Chapter 4

Screenwriting in Britain 1895–1929

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The story of the development of screenwriting as a discrete practice is one of *habitus*, labour relations, cultural assumptions and inter-medial borrowings. It is a narrative lying within the larger one of cinema, following the same contours of growth and retrenchment and with the same concerns about how to match production technology with audience comprehension. But it also has its own history of creating and rationalizing specific ways of working, and of negotiating spaces for these within broader industry practice. This chapter introduces that history, during the silent era of the British film industry.

The earliest 'screenwriters'

Screenwriting has never been a heavily populated profession. During the whole silent film period only around 360 people (including around 60 women) can be identified as specialist screenwriters, almost all from 1912 onwards.[1] However, even identifying 'the screenwriter' as a meaningful role remains problematic until the later 1900s, mainly because the early 'cameraman' system of production did not demarcate a specific role of writer; 'the operator would select the subject matter and stage it as necessary' (Staiger 1985: 116).[2] From around then, and particularly from the early 1910s, a new 'wave' of specialist writers established their role as a professional one, developing and rationalizing normative practice throughout the 1910s and attempting to secure their status as the 'author' of a film, similar to that of a playwright. By the mid-1920s, they had already lost ground to the director, and by the time the industry began to pick up after the mid-decade slump, a new set of practices were forming around a third 'wave' of screenwriting activity. Charles Barr describes pre-1930 film industry development as occurring in stages (Barr 2009: 145); the waves of screenwriting activity are responses to these.

In the earlier 1900s, the role of writing was not demarcated from other roles: everyone did what they felt they could do; for example, film company owner Cecil Hepworth paid tribute to Percy Stow both for his direction of 'trick' films and his ability and willingness to 'take … turns at the developing and printing machine' (1951: 53). At Hepworth's, whoever was responsible for the screen idea merely offered the story, which was written up to be approved by Hepworth. The earliest

noted credit as scriptwriter in Denis Gifford's *British Film Catalogue*, vol. 1 (2000) is Hepworth himself for his *Alice in Wonderland* (1903).[3] This 16-scene 800 ft (or around 13-minute) film, which links key scenes as a narrative framework, has been recognized as significant (Low and Manvell 1948: 83–5; Higson 2002: 42–64). It was ambitious, and based around scenes as pictures.

> We did the whole story in 800 feet – the longest ever at the time. Every situation [i.e. scene] was dealt with, with all the accuracy at our command and with reverent fidelity, so far as we could manage it, to Tenniel's famous drawings.
>
> (Hepworth, 1951: 63)

In 1904, with British industrial production having doubled in a year, and with this increase made up of longer films lasting anything from two to sixteen minutes, Hepworth found it necessary to employ actor Lewin Fitzhamon as 'stage manager', the early term for director. This meant Fitzhamon 'wrote, stage-managed, directed and acted in around two films a week for eight years' (Gifford 1986: 315). Despite the speed of this turnover, there were still formal written scripts for this; 'Fitz' later recalled that there were 'scenarios' at Hepworths in 1904, typed by Ethel Christian who ran a theatrical typing agency;[4] 'The game at first was to submit a scenario', to be approved by Hepworth (Gifford 1986: 315–16). Significantly Fitzhamon claims that by the end of 1904 the public was also sending in story ideas, which Hepworth would pay for, and which Fitz would adapt himself on Sunday mornings (S. Brown 2008: 2). Fitz carried a notebook in which he also wrote ideas for scripts in the evenings, but scripts were not given to the actors; instead they followed verbal instructions during rehearsals, and presumably also during shooting itself (S. Brown 2008: 2). It seems, therefore, that at least one major British film production company ran a 'quasi-director' system from around 1904, where responsibility for constructing the narrative lay with the 'stage-manager', based on screen ideas proposed by himself or others. The formality of a 'film-script' seems important only to this stage-trained director and to Hepworth himself.

By 1907 the provenance and suitability of film story ideas were issues that began to surface in the trade press. An American article on 'The Requirements of the Film Plot' appeared in the newly revamped *Kine Weekly* (1907a), though the following week the journal pointed out that 'a well known manager' had shown them a cupboard full of 'new subjects', not all of them practicable, 'for it is an unhappy fact that some of the most original ideas are most difficult to put into practical form', although there were sufficient to 'ensure a steady stream of good class subjects' (*Kine Weekly* 1907b). The linked issues of suitability and the need for an endless surplus of story material were already present in the industry.

Screenwriters themselves are generally uncredited in trade literature until 1912 (Gifford 2000: p. ix), though they were clearly employed before then. Clarendon Films' founder-partner Percy Stow employed Langford Reed from 1907 to 1909

as a story writer, and he is credited as writing a script of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* – lasting around 12 minutes – in November 1908. For the moment at least, Reed is the first clearly identifiable specialist screenwriter in British film production, though there are several earlier filmmakers who might now be termed writer-directors. Reed continued screenwriting until 1922, being well enough known as a 'photo-playwright' in 1915 to be selected as the first to be featured in a series of biographical articles for the *Bioscope* (Elliott 1915b).

The second 'wave'

Until the early 1910s, almost all films were shorter than 15 minutes long. From 1911, in line with the European trend towards longer 'feature' films, multiple reel films grew in number, becoming the norm from 1916.[5] Production during the silent period reached a peak of 832 fiction titles in 1914 (Figure 4.1), after which the number of titles falls to just 109 in 1918, but this is mitigated by an increase in the length of individual films. By 1919 most productions were five-reelers or longer, and by 1923 most were six-reelers or more, lasting perhaps 75–90 minutes plus.[6] There was a post-Great War 'bounce-back' to 210 fiction titles in 1920, but production slumped again to a mere 52 in 1925, before the Cinematograph Films Act 1927 (the 'quota' Act) and other changes began to increase British production once again. By the start of the 1930s (and the phasing out of silent film production) the British film industry was producing just over 100 titles per annum.[7]

The changeover from numerous small titles to fewer larger ones reduced the demand for many different, short and simple screen ideas to a much smaller number of longer, more complex (and more financially risky) productions, including film series and serials. The demand for screenwriters was therefore reduced overall, but those who were required needed to be craftsmen and women of some skill and experience. By 1918, the skills required for such screenwriting
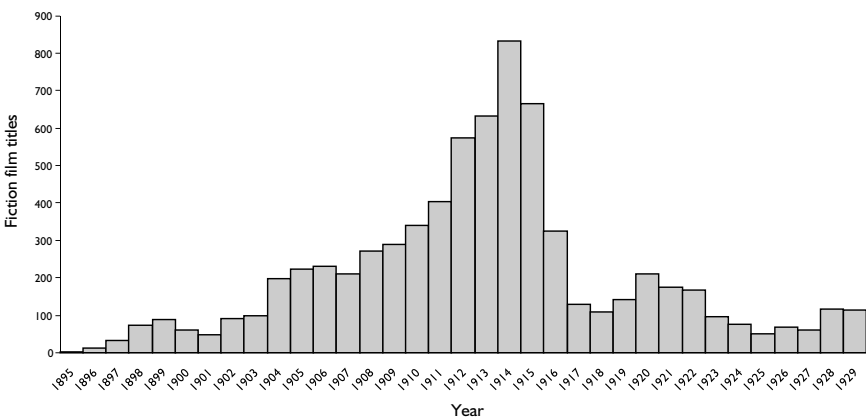

Figure 4.1 UK fiction films released 1895–1929 (analysis from Gifford 2000)

were significantly more specialized than they had been in 1908, when craft skills and norms began to be formalized.

