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**Hollywood: The Sequel**

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**Hollywood: The Sequel**

by

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**Dissertation**

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**This dissertation is dedicated to the biz—  
the sharks, the lambs, and everyone in the middle. . .**

**die Wissenschaft unter der Optik des Künstlers zu sehn, die Kunst aber unter  
der des Lebens. . . .**

from Nietzsche's *Attempt at Self Criticism*, 1886, in the revised introduction to  
*The Birth of Tragedy*

§§§

**And mark how well the sequel hangs together:**

from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*, 1591

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*The Godfather*—and its first sequel—is in large part about a young man’s integration into a domain with which he is initially unfamiliar. Over the course of the narrative he grows more and more adept at reading the tea leaves and acting accordingly. But if he seems to be “a natural” it is only due to the wisdom, strategy, and power of the shoulders upon which he stands. As dissertation chairperson to *Hollywood: The Sequel* Jerome D. Williams acted as a wise and gentle Godfather throughout the entire process—a favor for which I am grateful and a debt that I am more than willing to be called upon to repay if some day that need should arise. Thank you, Godfather.

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## **Hollywood: The Sequel**

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*Hollywood: The Sequel* provides an historical account of film sequelization and its importance to the domestic entertainment industry from a marketing standpoint. Based on an extensive literature review, it was conjectured that the ratio of domestic sequel-generated revenue to overall domestic revenue from the 1950s-2000s would follow a classic diffusion pattern. Utilizing historical trade data from *Variety* magazine, Excel and SPSS databases were developed to determine the percentage of sequel-generated domestic box office revenue from 1954-2006, relative to overall revenue. The formal hypothesis was that *from the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve.* The goodness-of-fit of the historical dataset (N=3,710) with the s-curve

estimation-algorithm was measured against the goodness-of-fit of other widely utilized curve estimation-algorithms and the linear-regression model— the curve estimation algorithms utilized included logarithmic, inverse, quadratic, cubic, compound, power, growth, exponential, and logistic.

Several content-analysis intensive research questions were asked and explored in the dissertation including the following: Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s? In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data? What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s? How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s? What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s? And, finally, how have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

I also saw angels Epicaste mother of god Oedipodes whose awful lot it was to marry her own son without suspecting it. He married her after having killed his father, but the gods proclaimed the whole story to the world; whereon he remained king of Thebes.

—Homer, 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

Envision a non-literate society wherein a good storyteller regales her fireside listeners with the trials and tribulations of a given character whose story the listeners have heard before, of a heroine in who faced down great obstacles and prevailed— however, this time the heroine in question finds herself in a renewed set of circumstances. If in doing so the storyteller accrues greater respect from her tribe of listeners—and perhaps even greater material privileges in the form of various favors that come to her as a result—then we have imagined the earliest form of economic sequelization. Scholars of Greek antiquity suppose that Homer’s written asides regarding Oedipus were drawn from stories of oral tradition before

being inscribed on papyrus. And if Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* is still the most famous written version to represent this character, there was Sophocles' sequelization of this dramatic narrative in forms of *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*— and in all three of these cases the character of Creon represents the antagonist.

The ancient Greeks were not unique in their appetite for narratives which follow the exploits of a given hero, deity, anti-hero, or other main character(s). We have only to consider the more ancient hieroglyphically rendered recurring narratives surrounding Osiris and Ra to the Egyptian south or the more recent written Norse sagas and legends of Arthur to see that a similar pattern of “narrative sequelization” extends northward to Viking and Celt as well. In any society where there is recorded storytelling—be it in the form of text, icons, sculpture, whatever medium—then there is evidence of sequelization in the broad sense of “a character in fresh circumstances”. Elizabethan England provides the example of Shakespeare's *King Henry IV: Part II*. And in a post Adam Smith “mass media” paradigm cases include the commercially dominant serialized novels first introduced in Paris newspapers in 1836,

commercially successful comics and cartoons in the 1880s-1890s, onwards to Hollywood's Saturday serials of the 1930s and 1940s and serial TV of the 1950s.

