Doctor Who: Adaptations and Flows

Mark Bould

Doctor Who (1963-1989, 2005-), the longest-running and most successful sf television show of all time (Miller), provides unique insights into how the experience of television programming has developed over the last half-century. Moreover, almost from the moment of its inception, it became a multimedia franchise, with comics, books, toys, games, a rebooted series, spin-off series, interactive web content and so on, as well as cinematic, direct-to-video, televisual, and internet/DVD pornographic film adaptations. Such a proliferation of commercial texts poses particular problems—and opportunities—for adaptation studies, which hitherto has tended to concentrate on the nature of textual transformations between more-or-less canonical texts and their adaptations—a close focus that typically loses sight of adaptations and their sources as commodities bound up in the realms of production and consumption. In order critically to comprehend them, it is necessary to come to terms with the nature of intellectual, creative labour required by both producers and consumers of textual commodities. That is, we need to develop the means by which to "examine the historically specific conjunctures in which interests and meanings are brought into being and actively negotiated" (Grainge 8). This requires attention not only to "the diversity of attitudes and practices that exist among consumers, audiences and subordinate social groups" privileged in cultural disciplines since the 1980s, but also "with equal sensitivity to context and complexity the interests and meanings worked out within the field of cultural production" (8). Thinking about adaptation therefore requires us simultaneously to consider not only the processes by which we make culture out of commodities but also those by which capital is made out of culture.

Because of *Doctor Who*'s longevity across multiple media platforms, the concept of "flow" developed in television studies and new media studies provides a useful framework within which to consider adaptations within the franchise. In the 1970s, Raymond Williams, culture-shocked by American commercial television, influentially decried the medium's "single irresponsible flow of images and feelings" (92), echoing postwar public discourses about the flood of (Americanized) mass culture threatening British cultural identity. This notion of televisual flow, most fully articulated by John Ellis in the early 1980s, rapidly became dominant within television studies: Jane Feuer described the medium as a "continuous, never-ending sequence in which it is impossible to separate out individual texts" (15), and even John Fiske, critical of many of the conclusions derived from this model, conceded that television's typical form was "a rapid succession of compressed, vivid segments, where the principle of logic and cause and effect is subordinated to that of association and consequence to sequence" (105). However, Fiske argued, rather than inundating viewers, this segmented flow prompted viewers into active meaning- and pleasuremaking. To an extent, this shift in perspective followed the transition from the era of televisual "scarcity" (often referred to as TVI) to an era of televisual "availability" (TVII), in which channels proliferated and the industry emphasis shifted from attracting mass audiences to niche marketing to more affluent audience segments. The current transition to the era of televisual "plenty" (or TVIII) has been articulated around the issues of media convergence, multi-media platforms, transmedial story-telling, and the cultivation of long-term loyalty to series and channels by multiplying potential points of contact between brand and consumer. In such disscussions, "flow" is used, often without critical reflection, to describe several phenomena:

Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce viewer commitments. Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers. The promises of this new media environment raise expectations of a freer flow of ideas and content. (Jenkins 18)

Programming, it seems, has broken its banks, becoming an inescapable flood of content across different media platforms as producers increasingly orientate their endeavours to "the lucrative possibilities of migrating content and program repurposing" (Caldwell, "Convergence" 48). However, as William Uricchio argues, beginning with the introduction of remote control devices, the viewer began to gain some measure of mastery over this torrent; indeed, the development of domestic and portable recording, playback, timeshifting and spaceshifting technologies has produced "the effect of enhanced viewer choice in the form of a *stream* of programming carefully tailored to the viewer's preferences, tastes, and desires" (Parks 135, my emphasis). Simultaneously, digital technologies have enabled new affective and intellectual communities to emerge among geographically dispersed consumers, and for new kinds of relationship to develop with producers, ranging from moments of co-creativity to excessive policing of intellectual property. These transformations of the media environment have important consequences for the study of adaptation.

Adaptation is typically understood as "the appropriation of meaning from a prior text" (Andrew 97). Such formulations tend to reify the prior text as a fixed object with a set meaning rather than treating it as an ongoing site of multiple contested meanings. Thus a conventional understanding of adaptation might, for example, limit itself to considering the relationships and variations between a seemingly bounded and fixed text, such as the second *Doctor Who* serial, the seven-parter now known as *The Daleks* (21 December 1963-1 February 1964), and similarly contained adaptations: the 1964 novelization by the series' script editor David Whitaker, *Doctor Who in an Exciting Adventure with the Daleks*, ² and the

filmed adapation, Dr. Who and the Daleks (Flemyng UK 1965), co-scripted by Whitaker. However, such delimitations exclude from consideration some potentially more interesting questions. For example, to what extent should an episode of serial television, predicated on principles of continuity and repetition with difference, be understood as an adaptation of the preceding episode? Or a serial be understood as an adaptation of the preceding serial? Moreover, if adaptation is understood in contemporary industry terms as the repurposing and migration of content, what should one make of the TV Century 21 comic's Dalek strip (1965– 66), scripted by Whitaker, which offers a rather different take on Dalek history than can be construed from the serial, novelization or film? Or of The Go-Gos' "I'm Gonna Spend My Christmas with a Dalek" (1964), the first of many *Doctor Who* tribute singles? Of the Daleks' appearances in of other television shows, including a 1964 edition of *The Black and White* Minstrel Show? Of Dalek merchandizing, which in the 1960s included toys, games, badges, a PVC costume and sweet cigarettes with collectible cards? To what extent are such texts and artefacts to be understood as adaptations? And if one accepts that consumers also adapt texts, what should one make of the games children played with such merchandizing? Or of children just playing at being Daleks?³ Furthermore, how do all of these texts and experiences contest and transform our understanding of the "prior text," a television serial that was broadcast once and never intended to be seen again?