The new division of labour provided a route for promising aspirants to enter the film industry. Writers could be taken on as Scenario Editor, where they read submissions, and formatted stories into scripts as well as writing screenplays themselves, as did Victor Montefiore at Hepworths (S. Brown 2008: 4). Montefiore also wrote articles and a pamphlet on best screenwriting practice (1915) contributing, with others like Eliot Stannard at B & C and later Adrian Brunel at the British Actors Film Company, to the establishment of the 'doxa' of screenwriting based on a range of beliefs about art and good practice, and focused on notions of dramatic construction including that of the 'well-made play'. Such gatekeepers and opinion-formers were in a position to establish norms, but as they did so they raised the bar for amateurs. In the mid-teens screenwriters like the determined (but not himself hugely experienced at that point) William J. Elliott was telling the 'Incompetent Amateur' to go, 'and it's up to us to see him off' (1915c). By 1919, director Maurice Elvey explained the extent of skills necessary for the professional screenwriter who was, as a consequence, a scarce commodity.

> The number of people in London who can be trusted to turn out a scenario on which a [director] can really get to work without fear of being stopped by some technical error can be numbered on one's fingers. A scenario writer must know something of photography, scene setting as applied to studio work, the possibility of lighting effects from searchlights to candles, psychology, costumes and the artistic temperament.
>
> (Elvey 1919: 1)

One result of increasing the level of craft skills was that the general trawl for ideas, through advertisements and the occasional competition, became more dispiriting. It resulted in 'stacks and stacks of "synopses" and "scenarios" from servant-girls and office-boys. If the disappointment doesn't sour you then this daily avalanche of puerile piffle will unbalance you', said the former scenario editor Adrian Brunel (c.1922).

Stage and literary sources, as fully constructed fiction, became popular targets for adaptation, with publishers sending off their latest works to scenario editors 'tied together like firewood' (Stannard 1921a: 140). Film companies leapt on almost anything, to the chagrin of the freelance writer.

> At best it is a cut-and-slash trade … [The] work must be translated from rhetoric into continuous action; it is this terrible screen need for perpetual motion that has caused so many indifferent and oft-time lamentably bad books and plays to be eagerly sought after by film manufacturers.
>
> (Stannard 1917: 108)

Screenwriters themselves found the profession a struggle, with the need for oversupply creating a buyers' market. Adrian Brunel suffered rejection at the hands of Clarendon in 1912 and 1913, and William J. Elliott, who may have worked for Hepworth (S. Brown 2008: 3) but was first credited in 1914 as a screenwriter for London Films,[8] disarmingly claimed to have received 275 refusals and 10 acceptances during his first year as a screenwriter (1915a). 'I suppose', he said, 'I must now be regarded as a successful photoplay writer' (1915a). Adrian Brunel was provoked into writing to *The Cinema* in 1921 pleading for more film finance, particularly payment for screenwriters' time to work on scripts.

> Two or three [British screenwriters] are over-worked and are over-producing – while the others chase about for commissions. It is a hard job and some of the more fortunate ones will occasionally obtain a commission to do, say, a five reel adaptation for £100. A conscientious writer will take a month at least to do this … but the poor devil is driven and must live; he cannot afford more time and must chase round for another commission.
>
> (Brunel 1921: 1)

As always, the less well-known writers got work providing uncredited material, or scenarios which were not produced. Former actor Gerald de Beaurepaire adapted a novel *Barnaby* for Barkers in 1919, and stayed with them as 'scenarist'. His account describes his industrial function.

> Much of what my fellow-scenarists and I wrote, down at Ealing Film Studios, between 1918 and 1925 did not get to the point of being 'shot'. In those days we just had to write SOMETHING in case an IDEA was needed … Harry Engholm and I did a bit of freelancing together – I think it was for Stolls – and the outstanding script I can remember was an adaptation of Conan Doyle's great boxing story, 'The Croxley Master'.
>
> (De Beaurepaire 1961: 2)

The potential for female employment was thought to be good, particularly because of the perception that cinema was attractive to women; 'women's stories' were considered an important genre (Newey 2000: 151). Despite that, only around 17 per cent of credited screenwriters during the whole silent period were women, some of whose activity may also have been mediated or negotiated through familial or domestic structure (Newey 2000: 160–1); there were certainly family relationships in the professional lives of Ethyle and Ernest Batley, Lisle and Nellie Lucoque, the Hepworths, the Merwins and the Morgans. Women did become noticed; while Hepworth later credited his wife Margaret with the story for *Rescued by Rover* in 1905 (1951: 66), it was not until the start of the 'second wave' that professional writers became visible, among them women like Hepworth's Muriel Alleyne (whose first credit was in 1912), Alice de Winton (1913) and Blanche MacIntosh (1913). Others include Ethyle Batley (1913); and the Marchioness of

Townshend (1913), who wrote for Clarendon Films. By the 1920s some women had made significant names as screenwriters, from Eve Unsell (from 1919 in Britain), Alma Reville (who started in London Films' editing department around 1915,[9] but whose first screenwriting credit was in 1928) to Irene Miller (from 1915) who worked for Barker and Samuelsons, and Lydia Hayward (from 1920), who was very active in the 1920s and continued more sporadically to the 1940s.

The most successful screenwriters, such as Kenelm Foss, Benedict James (a.k.a. Bertram Jacobs) and Reuben Gillmer, were indeed in demand, and the one most seriously overproducing was Eliot Stannard. He started by adapting his mother's novel *Beautiful Jim* for B & C in 1914, following up before the year was out with several other scripts for the same director Maurice Elvey, and his habitual star Elizabeth Risdon. Stannard proved himself reliable and quick, to the point that by 1920 he was regarded highly by the industry.[10] By the mid-1920s he was the *éminence grise*, writing for the upcoming new director Alfred Hitchcock, with seven of Hitch's nine silent scripts attributed to Stannard (Barr 1999: 16). His last script (of around 150 in his career) was produced in 1933. A man with an intellectual grasp of his work, he concentrated on screenwriting with few forays into other media, despite collaborating on a stage play in 1924.[11] Stannard probably contributed more than any other writer in Britain to the perception of screenwriting as a distinct art, a contribution only now being recognized (see Barr 2009: 153; Macdonald 2009).

