private medical worker, he does not have a direct connection to Jane's upbringing outside of the bounds of his practice, making him simply a masculinized downplayed version of Miss Temple. In doing so, Jane's character is made to be less complex and independent of male supremacy in the film.

Joan Fontaine's Jane Eyre

Jane, played by Joan Fontaine, enacts a watered-down version of Brontë's characterization of Jane's enduring independence throughout the film. Film critic Stephanie Zackarek described Fontaine's illustration of Jane as well done but flawed in her attempt to showcase Jane as an exceptionally self-governing woman. "But while Fontaine makes a perfectly suitable Jane Eyre, there is something a little recessive about her: She's meek at times, as the role demands, but when it's time for her to be fiery, there's a wall of reserve that she can't quite break through" (1). Further, one important plotline that occurs in the book not present in Stevenson's adaptation is Jane's push ahead in social status when she inherits her uncle's fortune. Jane's inheritance changes her abilities as a character by bestowing on her the right to follow her desires freely, depending on herself. "In the nineteenth century, women without money were at the mercy of others, either their husbands or employers. But a woman with money had the liberty to pursue her independence. Jane's decision to return to Mr. Rochester is on the grounds that she will never need to be kept by him, and that she has the freedom to come and go from his life" (Atkins 1). The omission of Jane's inheritance from the film made Jane's character more dependent upon Rochester, which in turn makes her choice to return to him seem like one more in the interest of security rather than one of love.

Though at times Jane's character appears muted throughout the film, her presence still retains elements of female independence. An example of this can be found in the scene

when Jane defiantly refuses Brocklehurst's forcing of her to take the position of a teacher at the Lowood Institution. In addition, Stevenson invokes an ability to enter Jane's mind through her narrations, as she makes summarized descriptions from the book (even showing the book cover of Jane Eyre) as a means to display a change in setting, Jane's state of mind, and as a way to pay homage to Brontë. Thomas Leitch commented that "Dozens of adaptations that open with screens showing copies of the books on which they are based… invoke not only their specific precursor texts but the aura of literature as such to confer a sense of authority." (Leitch 165). By displaying literary elements throughout the film, Stevenson allows for an independent focus into Jane while still presenting a firm understanding of Brontë's work. In the long-run, however, Joan Fontaine's casting as Jane make the film inferior to the book from a feminist standpoint, watering down Jane's complexity and ability to develop as a free-thinking individual.

Orson Welles' Rochester

Finally, in analyzing the film's use of feminist themes one must look to Orson Welles, who plays Mr. Rochester, the harsh and difficult, but charming suitor to Jane. Overall, Welles' characterization of Rochester is that of an intensely masculine Victorian man, marked with horseback riding, generous wealth, and a commanding presence. The film itself reinforces a masculine aura by focusing far more on Rochester than Jane once he is introduced into the film. Editor of the book *Nineteenth-century Women at the Movies: Adapting Classic Women's Fiction to Film*, Barbara Lupack commented that "Orson Welles, who plays Rochester, always dominates whatever scene he is in. But it also has to do with the camera work, about which Welles might have had some say. Cinematically, Jane is placed as Rochester's observer: she yearns for him, waits upon him, watches him from the window, the stairwell, a corner of the room, hiding her tears from him behind closed doors." (Lupack 196). Even with the scenes being expressed through Jane's perspective, they adhere to Rochester through the use of mise-en-scene in the Thornfield scenes. In effect, this crafts a patriarchal atmosphere marked by woman's obedience to men throughout the film. However, the characterization of Rochester in Stevenson's adaptation does successfully illustrate the gothic Brontë-envisioned Byronic hero aspects of Rochester. Lupack wrote that "…Welles's baroque sensibility is in many ways suited to the Gothic elements of the original novel… largely due to Welles's influence." Lupack then expands stating, "While he sometimes overplays his hand in an embarrassing manner… he has caught the tenor of Brontë's image, the swashbuckling Byronic overtones of her male character." (Lupack 198).

Fidelity to characters in adaptations has been argued to be undesirable, as "fidelity has led to the neglect of the creation of novelty" (Kalra 3). However, in the case of Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* the application of fidelity to Brontë's vision of Rochester allows for a sense of authenticity for the viewer. Overall, Orson Welles' performance as Rochester both leaves a sense of patriarchal dominance in the film, while still successfully displaying literary merit.

Will They or Won't They: The Classic Love Story

Dakota Brown

Plot Summary

Jane Eyre (1996) is a contemporary film adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's novel of the same name, originally published in 1847. Orphaned and doomed to live with her unloving aunt, Mrs. Reed, young Jane endures harsh treatment as a forgotten outsider. As if blessed by fate, Jane soon faces an opportunity to shorten her unforgiving captivity when she's whisked away to the promising prospect of a formal education. However, life at Lowood proves as equally difficult as Jane is faced with the same contempt and servitude at the hands of the school's cold instructors. Despite her seemingly hopeless situation, Jane forges a strong bond with fellow Lowood occupants Helen Burns and Miss Temple, whom Jane gains strength and knowledge. As time moves forward, Jane, now grown, finds new employment as a governess to a young girl at the secluded Thornfield. Jane settles in quickly, finding joy in her new vocation whereupon she meets the mysterious master by the name of Rochester, a strange gentleman with an affinity for perplexing Jane. Over time, the two grow fond of each other's company and intellectual fortitude, existing alongside each other as equals. Nevertheless, Jane retains a cool distance from Mr. Rochester, who reveals his impending marriage to a young beauty. Yet, as her heart still yearns for the stoic Mr. Rochester, Jane must overcome a class based social structure and discover the elusive secrets hidden at Thornfield Hall before they can join in each other's hearts. In a classic romance, what else is a girl to do?

Context

Jane Eyre (1996) wasn't made in a day, nor by a single person; it takes a hydra of minds working together with harmony and experience. *Jane Eyre* (1996) was distributed by Miramax studios, a global film and television focused company, "known for its award-winning and original content" ("About Miramax"). Indeed, the studios credentials are undeniably favorable with over seven-hundred titles, nearly three-hundred Academy Award nominations and sixty-eight Oscars. For the average movie goer unlikely to remember studio names, Miramax has been the curator of critical and commercial successes such as *Pulp Fiction, Good Will Hunting,* and *The Aviator,* to name but a few ("About Miramax").

Of course, like a growing, young child, a film requires the dedication and nourishment of its parentage. They are called "directors", but we may think of them as the purveyors of entertainment, nursing their "baby" for the sake of creating new life and imagination in the world. Jane Eyre is known for being a troublesome child, said to be in need of both strict guidance and loving patience. Who could be considered so qualified for the task? Enter Franco Zeffirelli, a director known for his great success in rendering timely narrative works into the realm of motion pictures. Indeed, credit is due to Mr. Zeffirelli for his ability to translate these narratives into works that appeal to a much wider audience rather than a relative few diehards (Hapgood 81). It's arguable to state that contemporary audiences, high on the flashy CGI blockbusters of today, are much less inclined to accept the offer to view a more practical film

narrative originally conceived by Shakespeare or Charlotte Bronte. However, Zeffirelli humbly boasts, "I have always been a popularizer" in reference to his successes with titles like *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo & Juliet* (Hapgood 81). Both films have aged remarkably and still elicit strong, emotional reactions from today's audiences; a testament to Zeffirelli's skill (Hapgood 81).

However, it may be more accurate to describe the talented director as a *re*-popularizer, given these stories took their first breaths of life long before Zeffirelli sought their reinvention. Yes, he is simply reactivating the appeal of these classic stories (Hapgood 82). Also, while he strives to remain faithful to such renowned works and what he defines as the "core" of the story, Zeffirelli acknowledges the sensible need to revitalize and/or alter certain aspects due to the significant societal differences (Hapgood 82-83). After all, the centuries between the original audience and ourselves warrants such alterations for the stories to remain not only relevant, but relatable as well. Despite the general positivity surrounding Zeffirelli's reputation, in Robert Hapgood's section of *Popularizing Shakespeare,* he claims at least part of Zeffirelli's success is born from smart commercial decisions when casting popular stars (83-84). This is a fair concession given the effect casting has on audience movie going decisions. While acknowledging Zeffirelli's success with his earlier titles, Hapgood states, "his (Zeffirelli) recent forays into films with a directly popular appeal have held mixed reviews", revealing even the most successful directors have their shortcomings (81).

Certainly, Zeffirelli's continued work in period pieces hasn't met with the same positivity as with his earlier films, such is the case with his 1996 rendition of *Jane Eyre.* The film was, received with mixed to negative reviews from most critics, including *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times.* For instance, Stephen Holden of *The New York Times,* finds the casting of Charlotte Gainsbourg a convincing portrayal of an intelligent, spirited Jane, but then rescinds at the visual appeal of an originally plain character, explaining that Hollywood couldn't seem to resist the trope of an attractive heroine. Holden also criticizes John Hurts "subdued, introverted portrayal" of Rochester, disliking is "weak English accent" and "embittered angst". Likewise, Kenneth Turan of *The Los Angeles Times* expressed his disappointment in Zeffirelli given his successful background in period romance. Turan argues against the poor choice of casting Gainsbourg and Hurt, stating their performances lack any emotional level, making the movie seem "as if all the feeling has been leeched out of it". Although, Turan expresses the opposite of Holden with regards to Gainsbourg's physical portrayal, describing the actress as "plain-looking" and appearing "somewhat like Bronte herself". Altogether, the film generally failed to live up to critic expectations with the overall agreement *Jane Eyre* (1996) is a romantic film lacking in any substantial passion.

Analysis

Adaptation Alterations

Of all the world's divisive dichotomies, perhaps the most combative pertains to the age old argument of the book versus the movie. Which is better and why are often sources of great contention between peers, though it doesn't have to be so. At the heart of these vibrant debates lies the question of fidelity: how closely did the film follow the novel's narrative? For

some, it's a welcoming surprise to see elements of the story altered, but for others, the slightest infraction sets their blood to boil. Regardless of one's stance in the endless debate, changes to the original narrative are expected, if not inevitable. Dianne Sadoff, author of *Victorian Vogue: British Novels on Screen,* brings together the accumulative knowledge of various scholars on this subject, asking, "is strict fidelity even possible?". While a film is certainly capable of recreating the majority of a written work's story, the two belong to different mediums and thus capable or incapable where the other triumphs or fails. Simply, a film aspires to be more than a regurgitation of what has already been done (Sadoff xviii).

For example, Franco Zeffirelli's 1996 film adaptation of *Jane Eyre* embraces its own modifications to the story. Whether these alterations were the product of time constraints, narrative simplicity, or artistic license, they have a noticeable effect on the story. For instance, Bertha Mason's pivotal role in the film was significantly downplayed leading up to the story's climax. The viewers see no instance of Bertha ripping apart Jane's wedding veil in an anger fueled rampage. Likewise, Bertha never mortally wounds her brother after a brief, twisted reunion. Both instances serve to further convey the imminent threat of Bertha in the novel, but are noticeably absent in the film. This is most likely due to time constraints, but it seems an unnecessary sacrifice given the generous amount of time spent on Jane's childhood.

Perhaps the most significant (and common) alteration is the condensation of St, John Rivers plotline, with other adaptations omitting him almost entirely. Surprisingly, despite time constraints, director Zeffirelli chose to include St. John's narrative, albeit at an awkwardly brisk pace. St. John's introduction to Jane in the film strikingly differs from the novel when their first interaction occurs with Mrs. Reed's death. This change was possibly made to provide additional characterization to St. John before he's sent off the screen for good and all. Regardless of how one might feel about alterations to their favorite narrative, they are necessary for the audience to find excitement in the novelty and comfort in the recognition of the story (Sadoff vxiii). Replication without alteration seems a frivolous pursuit indeed.

William Hurt

As an audience, the first response after viewing an adaptation is to give credit where it's due or play the blame game for what went wrong. When this occurs, audiences are unwittingly participating in a practice known as auteur theory. More specifically, audiences are examining a film by associating it with a director or a dominant figure involved in the making, such as the actors cast (Corrigan 93). In the case of *Jane Eyre* (1996), audiences and critics alike expressed high hopes for the film's quality when William Hurt was cast as the stoic Rochester. With Hurt's trademark slow mannered delivery and "deep, mellow voice" the decision to cast him in the role seemed textbook ("William Hurt"). Additionally, Hurt's extensive and largely successful career in entertainment seemed adequate for the casting. With accolades and nominations for "Best Actor", "Best Supporting Actor", and Academy Awards combined with experience in stage, film, and radio, it seems almost foolish to claim his performance was anything less than extraordinary ("William Hurt").

Yet, regardless of Hurt's impressive resume, critics and audiences alike found his performance lack luster. Indeed, his monotonous tone and unexcitable demeanor didn't mix well

with the already indifferent Rochester. It was a tasteless performance that only served to exacerbate the arguably unlikable characteristics of Rochester, while simultaneously shrouding the redeemable aspects of his character. In the novel, Rochester's spurs with Jane read as playful; a sort of intellectual arm wrestle. In the film however, Hurt leaves no room for such interpretations, and instead comes across as angry, bitter, and downright hateful. Despite Hurt's extensive talents, he was poorly miscast in this period romance, leaving audiences thankful there were other, better adaptations to turn to.

Character Dynamics

Boy meets girl, they fall in love, get married, and live happily ever after. Is it ever this simple? When it comes to film, of course it is. It's a common formula, but with the right story and actors, the stars may align into a favorable portrayal of happiness and commitment. As the recipe goes, two people join together forming a loving bond until they inevitably break up in some dramatic fashion (Barsam and Monahan 88). Then, after realizing their faults and determining the destiny which compels them, the two people reconnect with passion and resolve. Other common characteristics of the romance plot include the couple being at odds upon their first interactions, yet they fall in love despite or because of these differences. To add a touch of drama to the tale the couple face obstacles of misunderstandings, competing suitors, or even social pressures (Barsam and Monahan 88). Whatever variables, whatever the concoction, the accustomed formula withstands time itself.

While it may be difficult to imagine a masterpiece from the nineteenth century fitting into a familiar trope, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* adheres to the classic romance plot in every conceivable way. Yet, the period love story between Jane and Rochester still intrigues and delights readers and viewers to this day. Unfortunately, *Jane Eyre* (1996) goes against the grain in this respect as the two leading stars exhibit little to no palpable chemistry on screen. As stated by critics Holden and Turan, actors Hurt and Gainsbourg are a miss matched pair, lacking a discernable trace of romance. In a story about love and passion, it's imperative the two leads contain even an ounce of these crucial components. Unsurprisingly, this lack of on screen chemistry completely undermines the entire premise of the story. By the end, Jane seemed more like a victim manipulated into "loving" Rochester while the latter came across as an insatiable man-child. Likewise, Jane's rousing speech that has come to be widely praised and admired, suffered greatly in the film by a combination of Gainsbourg's stilted delivery and the aforementioned lack of zeal between the characters. In the end, the two actor's performance was akin to an amateur high school play, simply going through the motions and reading the lines like a checklist, rather than appearing unique and genuine.

Restoring Bertha's Humanity

Carmen Christopher

Plot Summary

Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester by Clair Holland is a novel adapted from Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë. This adaptation is a romance and neo-Victorian novel that revises Jane Eyre to tell it from the point of view of Bertha Mason. The book begins when Antoinetta Bertha Mason of Spanish Town, Jamaica, finds herself quickly married to Mr Rochester, but they fall out of love just as quickly. To Antoinetta, Rochester is mean, violent, and longs to be back in England after discovering the Mason family had tricked him into marriage. To Rochester, Antoinetta is annoying, wild, and uncontrollable. In order to restrain Antoinetta, Rochester dopes her with opiates on their voyage to England. Rochester hides his wife in third floor of his home under the care of Grace Poole, who continues to drug her. In this adaptation, Rochester is especially horrible. His maliciousness is shown through his manipulation of Antoinetta through drugs, his threats to her, and his physical violence against her.

Ten years pass and through her window, Antoinetta begins to lust after a young stable man. The jailed woman escapes her room when she can slip past the drunk Mrs Poole to explore the house and grounds of Thornfield Hall. While in the stables one night, Antoinetta is discovered by the stable man, John. They are immediately taken with each other and begin to have an affair.

Antoinetta, who names herself Louella, starts to show her unstable ways after Rochester torments her about his impending marriage. That night, she escapes her prison, sets his bed on fire in hopes that it will burn the whole house down. Later on, she attacks her own brother as he wishes to release her from her prison. She wishes to remain at Thornfield Hall to stay with her lover. As Jane and Rochester are about to marry, Louella's brother and his lawyer stop the ceremony to tell of Rochester's previous marriage. Rochester orders Mrs Poole to give Louella a double dose of her opiates so that when the wedding party goes to see her, she seems insane.

Afterwards, Louella plans her escape. She disguises Mrs Poole to look like her, drugs her, then leads her to the roof. Mrs Poole falls to her death where her body is mistaken for Louella's. Louella sets fire to the house, and escapes to the Caribbean with John and their unborn child.

Context

Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester was published August of 2011 by Blue Ocean Publishing Clair Holland spent much of her childhood reading books like *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and dreaming of relationships like those in the books. She received a bachelors degree in psychology, focusing on relationships. This novel is her only published book.

According to Jayashree Kamblé's book *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* is one of the earliest romance novels. Richardson's

book also can be credited with popularizing romance as a genre. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is attributed to being the famous and significant romance novel ever written. Kamblé also considers *Jane Eyre* a pre-romance novel that focus more on courtship than on the romance (28). This makes Jane Eyre easily adaptable into a romance.

Since then, the popularity of the romance genre has increased dramatically. Pamela Regis, author of *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* states that romance novels make up almost sixty-six percent of paperback books sold in North America. She goes on to emphasize that while romance novels are widely popular, people consider them to be the least literary and the least worthy of criticism of any genre (xi).

The vast majority of romance readers and writers are women, as stated it Janice A. Radway's book *Reading the Romance*. She points out that women use romance novels to escape their reality. These novels are even being advertised by publishers as an escape: "'Month after month Coventry Romances offer you a beautiful new escape route into historical times when love and honor ruled the heart and mind'" (88). Women nearly always made the distinction between escaping from their husbands and children, which is not the case for most of them, and from escaping the "responsibilities and duties of the roles between wife and mother," which is an emotional necessity (92).

When *Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester* was published in 2011, several other romance novels were being published and became extraordinarily popular. The *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer had come out only a few years before. *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth were both published in 2011. These books are either set in the present or future. They all have extraordinary circumstances surrounding them. These widely popular romance novels are in contrast with Holland's novel, which is set in the Victorian era. This may attribute to the novel's obscurity; when a nation is reading about the present and future, a novel set in the past may not peek any interests. There are no formal critical reviews of the novel, which seems to suggest that it is not worthy of critique. But, as Thomas Leitch states in "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory," *Jane Eyre* will of course be better than *Jane Eyre's Rival* because the original will always be better at being itself (114). Even though critics do not see the value in critiquing this adaptation, readers must remember that adaptations are never simply "good" or "bad," as Siddhant Kalra states in "Adaptations as Translation: On Fidelity" (4). The novel is worth analyzing for its comments on neo-Victorianism and how it adds to the romance genre.

Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester not only is a romance, it is also a neo-Victorian novel. The novel Jean Rhy's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, another adaptation of *Jane Eyre* that was published in 1966, marks the beginning of neo-Victorianism. Neo-Victorian novels are books that are written in modern times, but are set in the Victorian era. More than historical fiction, neo-Victorian works set out to engage with Victorian novels in a self-conscious way, according to Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn's book *Neo-Victorianism*. These works reinterpret, rediscover, and revision Victorian ideals (4). Neo-Victorian novels "challenge the nineteenth century's assumptions and dominancy" (8).

This romantic, neo-Victorian adaptation of *Jane Eyre* drastically alters Bertha Mason's character. *Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester* humanizes her through her romantic relationship with John, revises her madness, and vilifies Rochester.

Analysis

A Woman with Desires

Because *Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester* is a romance, it allows Louella Mason to have a voice of her own, which is something *Jane Eyre* never gives her. Most romances have heroines, not heroes; *Jane Eyre's Rival* is no different. According to Radway in *Reading the Romance*, romance novels have "a tendency to consolidate certain feminist agendas for women in the character of a working, independent heroine" (15). While Rochester does not allow Louella to work, she is somewhat of an independent woman. She regularly escapes from imprisonment: "Antoinetta learned that a few drops of the drugs that Mr Rochester used to subdue her dropped inconspicuously into the glass… would cause a combination that sent Grace Poole into a stupor… As Grace Poole twitched and snorted her way through unconsciousness, Antionetta stole the house keys from her jailor and set herself free." (19-20)

Through Antoinetta setting herself free, Holland shows both her independence and intelligence. This suggests that she does what she wants when her jailors are not too observant. She is not completely confined by her prison nor by her husband. Because she is independent and desires to leave her imprisonment, she is humanized.

Radway goes on to state that the heroines of romance novels will not be quieted by the men that wish to restrain women through the elimination of their voices (124). In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester does just that to Bertha. Because *Jane Eyre's Rival: The Real Mrs Rochester* is a romance told mostly from Antoinetta's point of view, Holland succeeds in both giving the voiceless a voice and humanizing her by doing so. Antoinetta is free to express her desires, her thoughts about her imprisonment, Rochester and Jane. She is no longer the silenced madwomen in the attic, but the unfortunate woman who has been cruelly treated. After commencing the affair, Louella considers the differences between her new lover and old husband: "One night, caught unexpectedly in the outside courtyard by a summer downpour, John and Louella found themselves in the coach bard. Louella stared at the rows of vehicles of which she should have been mistress. No matter. She had found her hero, a partner perfectly matched to her moods and physical desires. A man who loved her and was wholly loved by her in return. A man who could take away her fears and kiss away her pain. A man who lost himself as completely in her passionate embrace as she lost herself in his. She would not change what she had now for all the carriages in England." (53)

Here, Louella is seen as a woman who has sexual, emotional, and physical desires. She

is ruled by passion and love for John. Her voice has been given to her, and she is no more the "'Vampyre'" with the "'savage face'" and "'the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blacken inflation of the lineaments'" described by Jane after Antoinetta tore apart her vail (283-4). Louella seems completely different from her character of Bertha in Jane Eyre and Linda Hutcheon argues in her lecture "From Page to Stage to Screen: The Age of Adaptation" that Holland was intentional in doing this. Adapting Louella's character to make her more human is not an interference or betrayal of the original, is just gives readers something different to think about, Russell Banks argues in "No, But I Saw the Movie."