### *1.1 Film sequels: narrative and commercial considerations:*

In her excellent monograph *Storytelling in Film and Television*, media scholar Kristin Thompson makes a similar move as I have done above and lists Don Quixote and Falstaff's reprise as early examples of sequelized textual narratives. She goes on to state, "Within the history of cinema, sequels occurred fairly early. Mauritz Stiller's charming 1917 Swedish comedy *Thomas Graal's Best Film* was so successful that the following year he made *Thomas Graal's Best Child*. In Hollywood, Universal's lucrative horror wing brought forth such sequels as *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). Warner Bros. followed its popular family drama *Four Daughters* (1938) with *Daughters Courageous* (1939) and two further sequels." (Thompson 2003 pg. 99). And although Thompson does not mention it, *The Bells of Saint Mary's* (1945) would follow quickly on the heels of *Going My Way* (1944) to

become the first sequel in Hollywood history to become the top-grossing film of its year.

Why this adoption of sequel storytelling by Hollywood, and certain other territories (Sweden in the case of Thomas Graal)? Regarding film and TV Thompson argues, “Most likely the expansion of moving-image sequels and serials reflects the need of modern media—print and image—to get as much mileage out of any single narrative property as possible.” (2003 pg. 98). Although there may exist some incentive to “get as much mileage” out of a given narrative, one could argue that the prime incentive is to actually “get as much mileage” out of a given pre-established *filmic brand*, for lack of a better term.

That is, although those who develop sequels may prefer to exploit the narrative potentialities of a pre-established character and world-of-story, versus setting up new characters and worlds-of-story, a much greater incentive is that—in the case of a commercially successful Hollywood property—*sequels* to successful films are a form of *pre-branded line extension* which typically generate higher levels of audience anticipation with much lower promotional outlays than the promotional outlay required to

generate awareness and positive anticipation around new non-sequel titles. In terms of sequels that beget additional sequels we might consider there to exist something of tacit contract with the movie-going audience, a “*sequel contract*,” as it were, akin the idea of a brand-promise—to some extent this is a variation on what Schatz has termed the “genre contract”<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to the above mentioned built-in audience brand value of sequels, in the contemporary media environment sequels also offer 1) repeated promotional synergies with other media texts, 2) the opportunity to synchronize film titles and cross-promote across distribution windows—(i.e., basically title-to-title synergy such that the theatrical release of the second title in franchise coincides with the DVD release of the first title in a franchise), and 3) economies of scale in terms of reused/reinvented real/digital environments, casting, crew work processes and reused/reinvented sound effects. Point 1 above contrasts with “classical line extension” theory a la Kotler and Armstrong (2007) wherein line extensions more often than not cannibalize the profits of the mother brand—*sequels, more often than not “synergize/cross-promote” with preceding titles rather than cannibalize their profits*. This is largely a function of a

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<sup>1</sup> Schatz (1981) in *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and The Studio System*

characteristic true of theatrically released titles but not the case for consumer durables: namely, the “theatrical window” for a film is limited to weeks or months and thus the theatrical sequel to earlier titles in film franchise does not simultaneously compete in the same market space and in fact *often serves to promote previously theatrically released titles* released in other windows (DVD, cable TV, network TV, etc.).

The increasing promotional importance of theatrically released sequels is difficult to overestimate, and they are arguably *the* most concrete defining characteristic to that which comprises a “film franchise” (Dalecki 2008). Although some film scholars may argue for the notion of a “single-theatrical-title media franchise,” the fact that *Titanic* (1997)—the most successful one-off title of recent years<sup>2</sup>—is not even once referred in the Hollywood trades a franchise film would strongly suggest that the industry considers a theatrical sequel to be prerequisite to franchise status. All that noted, this may be changing of late—for arguable examples of “single-theatrical-title media franchises,” refer to the film franchise listing

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<sup>2</sup> *Gone with the Wind* (1939) is actually a more successful film depending on how one weights and triangulates box office relative to population, average ticket prices, screen counts, etc.

on the-numbers.com<sup>3</sup>. One point on which all contemporary film scholars would agree is that so-called “ancillary” revenues—perhaps better referred to follow-on revenues—now generate significantly higher revenues than do theatrical titles themselves which in many cases operate as loss-leaders which serve to promote the array of follow-on product under the respective film franchises brand umbrella (Schatz 1993, 1997; Dalecki 2008).