While it is clearly beyond the scope of a single essay to explore all of these questions, it is possible to undertake some necessary groundwork to begin to answer them. In his work on adaptation, Robert Stam describes a text as an

open ... structuration ... reworked by a boundless context. [It] feeds on and is fed into an infinitely permutating intertext, which is seen through ever-shifting grids of interpretation ... All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations of those

formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts. (57, 64).

This is an apt description not only of the individual episode or serial but also of the entire *Doctor Who* franchise, a vast body of material produced by so many people since 1963 that no romantic-bourgeois notion of "the author" or "the original" could possibly survive. Even the first episode broadcast, "An Unearthly Child" (23 November 1963), cannot treated as "the original," since it is not only a tissue of intertextual borrowings but also an adaptation of prior texts—an unbroadcast pilot version and the (hastily revised) script. However, in an era in which media corporations increasingly conceptualize ownership in terms not of authorship and copyright but reproducibility and trademarks (see Lury), both promotional material and critical commentary continue to deploy notions of authorship, canonicity, authenticity and fidelity as tools with which to shape, and to validate certain experiences of, *Doctor Who*. Such discursive interventions demonstrate the dynamic vitality of a series and a franchise that are full of inconsistencies and variations of tone and content, that continually exceeds monological control, and has always done so. Restoring this sense of fluidity, of contingency and contestedness, to the object of analysis, whether a prior text or its subsequent permutations, is the essential first step in any treatment of adaptation.

One way in which to do this is to foreground the relationships among form, content, and the contexts of production and consumption. While questions of form dominated studies of televisual flow, which frequently treated the programs and genres merely as variations on the same structure, contemporary uses of "flow" tend to treat content as if it were separable from form (or at least reducible to trademarkable characters and story-worlds). In order to reconnect form, content, and context, this essay will begin with a detailed attempt to reconstruct and explore the experience of watching a mid-1960s *Doctor Who* serial as an example of Ellis' televisual "flow." It will then trace some elements of the franchises

transmedial flow, focusing on the first cinematic film, the 1996 television movie, and the relaunched television series.

Doctor Who and televisual flow

On 22 May 1965, ten million people watched the new episode of *Doctor Who*, "The Executioners." For many, this was already a Saturday evening habit; others would have tuned in because the ending of the previous Saturday's "The Final Phase" (the conclusion of the four-parter now known as *The Space Museum* [24 April-15 May 1965], seen by 8.5 million viewers) signalled that the Daleks were returning. "The Executioners" was the seventy-second episode of *Doctor Who* and the first installment of the series two six-parter—followed by "The Death of Time," "Flight Through Eternity," "Journey into Terror," "The Death of Doctor Who," and "The Planet of Decision"—that is now called *The Chase* (22 May-26 June 1965), but was known to its makers as *Serial R* or *The Pursuers*.

With the next season's *The Savages* (28 May-18 June 1966), *Doctor Who* abandoned individual episode titles and began to identify each serial by name, but for most of its first three seasons—for 118 episodes—each story flowed into the next without the clear demarcations that serial titles would have provided. Indeed, the division of a more-or-less continuous series into a succession of more-or-less distinct serials (of between one and twelve episodes) was partly driven by production planning and budget management.⁵ For example, for book-keeping reasons, the BBC treated the four-part *Serial M*, now called *The Romans* (16 January-6 February 1965), as episodes three to six of *Serial L*, now called *The Rescue* (2-9 January 1965)—a two-parter designed to introduce Vicki (Maureen O'Brien) as a new series regular after the departure of Susan (Carole Ann Ford) at the end of "Flashpoint," the final episode of the six-parter now called *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* (21 November-26 December 1964). Although each serial achieved a relatively high degree of narrative closure, the viewer

did not know in advance how many episodes a particular serial would have. Such uncertainty—and the sense of an endless sequential flow—was reinforced by the use of cliffhangers. Individual episodes featured a mid-point crisis (to aid overseas sales to commercial broadcasters who required convenient breaks for advertisements) and a closing cliffhanger so as to propel viewers into the next episode, which began by repeating the previous episode's cliffhanger ending. This was also sometimes the case with a serial's final episode, with the cliffhanger placing narrative closure under erasure by propelling the Doctor and the viewer into the next serial, which had in effect already started. This sense of seriality is strongly emphasized by *The Chase*, which takes in three different terrestrial locations and at least two other planets in quick succession, rather than being set in a single time/place.

During the 1960s, *Doctor Who* was broadcast on a 405-line VHF AM system and viewed on analog televisions in which the cathode ray tube fired electrons at a phosphor-coated screen to form images, refreshing alternate lines every fiftieth of a second. This made the image "curiously ephemereal, ... half gone and fading before it [was] even completed" (8), while creating an overwhelming sense of immediacy, as if the program was "transmitted and received in the same moment that it [was] produced" (Ellis 58, 132). The BBC's adoption of Ampex video tape in 1958 meant that it was no longer the case that certain kinds of programs, such as drama series, were broadcast live, but that does not seem to have particularly diminished the sense of immediacy. In part, this would have been due to the persistence of many of the production practices of live broadcasting. For example, cutting videotape was time-consuming and generally considered too expensive since the tape could not then be reused to record another program. Consequently, although it was not necessary for an entire episode of *Doctor Who* to be shot as a single continuous performance, it continued to be shot in a multiple camera studio, with "events ... staged in temporal sequence and picked up by a number of cameras one of whose images [would be] selected at any one

moment by the director" (149) and recorded on tape. The action was normally shot from one side (so as to keep other cameras out of shot), producing a grammar (unlike that of classical continuity editing's shot/reverse-shot) that favors longer takes and does not elide "dead" time but tends to show actions in their entirety. This practice can be seen in the contrast between a sequence in "The Ordeal," episode six of *The Daleks*, and its restaging in *Dr. Who and the Daleks*. In the former, Ian (William Russell) and Barbara (Jacqueline Hill), making their way with three Thals through a tunnel in the mountain behind the Dalek city, come to a precipice across which they must jump, one by one. This sequence lasts nearly eleven minutes, including an interpolated minute-long scene with the Doctor (William Hartnell) and Susan captured by the Daleks; excluding this other scene, the sequence still accounts for more than thirty-five percent of the episode's total running time. In the film, the same sequence (with one less Thal) takes less than five minutes, including an eighty-second long interpolated scene. This contrast in duration reflects not only the respective media's editing styles, but also the economic factors affecting production.

