The look: style, technology and televisuality in the New Who

7

THE LOOK

Style, Technology and Televisuality in the New *Who*

Jonathan Bignell[1]

This chapter explores the distinctive qualities of the Steven Moffat/Matt Smith era of *Doctor Who* by discussing how dramatic emphases are connected with emphases on visual style, and how this depends on the technologies and production methods used to make the episodes. The US television theorist Horace Newcombe argued that television is intimate, continuous and immediate, and thus most suited to verisimilitude and a focus on character and story. Visual stylishness, on the other hand, was associated with cinema rather than television.[2] But the technologies used to produce television programmes, and also to watch them, have eroded this distinction. *Doctor Who* was first made in the 1960s era of live, studio-based, multi-camera television with monochrome pictures. However, as technical innovations like colour filming, stereo sound, CGI and post-production effects technology have been routinely introduced into the programme, and now high-definition (HD) cameras, they have given *Doctor Who*'s creators new ways of making visually distinctive narratives. Indeed, it has been argued that since the 1980s television drama has become increasingly like cinema in its production methods and aesthetic aims.[3] In relation to the reception of programmes,

viewers' ability to watch *Doctor Who* on high-specification TV sets, and to record and repeat episodes using digital media, also encourage attention to visual style in television as much as in cinema. In 2009, 'Planet of the Dead' was the first *Doctor Who* story to be shot in HD and released on Blu-ray disc, and this new higher-specification format is designed to provide yet greater visual clarity and detail. The chapter evaluates how these new circumstances of production and reception have affected *Doctor Who* under the supervision of showrunner Steven Moffat.

The chapter engages with arguments that visual style has been allowed to override characterisation and story in the current *Doctor Who*. The argument in this chapter is that contemporary technologies and production methods are used in different ways, and do not in themselves lead to a certain aesthetic style. For example, visual spectacle using green-screen and computer-generated imagery (CGI) can function as a set-piece (at the opening or ending of an episode) but the same technologies can also be used 'invisibly' to add digital elements that might scarcely be noticed in a scene and which enhance the drama. Moments of visual spectacle in episodes under Moffat's leadership connect back to Russell T Davies's concern to show off the BBC's investment in the series, and Moffat's desire to extend the capability of *Doctor Who* to make an impact visually. But Moffat's *Who* also references British traditions of intimate character-focused drama that were evident in 'classic' *Doctor Who* of earlier decades. This chapter will also build on Simone Knox's previous offering on the transnational dimensions of the new *Who* by arguing that the visually spectacular nature of the Russell T Davies era typical of American telefantasy is greatly reduced for budgetary reasons.

New Contexts of Production and Reception

Doctor Who needs to provide a satisfying experience for the wide range of viewers and viewing contexts. This is because television has become an aspect of media convergence culture in the developed world, where production technologies, programme texts and fictional genres cross back and forth from one viewing platform to another. The programme must work on large screen HD TV sets as well as smaller conventional ones, since *Doctor*

Who is broadcast on the BBC's dedicated HD channel simultaneously with its first run screening on BBC1. It must be satisfactory when seen with the restricted resolution and colour consistency of computer monitors as a download or an iPlayer stream. It must also be possible to enjoy the programme on the tiny screen of a mobile phone. *Doctor Who* has been leading the BBC's extension of its programmes beyond conventional broadcasting, both to reinforce the programme's powerful brand and to demonstrate the BBC's commitment to convergent technologies. Using *Doctor Who*, the BBC has previously pioneered spin-offs and paratexts such as SMS feeds and 'mobisodes', and now games. BBC Worldwide now plans to market *Doctor Who* on Facebook, and episodes will be available on Facebook in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand for a two-day viewing window.[4] *Doctor Who* needs to be made with these new viewing contexts in mind, and it is a vehicle for bringing the BBC as a brand into the consciousness of the mainly young people who use these new media technologies. These factors affect what *Doctor Who* episodes look like.

The production values of television drama are perpetually increasing[5] and digital technologies have increased the sharpness and complexity of both images and sound. Television is made in very much the same ways as cinema and animation, because of the convergence of television's digital production systems with the technologies used by specialist visual effects companies who work in several media. All original BBC dramas are now shot in HD, and edited and post-produced digitally. The all-digital workflow in production, which can integrate inputs from a range of sources at different stages of production, has been used to drive consumer demand for digital reception technologies like widescreen and HD television sets, projectors and surround-sound. This emphasis on visual quality stimulates television makers to exploit its capabilities.