Revision of Madness

Another way *Jane Eyre's Rival* makes Antionetta more human is through the revision of her madness. In the adaptation, Louella is not a madwoman locked in the attic out of necessity. Instead, she is an impassioned woman being drugged by her husband. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester claims that Bertha was crazy long before they left for England: "And I could not rid myself of [my wife] by any legal proceedings; for the doctors now discovered that my wife was mad—her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity" (306). Rochester claims that his wife was crazy, yet she was never called upon to defend herself. *Jane Eyre's Rival* allows her to state what happened in her own words. According to her begins drugging her when he brings her to England from Jamaica: "Once on the boat, he sedated her often with those opiate drugs so readily available to him in Spanish Tow and by the time they landed in England he had made his wife an addict" (10). This demonstrates that when given a voice, silenced women tell a completely different story.

Louella is not represented in the adaptation as a madwoman at all. All of her violent attacks and outbursts have reasons. After Rochester violently and unjustifiably attacks Louella, she decided it is time to take action against him. While looking at the bruises that cover her arms and legs from his violent attack, she decides to set his bed on fire as he sleeps to kill him. She hopes that the fire will spread to the rest of the house and take her with it too (75-6). Unlike *Jane Eyre* where Bertha set Rochester's bed on fire for seemingly no reason, *Jane Eyre's Rival* gives her a good reason to act the way she did. In the adaptation, Louella is not crazy, she is passionate and revengeful. This makes her seem less like an animal that will strike at any opportunity.

This retelling of Bertha Mason's madness is an example of neo-Victorianism. In the revising of Louella's madness, Holland rewrites how this woman of color is portrayed in Jane Eyre. Heilmann and Llewellyn in *Neo-Victorianism* state: "these novels… illustrate postcolonial neo-Victorianism's creative challenge to the critical theory concepts of hybridity and the silence of the subaltern… Spivak defines subaltern as the indigenous rural subject silenced by both imperial and local discourses and structures of power, arguing that the female subaltern… ultimately remains unpresentable… [Neo-Victorian] novels contest the ideas both that the disposed are of necessity voiceless, and that silence, where is does not exist, must invariably reflect disempowerment." (69)

Jane Eyre's Rival ultimately retells Bertha's story in a way that reclaims her voice and therefore her power. The neo-Victorian novel redefines the rules set out by the Victorian novel to correct its mistakes.

Rochester

Rochester's character in Jane Eyre's Rival is monstrous, which humanizes Louella in contrast. In *Jane Eyre*, the information readers receive about Bertha Mason is told completely through Rochester. Through his lens, we see how he wishes to portray himself. After Richard Mason and his lawyer confront Rochester about already having a wife, Rochester states that he "almost as soon strike a woman as you" when Richard looks frightened of him. Rochester portrays himself as a nonviolent and benevolent caretaker of his imprisoned, crazy wife (292). No one else in the story tells the readers how Rochester treats Bertha. Louella in Jane Eyre's Rival tells a different story of Rochester. To her, he is mean, physically and verbally violent. After Rochester decides to marry Jane, he violently abuses her:

A hand grabbed her wrist in a vice-like grip and she found herself being dragged from her bed. "You dirty whore, I wish you were dead. I rue the day I ever set eyes on you." […] As the attacker dragged her across the room and threw her roughly to the floor, Louella knocked her hip against the wooden chest in the fall. The pain made her cry out in anguish. She instinctively covered her face in case he struck her as he had done so often in the past. But, despite shielding herself against the heat of his anger, she couldn't help but look up into the wild eyes of her husband." (70) This shows that Louella in the adaptation truly knows what Rochester is like. He is horrible, violent, and abusive. In Jane Eyre, readers must take Rochester's word on Bertha and how he treats her. Because Louella gets a voice in the revision, readers understand that Rochester drives her to do crazy things.

After Louella's failed attempt at Rochester's life, the captor chains her to the wall of her prison. She sits there covered in bruises with the metal biting into her arm. He does not release her. Instead, he leaves her locked there like an animal (78-9). This demonstrates how Holland rewrote the character of Rochester. He is more to blame for Louella's actions than he was in Jane Eyre. Holland demonstrates literally how a Western European man claims Louella's body and voice. By writing a neo-Victorian romance novel, Holland attempts to reclaim Louella and give her a voice of her own.

Adapting Jane Eyre in the Raw

McKayla Helm

Plot Summary

The 2011 film Jane Eyre by Cary Joji Fukunaga is a celebration adaptation focusing on the intense relationship between Jane Eyre (Mia Wasikowska) and Edward Fairfax Rochester (Michael Fassbender). Featuring a series of flashbacks, the beginning of the film builds suspense by showing the curious events leading to Jane's escape from Thornfield Hall. Moments of Jane's past are revealed in progressively shorter scenes to viewers until they are caught up to her current predicament. Viewers also see quick scenes from her deplorable childhood with the Reed family and her painful interactions at Lowood School for Girls, all intermixed with scenes from the present with St. John Rivers and his sisters. When the film catches up to its starting shot, the romantic drama elements dominate the narrative. For example, Mr. Rochester's interactions with his assumed love Blanche Ingram are barely recognized in the film. Many other important female characters are barely developed, like Mrs. Fairfax and Helen Burns, or forgotten altogether, like Miss Temple. The importance of St. John Rivers and his sisters to Jane's independence is even skipped as she is swept away with yearning for Mr. Rochester after her flight from Thornfield. Although more emphasis could have been given to the other characters in the film at many points, including the ending, they are all forgotten to a certain extent in Jane's pursuit of pure love with the man she deems her equal.

Context

The 2011 version of Jane Eyre is the most recent feature film out of fifteen, the first premiering in 1934 ("Adaptations of Jane Eyre"). The script by Moira Buffini for the 2011 version existed for a few years before the film's production by Ruby Films. BBC Films, Focus Features, and Lipsynch Productions also backed the production financially. Originally BBC had been looking into an adaptation before enlisting Fukunaga to take part in the execution. Fukunaga, who also directed the television show True Detective and film Sin Nombre, said he had loved the previous 1944 film version of the novel since he was a kid (Buchanan). After the announcement of a remake in 2009, he expressed his interest in emphasizing the Gothic pieces of the novel in order to represent it with raw authenticity. Period films are characteristically beautiful, but Jane Eyre is a messy novel compared to an author like Jane Austen. Fukunaga noticed this and incorporated it into his film using Gothic elements. He said there is a "spookiness that plagues the entire story...there's been something like 24 adaptations, and it's very rare that you see those sorts of darker sides. They treat it like it's just a period romance, and I think it's much more than that" (Buchanan). Fukunaga remained true to his vision and attempted to recreate Charlotte Brontë's story as accurately as possible by creating near-period costumes with designer Michael O'Conner and choosing an authentic setting for Thornfield Hall. The building used primarily for representation, Haddon Hall, was previously used in BBC's 2006 version of Jane Eyre.

This adaptation was mostly received well by audiences and critics. Overall, the film received favorable reviews on the website Rotten Tomatoes by 84 percent of critics and 76

percent of average viewers. New York Times critic A.O. Scott gave the film a pleasant 4/5 while explaining that it was "A splendid example of how to tackle the daunting duty of turning a beloved work of classic literature into a movie" (Scott). More than anything, all critics applauded the feelings conveyed by the cast, especially Mia Wasikowska's performance. Scott saw the story represented by Wasikowska with "an astute sense of emotional detail" (Scott). Fellow critic Ty Burr, from The Boston Globe, said, "Emotions, repressed and then set free, drive this 'Jane Eyre,' and what the film loses in epic resonance it gains in inner strength" (Burr). Rather than the actors' performances, negative critics harped on cinematic and musical choices. The Christian Science Monitor critic Peter Rainer believed that "Those star-crossed lovebirds Jane and Rochester are no match for the tracking shots and throbbing violins" (Rainer). Rainer gave the film a disheartening C+. Additionally, Washington Post critic Ann Hornaday commended the film's attention to novel details, but regretted that it "still lacks the element of essential fire to make it come fully, even subversively, to life" (Hornaday).

Analysis

Jane Eyre, the Bildungsroman novel by Charlotte Brontë, takes a plain young heroine and follows her transformation into a sensible and headstrong woman. Jane Eyre, the 2011 dramatic feature film directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga, takes an intelligent but pitiful orphan and pairs her with a man who leads her to her destiny. These two storylines have a lot of similarities. For example, Jane, the main character, is expertly portrayed in both artistic works. But what the 2011 film adds is an equally important male character and an emphasis on his relationship with Jane.

Edward Fairfax Rochester is indisputably a key character in the novel. It can also be said that his significance relies on Jane's situation and her emotions towards him. If it were not for Jane, Mr. Rochester would not be important at all to readers. This dynamic changes in the film, for the entire romantic storyline is dependent upon his meeting of Jane. Does the simplified story detract from the original novel? No, this adaptation exists as its own entity utilizing its medium to the best of its ability. Although mastering the narrative economy is difficult, the film succeeds by focusing on the translatable theme of romance in order to convey the director's understanding of an author's vision while catering to a modern audience.

The Theme of Romance

Jane Eyre as a novel focuses on the complexities of the character's development rather than on the intricacies of a relationship, such as the 2011 film portrays. From the beginning shot of the film, viewers are introduced to the climax of a plot that centers on Jane's involvement with Mr. Rochester at Thornfield. Only the first half an hour of the film is dedicated solely to Jane's story, although it is all in an effort to bring the audience up to speed on her association with Mr. Rochester. This is not unusual for a twenty-first century film, for its predecessors also "focus towards Jane and Rochester's romantic relationship, though this is portrayed in very different ways throughout the novel's film adaptation history" (Loh 56). Is this a problem, though, considering the depth of Jane's personality that Brontë developed in her novel? To be reduced to just a relationship is the exact opposite of the novel's message. There were defining moments in the film that could have altered the emphasis towards Jane and the development of other characters, but were traded for the pursuit of romance. The majority of the cast served little purpose in the film except to represent their designed role in the book. This was illustrated especially when Mrs. Fairfax voiced a request for a deeper connection with Jane during their scene in the burnt hall, and instead of acknowledging the opportunity, Jane inquired after her lover. These critical moments weaken the strength and story of the heroine even though they were necessary, given the narrative economy and the theme chosen. However, the film also neglects chances to show the complexity of the relationship with Mr. Rochester's manipulation of Jane. Blanche Ingram is present in the film, although the charades scene is absent completely. This defining portion of the novel showcased Mr. Rochester convincing Jane of his matrimonial interest in Blanche when they both imitated acting out a marriage. Instead, film viewers see small shots of Mr. Rochester and Blanche giggling together under a canopy, which makes Fassbender's Rochester far less manipulative than the one defined in the novel. This "jealousy, which is concerned more with ownership than with love, plays an important role in Jane Eyre," and when removed,

weakens the "real" romance (Nestor 57). However, the film addresses the critics of the romance through subtle cinematic choices. The dialogue and progression of the film may fall short on complete character representation, but the mise-en-scène hints at the underlying introspection of the novel that proves difficult to translate to film. For example, the framing of the film expresses what Jane cannot say in a film without voiceover. "Subjective first-person focalization" and tight framing are repeatedly used in the film to represent Jane and her sense of imprisonment at Thornfield Hall until "the final scene, which, set on the premises of Rochester's property but separated from the gothic ruins of Thornfield Hall by a life-giving river, hints at her liberation from the confinement that has hitherto been her fate" (Pietrzak-Franger 269-270). The high key lighting of the garden rescues Jane from the shadowy pools of light that paint Thornfield so treacherous. At the end, "Neither Rochester's fortress nor his intense passions, suggestively conveyed by the flickering shadows of the fireplace and candle light, can keep her prisoner" (Pietrzak-Franger 270). Given the confines of film, the 2011 Jane Eyre adaptation decidedly used the romantic genre to convey Bronte's novel to a modern audience.

The Differences in Vision

Fukunaga sought from the beginning to represent the novel and Charlotte Brontë's vision as closely as possible in order to accomplish his celebration adaptation. As a "stickler for raw authenticity," Fukunaga explained his interest in expressing the novel as it was written while "trying to figure out what Charlotte Brontë was feeling" (Buchanan). Brontë's storytelling is tangled and problematic compared to other Victorian literature, but this is not a hindrance to the story. It is brilliant work because of its characterization and force of psychology, especially when it comes to Mr. Rochester and Jane. The Gothic aspects Fukunaga notices are supplementary to the already raw novel. Even though the film is listed and received by audiences as a British romantic drama, Fukunaga sought to incorporate the Gothic elements he read in the novel to make sure the film was more than a romantic movie. Fortunately, some critics picked up Fukunaga's eery aspects of the film. Buchanan described the "beautiful gloom" and warned viewers not to "come to this hoping to get your

period-movie freak on" (Buchanan). Fukunaga had been concerned about mixing horror with the beloved novel's story because he felt that it was "rare that you can promote a love story and feel fear in a film" (Montagne, Renee, et al). However, this is what Christine Geraghty theorizes is the difference between novels and films: the ability to tell multiple stories. "Two or three genres layer one over another in an attempt to tell a story" in film (Geraghty 11). Gothic romanticism is irrevocably woven into the novel, but it is up to each adaptation how far it will go to incorporate the darker elements. While the 2011 film invests in many Gothic aspects of Jane Eyre, it also waters down some of the darker elements of the romance itself. In the novel, Mr. Rochester is left with a mutilated arm and blindness, leaving him completely reliant on Jane. The female Gothic ending of the novel serves as a "symbolic 'punishment'" of Mr. Rochester, allowing their existence as equals through his disablement in "an overtly patriarchal world" (Srivastava). The 2011 version leaves Mr. Rochester's body intact, which detracts from the horror and depth Fukunaga sought to include. Other Gothic elements Fukunaga could have incorporated were the physical unattractiveness and mental instability of the master of Thornfield. Fukunaga believed that Fassbender was "rugged" and a "man's man" with "a fierceness that is covering for a lot of pain" (Montagne, Renee, et al). Indeed, Fassbender passionately fulfilled his role as the brooding, calculating Byronic Mr. Rochester, but barely brushed the more twisted and maniacal aspects of his personality. "Rochester may be an impossible character" in this sense, but he is invaluable to the "wild" Gothic romanticism rampant in the novel (Scott). Buchanan ventures that the actors "are so eerily attuned to each other that the film lacks much of the romantic suspense we associate with the story," which offers a reason for the rose-colored lenses audiences see the relationship through (Buchanan). Additionally, many people also consider the actor traditionally beautiful. Fukunaga recognized this fault when casting, but believed Fassbender's acting would define the character. Unfortunately by doing this, he fell back on "traditionally" making him "pretty" so that audiences would effortlessly care about the character (Montagne, Renee, et al). Had Fukunaga aligned his vision exactly with Brontë's, he would have used Jane's perspective more to show the reasoning for her interest. In terms of the leading actress's performance, it was highly praised by both critics and audiences. Wasikowska's appearance alone fulfilled "the imperative of plainness with a tight-lipped frown, a creased brow and severely parted hair" (Scott). Her "marvelously intuitive" rendition utilized spirited expressions as often as vacant ones, making her a perfect match for the self-analyzing Jane readers see in the novel (Rainer). In terms of artistic vision, casting Wasikowska could be considered the most similar choice between author and director. Seeking a perfectly represented Jane is perhaps the most authentic decision an adaptor of the novel can make, because "it's hard to separate Charlotte from Jane. When you write fiction, you're allowed to write, or rewrite reality" (Montagne, Renee, et al). In the novel Jane is the plot, not her romantic endeavors, so an actress like Wasikowska goes a long way towards syncing Brontë and Fukunaga's visions.

The Modern Reception

In addition to Brontë's vision, Fukunaga also had to consider the audience's reception. The film is a modern movie, and viewers as a whole are changing in terms of love and romance.

Love is quicker to find now, but difficult to experience in large doses. A 2016 article by Krysti Wilkinson explained that the current generation seeks to invest in romance, but fears the retribution. They seek dating apps for simplistic connections at the cost of real interaction existing. They want only the illusion of a real relationship. Current generations "don't want a relationship" based off their contradicting outlooks on love, but they still chase it on social media and in entertainment (Wilkinson). So with easy connections a swipe away, deep, true love is losing meaning as current generations push back marriage. "Barely half of adults ages 18 and older" were married in 2010, specifically only fifty-one percent of adults compared with the seventy-two percent in 1960 (Cohn). Comparatively, women who lived in the era of Romanticism with Brontë were married in their early twenties. Since birth, they were expected to eventually marry suitably as per tradition and according to society. These drastic differences between eras in terms of love, or the lack thereof, has resulted in current generations seeking romantic stories from Victorian England. In order to rediscover and reminisce on the love their generations are missing, millennials and Generation Zers turn towards time periods flooded with romantic elements. Watching a film like Jane Eyre brings hope, because Jane loses nothing in her relationship and her story depicts a perfect, seemingly effortless love. Modern viewers reach out to romance, feel the flicker of flame, and retreat for fear of a burn. The 2011 Jane Eyre caters to such longing for love with its focus on Jane and Mr. Rochester's relationship, because "adaptations invariably use and highlight only those aspects of complex Victorian narratives and characterisation which conform to the ideology of their own time" (Primorac 454). An audience turning to Victorian literature for romantic dreams is not necessarily a problem, but the possibility of Hollywood contorting their understanding of love would be. For many years, Hollywood has packaged and produced romantic films for profit, catering to the desperate desires of lovelorn women, heartbroken exes, and daydreaming teenagers. "An estimated four out of five Hollywood films have a romance as their main plot," which means a lot of viewers are seeing depictions of what 'ideal' relationships look like (Kagan xi). Generally, Hollywood illustrates perfection and happy endings, and any variances from these impossible standards are not meant to be. These romantic films specifically designed for women "give an unrealistic view and immoral code associated with relationships and romance" (Green 309). Audiences that forget romance turn to Victorian novels and their adaptations for reminders, but instead receive impressions of unrealistic relationships. What then can the audience do but base their not-so-perfect lives off of these examples, and then fall short once again? This cycle could be avoided if romantic adaptations of Jane Eyre portrayed relationships as they exist in reality: complicated, but not impossible. In terms of the 2011 film, Fukunaga believed that it set a good example for viewers. Wasikowska as Jane would not "go against her morals, and against her respect for herself" even though she loved Mr. Rochester, "And I think that's rare today. Today, even, people often compromise themselves in order to try to maintain a love, even if it destroys them" (Montagne, Renee, et al).

The 2011 Jane Eyre adaptation focused on the main character's relationship in order to translate Brontë's vision for a new audience. The adaptation was designed to celebrate the film. Without first comprehending and accepting the major focus in the film and reasons behind the choice, audiences may not understand the significance of the historical piece of

Victorian literature. Understanding the background and reasoning for a film's creation can help generate self-reflection in viewers while also opening their eyes to the artistic expression of adaptations.

Adaptations are viewfinders into a generation's culture and society. Although based off a previous creative expression, adaptations show the differences between modern and historical audiences. This film in particular takes a powerful coming of age story and highlights key aspects relating to romance, therefore applying it to a generation lacking in love and confidence. Although critics may consider this significant change in focus problematic, the film still stands as a brilliant tribute to a beloved piece of literature. And that, reader, summarizes an analysis of Jane Eyre the novel and Jane Eyre the film.

Lust, Pain, and Heartbreak: For Kids!
An Analysis of Jane Eyre and A Children's Literature Adaptation

Grace Hemming

Plot Summary

Children are greeted with the same beginning to Jane Eyre in this adaptation that adults have been enjoying for centuries. Jane is a young orphan living with her Aunt Reed and her three children, all of whom are rather cruel to Jane. After a decade of mistreatment and abuse, both physical and verbal, Jane is sent to Lowood School. While at Lowood, Jane is again cruelly mistreated, but this time it is at the hands of the headmaster, Mr. Brocklehurst. The pupils are often deprived of sufficient clothing and food, and many students die as a result. Jane remains at Lowood for eight years: six of which are spent as a student rising to the top of her class, and the other two as a teacher. Growing tired of Lowood and its monotony, Jane seeks a governess position and finds one at Thornfield Hall; she accepts the position immediately. At Thornfield, Jane works as the governess to Adèle Varens and serves at the pleasure of Mr. Edward Rochester, who is the owner of the estate. Jane finally feels she has found a home in Thornfield and quickly grows attached to those who inhabit it, especially Rochester, with whom she develops an automatic connection. As she struggles with her feelings toward Rochester, Jane is also confronted with peculiar occurrences in Thornfield that threaten her first real shot at happiness in life.

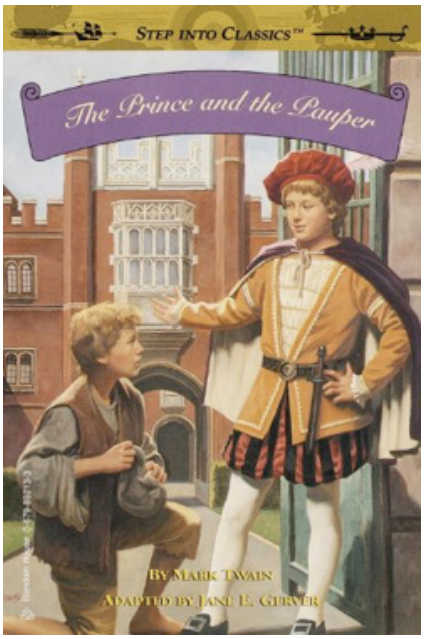
Context

Published in 1997 by Random House Inc., Jane Eyre, adapted by Jane E. Gerver as a children's book, is part of Random House's "A Stepping Stone Book" and "A Stepping Stone Book Classic" collections ("Jane Eyre"). After a merger between Penguin Group and Random House Inc. in 2013, the company now calls itself Penguin Random House. Penguin Random House Children's Books is the world's largest English-language children's trade book publisher and creates books in all formats for preschool children through young adult readers. Penguin Random house established itself as the pioneer in the beginning reader genre in 1957 when it created the Beginner Books series, with The Cat in the Hat as its first publication. The series was co-founded by Ted Geisel, who is more commonly referred to as Dr. Seuss. In 1958, only four titles were in the Beginner Books catalog. Two years later, it was earning over a million dollars a year and helped establish Random House as the largest publisher of children's books in America. Since then, Penguin Random House has created several other series designed for young readers, such as Step into Reading series and the Stepping Stones first chapter book series ("Our Publishers").