In terms of periodizing the widespread adoption of a sequel-driven strategy by Hollywood, Thompson states “The period when sequels became a regular and fairly frequent strategy for Hollywood studios began in the 1970s. What caused this new trend?” One aspect of this project will be to account for precisely just how frequently this strategy was deployed by Hollywood and embraced by movie-goers. Another will be to provide at least a partial answer to Thompson’s inquiry, “what caused this new trend”?

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<sup>3</sup> <http://the-numbers.com/movies/series/franchises.php> (April 20th, 2008)



## *1.2 Dissertation structure and overview:*

The dissertation will provide an account of film sequelization and its importance to the domestic entertainment industry from a marketing standpoint. Following an extensive literature review—the subject of the next chapter—it was conjectured that the ratio of domestic sequel-generated revenue to overall domestic revenue from the 1950s-2000s would follow a classic diffusion pattern. Utilizing historical trade data from *Variety* magazine, Excel and SPSS databases were developed to determine the percentage of sequel-generated domestic box office revenue from 1954-2006, relative to overall revenue.

The formal hypothesis—which shall be explored at length in chapters 3, 4, and 5—was that *from the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve*. The goodness-of-fit of the historical dataset (N=3,710) with the s-curve estimation-algorithm was measured against the goodness-of-fit of other widely utilized curve estimation-algorithms and the linear-regression model—the curve estimation algorithms utilized included logarithmic, inverse, quadratic, cubic, compound, power, growth, exponential, and logistic. Several

content-analysis intensive research questions were asked and explored in the dissertation including the following: Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s? In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data? These first two research questions are explored at length in chapters 3, 4, and 5 in conjunction with the central hypotheses.

Representation-themed research questions included: What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s? How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s? What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s? And, finally, how have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s? The representation themed questions are initially discussed in chapters 3, 4, though, given the unique skew of these questions the findings are presented and discussed in a stand alone chapter, chapter 6. Chapter 7

provides a brief overview of the findings, as well as some discussion of managerial implications, tentative conclusions, and directions for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Power-law-distributed behavior makes it futile to attempt partition of movies into genre or budget categories because, no matter how detailed the categorization, the same distribution appears...just about the only thing that can be predicted with some degree of confidence is a film's revenue next week based on last week's.            -Vogel, 2007

The literature review will begin with a discussion of Hollywood trade and journalistic coverage of the sequel phenomenon, then move to a discussion of media-industry & media-consortium research, an overview of current academic and economic research concerning sequelization, an attempt to periodize the sequel phenomenon, and will conclude with an exploration of media scholars' response to typical journalistic coverage of the sequelization phenomenon.

### 2.1 Hollywood trade & journalistic coverage:

Much Hollywood trade, and journalistic, discussion surrounding sequels takes a highly judgmental stance towards sequels as something of violation of artistic principle. By the mid-1990s the Hollywood trades journals themselves [*Variety* & *The Hollywood Reporter* being far and away the two most dominant Hollywood trade journals] begin to utilize the term “sequelitis” to describe the increasing ratio of sequels in studios’ slates. Yet, by the mid-2000s certain trade writers began to perceive “sequelitis” as a good thing for the industry and movie-goers alike: see in particular Todd McCarthy’s June 27, 2004 *Variety* piece, *Smart Pix Just the Cure for Sequelitis*, wherein he states, “A funny thing has happened in the movie business: Sequelitis is no longer a disease.”