The third wave

The 'British Film Slump' of 1924, based around a supposed crisis in November in which *Kine Weekly* pointed out 'in alarmist rhetoric that every British studio had ground to a complete halt' (Burrows 2009: 160), may not have been quite the problem it was touted as, but the general reduction in individual titles in the mid-1920s clearly reduced the produced output of working screenwriters. Fewer new entrants found a way in to the profession; Figure 4.2 shows a significant drop in new names credited as screenwriters in the mid-1920s, with just five new screenwriters credited in 1925, down from 34 in 1921. Significantly, the increase in production from 1926 was not always taken up by previously active screenwriters like the plucky William Elliott, whose last credit was as writer-director of a series of three 30-minute films in 1926, produced (perhaps in a last-ditch attempt to direct his own destiny) by a company called Raymond-Elliott.[12] Other experienced professionals who ceased writing during this period were Blanche MacIntosh, Hepworth's chief writer whose last credit was in 1923, J. Bertram Brown (1924, apart from one co-credit in 1930), Kenelm Foss (1924, also with one co-credit in 1932) and W. Courtney Rowden (1923).

Whether or not this slowdown was 'an economic caesura which knocked out the old-fashioned and allowed the modern to appear' (Gledhill 2009: 163),[13] there was still some work for the core experienced writers; the estimable Eliot Stannard continued on his prolific way, along with Lydia Hayward (whose first credit was
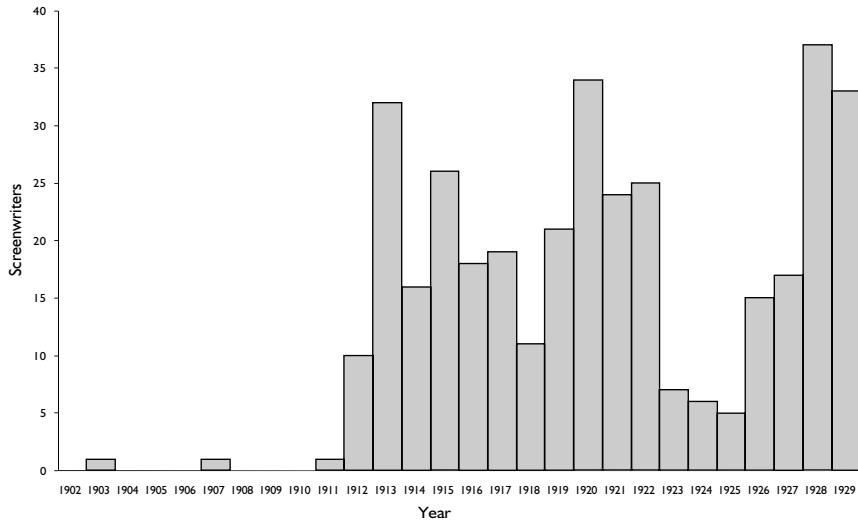
Figure 4.2 First credit screenwriters 1902–1929 (analysis from Gifford 2000)

in 1920), Roland Pertwee (1919), Patrick Mannock (1920) and H. Fowler Mear (1917), but there was now room for a new generation to join some of the older guard. As Lydia Hayward explained in 1927 'there is, at the moment, a shortage … and all who are interested in seeing our industry step up from its Cinderella condition to the rank of Princess would welcome newcomers' (1927: 155). The newcomers duly showed up; there were 15 previously unknown screenwriters in 1926, 17 in 1927 and 37 in 1928 (Figure 4.2). As Geoff Brown points out (2008: 247), the writing gap was now as likely to be filled by university graduates, familiar with the intellectual interests of the Film Society and *Close-Up* magazine, as by actors or enthusiastic amateur writers working from home. New boys included Sidney Gilliat, son of the editor of the *Evening Standard*, and Cambridge graduates Roger Burford and Angus MacPhail; but also an ordinary solicitor's son, W. P. Lipscomb, whose first major credit was for the B & D talkie *Splinters* (1929), and who went on to become one of the highest paid writers in Hollywood before returning to Britain in 1943 (*The Times* 1958). These new writers were able to learn the new ropes of a changed industry quite quickly, building new contact networks in companies like Gainsborough, with the new script gatekeepers such as Angus MacPhail.

Despite the influx, Cecil Hepworth is reported as saying the rehabilitation of the British film industry was due to new methods rather than to new men (Gledhill 2003: 100), and certainly enough of the earlier cohort of screenwriters survived in sufficient numbers to support this theory. The folkloric assumption that many silent film writers 'failed' to make the transition to sound film production suggests an incompetence that may not have actually been there; those whose experience started before 1924 and who continued to write into the 1930s and beyond include

Denison Clift, George Dewhurst, Lydia Hayward, Sinclair Hill, Harry Hughes, Harry Mear and Frank Miller. They were the ones who adapted to the new ideas, and to the new practices that came with them.

The screenplay

The formalization of the written form of the screen idea became increasingly necessary for the industry before the second 'wave' of screenwriting activity, but when was a written script first used, and how did it come about? In the labour system common during the decade after 1895, formally writing down a screen idea for production planning purposes was probably unnecessary except for the more complex scenes. With many films in 1903 less than two minutes long, a written script may not normally have been more than an aide-memoire, perhaps even written simultaneously 'as shot', and useful for later sales purposes. By 1903 longer films of several scenes lasting perhaps three or four minutes were becoming more common, though still often considered as separate entities with minimal narrative linkage such as G. A. Smith's comedy *After Dark* (1902).[14] In this 15-scene film of less than four minutes, a 'policeman's lantern illumines scenes of waif, drunkard, burglar …'[15] suggesting an approach to film construction that works – as other films of the time often did – as a collection of significant moments. Similarly in Hepworth's 1906 catalogue the 1903 *Alice* is reportedly shown as – and indeed offered for sale as – separate 'scenes', (Hepworth 1951: 63). Low and Manvell quote directly from the catalogue, which refers to scenes 'preceded where necessary for the elucidation of the story, by descriptive titles' (1948: 83–4);[16] in effect creating an impression of the whole *Alice in Wonderland* narrative through linking key scenes by written text. A script may well have taken the form of a similar scene-by-scene description, without titles, though in this case Tenniel's drawings probably provided more of an inspiration for the films than any written script.[17]

In the USA by 1905 formal scenarios were essentially descriptions of place and plot, divided into short scenes where the action was filmed, as if on a stage (Loughney 1990). As such, these outlines were very similar to those found in sales catalogues; indeed sales synopses may have been lifted almost whole from the original scenario. Scripts submitted for registration under copyright laws from 1907 in France were similar (Raynauld 1997), and there is no reason to suppose that these were very different from the scenarios presented by British screenwriters during the mid- to late 1900s. By 1909, ideas about formalizing the scenario were beginning to surface in the industry in the USA (Staiger 1985: 126), and by 1911 US-inspired screenwriting manuals were appearing in Britain. In 1912 the *Bioscope* had a regular column of news and advice for scenario writers.[18] Throughout the 1910s, manuals from successful (and indeed less successful) screenwriters were published, offering quite similar and mostly pragmatic advice, with reference to stage practice and notions of the well-made play.[19] Even the earliest manuals

CHAPTER VIII.