The Stepping Stones series is meant to be a bridge for young readers to go from picture books to chapter books easily. Within the Stepping Stones series, there are several categories: classic, fantasy, mystery, fiction, history, humor and true stories. As it's an adaptation from a British Literature novel, Jane Eyre falls into the classic category. Penguin Random House describes the classics adaptations as "ideal for reluctant readers and kids not yet ready to tackle original classics." Penguin Random House has taken on several classic literatures in its Stepping Stones series, including Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes, The Jun-

gle Book, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, and Frankenstein, to name a few ("A Stepping Stones Book Classics").

Jane Gerver is a published adapter, author, editor and illustrator of children's books. After initially reading Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë in the sixth grade, she immediately fell in love with the story. Much like Charlotte Brontë and her famous sisters, Gerver has also written under pen names for some of her books. She has written several children's books ranging from board books for preschoolers to books for late elementary school children (Gerver). Along with Jane Eyre, Jane Gerver has also adapted other classics, such as The Prince and the Pauper, originally written by famous American author Mark Twain. Gerver has said she does this to introduce children to classic literature easily and at a young age ("Jane E. Gerver").



While theories about adaptation have generally focused on adaptations of novels into visual media, such as film, adapted versions of classic novels as children's literature has received relatively little attention from critics. These adaptations, however, certainly have a publishing market and a considerable influence on children (Mettinger-Schartmann and Rubik 260). Adaptations and the adapted work often merge together in the audience's understanding of the complex relationship between them. Hutcheon says this is the "intertextual pleasure in adaptation that some call elitist." In contrast to this elitism, adaptations' accessibility drives the commercialization of adaptations and also its large role in education. Teachers and their students create one of the largest audiences for adaptations (Hutcheon 117).

Analysis

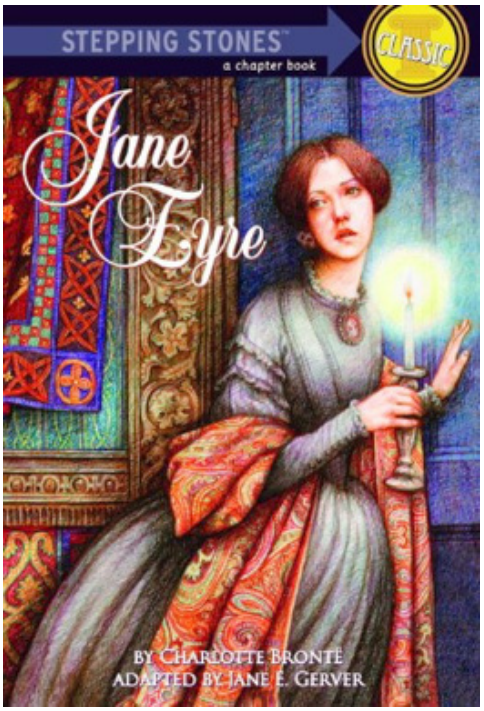
Omission of the Supernatural

The infamous red-room scene has long been discussed by critics as one of the most important scenes in Jane Eyre. Feminist critics have often read it as a metaphor for Jane's emergence into womanhood, such as the red representing menstruation or the confined nature of the room symbolizing a womb that births Jane into a sense of herself (Gavin 133). While in the room, Jane gazes into the mirror and is terrified by the vision she sees, "The strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking in the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit," (Brontë 14). Jane is triggered by her image in the mirror to imagine her late Uncle's ghost suddenly appearing in the room. Out of complete terror, Jane collapses and goes unconscious. The supernatural aspect of the red room is quite crucial to the rest of the plot as it becomes fundamental to Jane's womanhood throughout the rest of the novel, especially in her romance with Rochester (Gavin 133). Rochester often mentions Jane's supernatural qualities, frequently calling her an elf, a witch and other creatures, and it's this mysteriousness that attracts him to her. To Jane, he says, "She comes from the other world – from

the abode of people who are dead… If I dared, I'd touch you, to see if you are substance or shadow, you elf!" (Brontë 245). He also asks her, "You are altogether a human being, Jane? You are certain of that?" (Brontë 437).

As this supernatural quality is a large part of the original story, it's interesting to see that the children's book adaptation fails to mention any sight of a ghost. While Jane is sent to the red room for misbehaving by her aunt, the scene ends with Jane's narration stating, "Left alone, I cried until I fell asleep" (Gerver 3). Instead of feeling so fearful by the sight of her uncle's ghost that she falls ill and faints, she instead is simply sad for being locked away. The lack of the supernatural in the red room then erases the supernatural qualities that Jane possesses in the original story. Judith Hillman, author of Discovering Children's Literature, claims children's literature commonly displays a feeling of optimism and innocence, which would explain the erasure of the ghost sighting in the room, as it's neither optimistic nor innocent. However, Hillman also says children's literature has a tendency to combine reality and fantasy (Nodelman 189). These two specific characteristics of children's literature contradict each other in this particular scene of Jane Eyre, as it was unable to both be optimistic and include the fantasy of the ghost.

Depiction of Jane



While her sisters wrote stories of beautiful women, Charlotte Brontë realized the importance of creating a character that did not fit the conventional characteristics of beauty. Throughout the entirety of Jane Eyre, the reader is reminded of Jane's tiny stature and utter "plainness." Reportedly, Brontë insisted on it to her sisters that Jane be little and pale (Sandy 25). By creating this plain heroine, Brontë deliberately revised the romantic stereotypes of the Victorian age. Despite this, illustrators typically depict Jane as a conventionally beautiful woman (Mettinger-Schartmann and Rubik 262). Bill Dodge's cover illustration for Gerver's adaptation is no different. Depicted on the children's book cover is a pretty, young teen standing in a hallway wearing a nightgown. Her gaze appears quite helpless and lost, as if she is a damsel in distress rather than someone who is sure of her own agency.

Unlike the average heroine, it can be argued that Jane is quite unlikeable at times. She is judgmental, sarcastic, and unarguably temperamental, but she also respects herself when no one else will; this makes Jane a complicated character – she wishes to not be judged, yet she judges others. For instance, of Blanche Ingram Jane says, "She appeared to be on her high horse to-night… she was evidently bent on striking them as something very dashing and daring indeed," (Brontë 179). In Jane's tone it's clear she finds Ms. Ingram neither dashing

nor daring, and it's rather Jane who seems to be on her "high horse." Although Blanche is undoubtedly more beautiful and wealthier than Jane, Jane still feels superior. She fails to see any depth in Blanche Ingram and assumes because she is beautiful and rich, that that is all she can offer. In the children's book, Jane simply mentions her lack of jealousy toward Blanche and her suspicion that Rochester doesn't truly love her, and she leaves it at that. This removal of Jane's judgment and jealousy plays on the values people typically instill in their children and is a logical step in adapting Jane Eyre into a children's book.

One of the biggest problems with the character of Jane is her complete lack of sympathy toward Bertha Mason. Throughout the novel, Jane struggles with a sense of imprisonment. She feels trapped at Gateshead, a place where she's literally imprisoned in the red room, and she again feels a sense of entrapment at the thought of marrying Rochester. This figurative feeling of imprisonment is literally manifested in Bertha Mason, who has been locked in a room for 10 years per Rochester's request. After Rochester's secret has finally been revealed and the party enters her quarters, Jane refers to Bertha as "it," a "wild animal," and "the maniac," essentially stripping Bertha of her humanity. She offers no empathy or sympathy toward Bertha and is more caught up in the fact that Rochester is a married man than that he locked his wife in the attic. Because Jane is able to look at Bertha as non-human, it makes it easier to understand her immediate forgiveness of Rochester's behavior (Grady). In the children's adaptation, Jane offers a bit more sympathy for Bertha. While she is still frightened of her and calls her a maniac, she defends her to Rochester ever so slightly and says, "You are cruel, sir! Your wife cannot help her madness," (Gerver 71). Jane shows much more compassion toward Bertha Mason and a clearer understanding that Bertha wasn't to blame for her mental illness. This compassion is one of the ten core values Gibbs and Earley claim literature should teach to young children (9). These rewrites of Jane's character present a more likable, less complicated heroine that young readers can admire instead of dislike.

Depiction of Rochester

As Jane's plainness was crucial to her character, so were Rochester's looks, or lack thereof. Described as ugly by even the woman he loves, Brontë again defied stereotypes of the Victorian age that called for characters to be conventionally attractive. Gerver maintains this unpleasant physical depiction of Rochester as Jane describes his appearance when she agrees to meet him for tea: "His mouth, chin, and jaw were grim-looking, almost ugly," (Gerver 26). However, as Jane continues to learn about Rochester, his face is no longer ugly, but the face she liked seeing most (Gerver 29). Hollywood depictions often beautify the character of Edward Rochester by casting actors such as Michael Fassbender or Toby Stephens, which often takes away from Rochester's intrigue and the relationship between Rochester and Jane, which is admired for being more than skin-deep.

Rochester is the quintessential Byronic hero; for instance, he is arrogant and independent. As Nancy Pell says, he "continues to play the role of master not only with his household servants but toward all men and women," (412), as is made clear by the authoritative role he takes in his relationships with Adèle, Jane and Mr. Mason. None of these characters are his servants, yet he commands their submission and orders them around.

Thankfully, Gerver adapts Jane in a way to make it clear to readers that Rochester's behavior is not acceptable. After one of Rochester's demands, Jane responds, "You do not have the right to command me that way, sir," to which Rochester replies, "You are right… I have many faults" (28).

I find Rochester to be entirely more problematic than Jane. Not only is he arrogant, possessive, manipulative and demanding, he also refused to take "no" for an answer when Jane insisted on leaving Thornfield. He's completely shocked that Jane wouldn't run away with him as his mistress after she learned he was married and that he kept his wife locked in the attic. He lied for the entirety of their relationship, yet he fails to imagine a consequence. One of the most troubling lines is when Rochester says to Jane, "Jane! Will you hear reason? Because, if you won't, I'll try violence." Jane's narration states, "The present – the passing second of time – was all I had in which to control and restrain him: a movement of repulsion, flight, fear, would have sealed my doom – and his," (Brontë 302). Any woman should be terrified of this threat, yet Jane is not alarmed and instead speaks kindly to him. As Hutcheon notes, adults often censor adaptations and change the stories in the process of adapting them in order to make them appropriate for different audiences (118). This censorship was clearly executed by Gerver in her adaptation. As Jane tells Rochester they must go separate ways, he replies, "You are going? You are leaving me?" (74). Gerver eliminated a scene that obviously depicts a toxic, even abusive, relationship. While Rochester remains manipulative and arrogant in this adaptation, the removal of this conversation makes Rochester marginally better in my eyes.

Plain Jane & the Rockstar

Hailey Hilbert

Plot Summary

The question, which April Lindner set out to answer in Jane, was simple, "What would happen if Jane Eyre fell in love with a rock star?" This updated version of the Brontë classic, Jane Eyre, sees nineteen-year-old Jane Moore as a college student at Sarah Lawrence, forced to drop out because of her financial situation. After a brief interview with a nanny agency, Jane is placed in the home of Nico Rathburn, an attractive albeit washed-up rock star attempting to make his come back. It quickly becomes clear that Jane has fallen in love with Nico's bluntness, but cannot comprehend any scenario in which he feels the same way about her, an uneducated and plain looking teenager. He plays with her emotions, intentionally making her jealous of his romance with a famous photographer. Eventually, however, he comes clean with her and proposes marriage, following a pretty steamy encounter in Nico's bedroom. It is on that fateful day of their marriage that Jane learns of Nico's continued relationship with his ex-wife, a Brazilian model called Bibi; though Jane knew he was married before, she believed their divorce to be finalized. She receives quite the shock to instead find out that not only is Nico still married, but also Bibi has been living in the very same house where Jane has been nanny-ing. This sends Jane in a spiral, which causes her to flee the estate, Thornfield Park, and hide out in New Haven, CT among some siblings she meets by chance. But after being away from Nico for months, she hears of his misfortune and the fate of his house, so she returns to him to find him in relatively good health; the only injury he has suffered is to his guitar playing hand leaving him unable to make music. They live happily ever after, though, and Jane proposes marriage to Nico this time around.

Context

Jane was written by Associate Professor of English, April Linder, as an updated version of the Brontë classic Jane Eyre and was published by a division of the Hachette Book Group called Poppy in October of 2010. April Lindner describes in the Author's Note her desire to give Jane Eyre a modern retelling which would capture the freethinking nature of Jane and the triumph of this coming of age story. It was with this goal in mind that she set about writing a twenty-first century, American, Young Adult adaptation of the text, which she believed would resonate with modern audiences and capture the sense of kindred spirit that she herself has always felt with Jane Eyre as a character. Through writing Jane, she

hoped to encourage readers to return to the original.

Making the decision to write in the Young Adult genre is one that Lindner made consciously because she believes the issues at the heart of Jane Eyre are those which everyone Jane's age experiences. The genre as a whole has exploded recently, but there is still a disparity in the amount of critical analysis has been written about it, which could be an effect of the quick pace of the expansion. Caroline Hunt writes, "in its short official lifetime, YA literature has gone from having no acknowledged existence, to forming a generally recognized category with a central canon, to displaying a more fragmented, ever-changing multiplicity of canons"; in essence, Young Adult literate has grown so rapidly that it is still unclear where it fits into the whole of literary theory (Hunt). Despite evading theorists, YA literature continues to become even more popular, with teenagers and adults alike and "certain titles published in the U.S. as YA are considered mainstream fiction for adults in other countries" (Feeney). However, Pattee argues that in the years since Caroline Hunt published her article, the field of Young Adult fiction has been more defined in terms of criticism and theory, so there is hope yet that literary theorists could achieve a better understanding of the genre, which is also referred to as new adult fiction, those new adults in question being in the emerging stages of adulthood from adolescence.

One explanation for the continued success of Young Adult fiction is that it does not shy away from the dark reality of the adolescent experience, while also finding what Feeney calls "the kernel of hope." YA should not be cliche if it is aiming to appeal to teenagers, according to bestselling author David Levithan,"it's not about being preachy or pragmatic to say that most people find a way out of the maze of adolescence. It's only being accurate" (Feeney). Young Adult has to be more overt in its central points because the frequency with which teenagers read today is significantly less than in the past. With the technological advances that have made is possible for every teenager in America to own a smartphone, some would argue books have lost their appeal and since "American teen-agers are less likely to read "for fun" at seventeen than at thirteen," certainly the culture of American high schools is not conducive to reading habits (Denby).

Once an author decides to adapt a classic into the Young Adult genre, though many do not originally plan for their novel to be considered Young Adult, they learn these facts, which most definitely inform the way in which they write their adaptation. When updating a classic, authors aim to condense the main points of the novel into a neater package which is easier to comprehend and written in modern vernacular. Slang and pop culture references will make your books more believable and successful, but must be consulted on by an actual teenager to deem them acceptable first.

Analysis

Mental Health

In the eyes of Lindner, the difficulties she has to overcome by placing these characters in a modern landscape are the class differences between Jane and Rochester, in this case Nico Rathburn, and the fate of Rochester's first wife as she puts it, "in our age of medical miracles" (368). There are certainly huge class inequalities in a modern context, which she portrayed through pairing a broke college student with a successful rock star. However, the

issue of mental health is one that required some explanation in twenty-first century America, where there are definitely healthier alternatives to locking a grown woman in an attic with a babysitter.

A hospital psychiatrist, Christine Montross, wrote for The New York Times that she believes that mental health institutions are the only option, which provides the best possible care for those with debilitating mental health conditions. In her own words, "facilities for chronically psychotic patients would have medication regimens and psychoeducation tailored to the needs of those living with mental illness," which is a far more desirable alternative to living independently but without the care necessary for successful living (Montross). But these patients have not been completely released from institutions, as the term 'deinstitutionalization' would suggest, but rather have just found themselves in institutions, which are less specialized, more expensive, and thus less effective, such as prisons. All of these alternatives are still more relevant than Bibi's living conditions, in an attic suite with a single monitor watching her all hours of the day.

The most important task that Lindner has to accomplish is making her text seem authentic and believable, like a story that could stand on its own without prior knowledge of the original text to fill in the plot holes. This is one of the jobs of adaptation and "a text can also fail to survive when attempts are made to adapt it to a new form," usually when the audience thinks the author is committing an act of infidelity or compromising the authenticity of the original in some way (Brokenshire). In this way, Lindner does fail at her adaptation because although she remains extremely close to the original, almost identical, she does not adapt the plot line in a way that seems authentic in a modern context.

Compared to the nineteenth century context in which Charlotte Brontë wrote Jane Eyre, Nico has far more choices than Rochester did. Aside from the fact that divorce is much more common, acceptable, and accessible today, mental health is something that everyone is educated on today in a way that was unavailable in Brontë's time. Lindner's only explanation for why Nico does not acquire more health care for Bibi is because the quality of institutions are not up to his standards. When Jane inquires whether they are better if you can afford a nicer one, he responds, "There are bad ones and worse ones. I couldn't stand to see her put away…to have her live out the rest of her life among strangers" (256). This is a compelling point because it directly disagrees with the idea that medicine has made mental health progress and claims that instead it would be better to care for your suffering loved ones on your own.

At the heart of Jane Eyre are issues of sanity and femininity which it seems that Lindner does not fully understand or value as crucial to her adaptation of the text. Instead, she chooses to focus on Jane' s perusal struggles and coming-of-age story line.

Sex

Potentially the most shocking addition to the novel is the overt sexual activity, which occurs between Jane and Nico Rathburn. While there is hinting of intimacy between Jane Eyre and Rochester, Jane is still constructed as a Christian woman who values her moral integrity and would sooner flee than forever live as someone's illegitimate mistress. In contrast, Lindner's Jane seems to be quite interested in having sex with Nico and unbothered by losing her innocence. While everything is implied in Jane Eyre, in Jane the scene unfolds

through Jane's point of view, "He unclasped my bra…then he eased the panties down over my hip bones" (211). This is more direct than a Victorian audience would have tolerated, but in a twenty-first century context sexual intimacy between the romantic leads is considered a given.

For the more modern audience reading Jane, a relationship between these two characters without the romantic, passionate love scene would not make sense nor seem authentic. This change, though, adds an entirely new element to the novel because it brings up the issue of age appropriateness and censorship. Young Adult is a self-censoring genre because parents regulate so much of the behavior of the genre's targeted age group. Certainly, this representation of the classic heroine of Jane Eyre as a nineteen-year-old nanny who sleeps with her employer is quite a provocative decision on behalf of Lindner.

Physical Appearance

Another point which Lindner has to negotiate in her adaptation is the appearances of both Jane and "Rochester." While in the Brontë version, Jane is described as being ordinary looking and Rochester is described as brooding and heavy browed, in Lindner's version Rochester is a rock star, making him good looking enough to attract hoards of female fans and Jane is eye-catching enough to turn the head of this rock star. One way that Lindner downplays Jane's looks is by repeatedly reminding the reader of her humble wardrobe, which is a common theme in YA literature since style and branding are arguably more important to teenagers than any other age group, according to The Atlantic.

Since Lindner has chosen to portray Nico as an internationally popular musician, there is no getting around the fact that he would be good looking; she describes his facial features in Jane, "He had a strong nose, dark brows, and a full lower lip…he wasn't classically handsome, but his features were appealing" (90). This description of the Rochester-esque character is extremely contradictory because full lips and square jaws are definitely traditionally attractive masculine characteristics; Jane repeatedly

makes the distinction between being handsome like a movie star and being handsome "for a rock star" (74). In an interview Lindner described the man she had in mind when she was picturing Nico in her novel; it was actor Milo Ventimiglia, pictured here, who is classically handsome and, ironically, a movie star. The contradictions do not stop there either; Lindner stated in that same interview that her Jane should be played by someone like Carey Mulligan, the actress that was responsible for portraying the classically beautiful Daisy in a screen adaptation of The Great Gatsby.

Despite these differences of opinion on who is and is not attractive, Lindner has to remind her reader consistently throughout the book that Jane is not pretty enough to date Nico, which in this case just means she is not a model, like the ex-wife meant to represent Bertha Mason. Lindner repeatedly discusses Jane cringing at her physical appearance, but this does not necessarily indicate that she is ugly, but rather just self-conscious and insecure, like many nineteen-year-old women. Like so many other elements of Lindner's adaptation technique, these descriptions of Rochester and Jane contradict the original story, while attempting to remain too loyal to it.

1934 *Jane Eyre* Film Adaptation: This "Talkie" Sure Didn't Say Much

Lacey Paul

Plot Summary

Jane Eyre is a 1934 romantic story and first film adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's classic novel to use sound. This story follows the life of Jane, an orphan girl that is raised by her cruel aunt before being sent to Lowood Orphanage for Girls. Jane faces many adversities until finding hope while working as a governess at Thornfield Hall. Jane is to teach and care for Adele Rochester, a wonderful little girl who is being raised by her uncle, Sir Edward Rochester. Jane soon falls in love with the charming Mr. Rochester who returns her love and asks her to marry him. Jane says yes, but her happiness is short-lived when she learns that her fiancé has locked his mentally unstable wife in the attic. Jane flees to Christ Mission of Lancaster and agrees to marry Rev. John Rivers before traveling to India with him. Soon after, she learns that her true love's physiologically instable wife burned down the house and left him nearly blind. Jane returns to Mr. Rochester at once and romantic bliss is restored.