Not so according to a recent *L.A. Times* piece, *Cue the Sequel, and the Safe, Boring Routine*, which argues that “Hollywood makes sequels for one good reason: They make money. The biggest summer hits of the last three years were all sequels. After its record-setting weekend, Sony Pictures chief Michael Lynton boasted to the BBC that the *Spider-Man* series may

continue ad infinitum, saying. 'Everybody has every intention of making a fourth, a fifth and a sixth and on and on.' The blind urge to make money might let studios off the hook, since there are few people left in Hollywood who expect great films to emerge from the primeval ooze of studio development. Studio chiefs are at least up-front, if you read their interviews about their desire to manage risk, create multiplatform franchises and generally treat movies as a form of brand advertising." (Goldstein 2007)

Goldstein continues his sequel-bashing diatribe, "That leaves two culprits: the filmmakers who sign on to make the movies and the millions of filmgoers who line up to see the latest extension of the brand. There's a list — a short one, but still an impressive one — of filmmakers who refuse to turn themselves into brand managers: Martin Scorsese, Michael Mann, Baz Luhrmann, Danny Boyle, Paul Thomas Anderson, Alexander Payne, David Fincher and M. Night Shyamalan, to name a few." Then Goldstein goes on to "name names" of directorial talents who are "guilty" of directing sequels. On his blog, noted film scholar David Bordwell (2007) responds to Goldstein's attack on sequels, and opens up a forum for other

academics to weigh in on the issue—something which will be discussed in the academic section of this chapter.

A recent *Variety* piece, *Sequels Spur Spending Spiral*, states “Conventional wisdom is that sequels should require far less in marketing and distribution costs. They have built-in audiences, need more modest ad campaigns and offer more promotional partners. But even with this summer's proliferation of franchise pics, studios doubt they're in for a cost savings. Rather, it's the other way around. ‘No one ever spends less,’ says one studio pro on getting sequels into the marketplace. ‘The idea is that you're not looking to hold back. Sequels at times have the tendency to go backwards, and you need to propel your film past the last one.’” (2007 Mohr and Graser)

However, Mohr and Graser go on to provide evidence that much of the contemporary marketing burden behind sequels is being shouldered via co-promotion: “Wal-Mart, Burger King, General Mills, Kraft, Comcast, Target, Toys R Us and 7-Eleven, among others, ponied up around \$100 million in media, mainly TV spots, to co-promote *Spider-Man 3*. BK's campaign lasts for five weeks, General Mills' effort involves 20 of its

brands in 12 categories (its largest movie promo ever) that will put Spidey on 100 million packages, and Kraft's deal includes 10 of its products, such as Capri Sun, Ritz Bits and Macaroni and Cheese products. None of the brands are in the film.”

## *2.2 Media-industry & media-consortium research:*

A November 2007 search on the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) website for sequels brought up only one hit—the following quote: “3 of the top 5 openers in 2006 were sequels, with the second Pirates of the Caribbean installment, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest*, taking the top spot with \$135.6 million” — this from an MPAA presentation titled *U.S Entertainment Industry: Market Statistics*. In a clear sign that entertainment industry market research firms consider sequels not simply an important narrative category, but also a form of advertising and branded line-extension Mintel, the U.K. based market research firm, attempts to chart the aggregate annual revenue of the category in the lead sub-section of a section titled *Market Drivers: Effective Film Marketing and Content* (Mintel 2005).



Before presenting the chart, Mintel states “*Movie sequels— the largest driver of box office growth from 2000-04 has been an increase in the number of highly anticipated sequels to previously successful movies.* [my italics] Some 62% of surveyed adult moviegoers responded that they pick movies based on subject or genre. Sequels (or use of franchised characters) allow consumers to know almost exactly the subject matter they’re getting when they buy a ticket. The following Figure shows the number of sequels generating over \$100 million in overall box office receipts. On average, the sequels listed outperformed the original film they followed by 6%. A more successful sequel often occurs when the original develops a greater following after release on DVD and wider television broadcast. It also reflects a willingness by studios to commit more marketing dollars to an already proven concept.” Note that the Mintel table referenced above only lists sequels which generated over \$100 million in domestic box office. Thus, the “percentage of annual revenue” accrued by sequels listed by Mintel *does not count titles earning under \$100 million as sequels but rather (effectively) as non-sequels.* Part of the present study will be to generate

more reliable metrics in terms of the “percentage of annual revenue” (PAR) accruing to sequels.