A SPECIMEN SCENARIO.

WE give here a sample scenario as a guide to the beginner :—

FOR LOVE OF GOLD.

Original Film Drama.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Earl Vivian	Old and Feeble.
Lieut. Vivian	Elder Son and Heir.
Hugh Vivian	Younger Son, an Unprincipled Scapegrace.
Elsie Howard	Niece of the Old Earl.
Hugh's Accomplice	A Burly Ruffian.

SYNOPSIS.

Hugh pesters his cousin Elsie with offers of marriage, which are rejected, there being a mutual affection between her and the heir. Hugh tries to extort money from his father, causing a violent scene, which results in the Earl's sudden death. Elsie and Lieutenant Vivian subsequently pursue their love affairs in the presence of the dead Earl, thinking he is asleep. They only discover his death on trying to wake him to announce their engagement. Hugh is left nothing in the will, and he eventually makes an unsuccessful attempt to steal the family jewels. Becoming desperate, he bribes an accomplice to murder his brother. An attack is made at the top of a cliff, but the heir foils it, and in the scuffle Hugh falls over the cliff. Elsie succeeds in reconciling the brothers as Hugh lies dying.

Scenes 1, 3, 6, 7	The Library.
„ 2	Entrance to the Mansion.
„ 4	The Garden.
„ 5	The Terrace.
„ 8	A Squalid Courtyard.
„ 9	Interior of Dirty Attic.
„ 10, 12	The Drawing Room.
„ 11, 13	Top of Cliff.
„ 14	Hugh's Bedroom.

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Hugh struggles with her, but Elsie manages to ring the bell. As the new Earl and a footman rush into room, Hugh strikes the girl down, and makes off without the jewels.

SCENE VIII.—A Squalid Courtyard.—*The Conspiracy.*— Hugh, now very shabby, enters ; looks round furtively, and knocks at a door, which is opened by an old woman. After a moment's conversation, he enters.

SCENE IX.—A Dirty Attic.—A villainous-looking man is leaning across a table asleep ; on the table are bottles, glasses, clay pipes, etc. Hugh enters ; they converse. (Bust view of the two plotting.) Stage view again. The bargain is concluded, and Hugh exits.

SCENE X.—The Drawing-room. Evening-time.—*Elsie pleads for Hugh's forgiveness.*—The lovers, in evening dress, are discussing Hugh ; Elsie tries to make peace, but her lover is obdurate. Disappointed, she turns away, and takes up a book. A slight estrangement springs up ; the new Earl saunters moodily through French window.

SCENE XI.—Top of Cliff. Blue for night effect. Bushes or other shelter at side.—*The Ambush.*—The heir is strolling along, sometimes pausing, thinking, and surveying the night. The ruffian, Hugh's accomplice, appears among the bushes, armed with iron bar ; he hesitates about rushing out. The heir strolls on, stealthily shadowed by the ruffian. Hugh also appears in the bushes, urging his accomplice by signs to do his work.

SCENE XII.—The Drawing-room.—Elsie has put down her book ; looks longingly at window ; resolves to follow her lover and make up their little quarrel. Picks up a wrap, and exits through window.

SCENE XIII.—Top of Cliff.—*The Attack.*—Heir is leaning against a fence, smoking peacefully ; in background are the two villains. The ruffian creeps up behind, and the bar is raised for the blow, when Elsie appears in distance, and utters a warning scream. The heir turns and fells the ruffian. Hugh dashes out, and

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Figure 4.3 Scenario format in 1911; from E. J. Muddle (1911) *Picture Plays and How to Write Them*, London, The Picture Play Agency

referred to specific practice, suggesting that a format style was sufficiently common in 1910/11 to be regarded as established (though the agency of the manuals themselves in creating this practice cannot be discounted). Sample scenarios showed the title, the generic label (e.g. comedy), a list of principal characters or cast, a short synopsis (in the present tense), a list of locations attached to the relevant scene numbers, and the action, including inter-titles (see Figure 4.3). The emphasis was on plot and action.[20]

Figure 4.4 shows a page of an apparently unproduced scenario from perhaps 1913 or 1914, *The Darkest Hour* by William J. Elliott, who may have submitted it to Hepworth.[21] The 'half-quarto' style appears to have been one of the known conventions of the time,[22] but what is intriguing to the modern screenwriter is the mix of its stage conventions (the scene description, a sense of the proscenium arch in the placement of objects 'R' or 'L', and the main character 'discovered') with a clear understanding of continuity between the master scene and an inserted shot.

Shooting scripts as separate documents are not mentioned in the 1910s advice offered to would-be writers. This absence might suggest they did not exist, but a surviving script for the 14-minute *The Jewel Thieves Outwitted* (1913) suggests otherwise (see Figure 4.5). This is a handwritten foolscap page divided into scenes with basic action on the right-hand side of the page and the left-hand side left blank for notes, suggesting a more pragmatic concern with getting shots and

S c e n e ... 1.
Room furnished as bed-sitting room. Window facing
camera, door L. A small bed and fireplace R. A
treadle sewing machine by window. A round table
in centre of room.

Eva discovered, working at machine. Enter two
children, a boy and a girl. They run to Eva and
kiss her. She takes out a purse, gives them money,
sends them on an errand. They exit.

Eva turns to window, as if in answer to a signal,
opens it, and leans out, talking.
(INSERT, Flash from window of street below, Tom
standing by opposite gate, looking up, talking.)
BACK TO SCENE. Cresswell enters, sees purse, opens
it stealthily, extracts money, replaces it, exits.

Eva shuts window, replaces purse in pocket, and
resumes her work.

Figure 4.4 Unpublished Scenario c.1913; William J. Elliott (c.1913) *The Darkest Hour*.
Nettlefold Special Collection, British Film Institute National Library

Figure 4.5 Shooting script, 1912, for Cecil Hepworth (1913) *The Jewel Thieves Outwitted*.
Fred Lake Special Collection, British Film Institute National Library.

recording takes. While it looks very different to the US-style 'continuity' in use at about the same time,[23] it has the same function of breaking up the script into shots and describing them in sufficient detail to be shot. The script appears to have been used for shooting in November 1912 by Cecil Hepworth, and includes amendments, notes of dates and footage shot (and if 'NG'; no good). Whether it was standard practice in his company to work from such a shot-list, or whether this was a personal way of working (like Lewin Fitzhamon's notebook), is not known.