Context

The 1934 film Jane Eyre was the first "talkie" adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's classic novel ("Jane Eyre (1934)"). While this is a historical film adaptation, Monogram Pictures' low-budget rendition consists of evident flaws regarding dialogue, filming, directing and casting. Monogram was notorious for low production value "B-films" from 1931 to 1952 before merging with Allied Artists Productions. Monogram produced nearly 1,000 genre films including Westerns, serials, horror films, comedy shorts and melodramas. The company was one of the independent producing distributors referred to as Poverty Row, including Republic, Liberty, and Producers Releasing Corp ("Monogram Pictures"). The films put out by these studios were composed of unknown actors that were on their "way down." Monogram was branded for their serial films and Western serials "featuring some of the most popular cowboy stars of the time," including John Wayne. Ironically, Wayne's "way up" to stardom is credited to Monogram's Lone Star Productions, considering Wayne made 16 films between 1933 and 1935 for the studio. In 1946, Allied Artists Productions was formed to oversee Monogram and handle the production of higher-budget films. Allied Artists was a separate entity at first, but the quality of its products held no distinction from that of Monogram's ("Monogram Pictures"). This eventually led to Monogram adopting the Allied Artist name in 1952 (Edwards, 395).

While the production value of Jane Eyre is tremendously poor with inconsistent lighting and sound quality, the renown 1930s Hollywood director Christy Cabanne lacked creativity and individualistic style. Under the supervision of D.W. Griffith, who directed the Hollywood classic The Birth of a Nation, Cabanne started directing films in 1915 (Erickson). He was an efficient and an organized director, but lacked any signature artistic style. Cabanne directed 166 films in his career and never developed a tasteful style, apart from vanilla. The only films that had a glimpse of Cabanne's individuality was in Jane Eyre and the 1940's The Mummy's Hand; however, "he was seldom able to sustain that style for a full seven or eight reels" throughout the film (Erickson). Well-done shots throughout Jane Eyre are always

centered around Colin Clive playing Sir Edward Rochester, further proving that Cabanne's individual directing style never outshone his star performers. Cabanne only directed low-budget "B-films" throughout his 30-year career and never gained "A-film" status. Cabanne was a known prolific Hollywood director for the quantity of films he directed, not the quality of the films.

The box office bomb Jane Eyre suffered from low production value and poor directing style, but the film also lacked captivating dialogue; nonetheless, the star performers delivered a pleasing rendition of Jane Eyre and Edward Rochester. Virginia Bruce was a singer and actress that landed her first lead role as Jane in Jane Eyre. The 24-year-old bombshell-blonde was characterized by lead roles in secondary films and the "other" woman in more prestigious films. The limitations of low production "B-films" offered Bruce little chance of elevating her acting status. Her promised "A-film" MGM Studio status was hurt by the death of writer and producer Irving Thalberg in 1936. The remainder of Bruce's career was appearing in over 60 films as either secondary characters in high valued productions or leading roles in low valued productions (Beaver). Virginia Bruce's Jane Eyre costar, Colin Clive, also played leading roles in "B-films" and supporting roles in "A-films." Colin Clive was 34 years old when he played the romantic Edward Rochester. Clive was known for playing Dr. Henry Frankenstein in the 1931 horror-film classic Frankenstein. He was a clever and charming man, but behind the scenes was a severe alcoholic. Early on in his acting career, Clive had an alcoholic breakdown in 1934 while filming The Firebird and was replaced by actor Lionel Atwill (McPeak). Clive portrayed an empathetic and handsome Rochester, giving a memorable performance in the uneventful film. Disappointingly, alcoholism hinged his acting career and subsequently hastened his death from tuberculosis and pneumonia. Clive died in 1937 at the age of 37 years old (McPeak).

Analysis

1930s Bombshell-Blonde Meets Plain Jane

Virginia Bruce is a classic representation of femininity with her mesmerizing demeanor and harmonious singing voice. She was a blue-eyed bombshell-blonde with long legs and curves to match. Her doe-eyes offered a look of seduction when paired with full and pursed lips. Her waved-short hair framed her high and prominent cheek bones. Virginia Bruce was what men chased after and women envied to be. She was glamourous in subtle ways and an actress of pure beauty, the pure definition of a Hollywood star. Bruce's portrayal of Jane Eyre "was charming and efficient as Charlotte Brontë's indomitable heroine" in the 1934 version ("Virginia Bruce"). Film critic Bruce Eder said she did "a surprisingly good job, given the limitations" of the unsuccessful adaptation. Bruce gave a remarkable performance as an actress, but not as Jane Eyre. Director Christy Cabanne saw Bruce's enchanting voice as a golden-movie moment and took it. Sitting behind a grand piano and singing a melodious tune highlighted Bruce's gentile spirit wholeheartedly. All of Virginia Bruce's characteristics are entirely a contradiction to that of

Jane Eyre.

Jane Eyre adaptations inadvertently degrade Jane's feministic actions and overtly sexualize her physical appearance. The 1944 version of Jane Eyre an is over-melodramatic adaptation with the too beautiful Joan Fontaine and "her perfectly chiseled features more Hollywood than Yorkshire" (Gottlieb). In the era of 1930s and 40s Hollywood glam people did not want fidelity, they wanted desirability. Charlotte Brontë's classic heroine Jane is a plain girl who wears neutral-colored smocks with extreme neatness. She was a timid young woman who was not extraordinarily beautiful or gentile and yet, that is why readers felt empowered and captivated by Jane.

In the 1934 adaptation, writer Adele Comandini made Jane inherent money at the beginning of the film, subsequently denying any sense of independence for the remainder of the film. At the end of the film, Jane becomes engaged to Rev. John Rivers rather than rejecting his offer to be his wife, and undoubtedly the object he wished to possess. These subtle changes seem irrelevant in the context of the entire film, but these modifications are a prime example of the misrepresentation of women in Hollywood. Sheen says, adaptation's subtlety is "visually by definition to be using language, not image." Film adaptations of classic novels can be forgiven for negating Victorian fidelity for Hollywood cinematic glam; however, the 1934 adaptation of Jane Eyre changed the demeanor of an iconic feminist figure to mirror the repression of women during the 1930s.

The Hays Code: American Censorship vs Victorian Fidelity

The Motion Picture Production Code, more formally known as the Hays Code, was established in Hollywood cinema in 1930. Hollywood wanted to remain in the silent film's era of respectability in "the advent of sound on the motion picture screen" ("Motion Picture"). Crimes considered against the law was illustrating murder, methods of crimes, illegal drug traffic, the use of liquor, adultery, scenes of passion, ridiculing of other nations and sex perversion. Classic novel film adaptations were largely influenced by the Hays Code during the 1930s and 40s. These "prevailing moral codes" and "legal regulation" consequently "governed film production in the United States" for over 30 years ("Sex and Society," 559). Jane Eyre is argued to be ahead of its time in the sexual realm of infidelity. In Charlotte Brontë's novel, Rochester tells Jane about the multiple mistresses

he had several years before. He also shares that his "niece" Adele may be his own child, but is unsure considering Adele's mother had relationships with multiple men, according to Rochester. Under the Hays Code, Rochester's admission to sexual infidelity would go against upholding the "institution of marriage." This is evident when Rochester says that the marriage with his "ill" wife was annulled, rather than him attempting to marry his governess even though he was still married to his mentally deranged wife. Inevitably, this would justify why Rochester was still married to Bertha Mason; therefore, showing the forbidden act of adultery. The code also stated that repellent subjects "must be treated within the careful limits of good taste," including the apparent cruelty to children. In the novel Jane Eyre, Rochester is rather unpleasant towards Adele, stating that she was not a clever girl with limited talent. In the 1934 film, Rochester utterly adores Adele and speaks freely with her about marrying Jane. This successively implies that the family unit is being upheld and the "correct standards of life" are being "presented on the screen" ("Motion Picture).

The film Jane Eyre hardly mentioned Rochester's mentally ill wife Bertha Mason, possibly due to Brontë's brute depiction and inhumane characterization of Bertha. Brontë left Bertha's ethnicity unknown, but "references to her 'dark' hair and 'discolored', 'black' face'" have led some "speculation as to her racial identity" (Atherton). Brontë has received criticisms of racial misrepresentation by poorly portraying Bertha as an animalistic beast rather than a mentally ill woman. A loyal film representation of Bertha Mason during the 1930s could be classified as a horror-film under the Hays Code; nonetheless, the code also stats that "people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly." Representing Bertha Mason as a deranged madwoman with dark hair and skin would be illegal under the Hays Code because it could be interpreted as disrespectful to another nationality. The code also states that "miscegenation is forbidden," which is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "a mixture of races; especially: marriage, cohabitation, or sexual intercourse between a white person and a member of another race" ("Miscegenation"). Arguably, the Hays Code was a repression of artistic freedom and form of racial prejudice from the 1930s until the 1960s.

The Glamorized Great Depression: The Golden Age of Hollywood

During the 1930s, the Great Depression was diminishing people's financial security and materialistic lavishes becoming a thing of the past; however, people were still flocking to the movies as Hollywood cinema become one of Americas greatest past times. Movie attendance did significantly drop by 1933, but up to 70 million people went and watched their favorite motion picture that year. Production studios suffered financial hardship themselves and struggled to keep returning costumers. The double feature was introduced when lowering ticket prices were proven ineffective. Double features were appealing to audiences because longer "A-films" were paired with shorter "B-films" for the price of one. "B-films" were criticized for being significantly shorter movies, but audiences enjoyed the practicalities it had. Audience members could sit and watch two films at a lowered price and enjoy one of the few luxuries they had ("Hollywood").

The 1930s was a popular time for literary film adaptations, some being historical adaptations of classic pieces of literature. Many films lacked fidelity with nauseating amounts of melodrama; nonetheless, the Great Depression made people long for an escape from reality. Jane Eyre stared two of the most handsome actors in the 1930s because that's what audienc-

es wanted. Very few wanted to see a girl, whom had no money nor family, suffer hardships throughout her life. That hit too close to home for audiences, they wanted to watch beautiful people fall in love and live happily ever after. In the era of genre films, Jane Eyre was a futile rendition of Charlotte Brontë's novel because of the meaningless morals the film offered. People often "sought meaning and escape in the same movie" during the Great Depression ("Hollywood"). Jane Eyre was a loose retelling of the classic novel and offered audiences anything more than subtle amusement. Audiences related to and unconsciously connected to cinematic renderings of desire and lost, both of which Jane Eyre lacked. Hollywood busts and blockbusters bombs were common during the 1930s and 40s, but films adaptations and cinematic retellings were only a mere portion of "The Golden Age of Hollywood" ("Hollywood").

Jane's Ascent to the Glamorous: How Hollywood Radio Brings Jane Eyre to Our Lives

Megan Potter

Plot Summary

The adaptation is an hour-long radio drama of Jane Eyre. Jane introduces herself, giving the audience a quick overview at the beginnings of her meager life – a mention of an unpleasant aunt, and an account of her time spent at Lowood school for girls. 10 years pass, and Jane refuses the offer of a teaching job to work as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she meets Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, and Adèle, her pupil. She settles into life at Thornfield, until one night she unknowingly meets the master of the house, Edward Rochester. Jane is bewildered by Rochester's rough and changeable manners.

Another peculiarity presents itself – there seems to be someone in Thornfield who wanders about at night, who is both mad and dangerous. The truth is concealed from Jane, even after a series of distressing events.

Quickly, the relationship between Jane and Rochester develops, and as the nature of this relationship may be taking a romantic turn, it is made more complicated by Rochester's obligations to Blanche Ingram, whom he intends to marry. However, disgusted by her, he sends her away, and promptly proposes to Jane, who accepts. The wedding is interrupted with the discovery that Rochester is married to a mad woman named Bertha Mason, who is kept hidden in Thornfield. Jane, horrified, leaves, returning to Lowood to work as a kitchen scullion.

Eventually, Jane returns after hearing Rochester has returned to England. She finds the estate has been burned down, but Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, and Rochester are all there to meet her, and Bertha has killed herself. Jane and Rochester marry shortly after, and the story comes to a close as they welcome their first child into the world.

Context

The year was 1948 when audiences first heard the voices of Ingrid Bergman and Robert Montgomery over the radio performing Jane Eyre – the middle of a prolific period of radio drama production in the United States which began in the 1930s and came to a slow end in the late 1950s. This particular rendition of Jane Eyre was presented by Lux Radio Theatre, one of the top-rated radio shows, ranking second on the list of "most popular evening programmes" in 1947 (Krutnik 32). It was produced by Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and stationed in Hollywood – relocated from its previous position in New York as demand for Hollywood film stars called for convenience in proximity.

The set up for Lux Radio Theatre was fairly simple – they would cast big-name actors and actresses to perform live both on the air and in front of a studio audience, and America's growing obsession with Hollywood glamor would draw in an estimated 20-30 million listeners every Monday night (Krutnik 29). In relation with Hollywood, radio shows such as Lux would often perform adaptations of Hollywood movies as well as classic literature. It was a time before television entered the domestic life of American citizens, and so radio was widely popular, giving people the opportunity for entertainment and to revisit stories that once were shown in theaters but became largely unavailable after their limited period of screenings. It also

gave companies the chance to advertise their products over air – Lux Radio Theatre itself was sponsored by the Lever Brothers and promoted their Lux Soap products.

All of these factors contributed to the success of radio anthologies, but few were so successful as Lux Radio Theatre. As Krutnik explains, the network had "a finely tuned sense of the 'tabloid mind' that enabled it to attract the mass audience" (28). Not only was the audience pulled in by names like Ingrid Bergman and Robert Montgomery, but there was also an understanding that the experience would be cinematic, engaging, containing the "fluidity and economy of 'motion picture technique'" (Krutnik 28). There was an expectation of quality and entertainment that Lux Radio Theatre was able to continually meet.

But perhaps radio renditions of classic literature were meant to accomplish something deeper than mere entertainment. In Prchal's essay on Melville's adaptations into radio broadcasts, he presents the idea, possessed by many producers, that radio "would be a boon to efforts to uplift the nation, a means to make the citizenry more sophisticated in regard to the arts and more educated all around" (45). Radio adaptations certainly did reach large audiences, and brought what might be considered as "highbrow" literature into popular culture. Lux Radio Theatre itself begins in the era of the Great Depression, which raises the question as to whether the American public really had time to acquaint themselves fully with literary classics. Therefore, radio provided a solution. The everyday working-class citizen could still be familiar with and engage high art, without the time commitment or education needed to address the original source. It is, as Hutcheon deduces in her book A Theory of Adaptation, not a lesser form of art because it is an adaptation – both the original and the radio adaptation hold a purpose within their cultural context.

It is apparent enough that Lux Radio Theatre and its productions such as Jane Eyre were successes in the eyes of the public, who craved more of their favorite stories and Hollywood stars. Critical reception may be a bit rockier. Lenthall in his study of critical reception of depression-era radio brings forth the idea that "as a national medium run by a few business interests, radio pushed the United States further along its path toward the rule of concentrated capital" (41). This may be seen in the 1948 Jane Eyre rendition – the broadcast is bookended by advertisements, and each act is followed by advertisements, all centered around Lux Soap. In fact, it humorously begins with the assertion that "if Charlotte [Brontë] were alive today and doing her own housework as she did in Yorkshire, I'm sure those new tiny diamonds of Lux would prove a helpful blessing to this family of geniuses." Subtlety was not so much a concern of Lux Radio Theatre. Yet however disenchanted critics were with such radio shows due to their consumerism and lowbrow implications, it cannot be denied that they achieved great renown.

Analysis

Editing: Adjustments and Additions

Beginning with the technicalities of this radio adaptation, there are clear distinctions between it and its source text. Due to the nature of the radio broadcast, Lux Radio Theatre's Jane Eyre was compressed to an hour's length, shorter than the standard film and certainly much shorter than the time expended in reading the novel. With the time constraint, allowances must be made for subtractions in the plot and subplots of the story.

Here is what has been removed from the original: Jane's experiences at Gateshead

or any interaction with Mrs. Reed later in the novel, Jane's friendship with Helen Burns at Lowood, Jane's stay with the Rivers family and her discovered relation to them, as well as her inheritance, and the existence of those characters altogether, and various other plot points which develop the characters more fully and build tension. However simplified, though, it retains the essence of a Jane Eyre story, and dialogue between Rochester and Jane remains an emphasis throughout, and in fact much of this dialogue can been found in the book itself.

Yet radio adaptation can provide for an aural landscape which the novel cannot, once again drawing on Hutcheon's claim that "transposition to another medium… always means change: there are always going to be both gains and losses" (40). What Lux's Jane Eyre loses in content, it gains in the sensory. Lux's Jane Eyre uses both non-diegetic music to create the atmosphere, and diegetic sound effects to embellish the story. Dramatic music often accompanies a transition between scenes because we are relying on hearing alone to guide us through the story, and particularly in this adaptation, it is melodramatic to a degree which may be comical to audiences today. Along the same vein, sound effects build the environment of the story around the listener – for example, the maniacal laughter of Bertha Mason is sure to place us in the position of Jane, who is startled awake by this. Paired with one another, music and sound effects are essential to what a radio drama is aiming to achieve.

In her essay on 'radioliterature', Mader discusses the economy of sound, stating the importance "not to overwhelm the listeners with a torrent of different sounds, but sound signifiers that can easily be decoded simultaneously to their aural transmission" (209). In Lux's Jane Eyre, within its hour-long broadcast, this idea must have been considered. Sound effects are not included for every moment in the narrative – only when an event of significance is occurring. In this way, Lux Radio Theatre is able to draw the listener to these moments, and unconsciously we retain them as significant. Similarly, Huwiler explores how the use of sound creates the world of the story, and the role of voice in establishing "the attributes of a speaking person, such as gender, age and even social or regional background" (134), an idea which makes the casting of Lux Radio Theatre's Jane Eyre interesting and will be explored further.

The Role of Hollywood Stardom

One attribute of a Hollywood star is that most people could probably identify him or her by their appearance. In the 1940s, if someone mentioned Ingrid Bergman, perhaps an image of the tall Swedish beauty would immediately come to mind. Both she and Robert Montgomery were renowned stars, after all, and if there was any reason Lux Radio Theatre gained the popularity it did, it was because of its pioneering use of Hollywood stars. This relationship provokes much thought – how does our knowledge of these stars affect our perception as listeners to radio adaptations?

In the particular case of Jane Eyre, those familiar with the novel would imagine her to be elflike, small in stature, and not especially attractive. Yet the casting of Ingrid Bergman, beautiful and standing tall at five feet nine inches, goes completely astray from this original description. And, returning to Huwiler's point about what characterization voice can provide, Bergman has a distinct Swedish lilt which strays from Jane Eyre's English roots. As radio adaptation would oftentimes stand in lieu of reading literature itself, does the portrayal of Jane as Bergman alter the public's perception of the character entirely? Similarly, Rochester is described by Brontë as not being particularly handsome, and yet Robert Montgomery is also

known for his good looks. In this way, choice in casting might even have significance in a media that is purely aural.

But choice in casting was also an economic decision at the time of Lux Radio Theatre. A Hollywood star could pull in large audiences just by name alone, and so radio shows were sure to include big names at all times, in order for their continued success. In fact, Krutnik describes a phenomenon that occurred due to competition between film studios and radio networks, the phenomenon of "the value of star talent as a bargaining tool in negotiations" (27). While many film studios were blaming radio networks for decline in box office sales, they were also discouraging their stars from appearing on shows such as Lux Radio Theatre (Krutnik 34). However, they soon became aware that perhaps these stars could bring publicity to their films while on air via the radio. In this way, there was a sort of cooperation and negotiation between radio and film industries, where previously there had only been contention.

Casting well-known and glamorous stars also served another purpose: it distracted. Lux's Jane Eyre was an hour-long broadcast, but other radio shows were more often than not restrained to a period of 30 minutes. This was an extremely restrictive limitation, and the content of the adaptations took huge hits to fit within this frame of time. It sacrificed "a great deal of the colour, atmosphere and character development necessary to create the complete whole" (Krutnik 40), and this effect is seen in Lux's Jane Eyre, as I previously stated what narrative points were cut from the story. However, the flatness of the story can seem more "colorful" when brought to life by renown actors and actresses, and thus stardom became the vessel for any successful radio drama.

Dominance of Romance Plot

The limitations of the medium meant that, essentially, only one plot within a story

would probably survive adapting to radio drama. In Lux's Jane Eyre, the surviving plot is the romance between Jane and Mr. Rochester, which in regard to Brontë's novel, is not all too surprising, though the novel offered many other important and essential plots. Jane and Mr. Rochester's dynamic is given the most amount of time in Lux's broadcast, with an emphasis on their dialogue and conversations, which quickly build a relationship that could not be as well established in another way with the time constraints.

The romance plot taking precedence over the other themes in the novel (such as Jane finding a family, or socioeconomic struggles, or feminism) does make sense, as it was a large part of Brontë's narrative and Lux Radio Theatre aimed to be entertaining, light-hearted, and open to a wide array of listeners. But the dominance of the romance plot is not only portrayed in Lux's Jane Eyre, but seemingly in places where it never existed before. In Prchal's analysis of Melville's radio adaptations, he states that a radio adaptation of Bartleby the Scrivener is introduced to a romantic subplot: "…the radio version works to dissociate Melville from ambiguity, that time-tested convention of highbrow narrative. Instead, Bartleby can be seen as the victim of a broken heart, and Melville starts to look a bit like a writer of sentimental romance" (53). Of course, this goes back to radio's aim of allowing what is considered highbrow to enter the public sphere, and the way that this was often accomplished was through romance. Would Jane Eyre be as gripping on the radio without the romance created by Bergman and Montgomery? Chances are low. With romance at its center, it becomes relatable, desirable, and gripping all at once, so while understandably critical reception of radio adaptation was not so favorable, publically it was a smart decision.

To continue off the romance plot is the inclusion of the melodramatic in general. Lux Radio Theatre's presentation of Jane Eyre includes all the elements of melodrama, as established by David Mackey in his analysis of radio drama. It reaches a "broad general audience," contains many "vicarious thrills," and the characters are "quite vivid, but they are often static" (60-61). And this is true of the characters in Lux's Jane Eyre. Jane is rather flat, only showing some of the spark she has in Bronte's novel, and her only development seems to rest at the feet of the romance plot. Mr. Rochester, similarly, recognizes his faults from the beginning, and is only slightly more cordial by the end. Every other aspect of Jane Eyre's radio adaptation comes together in melodramatic harmony – the dramatic music, the rapid pacing, the sound effects, even the stars themselves: all converge to become what will grip a listening audience from the start.