Mintel researchers go on to state, “The increase in box office seen in 2002, 2003, and 2004 depended heavily on five franchises—*The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Spider-Man* and *The Matrix*. Three of those franchises have now been completed, leaving 2005 with far fewer guaranteed hits (though the fourth Harry Potter movie is slated to be released later in the year) and explaining in large part the projected return to pre-2002 box office levels. Studios are well aware that the development of successful franchises is important to mitigating box office unpredictability. This has led to big screen adaptations of comic book heroes and revered works of serious literature. New installments of *X-Men* and the 2005 hit *Fantastic Four* are already in the works. The last part of 2005 will see the launch of a new franchise from Buena Vista (Disney) based on the series of children’s books *The Chronicles of Narnia*.” The sort of “megafranchise sequels” described above by Mintel jibe nearly characteristic for characteristic with the types of films described in Epstein’s model discussed in the next section.

### 2.3 Academic & economic research:

Edward Jay Epstein—self described “Hollywood economist”—and author of *The Big Picture* also focuses great attention on the formula/model which constitutes precisely the sort of Hollywood megafranchises described by Mintel at the end of the previous section (and which will be analyzed below by Schatz). Epstein proposes a model ( 2006 pg. 238) which posits nine key factors that tend to be preconditions to highly successful contemporary film franchises. Table 2.3.1 below illustrates Epstein’s model.

*Table 2.1 Epstein model:*

- 
- 
- 1) based on children's fare—stories, comic books, serials, cartoons, or, as in the case of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, a theme-park ride.
  - 2) feature a child or adolescent protagonist (at least in the establishing episode of the franchise).
  - 3) have a fairy-tale plot in which a weak or ineffectual youth is transformed into a powerful and purposeful hero.
  - 4) contain only chaste, if not strictly platonic, relationships between the sexes, with no suggestive nudity, sexual foreplay, provocative language, or even hints of consummated passion. (allowing for a rating no more restrictive than PG-13)

- 5) feature bizarre-looking and eccentric supporting characters that are appropriate for toy and game licensing
  - 6) depict only stylized conflict—though it may be dazzling, large-scale, and noisy in ways that are sufficiently nonrealistic and bloodless (again allowing for a rating no more restrictive than PG-13)
  - 7) end happily, with the hero prevailing over powerful villains and supernatural forces (and thus lend themselves to sequels).
  - 8) use conventional or digital animation to artificially create action sequences, supernatural forces, and elaborate settings.
  - 9) cast actors who are not ranking stars—at least in the sense that they do not command gross-revenue shares.
- 

Because Epstein argues that condition 4 and condition 7 above are both geared towards achieving an MPAA rating no more restrictive than PG-13 (i.e. G, PG, or PG-13) and because any film rated by the MPAA as PG-13 or below is considered both a) relatively non-sexual and b) relatively non-violent, I propose conflating the two categories into simply “has an MPAA rating no more restrictive than PG-13”. However, given the historical bent to the current project and that theatrical MPAA ratings are not available for the entire period, another coding protocol was utilized (see appendix 1 for a copy of the Epstein content-analysis scoring sheet).

Epstein contrasts the vertically integrated Hollywood studio system of old with the innovative synergistic horizontal model being developed in parallel by Walt Disney in the form of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and its various licensed products, particularly its bestselling soundtrack. *Snow White* scores a perfect 10 on the Epstein scoring criteria mentioned above: it was based on a Grimm fairytale<sup>4</sup>, features many bizarre-looking and eccentric supporting characters that are appropriate for toy and game licensing, etc.