The status of the main scenario (as opposed to documents used for shooting) is significant, because as writers wrote longer scripts they became more detailed and more technical. By the late 1910s the writer's version had become standardized in what has been described as 'the English style', where the construction of the script is both clearly about plot, and about specifying shots and other elements in detail (see Figure 4.6). Numbering reflects the master scene, but specific shots are included and allocated a letter within the master scene numbering system, thus privileging a sense of the scene over the shot. Scenes are sometimes also provided with sequence numbers and grouped – in this example (Figure 4.6) into episodes

Figure 4.6 'English style' screenplay 1921; Eliot Stannard (1921) *The Bachelors Club*. [format A] Fred Lake Special Collection, British Film Institute National Library

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(214) EXT.COTTAGE GARDEN - SEMI LONG SHOT

            Paul and Jenny walking side by side-they
            are both happy-she tells Paul of her wonder-
            ful contentment-her pleasure in the garden-
            everything-she stretches out her arms in
            absolute abandon of shappiness-Paul watches
            her with growing admiration-this action adds
            flame  to his growing like for the girl-he
            speaks to her tensely,gently,

T I T L E    "THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO MAKE OUR
             EXPERIMENT ABSOLUTELY SUCCESSFUL"

            She looks at him-suddenly perplexed-
            he gazes down at her-makes a half movement-
            then stops,thinking-

(215) CLOSE UP PAUL

            C.U. Paul as he thinks,after half making
            a movement as though he would declare him-
            self to Jenny OVERLAPS DISSOLVE AS HE
            THINKS,TO SCENE OF HIS INAUGURATION AT
            BACHELOR'S CLUB,WHAT AWAITS HIM IF HE
            BREAKS HIS OATH

(216) EXT.GARDEN - SEMI LONG SHOT

            BACK TO: Paul pulls himself together-takes
            one of Jenny hands-talks to her-bids her
            forget what he has said-CUT

Note: This in view of Mr.Zangwill's note to hold the
      affair in suspense,and not play it too strong,which
      I think very good indeed.
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Figure 4.7 Continuity-style script, 1921; Eliot Stannard (1921) *The Bachelors Club* [format C]. Fred Lake Special Collection, British Film Institute National Library.

– as well as into Acts, Reels or Parts synonymous with 1000 ft reels, or around 15 minutes each of screen time. Structure is therefore important on the pages of the English style script, and shots – though specified by the writer – are usually there to provide close-ups or other views of the action. They are shown as subordinate elements in the master scene. The informing poetics is not about constructing the film from shots, but about recording the action without missing out on detail. The other significant element is that the writer is here specifying all the detail, and assuming the director will follow the writer's instructions. There is evidence that scripts in this form of writer's draft, Format A,[24] were used in shooting, alongside scripts in another format, Format C (see Figure 4.7), which had shots numbered consecutively in the US continuity style and with the action written in a more prosaic style – less concerned with understanding motivation, for example.

Eliot Stannard's script for *The Bachelors' Club* (1921b) survives in both these formats, each with pencilled notes. My assumption is that the 'English style' script (format A) is what Stannard produced himself, and the continuity style (format C) is what the film company produced for the shoot. A. V. Bramble, the director, seems to have used both, though for what exact purposes is not clear.[25] The detail of format A shows that professional screenwriters were responsible for a detailed sense of the *whole* film, including specifying the shots, suggesting alternative

locations and even the odd note rationalizing script suggestions. Kenelm Foss noted (1920: 23–4) that Stannard 'doped' his own scripts – that is, provided additional technical information such as a location list with scene numbers, or a list of essential props – suggesting that Stannard may have been more meticulous than most. However, it seems that until the mid-1920s the screenwriter's job was generally seen to be less 'introductory' and more central to the shooting process than might be seen today, and the script was expected to reflect both narrative construction and technical detail. In Stannard's *Mr Gilfil's Love Story* (1919) directed by Bramble, for example, a comparison of the script and the completed film shows close correlation (Macdonald, 2008). Around 10 per cent of the film comprises additional shots, such as close-ups breaking scenes up still further, but there is otherwise almost no deviation from the script, except where the director has not actually been able to achieve the drama required by the writer. This way of working may be representative – Stannard may even have been influential in establishing and maintaining this style of script – but the sense here that the writer leads and the director follows is at odds with more controlling stance of the director in the later 1920s and 1930s, during the rebalancing of the relationship between writer and director that presaged the *auteur* theory.

Screenwriting and film poetics

The inter-medial connection between theatre practices and early film production has been studied from a range of perspectives (Brewster and Jacobs 1997; Fitzsimmons and Street 2000; Burrows 2003; Gledhill 2003; Rushton 2004) including screenwriting (Salt 1992; Macdonald 2010). The screenwriting discourse of the 1910s was characterized by inter-medial borrowings and loanwords from mainly theatre practice, in the search for a vocabulary and principles applicable to fiction film narrative. An inter-medial 'bridge' was extending to the new practice, with the early manuals finding it necessary to explain differences in terms of established theatre practice. Manuals and screenplays commonly used theatrical terms such as 'business', and film terms like 'reel' were interchangeable with 'act' in some multi-reel filmscripts. Screenwriting-manual writers E. J. Muddle (1911) and C. E. Graham (1913) felt the need to explain 'enter' and 'exit' in relation to the camera's field of vision, and the term 'scene' was still sometimes used to mean 'shot' in 1917.[26] In dramatic construction the influence of the 'well-made play' was strong; the ideas of Gustav Freytag and Alfred Hennequin have been linked to film narrative construction, and there is a correlation of ideas between William Archer's 1913 textbook on writing for the stage, *Play-making*, and manuals like that of Ernest Dench (1914) (Salt 1992: 111–13; Macdonald 2010). Certainly screenwriters studied theatre practice; the screenwriter and director Adrian Brunel studied several such books in his youth including Archer's work.[27]

However, this is not simply a story of theatre practice becoming attuned to film in a 'linear march to modernity' (Gledhill 2003: 89) as one might assume from the increasing use of famous stage actors in films.[28] Nor is it a recognition of the

importance of performative practices outside the narrational, as with the notion of a 'cinema of attractions' in early film.[29] Once screenwriting was established as a specialist practice, there was conscious discussion of what it should draw on for best practice, based on individual *habitus*. Gerald Turvey has noted that, while B & C's first film-makers (from around 1909) had backgrounds in music-hall, circus and popular entertainment, later employees brought experience from journalism and fiction writing as well as the legitimate theatre, and were beginning to rationalize their understanding of conceptualizing narrative fiction for the screen (2003: 85). In 1916, in his manual on film-making the director Harold Weston acknowledged a wide range of sources for film technique: painting, the theatre, the novel, poetry and still photography, as well as nodding across the Atlantic to admire films by D. W. Griffith and Thomas Ince (Weston 1916: 35). Eliot Stannard noted in 1920 that, while the scenario was 'an achievement in prose, it will rank with the Public purely as Drama [and] this being so it is the scenario-writer's business to visualize each scene he writes as "a picture"' (1920: 14).[30] Stannard was acknowledging the drama in 'artistic composition', in grouping and detail, as in painting. However, this notion of pictorial framing as a still picture – tableau-like – also suggests a view of film narration as a form of 'capture' rather than construction; of performance and presentation, rather than the creation through cutting of 'the illusion of a seamless fictional world that was fast becoming the norm' (Gledhill 2003: 93). What was in 'the picture' was what told the story, 'in the language of actions, which the heart must read', as actor-director-writer Henry Edwards put it (Gledhill 2003: 102). It was inside that picture-frame that performance and gesture conveyed, 'registered' or 'planted' the information which drove the narrative.[31]