'Quality' drama can be defined in part by how it recruits involved and active viewers by offering aesthetically challenging programmes that combine visual spectacle with dramatic complexity.[6] When Moffat took over the showrunner role for *Doctor Who*, the tone and visual style of the series was deliberately altered to emphasise a fantasy or fairy-tale quality, not only in the writing but also in the visual look of the episodes. The HD

cameras, lenses and the directors of photography that were used to shoot the episodes, according to the producer Piers Wenger, 'have all been chosen with that aim, with the aim of giving a series a sense of childlike wonderment'.[7] This was understood by the production team as a way of making television that has a lot in common with cinema. Wenger explained that

> those cameras, they are movie cameras. They aren't as portable and they are more expensive, but they strike a really good balance between this being a mainstream, Saturday-night, all-embracing family drama series and having a new atmosphere, doing credit to Steven's writing and vision.[8]

The Moffat era of the series has aimed for visual distinctiveness, by integrating technologies from cinema into television at the level of image definition (which is the primary advantage of HD, hence its name) but linked this hyperrealism of image detail to a palette of generic narrative tropes from fantasy.

Foregrounded and Embedded Spectacle

Moffat's new series declared an interest in the visual set-piece from the beginning, where the TARDIS crashes to Earth in London at the start of 'The Eleventh Hour'. Hurtling over London at the height of several hundred feet, with the doors of the TARDIS hanging open and the Doctor dangling out, the TARDIS crashes into Amy Pond's garden. The pace and changing point of view in the sequence seem calculated to encourage the sense of wonder that is one of the ways of characterising telefantasy as a genre. The sequence contributes little to the plot or to the exploration of character, but it encourages a sense of awe and admiration of its expertise, and in this respect it is comparable to the opening 'hook' sequences of blockbuster action movies, where the cinema viewer is quickly rewarded with an exciting opening. The philosophical concept of the sublime[9] has been used to explore spectacular US cinema science fiction where narrative pace and a distanced point of view allow time to contemplate special effects, such as in the lengthy effects sequences of the film *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979). But the effects sequences of

Doctor Who are too rapidly cut and point of view is too mobile to produce a sublime feeling. Instead, the sequences recall the space opera of US telefantasy of the 1950s–1970s, where effects were designed to thrill, shock and energise the viewer.[10] In the opening TARDIS flight of 'The Eleventh Hour', the rapid movement is effectively exciting and is a visual tour de force in itself. It is a helicopter shot that has been digitally overlaid with studio-shot green-screen sequences of the Doctor dangling from the TARDIS, and it is the roller-coaster pace of the editing of the sequence that is responsible for its impact as much as the visual content of any particular shot. Similarly, there is a space battle in 'Victory of the Daleks' that uses extreme wide shot and depth of field to emulate the awe-inspiring scenes of cinemascope fantasy films like *Star Wars*, where numerous spacecraft fill the screen in rapidly moving combat scenes. As Frank Collins has noted, the space battle sequences of *Star Wars* (1977) were planned by George Lucas with reference to aerial dogfights in World War II films such as *The Battle of Britain* (1969) and bomber attacks in *The Dam Busters* (1955). The visual realisation of the action sequences in 'Victory of the Daleks' re-works a tradition that is itself composed of re-workings of earlier set-pieces.[11] But the duration of individual shots is short, and much of the impact of the set-pieces in 'Victory of the Daleks' also derives from inventive editing. While the post-2005 *Doctor Who* certainly references cinema, and the epic science-fiction blockbuster especially, the realisation of set-pieces is different from what might be expected from the epic sublime. These spectacular action sequences can give way to a fairy tale atmosphere, as seen in 'The Eleventh Hour'.

CGI is often used in 'invisible' ways to enhance the drama rather than to draw attention to itself. For example, in the shooting of the season finale 'The Pandorica Opens' and 'The Big Bang', the director Toby Haynes reported[12] that the effects team from The Mill had specially sent a camera crew to Kew Gardens in London to shoot the leaves of tropical plants so that these detailed shots could be merged into the digitally created jungle of the Planet 1 environment for close-ups. Here, CGI and specially shot frames were knitted together so that the CGI sequences appeared equally as realistic as the shots made in the studio using 'practical' (physically constructed) props and sets.