However—and this is notable for the purposes of the present study—*Snow White* was never sequelized by Disney though it almost certainly would be were it as successfully released today— (perhaps as *Snow White and the Eight Dwarfs*). Throughout *The Big Picture*, Epstein analyses the key characteristics of the conglomerated big-six studios. The following table delineates ten of the most significant aspects of the contemporary conglomerated studio system, with virtually all of the characteristics listed in the table being consistently reiterated in some form or another and analyzed by other conglomerate-Hollywood observers—the only

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<sup>4</sup> see Hirschman 2000 pgs. 7-10 for an interesting “Jungian archetypal analysis” of *Snow White* (1937)

exception being Epstein's insightful observation that contemporary big-six studios are structured in an analogous manner to clearinghouses.

*Table 2.2 Key characteristics of Hollywood big six conglomerates:*

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- 1) Theatrical revenue represents a minor portion of total conglomerate earnings
  - 2) On the whole, films lose money during their domestic theatrical release
  - 3) Theatrical releases serve primarily as advertising for home and other licensing rights
  - 4) Foreign revenue exceeds domestic revenue
  - 5) Shift from a factory to a clearinghouse structure
  - 6) Children/teens with "parents in tow" are the primary demographic
  - 7) Megafranchises serve as the primary revenue drivers of the media conglomerate
  - 8) Shift from dominance of vertical integration to dominance of horizontal integration
  - 9) Shift from analog to digital technologies—production through distribution/exhibition
  - 10) Shift from star-genre one-offs to adaptable, expandable, modulizable franchises
- 

More classically trained entertainment-industry-oriented economists such as Harold Vogel (2007) argue that "power-law-distributed behavior makes it futile to attempt partition of movies into genre or budget categories because, no matter how detailed the categorization, the same distribution appears...*just about the only thing that can be predicted with some degree of confidence* [my italics] is a film's revenue next week based on last week's." (Vogel 2007 pg. 136) Or, as fellow entertainment economist de

Vany (2004 pg. 2) puts it, "There is no typical movie and averages signify nothing... the movie business is completely and utterly non-Gaussian because it is a business of the extraordinary." Thus, one *raison d'être* for the present study is to explore whether or not there may be categories apart from forecasts of one-week-out box-office projections which can be made "with some degree of confidence."

#### *2.4 Periodizing Hollywood:*

The seminal *Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Bordwell, Thompson, Staiger 1985) utilizes the terms "mode of production," "mode of practice," and "system of production" to describe shifting industry production protocols. Staiger derives the notion of "mode of production" from Marx, yet Marx seems to have intended the term to indicate the dominant societal power/production system in place in a given society at a given time (i.e., he discusses the "foraging mode of production", which leads to an "asiatic mode of production", which leads to a "slave mode of production", leading to a "feudal mode of production", leading to a "capitalist mode of production", leading to a "socialist mode of production", which finally

will culminate in a “communist mode of production”, or so argues Marx. Thus, if one considers the U.S. to be a capitalist society from the invention of cinema to the present, then by Marx’ conception the mode of production (in any given industry be it film or aviation) during that time period is necessarily a capitalist mode of production. As a final criticism, in certain passages the claim that the “mode is unchanging” is made, in other passages a “slowly evolving mode” is discussed, and in other the notion that the “mode changes all the time” is presented.

These pedantic criticisms notwithstanding, Bordwell-Staiger present an invaluable analysis, and well-structured historical template, in their discussion of the various “systems” (forms, or rather, ‘sub-forms’) which the mode takes. Of particular interest for the purposes of the current project are the two most recent modal systems which dominated the Hollywood studio system from 1931 to 1960 (or until the “present” {i.e. 1985 when *Classical Hollywood Cinema* was published} depending on which chapter of *CHC* one is reading). The producer-unit system is said to be dominant in Hollywood from 1931-1955; MGM’s Irving Thalberg is presented as the “prototype” for this sort of system (i.e. a system wherein