Doctor Who's budgetary constraints – there was just one studio day to shoot each twenty-five-minute episode – are perhaps most apparent in the broadcasting of errors. For example, in *The Chase*'s "Journey Into Terror," the shadows of the camera and microphone boom are visible on Ian's torso when he tries to dissuade the Doctor from entering a gothic laboratory; when we cut to a reverse shot of the action from the laboratory level, the offending camera and its operator are visible behind Ian, belatedly scooting out of shot. Such errors are quite common, especially as the series was intended to be broadcast only once: in "The Executioners," Maureen O'Brien struggles not to laugh as she delivers some absurd dialog and tries to cover it up by playing out the rest of the scene in a mildly hysterical manner; in "The Death of Doctor Who," as the camera tracks around a group of Daleks outside the TARDIS, camera 5, which is not even involved in shooting the scene, comes into

view; and in "The Planet of Decision," Hartnell fluffs his line, warning Ian and Barbara that if they try to use the Dalek time machine to return to 1960s London they will "end up as a couple of burned cinders flying around in Spain ... in space!"

Broadcasting – rather than reshooting – material that was "good enough" undoubtedly contributed to the sense of immediacy, betraying not only economic necessity but also the apparent disposability of *Doctor Who*, a program to be swept away by the flow of television, never to be seen again. This "good enough" quality is evident when other kinds of production economy become apparent. For example, the entrance to the Dalek time machine has a dogleg structure that is difficult for them to navigate, but which ensures that its interior is not visible from outside, thus avoiding the need to build an adjacent set. In "The Executioners" this entrance is carefully positioned on the right of the frame so that three Daleks can disappear around the dog-leg, re-enter the shot from behind the camera, and board the time machine again, thus doubling the number of Daleks in the "assassination group." At the climax of "Journey into Terror," the Daleks reveal that they have constructed a robotic simulacrum of the Doctor with which to fool his companions. It is played by Edmund Warwick (who only slightly resembles Hartnell) in long shot, miming to Hartnell's offcamera voice; and when we cut to a close up, it is of Hartnell in front of a mismatched backdrop. In the following episode, Hartnell plays the real Doctor, voices Warwick's fake Doctor, and plays the fake Doctor when extended interactions with the companions are required; and Warwick plays the fake Doctor, miming to Hartnell's off-camera voice, and the real Doctor in several long shots when his lip movements can be obscured. When the two Doctors finally confront each other, Hartnell switches between roles in a series of close-ups shot from alternating sides to create an eyeline match, which are intercut with three-shots of the companions observing the exchange as if watching a tennis match. The unintended, but also unavoidable, visibility of such production economies, however ingeniously orchestrated,

generate a sense of urgent jerry-rigging rather than classical stability. This is also the case with the visual contrast between taped studio images and the occasional filmed location inserts, such as the stock footage of Manhattan used in "Flight Through Eternity" or the long shots in "The Executioners" of Russell's and O'Brien's stand-ins cavorting on the dunes at Camber Sands, itself standing-in for the otherwise studio-bound desert planet Aridius.

It is difficult to judge precisely how obvious the resulting differences in image texture would have seemed, but two sequences in *The Chase* particularly emphasize how "Television has always been *textually messy* textural rather than transparent" (Caldwell, Televisuality 23). In "The Planet of Decision," the Dalek assassination group joins battle with the robot Mechonoids who have imprisoned the Doctor and his companions. This sequence begins with a zoom in over a model of the Mechonoid city to its central plaza where three Mechonoids have gathered, and then cuts to a montage of brief studio sequences that involves canted camera, zooms, extreme close-ups and multiple superimpositions of action, flames, and animated explosions. Intended to conceal that the director is working on a single set with just three Daleks and three Mechonoids, this filmic montage is such a stylistically pronounced compression of time and space that it shatters any sense of continuous televisual time. A second overtly textural sequence comes at the end of the same episode with a cut from the Doctor and Vicki on the planet Mechanus, a studio set with a painted backdrop, to a filmed insert of Ian and Barbara's return to London. There follows a twenty-three-second montage, including rostrum zooms, of twenty-eight freeze-frames of Ian and Barbara larking about in Trafalgar Square, on the Embankment, and in St James's Park, a stylistic choice that resonates with both nouvelle vague and swinging London films—as The Chase was being made, The Beatles were putting the finishing touches to *Help!* (Lester UK 1965). Copying filmed freeze-frames to video for broadcast certainly complicates the distinctions Ellis draws between the transience of the televisual and the ontological weight of film's photographic

material, simultaneously (if contradictorily) enlivening these characters' filmic stillness with televisual immediacy, memorializing them in their act of departure even as this moment of loss is swept away by television's flow.

While television's lower image-resolution and the inability to "pause" or "rewind" would have rendered production economies and errors less obvious than they now seem, they would have been as commonplace and as fleeting as the ghosting, interference, loss of vertical or horizontal synchronization, 10 and other phenomena that disrupted the experience of televisual flow while guaranteeing its transience. Although television "continues whether a particular set is turned on or not" (Ellis 138), particular programs were irrecoverable, with there being "hardly any chance of catching a particular TV programme 'tomorrow' or 'next week sometime' as there is with a cinema film" (111). Word-of-mouth undoubtedly increased the audience for "The Executioners," with those who had missed the Daleks' initial reappearance at the end of *The Space Museum* being able to enjoy one of the rare opportunities to "catch next week" something whose initial broadcast had been missed, thanks to the opening repetition of the previous cliffhanger. 11 This sequence also introduces *The* Chase's self-reflexive depiction of the audience's experience of television. After the familiar opening titles, whose distinctive visual design and soundtrack announce the program. 12 an image of advanced communications equipment fades in. The camera tracks back to allow a Dalek to enter the shot, turn, and speak into the device, reporting the departure of the TARDIS from the preceding story's planet. The camera tracks in on the wall-speaker from which another Dalek voice responds, revealing that the Daleks have their own time machine with which to pursue the Doctor. In the preceding episode, this was akin to a continuity announcer's end-credits verbal trailer for the next week's installment; here, the direct address to the audience is more urgent, setting up the narrative while delaying its start so viewers

alerted by the timeslot, title sequence, theme music, and the repeated cry of "Exterminated!" can gather around the television set.