My Lunatic, My Mad Girl

Amy Taylor

Plot Summary

Wide Sargasso Sea, by Jean Rhys, is written as a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre. Wide Sargasso Sea explores the minor character Bertha Mason, giving her dimension Charlotte Brontë did not. In Rhys' story, Bertha was born Antoinette Cosway – a white Creole woman in the West Indies. During this time in Antoinette's youth, racial tension was high. Antoinette came from a line of slave owners and once the slaves were freed, they were cruel to previous slave owners. When she was young, her house was burned down by an angry mob. The fire took her younger brother Pierre's life and turned their home to ruins. Antoinette was struck by a rock and became ill for six weeks. When she comes to, she learns her mother had been driven to madness after the loss of her home and child. Antoinette attended an all-girl Catholic boarding school for the remainder of her youth. When she was grown, her stepfather took her out of school and arranged for her to marry Edward Rochester. Over the course of the novel he realizes he does not love Antoinette but was merely "thirsty for her" (Rhys 84). Antoinette's bitter half-brother learns of their marriage and begins mailing Mr. Rochester letters explaining that Antoinette's mother was mad and that she will soon follow in her footsteps. Rather than a divorce, Mr. Rochester's solution is to lock Antoinette in the attic in his home in England. This is where the story begins to overlap with Jane Eyre.

Context

Jean Rhys' novel Wide Sargasso Sea was published in 1966. It was originally published by André Deutsch in the United Kingdom and by W.W. Norton in the United States. The novel was well received by both the public and critics. The New Yorker called it "a hard glimmering gem of a novel" (Crouch). New York Times said it "both gathers together – and transcends – the achievement of her earlier fiction" (Kakutani). They also mentioned it is less a companion piece to Brontë's famous novel than a gothic summing up of the themes that preoccupied Rhys throughout her life. Author Jean Rhys was born on the island of Dominica to a Creole mother and a Welsh father before she moved to Europe for school. She had the nickname "white cockroach" growing up in Dominica – a nickname Rhys gave her main character, Antoinette Cosway Mason. Jean Rhys was born with the name Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams

but changed her name later to Jean Rhys at the suggestion of her love interest. Antoinette also receives a name change from her lover. Antoinette becomes Bertha. Since Rhys came from mixed ethnic descent, she never fully felt welcomed in either the black or white community. Her feelings of unwelcome as the Other are reflected in Antoinette's feelings throughout the novel (The Prime).

This novel came out in the 1960's, an important time in the feminist movement. The United Kingdom was experiencing second wave feminism, also known as the Women's Liberation Movement. One point of discussion for women during second wave is equality in marriage. A theme in Wide Sargasso Sea is marriage dynamics and how the husband is still dominant in the 1800s. This book was important during its time because it showed a woman fighting against marriage inequality the same time women around the world were actively fighting for that same equality. Jane Eyre had become a popular novel among feminists and Wide Sargasso Sea expanded on the treatment of Bertha Antoinette Mason by Mr. Rochester in Brontë's novel. It really became a response to the second wave feminist movement.

Wide Sargasso Sea is an adaptation classified as a prequel. Plots typically develop in chronological order so sequels usually follow the original source in terms of fictional chronology. However, when sequels are based on events presumed to have taken place back before the events of the original text, they reveal the fictional past leading to the events described in the original story. These stories are termed "prequels". Since this story provides information on the hardly present Bertha Mason's past, chronologically it is placed in the prequel category (Rubik 183).

Adaptations provide many benefits for the original source text. According to John Glavin, adaptations help increase the popularity of already popular source texts, especially for older literature. He uses the example of Charles Dickens. Many people are familiar with his name and work despite never having read his books. This is because adaptations can be more accessible to the audience, shortened for easier digestion, or can focus on certain aspects of the story the source text does not (Glavin i). Wide Sargasso Sea explores a minor aspect of Jane Eyre that Charlotte Brontë did not consider.

Adapting does run its risks, though. The new work will always be compared to the original text the more faithful the adaptation is. This means the adaptation may never be seen standing on its own. If the adaptation deviates from the original text, it could be seen as unfaithful and may be poorly received (Hutcheon 86). Wide Sargasso Sea seemed to avoid this harsh criticism because it fell in its own category as a prequel, filling gaps that Brontë left open. According to Thomas Leitch, novels cannot help but leaving out details causing these gaps, which readers are encouraged to fill in. Adaptations often take advantage of these gaps to explore what the author did not give the readers, just as Wide Sargasso Sea did (Leitch 112).

Analysis

Bertha Antoinette Mason

Much of Rhys' depiction of Bertha Antoinette Mason is not given in the context of Jane Eyre. She ties her Antoinette to Brontë's Bertha through the use of fire in Wide Sargasso Sea. There is an abundance of fire and fire symbolism throughout Rhys' novel. Wide Sargasso Sea begins and ends with a fire, one written in Jane Eyre and one conceived by Rhys that happened in Antoinette's youth. Rhys retains what Brontë says about Bertha Antoinette's beauty.

Rochester describes her to Jane as once beautiful. In Wide Sargasso Sea Antoinette is depicted as a beautiful woman with family money given to Rochester as a dowry. Rhys has imagined the rest of Bertha Antoinette.

Rhys' novel argues that Antoinette was not born mad and neither was her mother, as Rochester leads the readers to believe in Jane Eyre. Both women were simply pushed to their wit's end. Antoinette watched her family get bullied growing up, watched her house burn down, her brother die, and her mother's spiral out of control. As a woman she was promised to Rochester whom she originally does not wish to marry. After he pleads with her she agrees and he in turn realizes he does not love her. He convinces himself that she is crazy and by treating her like she is and locking her in an attic, he pushed her over that edge. Christophine tells Rochester in Wide Sargasso Sea that Antoinette loves him and begs him to love her back but he refuses (Rhys 142). This shows that she was not mad, she was frustrated with the situation she had been put in – a loveless marriage in which she had no power.

In many ways, Antoinette Bertha Mason was written to be the opposite of Jane Eyre. Jane Eyre had no money or fancy clothes. She was not beautiful. Bertha had all of these. She married Rochester quickly while it took Jane a long time before she could marry him. Bertha's marriage was for status, sex, and money while Jane and Mr. Rochester bonded over their love, equality, and kinship (Gilbert 356). Antoinette Bertha can also be seen as a double for Jane Eyre, though. For example, Bertha runs back and forth like an animal while imprisoned in the attic. Similarly, Jane paced back and forth to calm down while imprisoned in the red room, frantic (Gilbert 361). Jane also sees Bertha as her future if she had married Rochester on their original wedding date. Jane already guessed in chapter 24 that his love for her would not last more than six months. Seeing Bertha confirmed her fear that Rochester would not make a faithful husband.

Mr. Edward Rochester

The most faithful aspect of Rhys' Rochester to Brontë's Rochester is how the reader is made to feel ambivalent toward him. In both works he has enough strong and weak points in character that the reader is unsure of whether the good outweighs the bad. In the beginning of Rhys' novel, the reader believes Rochester could be a positive force in Antoinette's life. He goes to her and pleads that she marries him. He starts out kind to her. Over the course of the novel he reveals the realization that he does not love her and eventually does not trust her. This is ironic because in Jane Eyre, both Jane and the readers learn they cannot trust Rochester after he reveals he has been hiding his real wife. Readers of both novels become torn between sympathizing that Rochester is in a loveless marriage but also accusing Rochester for not giv-

ing the marriage a chance or for entering the marriage in the first place. In the original text, Jane Eyre, he gains a little more sympathy because we only hear his side of the story – he was tricked and Antoinette Bertha was mad to begin with. In Wide Sargasso Sea, he does not get that redeeming quality. The readers see that it was his untrusting and unfaithful behavior that makes Antoinette what she is.

Rhys' Rochester can be seen as the embodiment of English law and the patriarchal codes that imprison Antoinette (Kendrick 235). Rochester flexes this Victorian patriarchal privilege when he dismisses Christophine from her duties at the honeymoon home. Christophine tries to fight back but Rochester reminds her that the home belongs to him now (Rhys 144). It is also shown when Christophine suggests Antoinette run away from Rochester but Antoinette explains that she cannot because Rochester now has all her money (Rhys 100). Antoinette is essentially trapped by Rochester in a Victorian era marriage. These oppressive norms that trap Antoinette are the things the second wave feminists were fighting against in the 1960's when the novel was published.

Victorian Marriage

Both of Rochester's marriages take place during the Victorian era. Gender roles in marriage were very strict during this time and that is reflected in both Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea. These roles play a large part in what drove Bertha Antoinette mad. Despite how desperately she wanted to get away from her marriage, she could not. She was subjected to an arranged marriage and all of her money was given to Rochester. What's worse is at this time it was the male that decided if a woman had gone mad. Mr. Mason decided Antoinette's mother was mad and sent her away. Rochester decided Antoinette, like her mother, was mad and locked her in an attic. Both of these women most likely could have avoided this fate if their husbands communicated and trusted them, rather than labeling them crazy.

John Stuart Mill commented on marriage in the Victorian era as nothing more than "actual bondage". He stated, "there remain no legal slaves, except the mistress of every house" (Bourke 423). This is visible in Wide Sargasso Sea because the novel takes place right after the emancipation of slaves. Antoinette clearly becomes chained to Rochester because she cannot leave him or reclaim her money. She is not seen as a slave in the eyes of the law, but she is linked to Rochester for life, no matter how unhappy they may be. He will not consent to letting her leave him therefore she must stay.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette and Rochester are in a liminal space of Victorian marriage. The story takes place while they are at their honeymoon home following their wedding. In this liminal space the reader can only see a few aspects of what their marriage would actually look like long term. It does not appear that Antoinette would ever work, making her completely financially dependent on Rochester. The couple has servants at the honeymoon home so the readers do not see if Rochester expected traditional gender roles from Antoinette as the home caretaker. This liminal space of marriage allows the readers to focus solely on Rochester finding out the Mason family secrets and the trust disintegrating between the two of them. It is safe to say just from Rhys' characterization of Antoinette that she would not fit into traditional gender norms because she does not seem to be a woman complacent with the expectations that come with being English, just as Jane Eyre did not wish to be pigeonholed with expectations (Hope 52).

Dracula
By Bram Stoker

"There is a reason why all things are as they are."

Humanizing Dracula: A Complicated Prequel

Spence Caudill

Plot Summary

In his 2014 film, "Dracula Untold", Gary Shore attempted to create an action horror film that related the origins of one of literature's most infamous villains: Count Dracula. As o ne of the most popular novels for film adaptations, it was only a matter of time before Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was adapted into a prequel. However, the film's depiction of Dracula quickly becomes problematic, filled with the overused tropes of action movies and an anti-hero that is so unlike any prior depiction of Dracula that the character is unrecognizable. Shore creates a Dracula that is not only redeemable, but steeped in humanity, making the film's protagonist (an odd term in when used to refer to Vlad the Impaler, much less Dracula) unfamiliar from the classic. Vlad's humanity is an integral part of the movie's central conflict, and his battle against his vampiric powers only exemplify the qualities of the character that put him so at odds with the classic villain.

Serving as a prequel, "Dracula Untold" recounts the life of prince Vlad the Impaler (Luke Evans), whose lands' peace is broken by the appearance of the Ottoman Empire, which demands the tribute of another generation of Janissaries soldiers. At the behest of his wife, Mirena (Sarah Gadon), Vlad attempts to negotiate with the Sultan (Dominic Cooper), offering himself in exchange, but the failure of the negotiation results in Mehmed demanding Vlad's own son (Art Parkinson) as well.

In an attempt to obtain the power he needs to destroy the Turkish army, Vlad seeks out an ancient vampire (Charles Dance) living within his lands. The vampire offers to shift his powers to Vlad, but there are conditions: it will only be for three days, but giving in to the inherent thirst for human blood will doom him for eternity, transforming him permanently. Vlad agrees, drinking the vampire's blood and becoming a vampire himself. Vlad uses his pow er in the nights following, but they are still not enough to save his people or his wife, who urg es Vlad to claim his full vampiric powers as she is dying. He drinks her blood, creates a small force of vampires from survivors among his people, and succeeds in saving his son from the Sultan's capture. In the film's epilogue, Vlad is depicted in modern times as meeting the dop pelganger and spiritual reincarnation of his late wife, who introduces herself as Mina before they walk off together, followed by the ancient vampire.

Context

"Dracula Untold" was the debut film for its director, Gary Shore, and its writers, Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless. Distributed by Universal Studios, the film's reception as a whole was problematic. Though its debut was strong, earning $23.5 million in its opening weekend in theaters-an amount it would double in domestic sales. However, it was far stronger in foreign sales; the film amassed three quarters of its total earnings, just over $217 million, from overseas box offices.

"Dracula Untold" was released on October 10th, 2014, as a PG-13 action-horror film. Its launch was contended in theaters by the premiers of several other horror and thriller films such as "Gone Girl", "Annabelle", and "Ouija", and was shortly followed by action films "Fury" and "John Wick". This competition in similar genres may have played a part in its pop ular reception, which earned it middling ratings from moviegoers. However, its critical reviews were less sterling. As a consensus, it was apparent that the film's shallow depth of emotion and its attempt to reshape Bram Stoker's villain were problematic, though redeemed by the cap tivating visuals. Criticism of the cast was mixed, regarding Evans' portrayal of the brooding

antihero as mostly positive while other roles lacked substance.

The cinematography, courtesy of John Schwartzman, is undeniably beautiful, and one of the strongest features in this adaptation. From sweeping, panoramic shots of stunning landscapes to hovering close-ups that capture the nuances of the characters' expressions, the use of light and dark is a central part of the film's inky, gritty style. With a muted palette that progressively darkens as Vlad draws nearer to the fate we, as an audience, know he's destined for, its strength is in the contrast between light and dark. Like a Caravaggio painting, the point ed use of chiaroscuro expertly moves the viewer's attention across the frame, highlighting key figures in a scene or emphasizing the true darkness which consumes it.

This technique creates a visual representation that runs parallel to Vlad's character development. The gradual decline in the palette and the slowly approaching darkness that envelops the screen add a visual understanding of Vlad's darkening future, and the ever-deep ening violence which his lands are thrust into. As the end of his borrowed powers draws near er and his urge to feed on human blood grows, the colors seem to fade from Vlad's world.

While this is mostly a cinematic tool, it's also an effect of the forced narrative which the directors and writers used to control the pace of the film. The majority of this adaptation takes place in partial to full darkness, either created by overcast skies or the full depth of night. Rather than lingering on the long daylight hours in which Vlad's powers would have been depleted by the sun, the production staff chose instead to omit what would have otherwise consisted of half of their allotted screen time. The film makes good use of its sunlight, in corporating it only when it's directly relevant to plot and, as a result, the careful use of sunlight also becomes a narrative tool to highlight Vlad's descent into darkness.

Analysis

The Nature of Prequels

Fundamentally, prequels and sequels are different applications of the same concept: a continuation of the original story. While sequels remain a more popular method in both film and literature, prequels offer writers and directors a unique opportunity to build upon existing works by fortifying the foundations upon which it stands. Both prequels and sequels are creat ed after their originals, and utilize references to their source materials for the basis of their content. What may remain more challenging about prequels not created by their original au thors, however, is that often the source is not always clear on its origins; a story can be easily continued forward, but it can be difficult to trace it back to its roots without proper guidance.

Though our modern concept of prequels is relatively new, pinpointing when and how they began is more complicated. Sequels, as a progression of a continuous story line, have ex isted as long as storytelling itself, contextualized by epics like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and seen in voracious use in modern literature ("Sequel"). However, it's more difficult to define what constitutes as a prequel-after all, every tale has a personal history. There is a foggy divide between introductions, prequels, and separate stories that make navigating them complicated and sometimes interpretive.

In the context of modern literature and the English language, the word "prequel" is still relatively young. Coined in 1958 in a publication announcement of James Blish's *Year 2018!*, it would be printed again in the context of Professor Tolkein's *The Silmarillon* ("Pre quel"). But the concept is undeniably older than both in literary application that simply had no

name prior. Extant examples of prequels are connected all the way back to the 4th and 5th centuries b.c., in a portion of the Epic Cycle called *Cypria*, which relates the events leading up to the *Iliad* ("Epic Cycle").

Bram Stoker's notations on Count Dracula's history are few and far between, and incredibly vague as to add to his mystery. The Count is described as being a "soldier, states man, and alchemist," (Stoker 434), and is regarded as a man of honor who led his troops against the Turks (Stoker, Chapter 18). Dracula relates his tales of honor and valor to Jonathan Harker after dinner one evening, remarking even that he was forced to flee battle in one in stance for the sake of his people. With so few and such vague details as this, it is easy to un derstand why Stoker's novel was over a century old before it received its first popular attempt at a prequel.

The Humanization of Dracula

One of the most challenging aspects of Shore's film is not the inherent humanization of Dracula's character (it would be natural to assume that even Stoker's Count was human at one point), but rather the heroism he displays. Those familiar with the novel will, undoubt edly, be surprised by the noble, daring figure Evans portrays: a man who is motivated by the desire to protect his family and his subjects, willing to make sacrifices to his own ethics and mortality. Shore's brooding hero is nearly unrecognizable from the classic Count Dracula, in regards to their personalities and motivations. Where Stoker's Dracula is calculating, and ex acts his desire from the world without remorse, Evans' portrayal is a haunted, self-sacrificing antihero whose attempts to save his people result in the sacrifice of his own mortal soul.

Indeed, Vlad forsakes an integral part of his character in order to obtain his powers; since returning to Transylvania, Vlad has made a very obvious return to his faith, indicated by narrated dialogue and shots of closely-held crucifixes. That Vlad is willing to sacrifice his mortal soul in order to protect his people is central to his heroic nature, regardless of what sort of past he may have. The film draws on the violence and horror of Vlad's personal back story as a former royal hostage and Janissary soldier prior to his conversion back to Christian ity, and there is a lingering sense of regret surrounding his involvement in the Turkish military

-an obvious shame of the acts he committed.

These layers of characterization, built on the Vlad's moral structure, are the ground work for the decisions he makes through the rest of the film: his personal understanding of the sacrifice he would make in offering the boys to the Sultan; the weight of his own past and confronting those atrocities; and the weight of his choice to risk damnation in order to save those he wishes to protect.

Though these assumptions of his character are not unfounded. Count Dracula him self regales Jonathan Harker with stories of his youth and early character. While there is no mention of a history amongst the Turkish army as a youth, or of the lengths to which he pur sued his infamous victory against the same army years later, the fundamental notoriety is the same in its involvement with the Turks. Count Dracula even offers up a singular moment of personal sacrifice, in the necessity of abandoning battle so that he might live. His reasoning: as a leader of his people, his survival would have been more beneficial to their well-being that the act of dying beside them in a losing battle.

Yet the portrayal of a morally conscious Dracula with no clear indication of his trans formation to pure villain is problematic-especially when the film takes its dramatic turn to modern times at its end. "Dracula Untold" pushes too far in its attempts to reach out to its audience, and effectually nullifies its own character in an attempt to connect with viewers. Evans' portrayal of Dracula begins strong, focusing on his dark history in connection to the Turks as a Janissary soldier, and his reputation as Vlad the Impaler. However, it devolves as we watch as Vlad is confronted with the past he has done his best to erase, and the choices he makes to ensure his promise to his wife is kept, to keep a new generation of young men from being forced into those same horrors.

Vlad's sacrifice is filled with a moral conflict that seems unlike the classic Dracula. While Stoker did not much define his villain's earlier self, there is the subtle suggestion in his reflections to Harker that he is not much changed in undeath as he was in life. Count Dracula feeds on the drama and attention surrounding the arrival of the Harkers the same as he feeds on human blood; it sustains him. Most importantly, Count Dracula does not express a mo ment of remorse for his actions throughout the novel; he is a shameless villain without con science, and that is part of his dark appeal.

It is the skewing of the title character's moral alignment that distances "Dracula Un told" from *Dracula*. Though we see Vlad return to his role as the dark, deadly warrior capable of leveling entire battalions as both mortal and undead, it is not without the loss of his moral convictions-and it is that caveat that makes him more human than monster in his ultimate sacrifice. Vlad doesn't reclaim his former violence out of a genuine want of them, but rather the ugly necessity of it; it is only at the behest of his dying wife and the motivation to save his kidnapped son that he gives in to the dark urges of his vampirism. It wasn't for greed or power that Vlad ultimately claimed his awful immortality, but for love-and there is nothing more humanizing than the ability to love with authenticity.

Vlad's liminality between hero and villain makes for a decent action movie, but a very complicated *Dracula* prequel. As the movie transforms Vlad from a human, whose soul would have soon been returned at the end of its three-day trial, to a creature of the night who is eternally damned, it creates a far more complicated dialogue in conjunction with the story it is attempting to preclude. In its effort to connect with audiences and craft a more human

version of the Count, it creates a wholly unrecognizable character who merely happens to share the same name. Even at his worst, when Vlad chooses to destroy the small following of vampires he has created to exact his final revenge against the Turks, he does so with the moti vation to protect. It is out of love that he commits these atrocities, which complicates the perception of him as a bloodthirsty monster with no true conscience.

The Genre Transition

As a part of the Dracula narrative, it is expected that "Dracula Untold" would strive to belong within the horror genre. The film's inky, often dirty cinematography instantly estab lishes a dark, edgy visual narrative which coincides with the aesthetics of the genre. It also cashes in on the early frights of Vlad's first encounters with the ancient vampire, utilizing jump scares and the disorienting fear of unseen attacks in the darkness of his mountaintop cavern. It's a strong hook, with promise to continue frightening its viewers for the remainder of the movie. Yet, as the drama unfolds, the story turns away from its horror motifs and embraces those more in line with a romance film.

This is done, mainly through the shift in the focus of interests. Initially, there is an emphasis on the mysterious creature in Broken Tooth Mountain, then the danger it could pos sibly pose upon the characters if released from its prison. The threat of the ancient vampire is a layer of terror on top of tension that is mounting in the film between the Transylvanian people and the invading Turks, and adds a touch of fantasy flavor to the film's thematics.