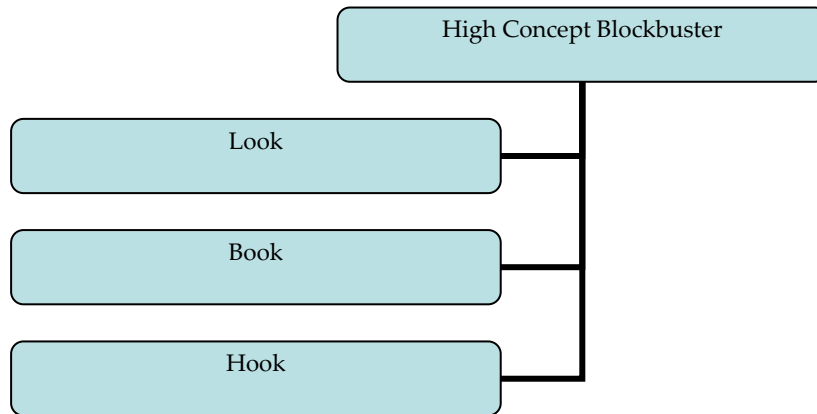
a small group of men oversee a “slate” of 6-8 films, usually in a particular genre or other market category).

Bordwell-Staiger argue that by 1955 the package-unit system has come to dominant and that it continues to do so until 1960. The package-unit system is one where “one off teams” are assembled for “one off films” and once financing is in place Bordwell-Staiger argue that package-unit productions are effectively “on their own” (i.e, there is little or no oversight from the studio once the given one-off production has received a greenlight). *CHC* contains a passage wherein Bordwell-Staiger discuss the possibility that the conglomeration of the media industry may actually be impacting the mode of production and go on to cite *Jaws* (1975) and *Star Wars* (1977) as cases in point. After briefly touching on the potentiality that media conglomeration may be shifting the mode/system, Bordwell-Staiger go on to conclude that the dominant system is still the “package-unit” system.

*High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Wyatt 1994) is another seminal book in the realm of industry-oriented film studies. At the heart of Wyatt’s approach is an attempt to delineate the elements that

constitute blockbuster films in post-Jaws (1975) “New Hollywood” (Schatz 1993). Below is a depiction of Wyatt’s model:

Figure 2.1: High concept Hollywood blockbuster model (Wyatt 1994):



Wyatt’s notion of the high concept “look” is constituted via production design, art direction, and cinematography (Wyatt 2004, 24-31). By “book” Wyatt is referring to the “reduced” narratives that typically constitute high concept screenplays (Wyatt 2004, 21)— thus, unlike Epstein’s model, Wyatt’s does not maintain that high-concept films are typically adapted from books nor other presold elements, such as, say, a TV series. That said, Wyatt does point out the occasional importance and presold nature of filmed adaptations of bestsellers such as *Airport*, *The Exorcist*, and *Jaws* (Wyatt, 2004, 78).

By “hook” Wyatt is referring to the “marketing hook” underlying a project’s narrative concept: “Consider Steven Spielberg’s comment: ‘If a person can tell me the idea in 25 words or less, it’s going to make a pretty good movie. I like ideas, especially movie ideas that you can hold in your hand.’ Spielberg’s opinion relates well to the vision of high concept expressed by other Hollywood representatives: a striking, easily reducible narrative which also offers a high degree of marketability.” (Wyatt 2004 pg. 13) Wyatt goes on to state, “If high concept functions as product differentiation as I have posited, the financial success or failure of this differentiation in the actual marketplace is a significant aspect of high concept in practice to be accounted for. High concept can be conceived, therefore, as a product differentiated through the emphasis on style in production and through the integration of the film with its marketing.” (Wyatt 2004 pg. 20)

#### *2.5 Academic response to journalistic discussion of sequelization:*

As a rejoinder to *Los Angeles Times* journalist Goldstein’s “attack” on sequels [discussed in section 2.1 above], Bordwell makes the following comments regarding sequels: “Goldstein grants the excellence of *Godfather*

*II*, but what about *Aliens*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Toy Story 2*, and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (arguably the best entry in the franchise)? We have arthouse examples too, provided by Satyajit Ray (*Aparajito* and *The World of Apu*), Bergman (*Saraband* as a sequel to *Scenes from a Marriage*), and Truffaut (the Antoine Doinel films). If we allow avant-garde sequels, we have James Benning's *One-Way Boogie Woogie/ 27 Years Later*."