Appropriately, the following sequence depicts just such a gathering. In the TARDIS console room, the Doctor, fiddling with the workings of a large, unfamiliar machine, chides Vicki for distracting him. She stomps off to find Ian, who is reading in his room. Her kibbitzing annoys him, so she heads into Barbara's room, where she spills a tray onto the dress Barbara is making for her. This family-like group (with the Doctor as grandfather, Ian and Barbara as parents, and Vicki as bothersome teenage child) then gathers in the console room as the Doctor's hammering on the recalcitrant machine causes "an unfortunate juxtaposition of the sonic rectifier and the lineal amplifier," eliciting a high-pitched wail. Vicki, who understands the machine better than does the male adult trying to fix it, explains: "anything that ever happened anywhere in the universe is recorded in light neutrons" and the time-and-space visualizer "converts neutrons of light energy into electrical impulses," enabling "you [to] tune in and see any event in history." At the Doctor's request, each companion selects a time and place to observe: Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; the court of Queen Elizabeth 1, where she urges Shakespeare to write a play about Falstaff in love and Sir Francis Bacon suggests a play about Hamlet; and a 1965 BBC1 appearance by The Beatles, performing "Ticket to Ride."

In the first two cases, the camera tracks in between the pseudo-family gathered around the small screen housed in the much larger machine, and then we cut to prerecorded inserts of the action. These hypodiegetic image streams possess even more pared-down visuals and an even more exaggerated frontality than are typical in presenting the primary diegesis, suggesting a lower image resolution; and both times, horizontal lines disrupt the image before it finally disappears in a storm of interference. This sense of the world being always-already part of an ephemeral televisual flow, provided you happen to dip in at just the right moment to

see an event before it is lost forever, is emphasized by the visualizer's third image stream. When it proved impossible to schedule a serial based on a future Beatles concert, and footage of them from *Top of the Pops* was unavailable (because the BBC routinely wiped and reused tapes of the show), the director transferred footage being shot for the 10 April 1965 *Top of the Pops* onto tape to insert into *Doctor Who*. This is the only surviving footage of the band's numerous appearances on *Top of the Pops*.

The visualizer's flow of discontinuous segments is, of course, not "the only thing going on" (Ellis 128) in this pseudo-domestic setting, and it is interrupted by the TARDIS' arrival on Aridius. Vicki switches the machine off while the Doctor consults instruments on the TARDIS console about the conditions outside. The size of the visualizer prop has evidently made it impractical to include the console in the console room, and so the Doctor's actions are shot from the viewpoint of the console's central column. In medium close-up, Hartnell looks out of the screen, his hands working (non-existent) controls out of shot beneath the screen, before throwing the (non-existent) switch that opens the TARDIS doors behind him. This unusual shot produces the peculiar sensation that the viewer is being switched off so that the pseudo-family can get on with their lives in the outside world.

Some time later, Barbara is disturbed by noises emanating from the TARDIS, where the visualizer is still working. Their "sporadic rather than sustained" looking returns to the device, which, like the family television, has continued to operate "in blithe ignorance of its lack of reception" (Ellis 24, 138). Indeed, it seems to wait for Barbara's entrance before tuning in on the "channel" showing the Daleks initiating their transtemporal pursuit of the TARDIS, and then to wait before giving any concrete information until Barbara has summoned the Doctor. There is a strong sense of these viewers having "delegated their look to the TV institution" (25), leaving the visualizer to watch whatever it chooses until something of interest summons them with a repertoire of aural and visual announcements.

The Doctor, fortunately, is aware that the apparent liveness of onscreen events is deceptive—"My machine can only pick up things that happened in the past"—and sets about evading the Dalek assassins. This self-reflexive depiction of televisual flow suggests that program-makers themselves might have thought in terms similar to those that would later become a dominant discourse about television.

One of the most difficult things to imagine in revisiting these early episodes is quite how unstable the program actually was. Nearly cancelled in its first season, it was only rescued by the popularity of the Daleks, and it was only with the departures and replacements of Susan, Ian, Barbara, and other companions, and then the replacement of Hartnell with Patrick Troughton at the end of season four's *The Tenth Planet* (8-29 October 1966) that the absolute centrality of the Doctor was cemented, along with his non-human status. ¹⁴ *Doctor Who* had no overarching story arc, and events from one serial tend to be forgotten in the next. Much of the backstory and detail of *Doctor Who*'s story-world that are now often taken for granted were created in an *ad hoc* manner, appropriate to the unrecoverable, ephemeral flow of television in the era of scarcity.

Yet Doctor Who was never exactly scarce.