When Vlad claims his temporary powers, however, there is the thrill of discovering his new abilities. The audience is no longer afraid of the unknown, but exciting in the study of these assets and wondering how they will impact the progression of the plot. It is this transitional point in the film where the producers slowly left behind their original genre and press slowly into another; while they retain the dark, gothic elements, the horror motifs of frightening monsters and unfathomable darkness are exchanged for a jaded hero and his impossible endeavor to stand against a greater military force. This transition transforms "Dracula Untold" in the latter half of the film into something more akin to a romance than a thriller.

This shift is in line with a key omission in Dracula's character, as well. Stoker's Count Dracula is an iconic sexual predator, steeped in eroticism – an aspect of the character that is removed in this adaptation. Though he exhibits intimacy with his wife, the tender moments they are the expected passion between spouses. Even after Vlad has obtained his temporary vampirism, he resists the predatory desire to feed on her blood in a particularly steamy en counter.

Shore's distinct move away from salacious predator to tormented lover ushers in a whole new narrative in the second half of the film; rather than the excitement stemming from frightening monsters in the dark, the film's brooding hero becomes a romanticized version of that monster, utilizing his new latent darkness for good. It's a very romantic notion, and the transfiguration of the genre embodies the greater problems of this adaptation. Though there is a certain degree of eroticism and romance inherent to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (whether or not it is healthy for the characters involved), it remains true to its origins as a gothic horror. "Dracula Untold", however embraces its romantic elements and forsakes its initial genre. The exact reasons behind this shift aren't exactly clear, except to facilitate Vlad's loss and to give him the final encouragement he needs to seize the power that will enable him to protect the singular thing he has left: his son.

As Shore's narrative distances the film from its literary origins, it drastically compli cates its relationship to the iconic character it attempts to reimagine. It fails to capture the essence of the character in its efforts to invoke an emotional response from viewers, and in humanizing an infamous villain for the sake of a captive audience.

Adapting Gothic Horror Novels: From Imagination to Reality

Ryan Herrera

Plot Summary

The film Van Helsing (2004), directed by Stephen Sommers, is a direct adaptation of the novels Dracula (1897) by Bram Stoker and Frankenstein (1818) by Mary Shelley. The film starts in 1887 Transylvania, where Dr. Frankenstein completes his monster with the aid of Count Vladislaus Dracula and Frankenstein's assistant, Igor. However, Dracula reveals his evil plan to Frankenstein and kills him, while the monster escapes to a windmill. A mob sets the windmill on fire, and the monster is lost in the wreckage. One year later, Gabriel Van Helsing is told he must help the last of the Valerious family defeat Dracula. A friar named Carl makes him weapons, and they travel to Transylvania to meet Anna Valerious. Soon after their arrival, Dracula's brides ambush them until Van Helsing kills Marishka, one of the brides. Anna then encounters Velken, her brother, who was thought dead after trying to capture the Wolf Man. Velken, however, changed into the Wolf Man himself. The group tracks Velken to Frankenstein's castle and discovers that Dracula is attempting to use him as a power source to give life to his born-dead children. They then find the monster who reveals he is the key to Dracula's experiment. They travel to Budapest, where the brides ambush them again while the Wolf Man bites Van Helsing. At the Valerious castle, Carl finds a secret passageway that leads straight to Dracula's castle. Carl then realizes that a werewolf's bite is the only thing that can kill Dracula, so Van Helsing goes to battle him. He defeats Dracula, but attacks Anna as she injects him with the cure for lycanthropy (a rare psychiatric syndrome that involves a delusion that the affected person can transform into, has transformed into, or is a non-human animal). He mourns her loss and has a funeral for her as the monster floats away on a raft.

Context

The film was written, produced, and directed by Stephen Sommers. Sommers had previously directed the films The Mummy (1999) and The Mummy Returns (2001), two remakes that were loosely based on the original Mummy film from 1932. These three films, Van Helsing included, served as reboots to the popular series of movies released by Universal Pictures between the 1920s and 1930s that featured many horror monsters from previous novels. These reboots were also released by Universal Pictures, which brought the series into a new millennium to reach a new audience. Sommers earned his master's degree from USC after spending three years in its School of Cinematic Arts. He also created his own company, The Sommers Company, in 2004, which he used to produce Van Helsing. Prior to this, Sommers had already tested the waters of adapting novels to film, writing and directing The Adventures of Huck Finn (1993) and producing Oliver Twist (1997), as well as the aforementioned Mummy remakes. According to imdb.com, most of Sommers' movies before Van Helsing were based on classics, and he followed them up with this adaptation of two of the most famous gothic novels of the 19th century.

The critical reception for this film was mostly negative. According to metacritic.com, Van Helsing has a metascore of 35 based on 38 critical reviews, which falls in the range

of "generally unfavorable reviews." The film doesn't fare any better on rottentomatoes.com, where only 23% of critics have given it a favorable review, with the general consensus for critics being that the film is "a hollow creature feature that suffers from CGI overload." It is given an even lower rating amongst the top 40 critics, where only 18% have given it a favorable review. These ratings show that, at least in the minds of film critics, the adaptation was not up to par with the novels or even older film adaptations. However, the popular reception of the film is much more positive. It has earned a 6.1 user score on metacritic.com, meaning more mixed to positive reviews, while 57% of users on rottentomatoes.com have given the film positive reviews, meaning 3.5 stars or higher. Most critics who gave the film bad reviews pointed to what they considered the overuse of computer-generated imagery. The film has taken criticism for the fact that "human actors are routinely upstaged by special effects" (Scott), and even Sommers himself took some criticism from critics like Roger Ebert, as Ebert feared that Sommers "is simply going for f/x overkill" (Ebert).

Sommer, however, intended to create a spectacle of a film that features all sorts of animated effects. The making of Van Helsing, released on May 7th, 2004, came at a time when filmmakers were pushing the limits of what could be done with CGI. In his film review for The Atlantic, Christopher Orr even states that, "the relentless special effects of Van Helsing would simply not have been possible ten, or even five, years ago. The movie was made now, it appears, because it could be made now" (Orr). The timing of the film, combined with the CGI know-how of Sommers, gave Van Helsing endless possibilities for what could be created.

Analysis

Technology

The impact of technology in the modern age distinguishes Van Helsing from the original novels in two ways: the technology used by the characters in the film is an upgrade over the technology used in the novels, and the technology used to create the film provided greater technological opportunities for its creation. In the film, we are introduced to a more technological version of the monster than the one portrayed in Frankenstein. The film's version shows the monster with bolts serving as electrodes coming out of its neck, two electrified domes covering its head and its heart, and hydraulic pistons on each leg. This is a far cry from the being with "yellow skin scarcely cover[ing] the work of muscles and arteries beneath" and "lustrous black" hair that we are introduced to in the novel (Shelley 37). In comparing the film to Dracula, the biggest change is in the technology we see the vampire-hunters use. Gone are the blood transfusions, phonographs, and typewriters used in the novel. Instead, the film introduces us to all sorts of weapons that would not have fit in the 19th century. Van Helsing is equipped with a semi-automatic crossbow, spinning blades, a grappling hook, and a bomb-like device that creates a light that matches the intensity of the sun. These technological advancements connect the story to present-day, because this technology could not have even been imagined at the time the original novels were written.

The capabilities of technology in 2004 are what really bring Van Helsing into a new realm of filmmaking. As previously stated, the film was released at a time when CGI was pushing the boundaries of what could be created on film. As Russell Banks says, there are "enormous and incredibly expensive technological resources and hardware available" that allow studios to make these films with spectacular visual effects (154). These capabilities are what made Sommers' vision possible. The images presented to readers of Dracula and Frankenstein can spark their imagination, but it is "the technical properties of the film and television media [that] can render [these images] as if real" (Bignell 3). The technological advancements in filmmaking offered Sommers an opportunity to create a film full of special effects. This was not possible even five years before the film was made, but the rapid growth of CGI is what helped Sommers turn a fantasy into reality and is the reason for Banks arguing that "film making has gone digital" (154). Readers are expected to use a lot of imagination when reading these novels, but it is "the iconic quality of the visual signs of film and TV […] [that] gives the stamp of authenticity to what is seen on the screen" (Bignell 3).

Power of Religion

In comparing Dracula and Van Helsing, one thing becomes very clear: religion, specifically Christianity, is a huge part of the story. In Dracula, we are first introduced to religion when Harker is offered a crucifix by an old woman when she learns he is on his way to Dracula's castle, and we also find others praying for him and praying as they moved closer to the Carpathians (Stoker 8). We also see religious icons later when Van Helsing uses Communion wafers to seal off Lucy's tomb and, later, to seal off Dracula's castle. The use of these icons are evidence of the fact that science, which Dr. Seward believes in wholeheartedly, won't be enough to kill Dracula; religion and the Christian faith are ulti-

mately the tools one needs to vanquish these vampires. In Van Helsing, Christian icons are even more heavily involved in the fight against Dracula. More icons are introduced in the film than we see in the novel. In the scene where Carl is loading up Van Helsing's weapons at the Vatican, Carl adds Holy water to the arsenal, as it will be needed in battle. Later in the film, we find out from Dracula himself that Van Helsing's first name is actually Gabriel, and he is the "left hand of God." From this, we infer that Van Helsing is actually an angel who was sent to rid the world of evil forces. As the "left hand of God," he battles the ultimate evil in Dracula, who through his vampire form, resembles Satan or even one of his demons. With all the allusions to Christianity that we see in Van Helsing, it is noticeable that religion plays a bigger role in combating evil than in Dracula.

The reason for the increased showing of religion in the film may be because of the very sexualized nature of vampire films in recent years. Reflecting on modern movies, we see that "changing attitudes toward sex account for the modifications in the vampire theme from the days of Bram Stoker and F.W. Murnau to the contemporary era" (McNally and Florescu 179). This attitude is seen in Van Helsing, where Dracula's brides and even Dracula himself are much more sexualized. The brides have very minimal clothing with very low-cut tops, and Dracula is a much more seductive being in the film. Although we do read about sexuality in the novel, it is much easier to express this sexualization when showing it to the audience's face rather than having them imagine it. In Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan's essay comparing Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone to its film adaptation, the duo state that the trailer to the film "remind[s] viewers that the magic the book asks them to imagine can be realized in realistic terms by the technological possibilities of film" (38). This idea can apply to other film adaptations as well. Films aren't held back by the same constraints that novels are, where they can only tell readers what something may look like and then let them imagine it. Instead, film adaptations can actually show you what is being described in the novels, bridging the gap between imagination and reality and giving the viewers the true image. With Van Helsing, Sommers had the advantage of being able to show rather than write about sexuality, and because of this, the film's sexuality is at a much higher level than those of the novels. This increased sexuality, in turn, creates the need for much more powerful showings of religion in the film than in Dracula; it takes an increased level of religious action for the good characters to win the ultimate battle.

Film Ending's Fidelity to the Novels

When watching a film adaptation of a well-known novel, a moviegoer's reception of the film may depend on how faithful it is to the original novel. That being said, if a moviegoer were to compare the ending of Van Helsing to the endings of Dracula and Frankenstein, they would find that the film's ending is much more faithful to the ending of the latter than the former. In Dracula, we see that Count Dracula's fate is death at the hands of Jonathan Harker and Quincy Morris, two men aided by the wisdom of Abraham Van Helsing. Harker gives the first strike to Dracula, where his "great knife […] shear(s) through the throat" of Dracula, "whilst at the same moment Mr. Morris' bowie knife plunged in the heart" (Stoker 350). We see a drastic difference in the film, where it is not Van Helsing's men that defeat Dracula but Van Helsing himself. On the other hand, the fate of Frankenstein's monster in the film is left ambiguous, as he sets sail on a raft and the film ends before the audience can see what becomes of him. This ending is much more faithful to the original novel, with a few slight differences. In Frankenstein, the last time we see the monster is on the ship of Captain Walton, mourning the death of his creator. Although he claims he "shall quit (Walton's) vessel" and go somewhere where he can die peacefully (Shelley 178), the monster's true fate is just as ambiguous as it is in Van Helsing. When comparing the ending of the film to the two books, a moviegoer may be disappointed in regards to its faithfulness to the ending of Dracula, whereas they may be pleased based on the ending of Frankenstein.

However, the audience should not automatically view the adaptation as "good" or "bad" without first realizing the struggles involved in adapting a novel into a film while attempting to keep perfect fidelity to the original. As Siddhant Kalra writes, "from text to film, the change in media changes the form entirely and in this transformation of form, there resides a long tradition of discourse on the efficacy of translation in literary adaptations" (2). What Kalra is saying is that comparing the original text and its film adaptation isn't like comparing apples to apples. The work put in to translate this text as well as the challenges that make it harder to adapt the text into a film should be taken into account when comparing the adaptation to its original. In today's age, "'good' and 'bad' lose the currency of their binary" and it is more important to view the adaptation in a "cross-paradigmatic analysis rather than suspending it within only one paradigm" (Kalra 2).

The viewing of a film adaptation's fidelity to the original does not take into account what the screenplay writers and directors are attempting to do with their version of the story. An adaptation cannot be a carbon copy of the original; writers want to put their own spin on the story just as much, if not more, than they want to remain faithful to the original. Linda Hutcheon wrote that "the creative work involved in adapting is a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another narrative, of abducting it, if you like, for one's own creative purposes" ("Age of Adaptation" 41). Sommers' ending to Van Helsing was a necessary change; Dracula and the monster do not cross paths in the original novels, so there was no way to create an ending that was perfectly faithful. However, it was also part of Sommers' desire to make the film his own that drove him to spin the ending his own way. This is largely seen in Dracula's fate in the film, where his death is completely different than what we read in the novel. Van Helsing brings with it a change in the way Dracula can even be killed. Whereas in the novel his death involves him being stabbed through the heart and

slashed in the throat, in the film we see that these conventional ways to kill a vampire are not nearly enough to kill Dracula. We see him stabbed directly through the heart twice: once by Dr. Frankenstein, and once by Van Helsing. However, neither of these acts have any effect on Dracula, and he even taunts Dr. Frankenstein by saying "you can't kill me Victor," thrusting himself onto the knife, and then finishing with "I'm already dead."

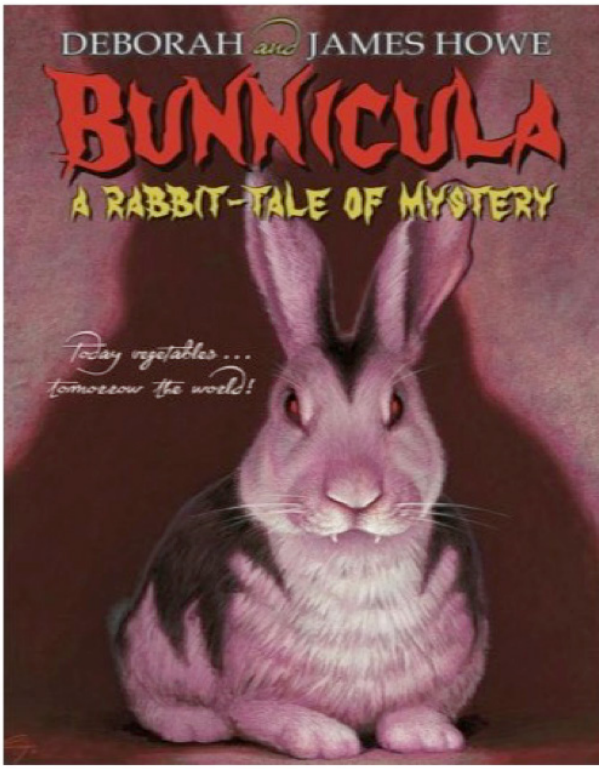
This twist is what leads to the biggest change the film makes from the novel. We find out from Carl that the only way Dracula can be killed is with a werewolf's bite, and this is eventually how Van Helsing defeats Dracula. Although this ending is not faithful to the novel and completely changes how Dracula is defeated, it was out of Sommers' desire to create his own narrative instead of recycling the ending of Dracula that led to this twist. Again, an audience's response to this change is based on its desire to see a faithful film adaptation, but this leads to the "palpable tension between the audience's desire for a fidelity to the beloved literary work and the creator's desire for autonomous reconfiguration" ("Age of Adaptation" 48). Sommers' ending may not have been as faithful to the original novels, but it was out of his eagerness to make his film distinguishable that led to the creation of this new ending.

In adapting a novel into a film, it is important to realize that the original is "not something to be reproduced, but rather something to be interpreted and recreated" (Theory of Adaption 84). Adaptations are supposed to be able to stand on their own. An adaptation can recreate parts from the original, but it is not ideal to make an adaptation that has no originality because "fidelity to its source text […] is a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense" (Leitch 114). In understanding this idea, we also gain an understanding of Sommers' drive to make an ending that was completely his own, regardless of its faithfulness to the novels.

Theorizing How Dracula Became Bunnicula

Samantha Koester

Plot Summary



A children's book written with a spin on the classic horror novel, Dracula, Bunnicula: a Rabbit-Tale of Mystery tells the story of a suspicious rabbit brought home by the Monroe family. During their visit to the movie theater, the family discovered a baby rabbit left in the theater with a mysterious note written in a foreign dialect. Since they were at the theaters to see the film Dracula, they settle on the name "Bunnicula" for their new bunny. With Bunnicula being told from the perspective of Harold, the family dog, the series of events as Bunnicula is introduced into the household is told in a lighthearted tone with twinges of suspenseful horror.

Shortly after the Monroes bring Bunnicula home, their vegetables begin to turn white. Chester, the household cat, begins to suspect that Bunnicula is the culprit – and a vegetable-juice-sucking vampire rabbit. Chester and Harold make it their mission to investigate, and eventually catch Bunnicula in the act. While Chester tries to sabotage Bunnicula at every turn, surrounding the rabbit's cage with garlic cloves and engaging in dramatic acts in an attempt to warn the Monroes, Harold begins to empathize with Bunnicula. In the end, Chester is forced to give up his devious plans, and Bunnicula finds himself happy, healthy and cared for by Harold and the Monroe family.

Context

Bunnicula was originally published by Atheneum Books, a company specializing in publication of literature for young readers. Now called Atheneum Books for Young Readers, the company is owned and operated by the publishing company Simon & Schuster. Considering the book's lasting popularity, Bunnicula was well received by children and the general public. A 1979 Washington Post review called it "whimsy," but "entertaining," also making an analogy to The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by likening Chester and Harold to Sherlock Holmes and Watson. New York Times reviewer Lois Metzger wrote that Bunnicula's authors had "the perfect pitch," and said the book and its following series were "charming and funny."

As a married couple, authors James and Deborah Howe wrote Bunnicula: a Rab-

bit-Tale of Mystery together as the first book of the seven-part children's mystery series. According to James' additional narrative to newer publications of Bunnicula, "Writing Bunnicula: the Story behind the Story," both he and his wife love to write (Howe, 1999). After James came up with the idea of Bunnicula as a character, Deborah decided that they had to create a story together. They decided to approach the book as a tale of mystery, not one of horror. James explains in his biography that this affected their decision to keep Bunnicula silent throughout the story, as well as make him a vegetable-loving vampire, not one out for human blood (Howe, 1999).

Unfortunately, Deborah grew sick from cancer before the excerpts they had written were fully pieced together, but she and James continued to expand on their ideas whenever they were able to. Together, they wrote the remainder of their chapters, and James typed them up while Deborah was in and out of the hospital. Deborah passed away on June 3, 1978 before the book was published in March of 1979 (Howe, 1999). Atheneum bought Bunnicula and another manuscript the two had written, which encouraged James to continue pursuing a career in children's literature after Deborah's death, according to James' Simon & Schuster biography. He published several more children's stories, and as of today, has written over ninety works in total (Howe, 1999).

The Howes began working on Bunnicula in the 1970s, a decade in which Dracula-inspired works, especially films, were on the rise. Gary Smith, author of Vampire Films of the 1970s: Dracula to Blacula and Every Fang Between, wrote, "It seemed as if a new vampire movie opened in cinemas every week, most of them offering some version of the established formula" (Smith, 7). Vampire film lore evolved every time a notable director added a new characteristic to the depiction of Dracula and other vampires. He noted that in the 1970s, the films took a different turn, becoming more erotic with the progression of the sexual revolution and calling attention to the troubles plaguing minority groups at the time (Smith, 7).

With the story of Dracula so widespread at the time, another vampire story seems predictable. However, Bunnicula changed the narrative into a children's adaptation. In comparison to the widespread adaptations of Dracula, there are few that take the form of children's literature, with even fewer that completely re-shaped the image of Dracula as a character, making it a popular and impactful piece of writing. Bunnicula was so well received that its legacy carried on beyond its initial publication. Not only did the book serve as an adaption of Dracula itself, but it also inspired its own adaptations. Apart from James Howe's addition of other Bunnicula books, two musicals were made, in addition to a 1982 short film, about the original book. In February of 2016, Warner Brothers launched a new television series based off of the Bunnicula books, also incorporating references to the original Dracula and other adaptations of the novel.

Analysis

What are genres, and how does Bunnicula transcend them?

A genre, in literary terms, is loosely defined as a category of written works that share similar qualities. From mystery and horror to romance and historical fiction, each literary genre comes with an understood set of guidelines that enable certain works to fall within its classification. As Amy Devitt explains in her article, "Integrating Rhetorical and Liter-

ary Theories of Genre," genres have, throughout history, been dependent on historical situations for their creation and changes. In summary, genres reflect the way authors and readers use language (702). Thus, specific identities arise for genres, and readers tend to have expectations in place when they pick up a novel or other piece of literature because it falls into a category they favor.

Of course, many authors tend to ignore "rules" with their writing. One way they sometimes choose to do so is by breaking the mold of the story's assumed genre (Devitt 706). This could lead to aggravation or frustration on the part of readers. Yet, a literary work may sometimes be praised, and even found more intriguing, if it tweaks an aspect of its identity to overlap with another or perhaps multiple genres. As Devitt claims, "Nonetheless, the most highly valued literature is typically valued to some degree for its 'originality,' its '"novelty"' (Devitt 706). Citing the arguments of a few other authors, she notes that texts do not always need to be assigned a single genre, as the definitions of genres have grown so broad, most works could easily belong to multiple genres regardless of the author's intention (701).