For director Harold Weston in 1916 the basis for film narrative construction was integration, a quasi-Aristotelian unity that opposed the tendency to present 'a series of incidents insecurely linked together by a number of connecting scenes' (Turvey 2003: 87). Weston noted useful techniques like the close-up, and parallel narrative action (which he called 'dovetailing'), i.e. cross-cutting between two narrative strands in the manner of D. W. Griffith, converging at the moment of dramatic climax and thereby keeping the audience alert (Turvey 2003: 87).[32] Such unity required any adaptation to be a process of de- and reconstruction, involving analysing the original story in terms of incidents, psychology and analysis/explanation, 'in order to facilitate the elimination of superfluous characters, the possible reordering … of events and the spacing out of film climaxes to fall at the end of a film reel' (Turvey 2003: 87). This process is no straight translation from one medium to the other, but is seen as a new piece of work; an 'adaptation proper' in Brian McFarlane's phrase (1996: 20), and the basis for any pretention to being a 'new art'.

Eliot Stannard also claimed the task of adaptation was one of reconstruction, defending his own 'modernizing' of Dickens or any other author as appropriate 'whenever I think the story will be made more vivid, clear and dramatic in picture form' (1918: 66). More generally he argued, through several articles in the late 1910s and in his 1920 manual, for the recognition of several principles not dissimilar

to Weston's ideas, in a poetics of screenwriting: Theme, Simplicity, Continuity, Psychology, Atmosphere and Symbolism.[33] Everything must relate to the Theme – similar to Weston's unity – and Simplicity was for the benefit of the audience. There were therefore to be not too many characters or complications, incidents and situations, with every scene relating to the main purpose. Continuity meant narrative linearity – no flashbacks. Stannard's interest in character Psychology was in giving the character sufficient depth to interest an audience at a particular, more cultured level than seemed to be the case. Elevating the status of screenwriting to an art meant avoiding melodramatic, improbable incidents, which could be done through addressing Atmosphere; the combination of character and visual information that created the right psychological environment for the theme. In his *Mr Gilfil's Love Story* (1920), for example, Stannard counterpoints a rich but empty 'atmosphere' surrounding Wybrow's cynical seduction of Tina with the more bucolic, cheery sequences of courtship between the servants Knott and Dorcas (see Macdonald 2008).

Stannard's 'modern symbolism' included both the suggestion of general concepts such as freedom, and of elements of character, such as honest toil represented by dirty hands (Barr 1999; Macdonald 2008: 230). His way of creating symbolism is connected to his belief that the screenplay is a 'series of impressions or optical illusions' (1920: 18), and his account includes the observation (made *before* Kuleshov's 1921 experiments in the Soviet Union) that a sense of continuity is not about showing every event, but from inferring connection and causality from placing key scenes or shots together (1920: 18). Stannard's views fitted in well with the interest in montage shown later in the 1920s; Christine Gledhill's analysis of the British 'pictorial-theatrical-narrative' mode foregrounds director Cecil Hepworth's 'mosaic' style of construction (2003: 96), and Maurice Elvey's pictorialism developing into a 'collage [as a] form of construction approaching Soviet montage' in, for example, *Mademoiselle from Armentieres* (1926) (2003: 111). Gledhill notes Charles Barr traces this approach back to Eliot Stannard, but proposes that Elvey developed Stannard's symbolic approach into a 'flicker-book' style of construction which inhabited the image itself, 'cut up into various angles and points of view and recombined as in a kaleidoscope of continually shifting and differentiating perceptions' (2003: 111). She identifies this approach in 'the ultimate picture story of British cinema' (2003: 119), Hitchcock's *The Manxman* (1929), which was scripted by Stannard. Whether credited to writer or director, or both, it was this pictorial-theatrical mode that provided the roots for Hitchcock's techniques, an aesthetic allegiance later obscured by the 'very excellence' of those techniques, says Gledhill (2003: 122).

The lost art of inter-titles

In the early 1900s 'Living Pictures' tended to require some narrative explanation, especially when they were linked together as several scenes or tableaux. In the usual context of fairground exhibition live lecturers performed the same

function as lantern-slide presenters, linking and interpreting the scenes on the screen. Joe Kember notes 'until at least 1907 in the United Kingdom the role of live performers seems to have been dominant', with the *Kine Weekly* noting the importance of these showmen (Kember 2006: 6). Barry Salt notes that the benefit of explanatory inter-titles was understood in 1901 with Robert Paul's *Scrooge; or Marley's Ghost*,[34] but they were not used much until multi-scene films became more common after 1903, with dialogue titles rare until after 1906 (1992: 59). How to explain the plot clearly to an audience was still an issue in 1909; while the *Bioscope* was of the opinion that a film should 'explain itself', *Kine Weekly* was announcing 'another useful novelty' in a 'special slide to accompany a film subject and bearing in easily read lettering a *préces* [sic] of the plot, so that the subject may be more easily followed by the audience' (Kember 2006: 6; *Kine Weekly* 1909). By 1908 inter-titles were common in perhaps half the films produced, mainly dramatic subjects (Fletcher 2003: 34), and 'sub-titling' was becoming one of the practices that formed a distinct specialization, an anonymous backroom operation.

Over the next two decades screenwriters continued to specify titles in their scenarios, 'but generally', said one writer in *Stoll's Editorial News* (assuring his readers that the director is largely responsible for sub-titles or, worse still, that they were the products of studio employees who had not yet developed any literary sense), 'it is found necessary to title the finished article' (1919: 3); that is, inter-titling was most usefully a post-production task. For the writer, incorporating subtitles in the script was on one level a pragmatic matter of explaining narrative or articulating speech, and on another was seen as an artistic asset with the power of poetic expression.[35] Eliot Stannard pointed out a title was useful in economically carrying forward the plot without the need for more scenes showing narrative progression (1920: 23), a style of storytelling that led to complaints in 1923 in *The Motion Picture Studio* that British films were serial incidents 'strung loosely together with a wonderful array of sub-titling to supply gaps in action' (Gledhill 2003: 160). However, Adrian Brunel was clear in 1921 about the control offered by inter-titles in assisting continuity, emphasizing changes in tone, mood and direction and helping make a character stand out (Gledhill 2003: 161). Once talkies arrived, the inter-title was not needed for dialogue and its use in explaining rapid changes or characters' inner struggles became stylistically awkward. There was overlap, with some films produced in both silent and sound versions but, as Andrew Buchanan pointed out in 1937, a comparison of the two would show that the vehicle for narrative comprehension had moved from the image to the dialogue.