An exception, in Moffat's opening episode 'The Eleventh Hour', is a stop-frame sequence replaying what the Doctor perceived at Leadworth village green when the Atraxi broadcast a universal message. The jerky sequence is marked out by its visual difference from the surrounding footage, to show that it is a recapitulation of the Doctor's vision as he tries to recall what had just happened. In other words, visual distinctiveness is motivated by an interest in character, where the viewer is aligned with the Doctor as puzzle-solver.

The current production system, while much more open to the use of effects sequences, also leads to an aesthetic of confinement and interior dialogue-based sequences that counterpoint the scale and epic ambitions of the new *Who*. The result is to place greater weight on performance by the actors. The producers have described the series as like a series of films, with a budget for film-like effects. This affects the way that the regular actors work, since as Karen Gillan commented in an interview, 'We're making mini feature films, in the space of two weeks! ... We have to get through a lot in a day.'[13] Moffat's 'Return of the Weeping Angels' blog expresses this in terms of Matt Smith's combination of action hero and quirky comic character: 'Both Chris [Eccleston] and David [Tennant] were quite cool Doctors, and while Matt certainly isn't short on cool, he has an amazing clumsiness. He's halfway between Indiana Jones and Stan Laurel.'[14] The reference to Stan Laurel here alludes to the silent movie star's physicality of performance, which was marked by ineptitude and unease with his own body (characteristics noted earlier in this volume). Developing on the earlier discussion of performance, however, these characteristics require the camera to dwell on Smith's performance in extended sequences at close range, rather than the movement in long shots that action sequences (like those of the Indiana Jones films) require.

Spatial strategies for epic scale versus character interaction, and for exterior spectacle versus interior constraint, are aspects of larger patterns of visual style and performance in Moffat's seasons. There are set pieces of physical action in 'Amy's Choice' when Amy and Rory are chased by alien-infested elderly people, and later their house is virtually demolished, for example. In 'Vincent and the Doctor', a skulking alien creature emerges from the shadows of an empty church, contrasting with the sunny

flower-filled fields around van Gogh's house. But in each of these episodes it is the interactions between the characters that determine how the narrative will progress, and thus the actors' performances that are foregrounded. In 'The Lodger', too, the focus is on the interaction between the characters of the Doctor and Craig and the performances of Matt Smith and James Corden in those roles. Although moments of visual revelation with the uncanny presence upstairs in Craig's house are significant to the narrative, its dramatic core is a domestic interior (shot in the studio) in which lively dialogue is exchanged and the comedic performance styles of Smith and Corden are centre stage. Similarly, in its sequel from series six, 'Closing Time', the invading Cybermen remain in the background and there are mostly interior scenes of the Doctor and Craig who form 'a double act with elements of classic comedy partnerships'.[15] Other episodes from series six and seven such as 'Night Terrors', 'The Girl Who Waited', 'The God Complex' and 'Asylum of the Daleks' (which presents a Parliament of CGI Daleks) also make extensive use of interior filming and focus on small groups of characters.[16]

Furthermore, in his first season Moffat developed the spatially restricted and psychological focus of 'Blink' into the two-part return of the Weeping Angels, 'The Time of Angels' and 'Flesh and Stone'. In an interview with *Doctor Who Magazine*[17] he described the story as a 'highly coloured, loud action-movie one', comparing the relationship between 'Blink' and the two-parter to the spatially constricted haunted house motif of the film *Alien* (1979) versus the spatially expansive sequel *Aliens* (1986). This expansiveness is foregrounded at the start of 'The Time of Angels' when the Doctor, Amy and River Song arrive on a broad open beach, bordered by high cliffs. The remains of a huge crashed spacecraft add to the sense of scale in the scene. But characteristically, the constraints of the production schedule required Moffat to rewrite part of the episode, since most of a day of location filming was dogged by heavy rain. As a result, Moffat's ambitions to place more of the action in the open location setting had to be abandoned, and replaced with scenes inside the TARDIS that were shot in the studio. The result is that in some ways Moffat's *Doctor Who* returns to the production systems and thus also to the aesthetic strategies of 1960s *Doctor Who*, where interiors predominated and the drama

had to make the most out of spatial restriction. The constraints of budget and time for outside filming meant that the 'classic' *Who* had to place greater emphasis on character interaction in restricted studio spaces.