Doctor Who and transmedial flow

In the second half of the 1980s, *Doctor Who*'s audience hovered around 5 million, dropping to an all-time low of 3.1 million for the first episode of season twenty-six's first serial, *Battlefield* (6-27 September 1989), and *Doctor Who* was cancelled when the season ended on 6 December 1989.¹⁵ The drawn out decline of the series across the decade is often blamed on its alienation of general viewers by becoming "aimed almost solely at its fans" through "endless attempts to fold the show in on itself by evoking its past" (Newman 5, 98). Whatever its shortcomings, this strategy is proleptic of the television industry's current

conventional wisdom—"that the cultivation of ... story-worlds ... is as crucial an element in its success as is storytelling" (Sconce 95). Faced with a huge archive of often contradictory material (an increasing amount of which was becoming accessible in other forms, such as novelizations, reference books, magazine articles, and videos), this attention to stabilizing continuity by emphasizing certain elements of the story-world—that is, reintroducing and firming up details initially introduced on an *ad hoc* basis—is as understandable as it was quixotic. Neil Perryman's claim that "the majority of fans now feel that ... ancillary additions to the franchise," such as books, comics, games, and web-content, "enjoy little or no legitimacy in terms of canonicity" (23) indicates a similar desire to give *Doctor Who*'s storyworld the kind of coherence typical of more contemporary franchises, such as the *Buffyverse*.

As noted above, debates around media convergence have seen a reconceptualization and transvaluation of "flow." Henry Jenkins, for example, enthuses about "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (2). To whatever extent such phenomena might be characteristic of the present moment, it is important to note that this is a matter of proliferation and acceleration rather than rupture. However, rather than catalogue *Doctor Who*'s transmedial flow, this section will focus on three specific adaptations in relation to production and consumption contexts.

In 1964, the British production company Aaru struck a deal to adapt *The Daleks* as *Dr. Who and the Daleks*. ¹⁶ The first screen media attempt to adapt the story-world, it repurposed the serial, intended for family audience, as a U-certificate film that children could see without an accompanying adult; ¹⁷ it was released on 23 August 1965, in the closing weeks of the school summer holiday. Whereas a family audience required "different points of entry that would attract viewers of all ages" (Leach 13), hence the age-range and gender mix of the

Doctor's original companions, the film, which was concerned with adapting its source for a different audience rather than with establishing continuity or canonicity, transformed the principal characters and their relationships. It replaced Hartnell's mysterious and cantankerous Doctor with a genial inventor, Doctor Who (Peter Cushing). Barbara (Jennie Linden) became his glamorous granddaughter, and Ian (Roy Castle) her comic relief boyfriend. More significantly, Susan (Roberta Tovey) was transformed from an older teen into an eleven-year-old of whom the Doctor is particularly fond (the *Doctor Who* strip in TV Comic had already given the Doctor a pair of younger grandchildren as companions). The opening scene establishes the bond between them—and their status as identification figures for the young audience—by inverting expectations as the camera tracks from Susan reading Physics for the Inquiring Mind, past Barbara reading The Science of Science, to Doctor Who reading an issue of *The Eagle* comic. Susan's red sandals indicate a further repurposing of the story-world, imbuing its science-fictional iconography with a Wizard of Oz sensibility, transforming the Dalek homeworld of Skaro into a vivid, Technicolor fantasy space. The forest is dark and threatening—especially when Susan must run through it alone—but the soundstage walls lend it a reassuring, cartoon-like simplicity. The city sets are spacious and intriguingly geometrical, and on their walls are light fittings that look like giant crumpled sweet wrappers and surveillance cameras that suggest Dalek eyestalks. The title sequence—an abstract, not-exactly-psychedelic, kaleidoscope of colours, set to fairly anonymous sixties jazz-pop—would not have been out of place in a James Bond spoof, while the male Thals, with their shaven arms and chests and heavy eye make-up, look like premature glam rockers. Not uncommonly for a children's fantasy film, camp and queer potentials innocently abound, addressing infantile and adolescent sexualities through visual excess in the safety of cinema's dark spaces.

Dr. Who and the Daleks was one of the top twenty films at the 1965 British box office, prompting a more expensive but less successful sequel the following year. ¹⁸ Both films continued to be screened at Saturday morning movie clubs for over a decade and were repeated on television far more frequently than any serial.

Throughout the 1980s, various companies expressed interest in the film rights to Doctor Who, but while these attempts came to nothing, television producer Philip Segal's seven-year quest to relaunch Doctor Who on a US network eventually resulted in Doctor Who (Sax 1996), a \$5 million-dollar television movie co-produced by Universal TV, 20th Century Fox Television, and BBC Worldwide. 19 When broadcast in the UK on 27 May 1996, it attracted an audience of 9.08 million. In the US, Fox premiered it during the May sweeps period—one of the months in which Nielsen conducts detailed ratings surveys and thus when network competition is most intense—opposite a major baseball game and the episode of the hit comedy series Roseanne in which Dan (John Goodman) has a heart attack. With only 5.5 million viewers (a smaller audience share than usual for Fox's Tuesday night movie), Fox did not exercise its option to make a second television movie. In his analysis of the television movie's cultural and ideological transformations of *Doctor Who*, Peter Wright attributes this poor performance to its adoption of "non-controversial content, a bland homogeneity that will offend no one and appeal in some, relatively superficial, way to everyone" ("Intertextuality" 85, quoting Fiske 319). This decision should be understood in the context of the challenges facing US networks in this period, when audience size and thus advertising revenues were being depleted by cable television.

Television movies were themselves a product of mid-1960s primetime competition, becoming a standard feature of network programming that was used to build audiences during sweeps periods through star casting and topical content. The most successful example was *The Day After* (Meyer 1983), which attracted 100 million viewers when ABC premiered it

during November sweeps. However, television movies were usually independent productions, properties that the network did not own and thus could not fully exploit. By 1996, with audiences fragmenting and the cost of marketing one-off programs escalating, the network television movie was in decline, soon to disappear and to be reinvented by cable channels not as event programming but as resolutely ordinary television (see Perren), returned to the flow from which it once stood out. Cable had already taught the networks "that the real programming game in town was [no longer] about initial air-dates, but about syndication rights" (Caldwell, "Convergence" 47). Since the *Doctor Who* television movie was not commissioned as a series pilot or approached as a potential "back-door" pilot, its ratings would have had to be remarkable for it to lead to further production, not least because Universal was "pushing the reorder of more episodes of *Sliders*. They owned 100 per cent of that show and had only a 50 per cent stake in *Doctor Who*, so you can pretty much figure out which one they really intended to support" (Segal with Russell, 144-45).