One particular genre has been notably criticized for encompassing a wide variety of stories: children's literature. Though children's books span age groups, subjects, settings and other characteristics that make up a genre, they often tend to be classified together in any given library. Should they fall under another category? According to Perry Nodelman in his book, The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature, literary critics have differing opinions. Some argue that if a book is directed at a particular audience, it should be categorized as being for that audience, while others argue that children's literature as a definition makes no sense. They believe children's works should be treated similarly to adult literature, allowing them to be divided by their characteristics (Nodelman 137). Sometimes, Nodelman says, critics deny that children's literature as a genre is, or should be, altogether nonexistent. While children's literature offers a variety of pieces that originated with children in mind, some stories intended for adults reach a popularity level that categorize them as a "must read," whether they are well-known classical works or simply beloved modern tales. To familiarize children with famous works, authors will take the story, simplify the plotline and remove anything they deem inappropriate. Then, they dress up its pages with artistic images and slap on a glossy cover so it winds up on the bookshelf of a young passerby. Think of the Great Illustrated Classics series, for example. The books stay true to the novel's original storyline, have several black and white sketches per chapter, complete the look with a colorful cover, and have been in print for years. Clearly, that style of children's adaptations creates an appeal, but what about those that not only change the plotline of the original story, but fall under an entirely different set of classifications?

Bunnicula shifts the infamous tale of Bram Stoker's Dracula from a gothic horror novel designed to appeal to 19th century adult readers into a children's mystery book with fantastical elements. While the authors followed the typical style of simplifying the plotline of Dracula, they did so in a way that almost entirely removed the novel's horrific elements. Upon reading Chester's initial hypothesis that Bunnicula is a vampire rabbit, readers temporarily acquire his belief that Bunnicula desires to harm the Monroe family, which would certainly be a characteristic of a horror story. However, once readers are aware that Bunnicula only needs and desires vegetable juice to live, horror is out of the picture.

Bunnicula's basic structure mimics typical tales of mystery. The story begins with Harold and Chester's curiosity surrounding the new family pet, follows shortly after with the case of the suddenly white vegetables, and concludes with Harold's investigation into Bunnicula's illness. Bunnicula begins cheerfully, grows darker as the mystery unravels, and ties up any confusion regarding the mystery by the story's end. It encapsulates the primary characteristics that would lead to its consideration as a member of the mystery genre, though its stylized content, happy ending, and resounding message of acceptance with its conclusion clearly marks it as a piece of children's literature as well. Despite the drastic change in genre, Bunnicula was well received and quickly popularized, as was noted earlier with its reviews and popularity as a source of adaptations.

From Vampire to Rabbit: How genre changes a character

The character of Bunnicula is, of course, based off of the vampire Dracula. Since Dracula's publication, the character of Dracula has been reimaged in both appearance and mannerisms in numerous ways. Typically, Dracula is portrayed, even if in a comedic way, as someone to be feared. While he and Bunnicula have that aspect in common, Bunnicula also draws a type of sympathy from readers that Dracula does not. In adaptations in which Dracula remains himself, viewers and readers rarely pity him, with the exception of cases in which a writer provides him with the addition of a tragic backstory, as in the 1992 film Bram Stoker's Dracula. In Bunnicula, Bunnicula is a version of Dracula that no longer poses a threat to humans. Instead of blood, he yearns for vegetable juice. Both vampires are from Transylvania, and clearly, they share a similar name. Yet, as an adaptation, Bunnicula takes the character of Dracula and creates a new character, one seemingly more suitable for a children's tale.

How might "suitability" be determined? As noted in the previous section, children's literature appears to represent the persisting discrepancy between genres. Though some of the contents of children's literature as a genre could cause some works to be grouped into another category, Nodelman distinguishes children's literature from adult literature by, in part, arguing that books intended for children typically are formed with a child's limited attention span in mind. They make sure to clarify what could be considered confusing and avoid off-putting or complex language and ideas (Nodelman 142). Bunnicula is written for younger elementary students, falling in a third - fourth grade comprehension range. While it is a chapter book with limited pictures, the print is large, the images are enticing, and the language used sticks largely to common, shorter words.

Nodelman also says that adult ideas about children's ways of thinking are what lead to the production of children's literature – not always, perhaps, what children themselves may actually desire. Yet, many critics agree that a specific way of constructing a children's book

creates a certain appeal (Nodelman 147). Largely, broader ideas that are presented in the literature have also been simplified to better enable children to enjoy and comprehend what they read (Nodelman 198). The way the Howes manipulated the tale of Dracula to become a book detailing a series of short events that lead to the overall acceptance of difference follows this pattern.

The reshaping of Dracula into a rabbit is, in itself, a method of drawing children into the story. Then, adding in Harold and Chester with their humorous antics makes the story a more entertaining read –it adds humor, and the notion of using an animal to tell a story seems to be a characteristic of children's literature. Framing the story from the perspective of Harold also gives the Howes a chance to be more lighthearted with their storytelling. Through Harold's character, they simplify potentially confusing situations for readers, as Harold himself often is a step behind and has questions of his own to ask throughout the book. As a children's book, Bunnicula completely reimagined the spooky, frightening character of the vampire Dracula, and it succeeded.

How Bunnicula's ending challenges and changes the tone of Dracula

In adaptive literary works, characters, content, and scenes are often entirely removed from the work serving as basis for the adaptation. Linda Hutcheon's book, A Theory of Adaptation, characterizes this as "subtraction" or "contraction" (19). Depending on the type of adaptation, creators may decide to only eliminate minor parts of the overall story, or they may choose to create their own work using only bits and pieces of the original. `In creating Bunnicula, the Howes chose to hold onto minimal aspects of the novel Dracula. Their changing the original plotline so drastically seemed to have little effect on the books' popularity. As Hutcheon wrote, "The 'success' of an adaptation today, in the age of transmedia, can no longer be determined in relation to its proximity to any single "original," for none may even exist (xxvi)."

In its many changes from the story of Dracula, Bunnicula's alternative ending is the most striking. Of course, as a piece of children's literature, it can be expected to end on a positive note. As an adaptation of Dracula, though, the ending is quite unusual. Dracula adaptations quite often end in the death of Dracula, which is usually warranted because of his misdeeds. In contrast, Bunnicula's perceived villainy is quickly remedied in the story. Bunnicula begins with him being welcomed into the Monroe family. Though that acceptance waivers during Chester's investigation of him, Bunnicula ends up finding a companion in Harold and continues being loved by his new family.

With Bunnicula posed as a mysterious, but adorable and innocent bunny, as revealed to readers by Harold, the entire tone of the Dracula narrative shifts. The original tone, conveyed by a Victorian author using the formal language of disturbing journal entries, is dark but dignified. Bunnicula, on the other hand, also inflicts concern, but is ultimately playful and lighthearted. The positive ending of Bunnicula shows that the story was intended to be read in this way, while Dracula's gruesome finale is inspired by the book's grim tone, though the ending is presented to readers as victorious. Clearly, the characteristics of Dracula play into the predictability of his death. As a character, Bunnicula reveals an alternate tone to the traditional narrative of Dracula, and the ending of his story resists falling in line with other typical Dracula adaptations in an exemplary way.

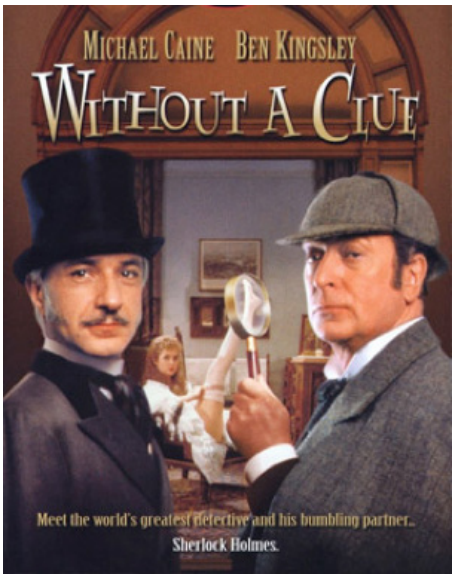
Sherlock Holmes
By Arthur Conan Doyle

"You know my methods. Apply them."

A Case of Identity: Character Reversal and Parody in Sherlock Holmes

Anna Glorioso

Plot Summary



The genius detective Sherlock Holmes is not the person everyone makes him out to be. In fact, he doesn't exist at all. In Without a Clue, a parody adaptation of the famous Sherlock Holmes mysteries, Sherlock Holmes's partner in crime John Watson is the real criminal detective mastermind. Dr. John Watson (played by Ben Kingsley) is an aspiring medical student who solves a murder for a medical colleague and writes about his experience. He then credits a fictional character "Sherlock Holmes" as the man who solved the case to protect his reputation to get into medical school. Everyone in town reads Watson's stories and wants Sherlock Holmes to solve their mysteries so Watson hires an actor named Reginald Kincaid (played by Michael Caine) to play him.

After Kincaid compromises a case by mixing up details because he was drunk and acting too confidently in his acting abilities, Watson fires him and decides to finally come out as being the true mastermind detective. But when The Royal Bank comes looking for Sherlock Holmes to solve the crime as to who stole engraving plates for the five-pound note, they refuse to believe Dr. Watson is capable of solving such a crime, forcing him to beg for Kincaid back for one more case. Throughout their investigating, clue deciphering and struggles working together, the pair discover Moriarty is behind this crime and they will stop and nothing to outwit him even if it means faking Watson's death and exposing Kincaid as an imposter.

Context

Book to film adaptations are always going to be a difficult journey. There are many routes a writer can take to adapt a film, and all of them are equally as difficult simply because the change of medium and audience changes drastically. In an article on adaptation theory and fidelity published by FLAME College of Liberal Arts, the change in media changes the form of the adaptation and "in this transformation of form, there resides a long tradition of discourse on the efficacy of translation in literacy adaptations" (Kalral 1) Instead of fighting the change in media form, adaptors embrace the change. Some adaptors use the medium to their advantage and sometimes it is in their best interest to twist the plot of the story completely purely for entertainment value thus eliminating the struggle of switching mediums completely. This adaptation concept is applied heavily in the 1988 comedy film Without a Clue.

Without a Clue was released on October 21, 1988 in the United States and the United Kingdom. It was produced by British entertainment group ITC entertainment, a sub-production studio of ITV Studios and was filmed in Great Britain. The director of Without a Clue,

Thom Eberhardt, is most known for directing B list eighties family comedies such as Honey, I Blew Up the Kids, so Without a Clue was directly in his wheel house. His directing style is messy, but intentionally messy. His films are notoriously ridiculous in a slap-stick comedy-style way which is why visually adapting a serious detective story was exactly the challenge he seemed to be fit for. Without a Clue reached a dismal 1,246,772 dollars at the box office opening weekend in the United States and only grossed 8,539,181 dollars total in both Britain and the United States. (IMDB) Back in the eighties, films like this were popular among families because they had something in them that everyone could laugh at. But, when someone takes a well-known character and story and twists it into something people don't recognize, their response is less than glamorous.

On the day of the film's release date a New York Times movie critic, Vincent Canby, thought the film was an "appalling witless sendup of the Sherlock Holmes-Dr. Watson stories, based on the idea that wouldn't support a five-minute revue sketch, much less a feature film for Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley." (Canby). Canby agrees the premise to this story is a work of genius but believed the satire and comedic elements were not up to standard for a film that aimed for a true parody. He believed the comedy elements to be too ridiculous to be taken as a noteworthy film. The one aspect Canby does praise is the acting by Caine and Kingsley. He expresses Without a Clue is "only noteworthy for Mr. Caine's angry performance as a jolly buffoon" and "Mr. Kingsley is very professional" (Canby). It seems Ben Kingsley and Michael Caine save this film from becoming a complete laughing stock.

When Without a Clue was released, there wasn't much of a public response because at the time audiences were tired of Sherlock Holmes adaptations. However, after years of it being released, people started to stumble across this hidden gem and had mostly positive responses to it on the comment section on IMDb. Everyone agreed the premise was interesting, but the cast line up was the reason they picked up the film in the first place. Roger Ebert, a nationally-known movie critic, agrees the actors make the film. According to him, Caine and Kingsley were perfectly typecast and "no one is better (than Caine) at playing frauds who become accidental heroes and Kingsley, who is the wittiest of men (as he demonstrated in "Gandhi"), is also able to project a complete lack of wit, necessary for any actor playing Watson" (Ebert). However, Ebert also believes the film "has an amazing premise but, it is not enough. In order to satirize something, you must first transcend it." (Ebert). The film never went beyond basic satire because in order to do that, the adaptation has to poke fun at something that takes itself too seriously. Through light comedy Sherlock Holmes stories have always made it clear Sherlock and Watson don't always take themselves too seriously.

Even though Without a Clue wasn't one of the top films of 1988, it still did something most adapters wound not attempt. It completely switched the identities of the two most important characters in detective narrative history and successfully achieved this in a satirical form. It resonates with audience members because it is familiar yet different to them and is one of the most noteworthy adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

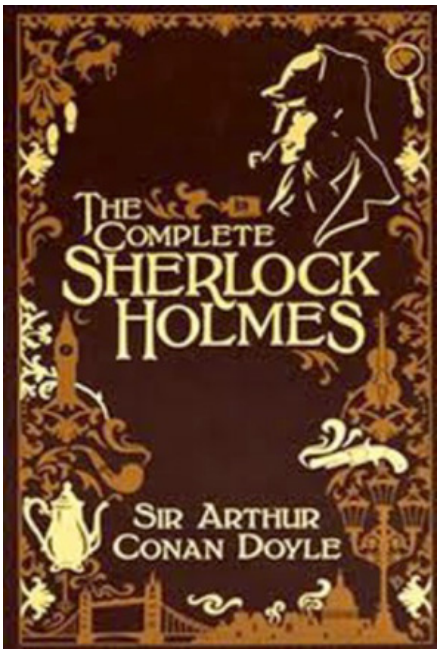
Analysis

The Hidden Identity of Sherlock Holmes

"You have not observed. And yet you have seen." (Conan Doyle 8). Sherlock Holmes

often utters these words, or variations of it, throughout his detective escapades. At the beginning of every story Sherlock Holmes must show off an aspect of his mental superiority. In "A Scandal in Bohemia" he is showing Watson how he recollects how many stairs are going up to his apartment and Watson doesn't know the number even though he has walked up those stairs thousands of times. But, that's what makes Sherlock Holmes the greatest detective in the world. He pays close attention to detail and disregards everything that isn't of use to him or the task at hand. Including emotions. Watson even describes Sherlock as "the most perfect reasoning and observing machine" (Conan Doyle 5) but he also frequently mentions that Holmes is very human. He is very logical and ridged and egotistical yet only takes cases that somehow involve the heart. He is fascinated by emotion as well as repulsed by it which makes Sherlock Holmes's identity very complex and especially difficult to adapt.

The adaptors that created Without a Clue realized how psychologically complex the character of Sherlock Holmes really was. So much so that they decided to give all those complex characteristics to Watson and make Holmes a blubbering idiot, but Thom Eberhardt keeps the confidence and ego in his character by showing high angled shots of Reginald Kincaid when he is playing the role of Sherlock. Linda Hutcheon, writer of Theory of Adaptation, writes about certain motivations adaptors have when they decide to adapt literature. According to her adapters have their own personal reasons to do an adaptation and they not only interpret that work, but they take a position on it. (85) Artistically, the adaptors of Without a Clue wanted to shine a different light on the Sherlock Holmes stories as well as to make a statement about the psychological nature of Sherlock. In the adaptation, Reginald Kincaid, the actor who plays Sherlock, uses his emotions instead of logic. Both react on their egos and both rely on substance abuse to cope but the writers purposefully wrote Kincaid's character to be the counter of Holmes with a touch of Watson. However, that is just the actor who plays him. When Reginald Kincaid is acting as Sherlock Holmes, he has every piece of the Sherlock mind puzzle. The adapters are comically referring to the identity struggle he has in, not only the Arthur Conan Doyle stories, but in this adaptation as well. Lynnette Porter, writer of the essay "Inside the Mind of Sherlock Holmes" featured in Who is Sherlock? Essays on Identity in Modern Holmes Adaptations, "If or when Holmes' mind is compromised, the audience and the character struggle to redefine Sherlock Holmes's identity." (51) When Sherlock Holmes loses his identity, the detective can no longer exist. Which is exactly what the writers of this film did. They ripped away his well-known identity and gave him a pathetic replacement only to give his real identity to Dr. John Watson.



The True Identity of Dr. John Watson

The character of Dr. John Watson is so ordinary he is the exact opposite of Sherlock

Holmes. He is emotional and ordinary and is in constant awe of Sherlock's abilities. In a way, Watson is supposed to be a substitute for the reader and audience. "Readers identify with John Watson, who, particularly and the beginning of his and Holmes's adventures, frequently praises Holmes's brilliance" (Porter 52). Watson gives readers a sense of security in the fact that he is often lost in Holmes's intelligence just as the reader is. Even after years of knowing him Watson is still always caught off guard by the genius that is Sherlock. That doesn't mean he isn't a complex character. While Sherlock is brilliant, he always stays the same. Watson's brilliance is that he evolves emotionally over the course of the stories which is something Sherlock never seems to do. Zach Dundas, author of The Great Detective, describes Dr. Watson as "the man you want sitting next to you as you wait in a darkened room for a highly trained poisonous snake or the fourth most dangerous man in London" (105) Watson is fiercely loyal. He is Sherlock's protector from the normal world and gives him humanity. He is his warrior that would do anything for him. Sherlock needs Watson to be his guide for the ordinary world he just doesn't understand.

In Without a Clue, Dr. Watson is Sherlock Holmes. He possesses the identity of Sherlock as well as the character of Dr. Watson. He solves the crimes, he writes about them, he makes medical assessments, he is clever, emotionally distant and above all he is the crime solving genius. The adapters of this film consciously made the decision to stray away from the traditional views of how Watson is supposed to behave and they completely disregarded fidelity toward the Arthur Conan Doyle stories. When adapting film, most people base the merit of the film on how closely it follows the book but, Thomas Leitch, author of the essay "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory" believes "fidelity to its source text… is a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense" (114). Without a Clue throws fidelity out the window and creates an identity switch masterpiece that give all the credit to Dr. Watson. In the film, none of this credit is given to Watson by the people in town, much like in the original stories where Watson is simply seen as an aid to the genius Sherlock Holmes. Thom Eberhardt uses a lot of low lighting and shadowing to portray Watson being overshadowed as the genius. The fool of the film is at the forefront, identity roles are switched, Watson, the real genius, is seen as the sidekick once again and the blundering fool takes all the credit all to make this film comical.

A Parody of the Great Detective

The writers who adapted Without a Clue believed these identity switches only made sense if the film was made into parody. This film was deemed highly original not only because it threw the idea of fidelity away, but it poked fun at the intensity of the Sherlock Holmes stories while also referencing the subtle humor within them. In a book on Parody, Robert Chambers describes general parodists as people who "encompass the whole genre and modes (of the work being parodied) and may produce art that significantly changes the direction or focus of those genres and modes" (47). It was the adaptors best intentions to make something comically artful out of a famously popular story and to make it more entertaining and understandable, they turned to comedy. There are many comical aspects within this adaptation that qualify it as a parody. The main one is how ridiculous the main characters act. They riddle the film with

one liners, a reference to the original stories, and they overdramatize dialog from nineteenth century London. The sound effects are overdone which build comedic suspense. The tone and atmosphere of the actual stories are a mix of comfortably familiar and suspenseful but, in this adaptation the atmosphere is always conflicting and uncomfortable in a hilarious sort of way. The actors' physical movements have elements of slap-stick comedy and happen often, and their costumes are overexaggerated clichés of nineteenth century dress.

The main driving force of the parody, however, is the element of the fool. Andrew Stott, author of Comedy: The New Critical Idiom, defines the fool as "a paradoxical character claiming a variety of overlapping roles including clown, buffoon, jester, and clairvoyant." (47). Reginald Kincaid, who Dr. Watson forces to play Sherlock Holmes, is a definite fool figure in this parody. He doesn't know what he is doing, he fumbles a lot, he makes everyone around him miserable, he has a drinking problem and he even solves the case on a blundered technicality. Reginald's character is a paradox to the real Sherlock Holmes's identity and watching him attempt to recreate that character is the center of the parody. As Russel Banks said in his essay "No, but I Saw the Movie", "film is in your face, fiction is in your head." (158) Whatever identity characteristics come to mind when people think of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson, it will only be in their heads and not a single adaptation will meet their image. So instead of trying to meet their expectations, these adaptors took a well-known story and a well thought out concept and twisted it to be their own comical art.

Race is Afoot: How "A Study in Black" Modernizes the Victorian Hero

Beckie Jaeckels

Plot Summary

In this adaptation, Sherlock Holmes and John Watson don't call the streets of London home. Watson, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, works as an intern at Convent Emergency Center in Harlem, New York. Divorced and recently homeless, Watson has turned to medicine. He is caring for a baby who was abandoned in a dumpster when a man named Holmes comes into Convent, asking after a young patient in his twenties. Watson leads him to the man, who sends Holmes to find his girlfriend; she has been kidnapped by a rival gang.

Holmes and Watson manage to rescue her, but not before entangling themselves in the crossfire. They are led into a world of gangs, drugs, and darkness. Watson stays by Holmes's side, insisting on seeing this through to the end. They grow closer as partners; Holmes sacrifices a key piece of evidence to save Watson's life. The case leads them to the reverend leading the drug trade; he is using the profits to fund programs for inner-city children. Tragically, the reverend is murdered by a rival gang before they can get him to safety. Watson and Holmes hit a literal dead end. The men return to the graphic novel's initial mystery: who is responsible for the babies in the dumpsters? They track down the man and woman responsible in mere days.

In true Sherlockian style, it is revealed that Holmes figured out Watson's current predicament. He asks Watson to move in to 221B Baker Street, and Watson complies. Their story ends with Holmes reading of their success in the papers.

Context

New Paradigm's Watson and Holmes: A Study in Black was released in 2013 and reprinted in 2016. It is a collection of the first four issues included in the Watson and Holmes series, as well as an epilogue. The graphic novel was written by Karl Bollers and illustrated by Rick Leonardi and Larry Stroman. All three men were experienced in the art of comic creation. Bollers previously worked with Archie Comics on Sonic the Hedgehog and Knuckles the Echidna. After this stint, he moved to Marvel Comics, where he contributed to Emma Frost and X-51.