Graham Sleight has further pointed out a sense of scale in post-2005 Russell T Davies *Doctor Who* in terms of story arcs.[18] Davies reshaped the *Doctor Who* format by planning lengthy story arcs that comprise both set-piece action sequences and moments of high-budget spectacle. Davies's work can be seen as an attempt to transcend the perceived limitations of visual style in the *Doctor Who* format. In an interview with *Doctor Who Magazine*, Davies said that 'the thing that enticed me to do *Doctor Who* [was] – big pictures. Television doesn't do that enough; most television is people sitting there talking.'[19] Davies' story arcs typically concluded in two-part season finales. The penultimate episode of Moffat's first season 'The Pandorica Opens' promises a large-scale set-piece ending, with the appearance of a whole range of monsters at the end (Daleks, Cybermen, Sontarans, Judoon, etc.), but the second part 'The Big Bang' confounds viewer expectations by doing something rather different. 'The Big Bang' is organised around a temporal paradox centred on the four main characters of the season (the Doctor, Amy, Rory and River Song), and its tone therefore feels quite different from, for example, 'The Parting of the Ways' (the final episode of Davies' first season) and the climactic sequences of massed Daleks in battle. Series six differs in that it does not conclude with a two-parter but rather with the episode 'The Wedding of River Song'. However, while the episode features a visual rendering of the way time has been distorted, the episode features one (very short) scene of an incapacitated Dalek lying on its side and the episode's focus is again on these four central characters.

Places and Spaces

The spaces where production takes place, and the technologies of shooting, have significant effects on the resulting programme. As the series production company, BBC Wales has been the base for the shooting of *Doctor Who* and also its accompanying *Confidential* making-of series and the spin-offs *Torchwood*

and *Torchwood Declassified* for adults, and *Totally Doctor Who* and *The Sarah Jane Adventures* for children. With so many hours of drama to make, BBC Wales leased the Upper Boat complex near Cardiff in 2006, where a dedicated studio was built for the programmes.[20] Standing sets for the TARDIS and for *Torchwood* interiors were housed there, along with open interior stages where sets for specific episodes were constructed. In Pontypool, not far from the production base, a disused factory on the Mamhilad Industrial Park was also used as a soundstage, initially for sets constructed for 'The Impossible Planet' and 'The Satan Pit' (2006). On the large sound-stages, green screens can be erected to allow the insertion of CGI sequences in post-production (discussed above). Green-screen sequences themselves are shot at the production base, usually in subsequent shooting blocks from the main recording of scenes for the episode in which they will appear. The separate shooting of effects sequences was always part of the 'classic' *Doctor Who*, where any sequences that required models, explosions, or other specially constructed effects were carried out at the BBC's Ealing Film Unit. This was because the studios in BBC Television Centre where the bulk of the programme was shot were equipped for multi-camera video recording that was done in long tranches as-if-live, so that the performers could be used most economically over a short run of shooting days. Brief effects sequences were shot on cinema film using single cameras, and these shots were inserted into the previously shot video episodes. This produced a different visual look in the video versus the filmed sequences. Since filmed inserts were significantly more expensive to make than as-if-live video, they were used sparingly and could appear comparatively more prominent.

One of the distinctions between post-2005 *Doctor Who* and its predecessor series is the privileging of location shooting and the use of a single technology (HD video) for interior and exterior scenes, including effects shots. Not only does this make the interior, exterior and effects shots share the same visual look as dialogue scenes, it also means that that they are shot in broadly the same way. One distinguishing feature of multi-camera video production in 'classic' *Doctor Who* was the shooting of the same action from different simultaneous points of view, where the director in the studio gallery was, in effect, editing the sequence

live by choosing when to cut from one camera to another. The other distinctive feature was the duration of performance, since the actors would perform scenes of several minutes' duration while being shot by the three cameras. In post-2005 *Doctor Who*, the use of a single camera means that all editing takes place in post-production, when the actors are absent. Moreover, each shot is recorded in a separate take, and the adoption of a different camera position requires the re-setting of lights, props or any other element that needs to appear the same in two takes. While *Doctor Who*'s action is frequently placed in other-worldly and fantastical settings, the consistency of the look and texture of its visual images enhances the programme's ability to denote a coherent fictional world (or worlds) that engages the viewer.