> A formula has been established which … has diverted the film from its natural path and, attractive and smooth though the modern talking picture is, it quite definitely tends to retard the progress of the film which depends solely upon moving images.
>
> (Andrew Buchanan, in Gritten 2008: 272)

Buchanan, along with Paul Rotha, Adrian Brunel and others saw a schism developing between 'commercial' and aesthetic approaches, where dialogue was seen as opposing the intelligent, artistic potential of the medium – Buchanan's 'natural path'. The model was highbrow versus lowbrow; two such audiences would develop, one 'intellectual, desiring food for thought, the other, well …' (Buchanan in Gritten 2008: 274).

'Authorship' and authority

With the professionalization of their roles, the relationship between screenwriter and director began a process of reorientation which, over some years, resulted in an increased level in the power and status of the director over the writer. In the 1910s, as specialist professionals working on scripts sometimes as long and even more technically complex than stage productions, together with the assumption drawn from theatre practice that the writer has artistic authority during rehearsal, the screenwriter – as 'author' – might claim a status equal to, and a role similar to, the playwright. In the theatre, the status of the playwright as an artist was established, but the status of the screenwriter was still under discussion in the film industry and elsewhere, mixed in with squabbles over how this 'cut and slash trade' treated the work of respectable novelists and other writers anyway. In the 1910s newly minted screenwriters attempted to form associations, lay down screenwriting principles and influence the debate over the artistic status of film narrative,[36] but it was status and power within company practice that was lacking. In 1921, novelist E. Temple Thurston complained that during a year working on scenario writing for Cecil Hepworth he 'had pleaded as an author, not for the right of decision in the matter of cast, costume, scenery but for the right … to be allowed to have some influence of mind in the presentation of the story', like a theatre playwright (*Bioscope* 1921a: 33). He was refused, so wrote no more screenplays. Hepworth responded politely but robustly a few weeks later.

> [The screenwriter or 'author'] has an absolute and undeniable right to put as many stage directions in the scenario as he thinks fit … [even] the exact pitch of every exterior view … but where he stops he must let the other fellow carry on without claiming the right to vary.
>
> (*Bioscope* 1921b: 6)

Hepworth recognized the writer's pain in handing over his script-child to a foster parent, but this policy – of a major film producer – is indicative of a general realization that industrial demarcation dictated a withdrawal by the screenwriter from decision-making once the script was handed over. This was not on quasi-*auteurist* grounds that the director needed artistic control, but on the practical grounds that 'the other fellow' needed to get on with the job as outlined already, in detail, by the screenwriter.

By the end of the 1920s, this pragmatic approach, together with a stronger sense of film as a medium controlled through the camera, gave the director opportunities to take firmer control. Discussion and collaboration between writer and director was wide-ranging and ostensibly on equal terms, but the power balance had shifted further away from the writer. The 1927 exchange of comments between writer Eliot Stannard and director Adrian Brunel about the initial continuity script for *The Vortex* reveals a polite, but definite, struggle over detail that represents much more significant issues about film poetics in general. Brunel was by then a director with a firm personal sense of filmmaking in general – 'I always prefer to begin a sequence with an intriguing close-up' – and firm opinion on this particular story – 'the shop girl should smile and not have an irresistible desire to guffaw' (Brunel 1927: #1/1).[37] The writer Stannard replies with new ideas – 'open on tiny hammers hitting the wire strings of the instrument' – and his own view of film aesthetic – 'I am against trick devices which are confusing and artificial' (Brunel 1927: #2/1). Brunel then veers from the almost humble – 'what about dragging the camera back in sc.5 …' – to the peremptory – 'no, not this' – while appealing to a shared sense of film style – 'all the 'Lubitchian [sic] possibilities of this shot need a few close-ups' (Brunel 1927: #2/1–2). Stannard, in what seems to be characteristically impatient fashion, resists Brunel for reasons of dramatic impact; 'over-use of close-ups may *kill* the real purpose of necessary close-ups which is to punch home a vital point' (Brunel 1927: #2/1; Stannard's emphasis). He continues to resist in a later exchange; 'it is *all* wrong, when establishing a new set to have endless close ups to point minor influences' (Brunel 1927: #4/1; Stannard's emphasis). Stannard believes a character's 'force and power' stems from being in the foreground of a shot, which would be lost if Brunel 'split it up with various camera angles' (Brunel 1927: #4/2). Brunel is polite but firm in his views.

By the time the exchange becomes waspish – when Brunel queries whether a doctor would do an examination in front of a house and Stannard replies curtly 'I have had my own lungs examined in the open more than once' – the differences show a fundamental disagreement over film style, though Stannard appears to know he will ultimately lose the argument (Brunel 1927: #4/3). The conclusion that might be drawn here is that Stannard is defending the older sense of how best to 'photograph' a drama, essentially capturing the action, while Brunel – a founder member of the Film Society and close associate of Ivor Montagu – sees the potential of constructing the narrative through shots. Here is a specific example of how the 're-invention, within the stabilising practices of a new international medium, of inherited pictorial, theatrical and storytelling traditions' (Gledhill 2009: 163) was negotiated on the ground; it demonstrates how the balance of power was shifting. This difference in approach may have been stressful for Stannard and similarly experienced writers in the latter part of the 1920s, who were trying to find a way past their focus on performance allied to plot selection and pace, towards an understanding of the camera as the instrument which provides power and emphasis in film narrative.

Conclusion

This story of the formation of screenwriting practice in Britain during the silent film period is a reminder that artistic, and industrial, practice is not based on a gradual and progressive discovery of a universal 'best' way of working. It is the product of labour organization and power relations, of influence and argument by certain people amongst others, of beliefs adopted from similar practice elsewhere, of commercial success or failure (and of what was perceived to be the cause), of cultural poetics and market pressures, and of technical development that can change the focus of film narrative construction from the pictorial to the conversational, with what seem to be radical consequences. As a document, the screenplay was developed from an adapted theatre-style script to a sophisticated and detailed narrative plan (while retaining many theatrical features). Once established in the 1910s, the professional screenwriter might have been accorded some of the status and influence of the stage playwright. By the end of the silent period, however, the British screenwriter was less of the lead collaborator or 'author' behind the film and more of a supplicant making suggestions, leaving more of the key decisions to others. Lower status meant more industrial constraint; screenwriters in the 1910s may have had some hopes of creating a new art of screenwriting, but by 1930 they were located rather more firmly in their industrial place as craftsmen and craftswomen.