Leonardi's previous work existed primarily in the Marvel and DC Comics sphere. He contributed to Cloak and Dagger, The Uncanny X-Men, The New Mutants, Spider-Man 2099, Nightwing, Batgirl, Green Lantern Versus Aliens, and Superman. Stroman also found his stride at Marvel Comics, working on The Uncanny X-Men, X-Factor, Ghost Rider (vol. 2), and Punisher. In the 1990s, he briefly published a creator-owned series called The Tribe. Both Bollers and Stroman are African American men – a key relation to their characters.

Bollers was approached by New Paradigm to write an adaptation of Holmes and Watson as African American men in modern times. Initially, Watson and Holmes were to be dropped into a fictional urban setting. It was Bollers' insistence that landed the two in Harlem, a place he called "a landmark of African-American culture" in an interview with Vixen Varsity. Grounding the story in a real place, he argued, would allow the creators to explore

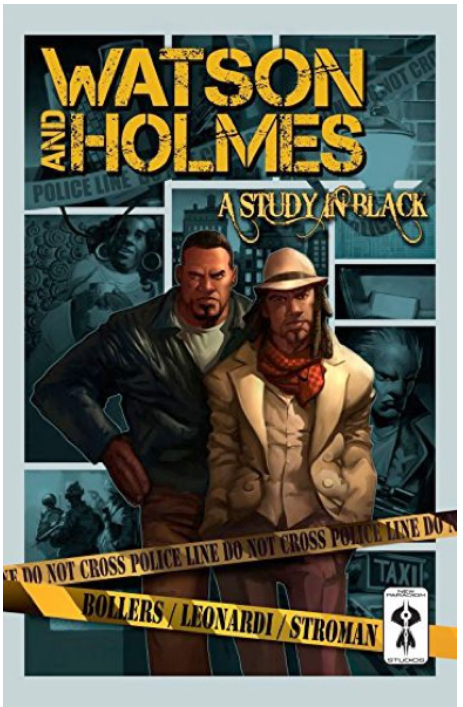
race and other pertinent themes more successfully. To do so, he chose the namesake of the Harlem Renaissance.

"I think there's also a perception in the mainstream that African-American creators have some type of agenda when (they) craft stories using established characters, particularly characters of color," he said in his interview with Vixen Varsity.

He wanted the racial alteration of the characters to have significance and provide an opportunity for analysis. Bollers was only able to remember two African American comic writers when he was growing up; this was troubling for a man who pushed for diversity in comics. This project continued that mission. Watson and Holmes was featured by Comic Book Resources during their Month of African-American Comics.

Though initial critical and popular reception was positive, it was limited. The comics were originally published exclusively online. Only after a Kickstarter campaign that raised over $16,000 was New Paradigm able to distribute a print edition. Primarily small blogs considered the graphic novel, while larger comic websites took their time catching up. In due time, however, Watson and Holmes received the praise it deserved.

In 2014, Watson and Holmes won at the Glyph Comics Awards for Story of the Year, Best Writer, Best Artist, and the Fan Award for Best Work. The Glyph Comics Awards honor Black-themed comics and creators who bring diversity to the medium. They began in 2006 and are hosted by the East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention. The graphic novel was also nominated for an Eisner Award, which honors creative achievement in American comic books. The Eisner Award is considered the comic industry's Oscar equivalent. Watson and Holmes made a mark on the comic community as a hallmark of racial diversity in graphic novels.



In 2012, Guinness World Records announced that Sherlock Holmes was the "most portrayed literary human character" in television and film worldwide. Graphic novel adaptations, on the other hand, are mostly omitted from analysis. The form of graphic novels as a medium, however, is interesting. They cannot rely on narrative description like books or musical scores like film and television to set mood. Instead, the art style must allow readers to "infer the emotions and motivations of characters as well as more fully understand the twists and turns within the plot" (Richardson 24). The grid structure of graphic novels functions simultaneously as a wall to contain and one to be broken. It "constrains and enables; it both limits and opens up new possibilities" (Hutcheon 35). What readers are left with is a snapshot of this world that is too "real" to be constrained by black boxes. Watson and Holmes's rigid and sketch-styled illustrations serve to convey the suspense and tense energy that the story demands. The format of a graphic novel allows readers to be "in control of the speed at which the page progresses" (Wolk 130). Essentially, they can choose to speed through,

in a manner that Watson might, or pay careful attention to significant details in the art as Holmes would.

What Bollers, Leonardi, and Stroman do with this medium brings a novel perspective to the modern concept of Sherlock Holmes. New life is breathed into everyone's favorite detective. Leitch says adaptations are complicated due to the "mythic nature and legendary status" of Holmes, since every adaptation depends not only on the original text but on prior re-imaginings (207).

Analysis

Time and Place

Bollers' insistence on placing Watson and Holmes in modern-day Harlem significantly changes how the two interact with the world around them. Holmes is traditionally coined as an expert in the science of deduction. One issue facing writers, then, was how to account for technological innovation that would have rendered some parts of his talents obsolete. Some of the mystery vanishes with evolution to modern times. What Holmes's character is tasked with is re-enchanting the modern world in a way that is consistent with Modernity: through logic and imagination.

Holmes and Watson were written by Arthur Conan Doyle as men of the present. They wandered the same streets as their readers and faced the same larger societal questions. Many of these are also present in the 21st century: economic recession, unemployment, war on terror, distrust of immigrants, and the "dumbing down" of mass culture. As Katherine Mangu-Ward says in The Many Resurrections of Sherlock Holmes:

The Victorians lived (as we do) through one game-changing moment after another. They craved (as we do) someone who did not fear the future but instead embraced and embodied progress. They wanted (as we do) a voice to remind them that what looked to be overwhelming chaos and incomprehensible change was actually a discoverable, understandable, and exciting world, one in which an individual could make a difference. (2)

In Watson and Holmes: A Study in Black, this chaos is provided in the forms of drug trade and gang violence. Holmes serves as an agent of deduction in this world, even if he is more interested in knowledge than justice. He is the man who will run into gunfire in pursuit of a cartel. He is also the man who will pickpocket a teenager for information. He is the hero – except when he is not.

Polasek cites the blurring of the lines between hero and anti-hero as a key change in post-millennial Sherlock Holmes (387). His interest in solving the puzzle over instilling justice acts to blur the line even more. In Watson and Holmes, Holmes must choose between keeping a hard drive so that he can know what is on it or saving Watson's life by disposing of it. In a moment indicative of Watson's humanizing effect of Holmes's anti-hero figure, the detective appeases the sniper and tosses the hard drive into a nearby trash can.

The anti-hero model of Holmes is as much a product of audience as it is of increased complexity. A fast pace and high energy level are required to engage modern audiences; even film adaptations are modeled after comic book adaptations to obtain this quality (Polasek 388). New Paradigm's Holmes is far from what Polasek calls "the armchair detective" of the Victorian Era (388). The modern Holmes must be constantly on his feet, interacting with the case in a way that is reminiscent of an adrenaline junkie.

The story's placement in Harlem mirrors London appropriately. The winding streets and alleyways lend themselves to underground structured crime. Holmes's informants still roam the streets – simply with a different accent. Moriarty still influences thing from afar – this time as the owner of an Air Jordan equivalent company. Lestrade is now Leslie Stroud, a talented detective with NYPD and, notably, a woman. Many of the elements of modernization outside of Sherlock himself are mentioned in passing in Watson and Holmes.

Modernizing Sherlock Holmes means more than updating names and changing technology. It means adapting to the style and purpose of the literature of the moment. By capitalizing on the renewed interest in comic books following The Avengers, New Paradigm channels the underlying drama and energy of Holmes and Watson. When reading adaptations involving Sherlock Holmes, "more than one text is experienced – and knowingly so" (Hutcheon 116). Readers are interacting not only with New Paradigm's Holmes but with all those who came before who have colored their own perceptions, as well as the adaptation.

Dr. John Watson

The John Watson who calls Harlem his home is a very different man than his Victorian counterpart. While Watson in Victorian tradition is no bumbling fool, he appears inferior in contrast to both Holmes and the version of himself present in Watson and Holmes. Unlike his predecessor, however, New Paradigm's Watson is not yet able to call himself a doctor. He is merely an intern at Convent Emergency Center.

Although the war took a psychological and physical toll on Watson in the original text, this is increased in Watson and Holmes. Prior to meeting Sherlock Holmes, he has been separated from his wife and son. As a result, the Watson that meets Holmes is not searching for a place to live; he is hoping that he may still be able to move back in with his wife. This doesn't happen. Worse, he sees her with another man. As a result, readers see a more emotionally charged and complex John Watson. Unlike his predecessor, he is young, inexperienced, and vulnerable in an entirely different way. To compensate, however, Watson is equal to Holmes in ways he hasn't been before. Watson is usually the emotion to Holmes's intellect, but now he must be something steadier.

Although Holmes is still the half of the duo skilled in the science of deduction, Watson is no fool. Unlike Dr. John Watson in "A Study in Scarlet", he is not the marveling outsider. He complements Holmes, contributing to his knowledge and functioning as a physical equal in altercations.

Both the graphic novel and original texts are narrated and framed by John Watson. While the Watson in Harlem is certainly curious about his newfound companion, the reader does not experience the same feeling of awe. He responds to Sherlock's wit with his own and makes his own demands as one half of the dynamic duo from the very beginning.

Watson is not held to the same standards that he was in Arthur Conan Doyle's ren-

dition. He is not the doctor who is also an ex-soldier. He is a man who has seen war and is trying to stop the same violence from spreading in the streets of his home. As a result, he is more relatable, both to readers and strangely to Sherlock Holmes.

Racial Meanings

The Watson and Holmes that the world knows are white men. They are Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law, Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. They fit traditional standards of white masculinity, despite individual quirks and flaws. They are the heroes that readers and viewers want. New Paradigm wanted to understand how those heroes might change if the colors of their skin did.

Previously, it was mentioned that Holmes interacts with his cases like an adrenaline junkie. This is congruent with past adaptations, but Bollers omits Holmes's notorious drug addiction. Unlike in "A Study in Scarlet," it is not even referenced in passing. Were this Holmes – a black Holmes – addicted to opioids or another substance, a deeper issue would emerge. The racialization of drugs is something a writer like Bollers would want to avoid. He has shown clear tendencies towards Afrofuturism and using the black drug addict stereotype would be entirely contrary to this.

Afrofuturism is concerned with "recovering lost black histories and thinking about how those histories inform a whole range of black cultures today" (Gilliland). New Paradigm tackled this subject through racebending, or recasting popular fiction with people of color. Often this technique is used to rework prejudices and biases that exist in present society by showing how people of color can have similar experiences to traditionally white characters (Gilliland).

Holmes's drug addiction is not the only aspect that changed because of racebending. In many recent adaptations, he is portrayed as somewhat messy and unprofessional by traditional standards. The illustrators kept to this tradition, giving Watson a clean cut and Holmes dreadlocks. Given the public debate around professional rules prohibiting natural black hairstyles, the choice to do so is provocative. In social definitions, it maintains the idea of Holmes as outside of the norms. However, given Bollers' stated mission and the goal of Afrofuturism, there is likely a double meaning behind this choice.

Most of the weight of Watson and Holmes's racebending falls on the shoulders of the reader. Aside from these two changes, most other differences are the result of translation across time and distance. The question then is whether they feel right or not. Racebending is a movement that requires consumer involvement. Although the visual nature of graphic novels limits the potential for fan-created art with different racial interpretations, readers can still choose to react on the basis of race.

Once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. The same can be said of adaptations of Sherlock Holmes. What is impossible may be unrepresentative, illogical, or simply unattainable. Whatever remains, whatever story the writers or illustrators or directors choose to tell, becomes another truth in the Sherlock Holmes canon. There is as much truth in the story of a black private investigator living in Harlem as there is in that of an English detective roaming the streets of London. Our truths do not change, but New Paradigm recognized that a new one deserved to have light shed on it.

Sherlock: The Great Adapting Detective

Nia Rhodes

Plot Summary

In the first film, depicted in 1890, Detective Sherlock Holmes, and Dr. John Watson face the mysterious Lord Henry Blackwood. Lord Blackwood is an occult leader and serial killer who claims to practice dark magic. Sherlock and Watson catch him in his fifth attempt at sacrificing a woman for his rituals. The duo hand him over to police where he is imprisoned. Before his trial, Blackwood warns Sherlock that three more will die and nothing can be done to stop their deaths. Blackwood is hung for his crimes thus closing the case, only to appear to rise from the grave. Sherlock and Watson race to stop Blackwood in his attempt to murder the British Parliament and seize control the country. With the occasional help of the American femme fatale Irene Adler, the pair attempt to stop Blackwood's takeover and save England.

In the sequel, A Game of Shadows, Sherlock goes head to head with the mysterious but threatening Professor James Moriarty after he murders of his love interest Irene Adler. Watson attempts to move on and enjoy newlywed life with his wife, only to be brought back after Moriarty sends assassins after couple on their honeymoon. Moriarty intends to increase the tensions between France and Germany into a world war while profiting in turn from his multitude of arms deals. As they face Moriarty, Holmes and Watson gain an unlikely ally in fortune teller and rebel fighter Madame Simza Heron. Simza is looking for her missing brother and fellow rebel, Rene. Holmes attempts to avenge Adler and stop Moriarty only to find himself facing his greatest and most cunning enemy yet.

Historical Context

With the consideration that Sherlock Holmes is in the public domain for the United States, there have been multiple adaptations throughout the years. The Guy Ritchie films shift their focus to adapting the characters of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson rather than their specific stories and adventures. Producer Lionel Wigram intended for the first film to pay homage to "The Hounds of the Baskervilles" where the titular case is plagued with fear and anxiety surrounding an alleged supernatural occurrence, only to for it to be debunked as clever thinking combined with science. Ritchie's adaptation also acknowledge the fear of the unknown with its villain Moriarty.

Sam Worthington and Colin Farrell were both considered for Watson before the role went to Jude Law. However, there is no mention of any other actor besides Robert Downey Jr. being considered for the lead role in this adaption. Before Sherlock Holmes, director Guy Ritchie was known for directing R-rated heist films of varying critical acclaim or ridicule that highlighted chase and fight scenes shot in his signature style. Upon signing on as director, Ritchie insisted the line of "Elementary my dear, Watson" along with his signature deerstalker, be excluded from the film. This line, though often quoted and referenced, appears in none of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original novels. However, throughout years of Sherlock Holmes being in the public's eye, it has joined a part of the Sherlock history.

The first Guy Ritchie film released to mostly positive reviews on December 25th, 2009. The film quickly reached the second spot in box office numbers, only 11 million behind James

Cameron's Avatar (Box Office Mojo). Critics generally praised the on-screen chemistry between Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law but held mixed reactions to the "simplistic" plot and stylistic choices of Ritchie. New York Times reviewer A.O. Scott described the film as "[having a] visual style […] [that] shows some undeniable flair. And so do the kinetic chases and scrapes that lead us throughout the city." Another highly critiqued aspect of the film is the increase in action and violence compared to the original or even the several adaptations that preceded it. "This is certainly the grubbiest Holmes in movie history. [...] [Holmes is] duking it out in the squalid East End as a bare-chested combatant in scenes resembling outtakes from Fight Club. What was the thinking behind all this?" (Rainer). Overall response was generally positive with the first film holding a 71% fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes and both films holding a 77% positive rating with audiences. The first film was nominated for two Academy Awards for Best Original Score and Best Art Direction. Robert Downey Jr. won his # Golden Globe for his role.

Guy Ritchie's films marked the start of a rapid resurgence of interest and adaptations of Sherlock Holmes for those in the 21st century. From 1999 to 2017, nearly 20 new Sherlock adaptations ranging from television to film to comic books have been released. Two adaptations of note, CBS's Elementary and BBC's Sherlock¸ have been produced with the intent to portray a modern Sherlock in the 21st century.

During his lifetime, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was very liberal with his authorial requirements for Sherlock adaptations, stating "you may marry [Sherlock] or murder him or do whatever you like with him," (Sturgis). As one of the most portrayed movie characters, according to the Guinness World Records, it is natural for the Holmes to change and adapt with each generation. Most likely in lieu of its longevity, there are no visible overwhelming backlash to each new Sherlock adaption as they are released. Linda Hutcheon highlights how "[...] there can be no literal adaption[s]. Transposition to another medium (or even within the same one) always means change," (Hutcheon 40). With a highly adapted work such as Sherlock Holmes, this is an aspect fans and viewers must accept.

Analysis

Sherlock Holmes

In the original stories, Sherlock Holmes is a cold though not entirely unkind man with an air of arrogance. He works around the law, occasionally helping by solving cases and turning over the criminals to the Scotland Yard. Notably, Robert Downey Jr.'s depiction of Sherlock is very overt with his quirky nature. He fires a gun into a wall for the claimed purpose of testing a experiment, drinks embalming fluid as though it were water without hesitation, jumps out of windows, and takes

Watson's things without his consent. These elements, though similar to his personality in original novels and short stories, aim to highlight Sherlock's eccentric genius archetype. Considering his calm and collected original nature, one of the major changes in these set of adaptations is Sherlock's penchant for violence. He regularly carries or acquires a gun, engages in boxing matches (in which both he and Watson place bets on) and shows little remorse for injuring or even murdering several of the men that stand in his way. However, this change carries over to all characters and aspects of the film along with Dr. Watson's character himself. Overall, several secondary but notable aspects are kept intact. Sherlock resides with John in a messy flat on 221B Baker Street, he has met and been outsmarted by Irene Adler in the past, he partakes in occasionally elaborate disguises to follow and observe others, and he retains his self-described job as a consulting detective.

Dr. John Watson

Dr. John Watson goes in a different route in this portrayal. Though strong willed, in the original novels Watson reads as an everyman and narrative framing device rather than Sherlock's true equal. The individuals that have been strongly implied to equal Sherlock are Irene Adler and Professor Moriarty, the former of which managed to outsmart Holmes. Jude Law's portrayal is strong, temperamental, and unafraid to fight as needed. He also often carries a gun and his cane which contains a hidden blade. In the novels, Watson often complains of or questions Sherlock's more undesirable habits. In the scope of the films, he ignores Sherlock's eccentricities and in one instance outright refuses to join Sherlock as he jumps out a window to follow Irene, even as Sherlock calls for him.

At times, Watson is also unafraid to put Sherlock in his place should he overstep his boundaries. When Sherlock appears to have thrown John's wife off a moving train, Watson immediately attacks him in anger and exasperation. This highly contrasts with the original depiction of Watson as a begrudging but ever-present voice of reason to Sherlock. Additionally, the purpose of Watson's character is his role of Sherlock's only friend and minder, he is also Sherlock's doctor and one of the few that can see past Sherlock's dismissive demeanor of his own mortality. In the films, Watson is quick to notice Sherlock has lost weight or is spending an excessive and unhealthy amount of time alone in their flat while between cases.

One of the most notable parts of the original novels is the relationship between Sherlock and Watson. Kayley Thomas states "the dynamic between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson is, of course, integral to any Sherlock Holmes Adaptation," (Porter 35). Though there is fun in the adventures and mysteries solved, the partnership between the two men is arguably the most important part of any adaption. The films play with this dynamic as Watson is preparing to propose to (and later marry) Mary Morstan who is constantly at ridicule of Sher-

lock. Though the film skips their origin story, instead starting many months ahead, the idea of separating the two bounces around in both films. Despite his loyalty to Mary and claimed desperation to live a calmer life, Watson follows Sherlock despite his claims of disinterest or unavailability.

Professor James Moriarty

Professor James Moriarty is considered one of Holmes's most notable adversary from the original stories. He appears in "The Final Problem" and *The Valley of Fear*. Sherlock refers to him as the "Napoleon of crime" (Doyle). In the first film, he is only shown in shadow, discussing and threatening Irene Adler. His few short moments in film are notable however as he dismisses a disguised Sherlock with a retractable pistol from his arm. In *A Game of Shadows*, Moriarty is the central villain and quickly shows his intellect is more than enough to challenge Sherlock. His strength and emotionless ruthlessness are his notable traits in this adaption as he poisons Irene Adler while he eats dinner and sings along to Franz Schubert's *Die Forelle* as he tortures Sherlock with a hook in his shoulder. In "The Final Problem", Moriarty is a threatening figure who sends hitmen after Sherlock with little hesitation. His ruthless nature in the films is emphasized by his right hand assassin Sebastian Moran. In his chapter "Twelve Fallacies In Contemporary Adaptation Theory", Thomas Leitch claims in fallacy #6 "Novels create more complex characters than movies because they offer more immediate and complete access to characters' psychological states," (Leitch 11). While Leitch works to debunk the many fallacies of adaptations, in this instance the novel's depiction is arguably stronger. When an adaption is made there will always be comparisons to the original, especially in the case of characterization.

Moriarty is arguably a far more threatening villain in the novels but a far more haunting and visceral villain in the film, this is due in part to the visual medium. Moriarty is cloaked in shadow the first several times he appears, allowing the audience to feel the true "fear of the unknown". when he interrogates and tortures Holmes in the film, there is audible tortured screaming accompanying it as Moriarty appears unbothered and almost amused. as though his torture of sherlock is a theatrical production. most notably, the film highlights showing not telling that Moriarty is an equal to Holmes. When Sherlock uses his "Sherlock Scan" to solve crimes, win fights or to inspect new characters as a threat it is always accompanied by his narration as the scene plays out in a flash forward before it occurs on screen. The end result shows Sherlock winning and Moriarty disrupts this as his voice joins in and the flash forward shifts to show him triumphing over Sherlock. He is the only character to cut in with a scan of his own. When the flash forward ends both are left laughing but aware of the mental battle that has taken place. This makes Moriarty the most obvious person to be Sherlock's equal.

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IN THE GAME OF LIFE, LESS DIVERSITY MEANS FEWER OPTIONS FOR CHANGE. WILD OR DOMESTICATED, PANDA OR PEA, *Adaptation* IS THE REQUIREMENT FOR SURVIVAL.

Cary Fowler