The second distinction between pre- and post-2005 shooting practices concerns the performer. Although scenes might be rehearsed and performed in fairly lengthy tranches, the single-camera shooting method means that actors may often perform very short sequences of a few or even one line of dialogue. Production planning privileges the camera, since it is organised around single takes, whereas multi-camera shooting privileges the performer (and performer interactions with each other). Extreme examples of this include the elaborate green-screen sequences of wire-work in 'The Eleventh Hour', where individual shots of Matt Smith suspended from the ceiling of the Upper Boat studio against a green screen were required as raw material for the post-production edit. Hours could be spent perfecting single shots of one actor. In CGI sequences where the actor is not close to the camera, digitally generated avatars of the main characters are created from reference photographs, but the actors are not otherwise required at all.

Locations have been significant in both Davies' and Moffat's seasons, but in different ways. 'Daleks in Manhattan' and 'Evolution of the Daleks' (2007) were shot partly in New York, 'The Fires of Pompeii' (2008) in Rome and 'Planet of the Dead' (2009) in Dubai. In Moffat's second Eleventh Doctor season, 'The Impossible Astronaut' and 'Day of the Moon' were shot partly in the USA, as was his third season episode 'The Angels Take Manhattan'. But in Moffat's seasons, the use of ambitiously distant and unfamiliar locations combines with narratives that emphasise psychological drama and character exploration.

Sleight has argued that strategies to increase the global reach of *Doctor Who* narratives were often unsuccessfully present during Davies's tenure as showrunner:

> A further aspect to the issue of scale is the series' attempts to take the Earthbound action outside the UK… [these episodes] are… carefully rationed in how much they use their overseas locales… [also] are the series' attempts, especially in its series finales, to show that the whole of Earth is under attack, not just the UK… [there is] that old standby, news reports from around the globe.[21]

When Moffat invited Toby Whithouse to offer the story that eventually became 'Vampires of Venice', the brief to produce a 'big, bold, funny, romantic' episode[22] led to Whithouse suggesting Venice as a location because of its romantic associations. Budget restrictions and the impossibility of shooting in a tourist destination led to the idea of going to Venice being excluded from planning, and instead Dubrovnik in Croatia was chosen because both 'Vampires of Venice' and 'Vincent and the Doctor' (set in Provence) could be made there. A local production company, Embassy Films, was engaged to provide crew and art-department staff at favourable rates compared to the costs of UK production. Similarly, the series seven episode 'A Town Called Mercy' saw Spain as standing in for the Wild West. Actual place is less important than the dramatic significance of the fictional space that can be created there.

Most of the shooting locations are in the UK, however, where the decisions of the production team show that they seek either extreme familiarity of place or exoticism. The modern city is usually represented by London, from where the companions Rose Tyler, Martha Jones and Donna Noble originate and thus where numerous stories return for their settings. The headlong flight over London in 'The Eleventh Hour' signals the importance of place by including landmarks such as the Palace of Westminster, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace and 'The Gherkin' (the Swiss Re building). But the important issue is these places' significance in the fictional world. As Sleight has noted, Davies used specific London settings to reference known places and thus to threaten the British political and cultural establishment

in 'Aliens of London' and 'World War Three' (2005).[23] In this respect the showrunners and writers of post-2005 *Doctor Who* continued a tradition, since 'The Dalek Invasion of Earth' (1964), most famously, had established the motif of alien invasion and destruction of London landmarks and continued it in the cinema film *Daleks – Invasion Earth 2150 AD* (1966). Existing real places are used but their characteristics are enhanced in order to make them conform to readily recognised emblematic or even stereotypical spaces.

Collins sees Moffat's locations across his episodes in relation to the UK Government's 'Icons of England' project (which began in 2006) in which the public nominated representative images of Englishness.[24] Of these visual signifiers of national identity, Moffat has used many including Stonehenge, the Spitfire fighter aircraft (discussed earlier in this collection) and the novel *Alice in Wonderland*. It is not only places that signify Englishness, but also a range of cultural symbols and texts that derive from various time periods. The small village of Leadworth where Amy Pond grew up and to which she and the Doctor frequently return is a significant contrast to London. What links these spaces is their emblematic role as images of Englishness, despite Leadworth being created around the cathedral green in the town of Llandaff which is in Wales. The production team fabricated the village duck-pond, dressed houses to represent the 'typical' English pub the Traveller's Rest and surrounding cottages and brought in an old-fashioned red telephone box. Leadworth's idyllic representation also enabled the meeting of the Doctor and the young Amy to have (what Simone Knox has called a universal) fairy-tale uncanniness that the director of 'The Eleventh Hour', Adam Smith, planned visually by referencing Tim Burton's cinema work and the down-to-earth encounter of a child with an alien being in *E.T. – The Extra Terrestrial* (1982).[25]