Notes

1 There are 61 female names from 358 names credited as screenwriters in Gifford (2000) from 1895 to 1929.
2 There is also a terminological issue. The actual terms in use for 'screenwriter' were scenarist or scenario-writer, picture-playwright, photo-playwright, scriptwriter and author. The 'stage manager' of the early 1900s became 'producer' until the 1920s when the US use of the term 'director' began to be adopted more widely. In this chapter I use modern generic terms 'screenwriter' and 'director', for the avoidance of doubt.
3 Gifford (2000): item 00668.
4 Ethel Christian Ltd was still typing filmscripts in 1917, as shown by the script for The Laughing Cavalier (1917) by Eliot Stannard and A. V. Bramble. Other agencies, like the 'Rupert Typewriting and Shorthand Bureau' also included scenario work along with other 'general typewriting', including poetry, plays and author's manuscripts (advertisement in The Stage 23 Oct 1919: 32).
5 See Brewster (2004: 226–7) on the slightly later introduction of longer films in the USA.
6 Duration is problematic, as the rule of thumb of 16 frames per second (fps) for silent films is only an average. During the 1920s, projection speeds were specified individually by production companies, and could go as high as 24 fps; Gifford notes his estimations of length or duration are approximate (2000: p. xi). The standard 1000 ft reel could be oversize, and a 'standard' five-reeler of the 1920s could be anything from 4,500 to nearly 6,000 ft, and might last between 60 and 90 minutes (with thanks to Leo Enticknap, University of Leeds).
7 This total is conservative; buried within these statistics and counted as single titles are film drama series, popular since 1909/10 (Marlow-Mann 2002: 149), when the

success of characters such as Lt. Rose created a continuing demand. During the slump of the mid-1920s – as television has demonstrated again since – there was an obvious financial benefit in shooting many episodes involving the same characters in similar plots and locations.

8 This was the 20-minute His Reformation (1914). Elliott was told by London Films' Bannister Merwin that 'the play would require a lot of reconstruction' (Elliott 1915a).

9 An article 'Alma in Wonderland', Picturegoer (Dec. 1925: 48), reprinted in Morris (2008) suggests Reville was 16 when she joined London Films (Morris 2008: 36).

10 Ideal Films' Harry Rowson describes Stannard as providing a 'lay-out for a scenario' of the adaption of the life of Florence Nightingale in 1915, in one evening between 5pm and around 11pm (c.1951: 61). A few years later Stannard was being invited to give lectures, e.g. to the Stoll Picture Theatres Club on 'modernizing' in adaptation (1918).

11 Eliot Stannard and Sidney Bowkett, The Audacious Mr Squire, The Criterion, 19 Feb. 1924. Reviewed in The Stage 21 Feb. 1924: 16.

12 Gifford (2000): item 07406.

13 The quote from Gledhill refers to a belief questioned by Jon Burrows (2009: 160–1).

14 Consistent with the notion of an exhibitionist cinema of 'attractions'. See Gunning (1990).

15 Gifford (2000): item 00633.

16 The catalogue also mentions here a dissolve between each scene, a technique Hepworth remained fond of.

17 The titles mentioned here are not dialogue, but explanatory titles. Salt (1992: 107–8) refers to the American use of dialogue titles as extremely rare before 1908, but notes that this began to change towards the end of 1908, with an increasing use of them over the next few years. Salt suggests 'even' European films came to use such titles from 1909, but that by 1913 only 63 out of 171 American titles he has sampled used dialogue titles.

18 E. J. Muddle, an unknown film trade worker in Cecil Court, may have been the first screenwriting manual writer to be published in Britain in 1911. Colin Bennett of the Kine Weekly is also believed to have produced a manual in 1911, though I have seen only the 2nd edn (1913). Muddle quotes at length from an American article (1911: 46–8). An early 'The Picture Playwright' page can be seen in Bioscope 29 Aug. 1912: 631.

19 See Macdonald 2007, 2010.

20 For example, Muddle (1911: 48). See also John Cabourn (c.1927: 5). The Rise of the 'Plotter'.

21 Elliott may have written this during his first year of writing. He claimed to have studied the technique of photoplay writing 'for six months while working as a writer and journalist' (1915a), so this might have been an early exercise, and/or one of his rejections, albeit one kept by Hepworth (as it appears in the Nettlefold collection of Hepworth studio papers in the British Film Institute National Library).

22 Adrian Brunel later recalled his first efforts at writing 'bioscope plays', presumably around the early 1910s and 'carefully typed on half-quarto sheets' (1949: 20).

23 See Staiger (1985: 110, illustrations 12.10, 12.11, 12.12).

24 I have referred to these as Format A and Format C respectively (Macdonald 2007).

25 Adrian Brunel produced various definitions of film terms for the British Standards Institution in 1939, in which he describes a Scenario as 'the actual film story complete and written in sequences suitable for filming'; the Continuity as 'a detailed form of scenario giving a complete description of each scene'; and under Shooting Script is merely noted '(see Scenario)' (Brunel 1939).

26 Bramble and Stannard's The Laughing Cavalier (1917) is typed in a continuity style (which I have designated Format B) as a list of 'scenes', a few of which are shot variations within the master scene, e.g. scenes 137–9. This is similar to a US example

The Raiders (1913) given in Staiger (1985: 110–11). The 'English style' of script format (Format B) usually referred to shots when included in master scenes, but where they stood alone they were 'scenes'. See Macdonald (2010).

27   See Brunel (c.1911).

28   Gledhill notes (2003: 93) Jon Burrows's PhD thesis showing it was the policy of the Hepworth Company to work with distinguished screen actors; Henry Edwards had an arm's-length but productive relationship with Hepworth, as actor, writer and director. See also Brown (1986: 143–54).

29   See Gunning's essay (1990: 56–62), and Thomas Elsaesser's commentary on it in his introduction to Elsaesser and Barker (1990: 13–14).

30   'Picturization' was indeed a term used generally to describe the process of turning a written text into a scenario.

31   'Plant' was one of Stannard's most common instructions in his scripts (Macdonald 2008: 231).

32   This also bears a resemblance to what Christine Gledhill calls Maurice Elvey's 'flicker-book' approach to editing (2003: 108–11).

33   See Stannard's five articles in 1918 for Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly: 21 May: 76; 30 May: 79; 6 June: 97; 13 June: 81; 20 June: 87. See also Stannard (1920).

34   Gifford (2000): item 00484.

35   See Gledhill's account of 'a cinema of intertitles' (2003: 160–2). Gledhill notes Gertrude Allen's article in *Kine Weekly* in 1921, describing a film without a subtitle to it being like 'a wonderful box of bon-bons without a ribbon-bow' (2003: 161).

36   For example, Brunel was involved in a preliminary meeting of the 'Society of Scenario Writers' on 20 Nov. 1918 (letter from Frank Fowell, 1918).

37   These comments appear as anonymous typewritten notes about the script of The Vortex in the Adrian Brunel Special Collection at the British Film Institute National Library, item 43/4. There are four distinct documents, only one of which appears complete. I base my conclusions here on the assumption that these documents are indeed Brunel and Stannard exchanging comments (though they were possibly typed up by others), and that I have correctly identified which writer is speaking. This cannot be confirmed, although there is a letter from Stannard to Brunel after The Vortex was written, in which he refers to the 'awful difficulties' of The Vortex, and that Brunel 'may not see eye to eye with [him] always' (Stannard c.1927).

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