The *Doctor Who* television movie was caught between the desire to maintain continuity with the series and the need to repurpose it significantly in order to attract funding. Despite the major revisions suggested by John Leekley series "bible" when Segal was developing the project as a potential series for Amblin (reprinted in Segal with Russell), the movie that was eventually produced emphasized continuity with the BBC series by casting the seventh Doctor, Sylvester McCoy, in an opening sequence that culminates in his regeneration as Paul McGann's eighth Doctor. On the one hand, this link might prompt fans to expect the movie to conform to the series, as might the scattering of iconic props—a 900-year diary, a sonic screwdriver, a yo-yo, jelly babies—associated with earlier Doctors. On the other hand, it signals a failure fully to reimagine *Doctor Who* for the industrial, social, and cultural contexts in which it was produced and consumed: Fox had built its reputation on narrow-casting and counterprogramming so as to attract the lucrative 18–34 year old male

demographic, an audience unlikely to be familiar with the BBC series. This attempt to address distinct audiences resulted in a movie that introduces too much of the story-world for new viewers, while its efforts to render unfamiliar content comprehensible and palatable—such as making the Doctor half-human so that he can enjoy a conventional romance with Grace Holloway (Daphne Ashbrook)—alienated many who expected a "faithful" continuation of the series.

The relaunched *Doctor Who* television series (2005-) has proven more successful in managing the tension between continuity and radical revision, enjoying the space permitted by series (rather than one-off) production to carefully reveal the extent of its revisions to, and selective continuities with, the earlier series and the television movie. This is signalled by the decision not to regenerate Sylvester McCoy or Paul McGann into Christoper Eccleston, but to launch the viewer, along with Rose Tyler (Billie Piper), the new companion-to-be, into the middle of an adventure in which the Doctor is already involved; and by incrementally unveiling a tidied-up story-world in which the Daleks and Time Lords eradicated each other in the Time War (except, of course, for those who later turn out to have survived) and the Cybermen are confined to a parallel universe from which they cannot venture into our own (except, of course, when they can). Series production also enables the Doctor's romantic and/or sexual involvement with his companions—studiously ignored as a possibility in the original series—to be cast as a series of variations on the reluctant romance narrative made so central to contemporary televisual stories by such series as Moonlighting, Remington Steele, Cheers, and The X-Files. His involvement with Rose is eventually resolved by sending an accidentally-produced human version of himself to join her in the alternative universe in which she now lives. The real Doctor, mourning her loss, does not really notice how smitten with him her successor, Martha Jones (Freema Agyeman), is until she returns to her life on Earth rather than waiting for him to reciprocate her feelings; and while the Doctor and Donna

Noble (Catherine Tate) become close, their relationship is never romantic. The romance between Captain Jack Harkness (John Barrowman) and the Doctor was thwarted—before the events of the series—when he became immortal, a fixed point in the timeline, and thus someone to whom the Doctor cannot be close for long. Although Amelia Pond (Karen Gillan) expresses her sexual interest in the Doctor as clearly as does Captain Jack Harkness, she has a fiancé, Rory Williams (Arthur Darvill), whom she marries and whom the Doctor accepts as a TARDIS regular.

As this array of relationships suggests, the new *Doctor Who* participates in television drama's turn to soap opera techniques, ranging from the psychologization of character and emphasis on affect to the privileging of close-ups to convey emotion and emotionality. As Glen Creeber suggests, this need not be understood "as a move away from the 'social' and the 'political' and towards the 'personal' and the 'trivial,' but as a gradual progression towards newer forms of representation which offer a more contemporary articulation of present social experience" (13); but it must also be understood in terms of an industry emphasis on a property's "emotional capital," that is, the "consumers" emotional investment in media content" that can be manipulated in order to "increase the brand's worth" (Jenkins 279). This logic also underpins the turn to high-concept narratives, to spectacular CGI effects and to the luminous cinematography and production design's emphasis on large blocks of primary color (plus yellow and purple), as well as Murray Gold's semiotically thin, filmic scoring that connotatively "stresses melodrama not science fiction, fantasy-horror not science fiction, and action-adventure not science-fiction" (Hills, Triumph 179)—all of which target a general audience which might not normally be interested in sf and whose attention might be more likely to wander. The new format, of standalone and multi-episode stories with season-long narrative arcs gradually emerging as hints, rumors and connections are released (in the program itself as well as its publicity and online extensions [see Perryman]), is designed to

reward both casual and attentive viewers. The guiding principle, however, is always the instrumentalist exploitation of a multi-media property and the audience's affective investments in it. For example, one of the most recent adaptations is *Doctor Who: The Adventure Games*, downloadable in four installments free from the BBC website. Piers Wenger, the series' new executive producer, boasted that "There aren't 13 episodes of Doctor Who this year, there are 17—four of which are interactive. Everything you see and experience within the game is part of the *Doctor Who* universe" (Anon). In the same press release, other BBC executives emphasized the integration between the televisual and interactive episodes, with the latter "defining the look and feel of future TV episodes" (Anon). Such statements are misleading. The four interactive episodes, which link together like a mini-season, do not "weave exciting" narrative strands" with the television episodes they were developed "alongside" (Anon), but exist parallel to them, playing no part in the season's narrative arc. However, in addition to producing additional points of contact with the franchise/brand, the interactive episodes' ambiguous relationship to the television series permitted the reintroduction of the original series' Cybermen to the story-world (in the second interactive episode, "Blood of the Cybermen"). 20 Whether this will lead to genuine transmedial storytelling is unclear, but the suggestion that *The Adventure Games* will influence "the look" of the television episodes is susceptible to being interpreted as a hinting that the original Cybermen might return to the series. More likely, it is an attempt to continue to exploit the Cybermen, even though the series' own story-logic prevents them from reappearing, while offering fan and older audiences what might be dubbed "narrow-cast affective content."