The fairy-tale quality of spaces was further exploited in 'Flesh and Stone', which was filmed on location at Puzzlewood in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. The night-time shoot made much of the deep gullies and dramatic rock formations of the wooded 14-acre park, which was dressed with extensive smoke and shot in low light. The forest attraction had already been used by the BBC for location filming for the Arthurian fantasy series *Merlin* and, according to Puzzlewood's manager, Helen

O'Kane, the production team chose the location after seeing it in *Merlin*.[26] The setting did not fit the script but they showed photographs of the location to Moffat who adjusted the episode to enable filming there. The tonal significance of this fantasy place was important enough to Moffat for him to rewrite parts of his script, demonstrating how the aesthetic resources offered by a specific location can impact on the completed programme.

Special Effects and Limited Budgets

Texts in the wider *Doctor Who* franchise include behind-the-scenes commentary on how special-effects work is achieved, for example in the *Confidential* series, box set DVDs extras and in interactive media outlets that expand the narrative. When 'The Eleventh Hour' was advertised in late March 2010 before its first screening on BBC1 on 3 April, Moffat's opening sequence of the TARDIS over London was made available on the BBC website and the interactive 'red button' digital television service. It is significant that it was this high-speed effects sequence that was chosen as the teaser for the series, to showcase its visual appeal. Moreover, a series of short videos were added to the website and red button feed, about the making of the effects sequence. The pre-visualisation artist Dan May explained how he constructed the CGI animation from a storyboard, and James Swanson, director of photography for the helicopter sequence, described the experience of making it. Similar contextual material forms part of the output of niche channels like Syfy and have helped to define telefantasy as generically associated with effects production. Effects sequences are expensive to make, but so also are the location-shot sequences where cast and crew need to be transported to distant places for filming. This means that while, in theory, new media channels allow the space for innovative, inexpensive programmes that can afford to have small audiences, in fact telefantasy programmes still need large audiences to support their continued existence.[27] BBC still wants *Doctor Who* to be a mainstream network programme for a mass audience, just as it was in the duopolistic era where there were only two main terrestrial channels, BBC and ITV. Moffat's role is to continue to keep faith with expert niche audiences, while exposing *Doctor Who* more

and more to mass audiences both in the UK and internationally by means of many different media products and texts.

Picking up on Simone Knox's previous chapter, as James Chapman has shown, the revitalised *Doctor Who* has continuities with a specifically national aesthetic but like other contemporary telefantasy series such as *Spooks* (BBC, 2002–11) and *Hustle* (BBC, 2004–12) it also seeks to accommodate itself to American norms of production and generic expectation.[28] Writing about recent US television drama, Peter Dunne argues that 'technological excellence is the determining factor today. For this reason the dramatic dynamic has changed over that time from stories about people and purpose, to stories capitalising on visual feats.'[29] The presence of set-piece effects spectacles in *Doctor Who* can be seen as an acceptance of perceived preferences in the American market for telefantasy that draws on the hardware and software developed by the Hollywood companies who make television drama but were founded to make cinema. These companies work across convergent media on franchises like *Star Trek* that exist in several different forms.[30] Speaking in an interview with *Doctor Who Magazine* about their work with special effects company The Mill, the executive producer Piers Wenger commented in relation to *Doctor Who* that 'Our aspiration is always to make it as good as the viewers' favourite American show or their favourite genre movie',[31] However, the revitalised *Doctor Who* is restrained by a limited budget.

Across the BBC as a whole, Director-General Mark Thompson's 'Putting Quality First' policy accepted a 20 per cent budget cut agreed with the government as a response to the economic downturn, so that *Doctor Who* was required to produce episodes with fewer resources. While Moffat commented that 'We could do with a budget like *Avatar*'s for every episode',[32] he recognised that reductions in specially made CGI sequences could have dramatic advantages. Whereas the previous showrunner and series creator Russell T Davies had a penchant for epic set-piece sequences at the ends of seasons, providing a sense of scale and spectacle at the resolution of storylines, Moffat has more often integrated CGI into episode storylines as a means of embedding uncanny, monstrous and frightening visual sequences into narratives based around puzzles and character revelation. These are the aspects of telefantasy that are most effective at retaining loyal fan audiences and sustaining niche or cult status,[33] since

they provide opportunities for immersion in an extended fictional world. Production technologies, visual style and narrative form work together in Moffat's seasons to generate distinctive experiences for viewers that aim to maintain the tone of the programme and broaden its audiences.