The same press release conjured the image of families "gather[ing] round the PC or Mac in the same way they do the television" (Anon). This returns us once more to the importance of consumption contexts in understanding adaptations. Like "The Chase," the new *Doctor Who*—which is often credited with reconstituting a seemingly irremediably

fragmented primetime family audience—self-reflexively depicts its heterogeneous audience (and, less consciously, its own contradictory attitude towards them as consumers). For example, in "The Runaway Bride" (25 December 2006), when the abducted Donna must leap from a speeding cab to the TARDIS hovering alongside, two children watch through the rear window of a car, as rapt by the action as the viewing audience, urging her to jump and celebrating when she makes it. In contrast, minutes later, Donna has no idea what the Doctor is talking about when he mentions the giant spaceship over London that featured in the previous year's "The Christmas Invasion" (25 December 2005) because she "had a bit of a hangover" and thus missed both the event itself and its media coverage. Between the children's immediate, visceral response and Donna's inattentiveness, the show sketches a range of alternatives. "The Voyage of the Damned" (25 December 2007) introduces Bernard Cribbins as Donna's grandfather Wilfred Mott, who still finds joy in contemplating the wonders of the night sky—a piece of sentimental casting, reminding older viewers of their own affective engagement with children's television when young. ²¹ Fans and other migratory audiences who pursue their interest across media are figured by the group of gentle misfits who become friends while searching for the truth about the Doctor in "Love & Monsters" (17 June 2006), and by Clive (Mark Benton) in "Rose" (26 March 2005), who is compiling a dossier on the mysterious Doctor who reappears throughout history just before catastrophes strike. A genial figure, enjoying the amused tolerance of his wife and son, he nonetheless embodies a stereotypical, middle-aged, overweight, and slightly creepy fan; but even as it denigrates fandom, Clive's brief appearance includes a nod to the fans—a photo of the Doctor in Dealey Plaza on the day before the very first episode of *Doctor Who* was broadcast. "Blink" (9 June 2007) features Larry Nightingale (Finlay Robertson), a video store clerk obsessed with DVD easter eggs in which the Doctor directly addresses the camera, as if in conversation with an unheard interlocutor; and Sally Sparrow (Carey Mulligan) who, after

interpolating (and interpellating) herself into this conversation so as to learn how to avoid the threat of the Weeping Angels and rescue the Doctor, becomes obsessed with tracking him down. They are mutually redeemed from potentially dangeours obsessions by the flourishing of their heteronormative relationship.

However, one of the episode's recurring images is of the Doctor's direct-address exhortation to the diegetic viewer, repeated as a coda to the extra-diegetic viewer: "Don't blink. ... Don't turn your back. Don't look away. And don't blink." In "the era of [the] permanent *marketing* campaign, where the selling of an entertainment environment is ongoing, an activity punctuated by commodity texts" (Acland 77), even a critically and commercially successful flagship television program, it seems, must demand our attention in order to reinforce viewer commitment, while simultaneously working to sweep us up in the channel's flow of subsequent programs. The new *Doctor Who* desires the attentive cinematic gaze, yet must allow for the distracted glances of disinterested viewers who might otherwise disperse, refragmenting the family audience it managed to stick back together. Yet it also wants this dispersal to occur, for family members to engage with migrated content and ancillary products, with the property's transmedial flow, so as to ensure they return next week, every week.

Adaptation studies has long recognized that adaptations may take a variety of approaches to their sources. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker, for example, divide adaptations between those which "attempt to give the impression of being faithful" (9), those that retain "the core … narrative while significantly reinterpreting … the source" (10) and those that regard "the source merely as raw material, as simply an occasion for an original work" (10). Dudley Andrew and Geoffrey Wagner offered similar tripartite schemes, and likewise privileged source over adaptation. The example of *Doctor Who* indicates the ways in which, and extent to which, such approaches are inadequate to the media environment we

now inhabit. As Robert Stam argues, adaptation studies must rid itself of deeply-rooted cultural prejudices about the superiority of older and linguistic arts over newer and visual ones, but it must also go further than that. It must pay greater attention to production and consumption contexts and more fully embrace the range of adaptations across media forms and such social practices as play. And in order to address this plenitude, it must develop a more fluid and flexible critical vocabulary, which might include not only such terms as cover versions, renditions, permutations, iterations, supplements, remediations and reboots, but also, perhaps, reversed polarities and regenerations.

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Notes

¹ Summoned By Shadows (Baggs 1992) and its sequels are the most notable fan-produced DTV movies, Abducted by the Daleks (Nowicki 2005) and Doctor Loo and the Filthy Phaleks (Gee 2005) the best-known pornographic adaptations.

² Only two further serials were novelized in the 1960s, *The Web Planet* (13 February- 20 March 1965) as Bill Strutton's *Doctor Who and the Zarbi* (1965) and *The Crusade* (27 March-17 April 1965) as Whitaker's *Doctor Who and the Crusaders* (1966); but Target Books reissued them in 1973 as the first titles in a series that would adapt over 150 serials by 1994.

³ For comprehensive details of *Doctor Who* tribute records and books, see http://www.millenniumeffect.co.uk/audio/tributes/index2.html and http://www.timelash.com/tardis/items.asp?books, respectively. For critical analyses of Dalekmania, merchandizing, consumption and play, see Bignell "Space" and "The Child,"

and Bignell and O'Day 61–64; and of novels, comics, audio adventures and online adjuncts, see Perryman.

- ⁴ In its first three seasons, *Doctor Who* ran for an average of 41 consecutive weeks per year, with average viewing figures of 8.7 million, peaking at 13.5 million for "The Web Planet," the first episode of *The Web Planet* (13 February- 20 March 1965), and dropping to 4.3 million for the first episode of *The Savages* (28 May-18 June 1966), the first time the audience was smaller than the 4.4 million who watched *Doctor Who*'s very first episode.