Conclusion

The forces discussed in this chapter that impact on Moffat's *Doctor Who* are dynamic and often contradictory. Emergent technologies of production and reception like shooting in HD or watching on Blu-ray have made it possible for a long-running series programme like *Doctor Who* to emulate what Moffat and other members of the production team perceive as 'cinematic' visual style. What they mean by this encompasses several aspects of the production. It is partly the greater level of visual detail that can be captured by the camera, and this leads to greater attention to the details of make-up, costume, set dressing and lighting than was required in the 'classic' era when the programme was shot predominantly on video. Cinematic style also refers to the integration of special effects into episodes, and although many effects are still created by models, prosthetics or props the notion of the cinematic predominantly means post-production effects created by CGI. Related to this, the ambition for television to be cinematic implies a sense of visual scale that is most clearly seen in set-piece action sequences, often at the beginnings or ends of episodes. The visual set-pieces, however, are integrated differently in *Doctor Who* than in a cinema film because they are ambivalently related to the format of the programme, and its deployment of pace and dramatic beats within episodes, stories and seasons. Hybrids mixing episodic plotlines of the drama series with multi-episode arcs of soap opera and the mini-series have become increasingly common in television drama,[34] and the closure offered in one free-standing episode plot co-exists with the continuation of others. This means that set-pieces are used as teasers in trailers, and are explained in making-of featurettes, so that they appear very prominently in the BBC's address to potential viewers. But they do not easily contribute to the ongoing story arcs of Moffat's seasons, and they do not easily offer

the character development and space for bravura performance that Moffat has also wanted to achieve in *Doctor Who*.

The tensions discussed here are familiar in the genre of telefantasy,[35] which is inhabited by an emulation of cinema in visual spectacle and effects technology, at the same time as the mobilisation of episode storylines and character trajectories that characterise the ongoing serial flow of television. Telefantasy can make mobility across space and time a key aspect of a programme format (it is obviously the case for *Doctor Who*), yet Moffat's *Doctor Who* is much more spatially restricted than it might appear. Within the fictional world that telefantasy creates, the details of a fictional place, a shooting location or a studio set-up energise the ways that scripts are realised and performances are created. Television, and some of the devices supplementing the television set as the place where *Doctor Who* can be viewed, is a domestic medium, but telefantasy encompasses the familiar and homely but also the alien and uncanny. Visual resources are clearly vital to this dynamic interplay in the genre, and Moffat's work on *Doctor Who* has sought to activate the potential of each of them. Moffat has consistently aimed for a fantastical, child-like feeling of wonder in the series, and although this has been constructed partly by the use of sophisticated production technologies, it has also been a property of the physical locations where episodes have been shot, and the relatively inexpensive studio settings where green-screen sequences and built sets (like the TARDIS itself) have been made. Physical locations have been chosen to suggest both exoticism and also familiarity of place. Moffat's episodes have moved across space and time, from the various alien worlds to the exotic in Earth's past and present as represented by Venice, or Death Valley. But some of these locations were actually somewhere else, where one place masqueraded as another for budgetary reasons. Moreover, *Doctor Who*'s paradigmatic Britishness meant locating stories in characteristically English locations, though many of those were actually simulated in Wales on location or in the studio. Moffat's aim for an expansive, large-scale, visually sumptuous look for *Doctor Who* has had to be realised inventively with restricted budgets, and this has often brought benefits in adapting storylines to available spatial resources and strengthening the attention to character that has always been central to the format.