 ⁵ In the 1970s, the format eventually settled down into a combination of (mostly) four-parters and six-parters (or two- and three-parters when season 22 (1985) experimented with 45-minute episodes).
- ⁶ In 1964, BBC2 was launched using the 625-line PAL UHF colour system developed for Western Europe, but it would be five years until BBC1 and ITV switched to this higher definition system. Because older television could not receive such broadcasts, and because national coverage was legally mandated, programming was rebroadcast in 405-line monochrome until 1985.
- ⁷ A tape cost approximately £100, while *Doctor Who* was budgeted at just £2,300 per episode, rising to £2,750 by the end of season three.
- ⁸ The episodes from this period available to viewers are either video or DVD releases struck from original tapes or kinescopes/telerecordings (the latter originally produced for export by filming a monitor showing the taped show, with the camera synchronized to the monitor's scan rate), which may or not have been "cleaned up" (to varying degrees), and most likely watched on either 625-line analog or 1080-line digital televisions (the latter have an image resolution of 1925 pixels per line, which are reproduced exactly time after time, while the former have the equivalent of 704 pixels and imperfect reproduction). Such downgradings

and upgradings of the image and soundtrack ensure that we can never experience them as originally broadcast.

⁹ In *The Daleks* and *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, the problem of persuading viewers that the Daleks pose a numerical threat was addressed by including life-size cardboard cut-outs in the background of several scenes. *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* also relies on the Daleks' cheaply costumed, mostly non-speaking Robomen and cheap-looking Slyther monster to swell their ranks. *The Chase* borrowed several of the Daleks made for *Dr. Who and the Daleks*, which finished production just before studio work on the serial began. Motionless—and thus presumably unoccupied—Daleks appear in the background of several scenes.

¹⁰ In "The Watcher," the first episode of the four-parter now called *The Time Meddler* (3-24 July 1965), the Doctor's impatient explanation of the TARDIS controls to new companion Steven (Peter Purves) includes a small metaleptic joke: looking out of the screen and pointing upwards and to his right, where some television sets would have had their controls, he says, "and that over yonder is the horizontal hold."

- ¹¹ The relatively casual viewing of this audience segment is matched by the Daleks themselves, who apparently missed the end of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* and the following twenty episodes, thus causing the robot Doctor to betray its identity by mistakenly calling Vicki "Susan."
- ¹² To the sound of BBC Radiophonic Workshop's electronic title music, a white line rises like a rocket up the middle of the black screen, unzipping it and opening it out into Rorschach-like mirrored patterns of white light in the middle of which, courtesy of vision-mixing from another camera, a white title fades in, then recedes from us as if down a low-budget version of the Stargate tunnel of light in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick UK 1968). This is not a spurious connection: Kubrick's office did contact the BBC to discover how a zero-gravity effect was was achieved in the twelve-parter now known as *The Daleks' Master Plan* (13

November 1965-29 January 1966). On the Radiophonic Workshop's contribution to *Doctor Who*, see Barron, Donnelly and Niebur.

- ¹³ "The original script was about the fiftieth anniversary of their TV debut, a concert in 2012, and the Beatles were to have been made up as old men. Later drafts said that it was 1994, and that they were appearing on 3D BBC TV in colour" (Wood and Miles 174).
- ¹⁴ For the first three seasons, no one seemed entirely certain whether the Doctor was human or alien. The Time Lords would not be mentioned until Troughton's final serial, *The War Games* (19 April-21 June 1969), which came after six seasons and nearly 250 episodes.
- 15 Cancellation did, however, free *Doctor Who* from "budgetary constraints, intermittently poor direction, often pantomimic acting, occasionally juvenile scripting, and the BBC's own inconsistent attitude towards it," enabling the "programme's true potential" to begin "to be realised" (Wright, "Shared World" 78) when Virgin Books launched its *Doctor Who The New Adventures* in 1991. This series of 61 novels, continuing the story of the seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy), was joined in 1994 by *The Missing Adventures* series, featuring the various Doctors in 33 adventures interpolated between television serials. When the BBC decided not to renew the Virgin's license, Virgin published 23 novels featuring the *New Adventures*' companion Bernice Summerfield, who has continued to appear in stories, novels, and audio dramas from Big Finish Productions. Between 1997 and 2005, the BBC then published 75 *Eighth Doctor Adventures* (1997-2005), featuring the television movie's Doctor (Paul McGann), and 76 *Past Adventures*, featuring the other Doctors. On the *New Adventures*, also see Smith; on Big Finish audio adventures, see Hills, "Televisuality."

¹⁶ Earlier that year, Disney approached the BBC about an adaptation of the seven-parter now known as *Marco Polo* (22 February-4 April 1964), but this project seems to have gone no further than an initial enquiry.

- ¹⁷ Since 1912, all films have had to obtain a certificate from the British Board of Film Censors (now, the British Board of Film Classification) before they could be exhibited in the UK. From 1951-1970, there were three kinds of certificate available: U (suitable for children); A (children must be accompanied by an adult); and X (suitable only for those over 16).
- ¹⁸ Arguably, this failure resulted from the proliferation of potential identification/entry points that diminished the centrality of Susan and the Doctor. Producer Milton Subotsky abandoned plans for a third film, probably an adaptation of *The Chase* or *The Keys of Marinus* (11 April-16 May 1964).
- ¹⁹ On failures to make a *Doctor Who* film and on the development and production of the television movie, see Lofficier and Segal with Russell.
- ²⁰ In the original series, the Cybermen came from the planet Mondas; in the new series they were the invention of a mad scientist on an alternative Earth in a parallel universe which is now completely inaccessible.
- ²¹ In addition to appearing as a companion in the second *Doctor Who* film, *Daleks Invasion Earth 2150A.D.* (Flemyng UK 1966), Cribbins narrated *The Wombles* (1973-1975), voiced numerous other children's animations and was a recurring storyteller on *Jackanory* (1965-1996).

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