Notes

1. This chapter is one of the publications arising from the AHRC-funded research project 'Spaces of Television: Production, Site and Style', based at the University of Reading from 2010 to 2014 and led by Professor Jonathan Bignell.
2. Horace Newcombe, *TV: The Most Popular Art* (New York, 1974).
3. Noel Carroll, 'TV and Film: A philosophical perspective', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35/1 (2001), pp. 15–29.
4. BBC Worldwide, Annual Review and Accounts 2010–11. Available. At www.bbcworldwide.com/annual-review/annual-review-2011.aspx.
5. Robin Nelson, 'Quality TV Drama', in Janet McCabe and Kim Akass (eds) *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond* (London, 2007), pp. 38–51.
6. Jonathan Bignell, 'The Police Series', in John Gibbs and Douglas Pye (eds) *Close-Up 03* (London, 2009), pp. 1–66.
7. Unknown interviewer, 'Journey into Time and Space', *Doctor Who Magazine* 419 (2010), pp. 18–23.
8. Ibid.
9. Scott Bukatman, 'The Artificial Infinite: On special effects and the sublime', in Annette Kuhn (ed.) *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema* (London, 1999), pp. 249–75.
10. Oscar Le Los Santos, 'Irwin Allen's Recycled Monsters and Escapist Voyages', in Lincoln Geraghty (ed.) *Channeling the Future: Essays on Science Fiction and Fantasy Television* (Lanham, 2009), pp. 25–40; Wheeler Winston Dixon, 'Tomorrowland TV: The space opera and early science fiction television', in J.P. Telotte (ed.) *The Essential Science Fiction Television Reader* (Lexington, 2008), pp. 93–110; J.P. Telotte, 'Introduction: the trajectory of science fiction television', in J.P. Telotte (ed.) *The Essential Science Fiction Television Reader*, pp. 1–34.
11. Frank Collins, *The Pandorica Opens: Exploring the Worlds of the Eleventh Doctor* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 49.
12. Tom Spilsbury, 'Shooting Stars', *Doctor Who Magazine* 426 (2010), p. 30.
13. Jason Arnopp, 'Chasing Amy!' *Doctor Who Magazine* 421 (2010), p. 28.
14. Steven Moffat, 'The Return of the Weeping Angels' blog entry. Available. at www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/2010/04/doctor-who-the-return-of-the-w.shtml.
15. Andrew Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion: The Eleventh Doctor Volume 5* (2012), p. 24.
16. See, for example, Andrew Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion: The Eleventh Hour Volume 4* (2011) and Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion Volume 5*.
17. Andrew Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion: The Eleventh Doctor Volume 1* (2010), pp. 69–78.
18. Graham Sleight, 'The Big Picture Show: Russell T Davies' writing for *Doctor Who*', in Simon Bradshaw, Antony Keen and Graham Sleight (eds) *The Unsilent Library: Essays on the Russell T Davies Era of the New Doctor Who* (London, 2011), pp. 15–28.
19. Benjamin Cook, 'Tooth and Claw: the Russell T. Davies Interview', *Doctor Who Magazine* 360 (2005), p. 13, quoted in Sleight: 'The Big Picture Show', p. 15.

20. TARDIS Index File: BBC Wales. Available at http://tardis.wikia.com/wiki/BBC_Wales.
21. Sleight, 'The Big Picture Show', pp. 24–5.
22. Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion Volume 1*, pp. 86–9.
23. Sleight, 'The Big Picture Show', p. 23.
24. Collins: *The Pandorica Opens*, pp. 7–8.
25. Pixley, *The Doctor Who Companion Volume 1*, pp. 19–41.
26. BBC Gloucestershire News, '*Doctor Who* films at Puzzlewood'. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/local/gloucestershire/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/newsid_8635000/8635073.stm.
27. Barbara Selznick, 'Branding the future: Syfy in the post-network era', *Journal of Science Fiction Film and Television* 2/2 (2009), pp. 177–204.
28. James Chapman, *Inside the TARDIS: The Worlds of Doctor Who* (London, 2006), pp. 184–5.
29. Peter Dunne, 'Inside American Television Drama', in Janet McCabe and Kim Akass (eds) *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond* (New York, 2007), p. 101.
30. Noel Carroll, 'TV and Film: A philosophical perspective', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35:1 (2001), pp. 15–29.
31. Unknown interviewer, 'Journey into Time and Space'.
32. Ben Dowell, 'How Will the Doctor Get Out of This One?', *Guardian*, Media section, 12 July 2010, p. 5.
33. Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (London, 2002).
34. Michael Z. Newman, 'From Beats to Arcs: Towards a poetics of television narrative', *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006), p. 16.
35. Catherine Johnson, *Telefantasy* (London, 2005).