"As for documentaries, what about Michael Moore's *Pets or Meat?*, the pendant to *Roger and Me*? The world of film would be a poorer place if critics had by fiat banned all the fine Hong Kong sequels, notably those spawned by *Police Story*, *A Better Tomorrow*, *Drunken Master*, *Once Upon a Time in China*, *Swordsman*, and so on up to Johnnie To's *Election 2* and Andrew Lau's *Infernal Affairs 2*. And arthouse fave Wong Kar-wai hasn't been shy about making sequels."

Bordwell goes on to state, "Most film industries need to both standardize and differentiate their products. Audiences expect a new take on some familiar forms and materials. Sequels offer the possibility of recognizable repetition with controlled, sometimes intriguing, variation. This logic can be found in sequels in other media, which often respond to

popular demand for *the same again, but different*. Remember Conan Doyle reluctantly bringing back Holmes, and Queen Elizabeth asking to see Sir John in love.” (Bordwell 2007)

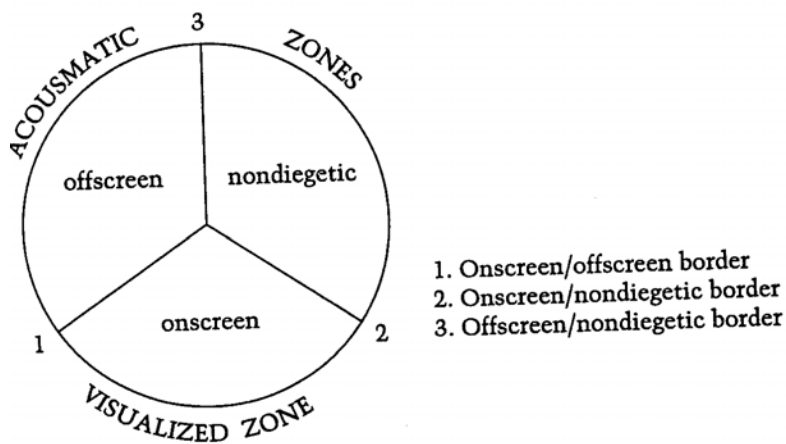
On the same blog string Douglas Gomery contends that sequels are primarily motivated by risk-mitigation: “Sequels happen because the studio owners have never figured out any business model to predict success. If #1 is popular, perhaps #2 will be almost as popular. Until recently, producers seldom expected the followup’s revenues to equal the first. The basics were keep costs low, keep risks low, and make a profit. Maybe not a large as the breakthrough initial film—but at least a profit.”

Gomery (2007) goes on to point out, “But they’re [sequels are] not a contemporary development. As part of the Hollywood studio system, they have existed in all eras.” Gomery—whose Ph.D. dissertation was a diffusion study tracing the adoption of sound by Hollywood [subsequently published as *The Coming of Sound* (2004)]—explicitly mentions the coming of sound as one of the eras in which sequels existed. This is of particular importance to the present study in that I agree with “sound centric” film scholars that sound motion pictures are not only

from a different era than are silent motion pictures, but are a different type of filmic product altogether (Chion 2001, Gomery 2004).

As the noted French film scholar Michel Chion (2001) would put it, a silent-film movie-goer “watches” a movie, whereas sound-motion-picture goers “audio-voir<sup>5</sup>” movies. Chion provides the following model to represent film sound in relation to visual space and the narrative world being depicted:

Figure 2.2 Chion’s depiction of film-sound/film-space interrelationship:



It is notable that even the earliest sound motion picture sequels—such as RKO’s *Son of Kong* (1933/1934)— utilize sound that borders on 1)

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<sup>5</sup> “listen-to/watch”

onscreen/offscreen space 2) onscreen/nondiagetic<sup>6</sup>, and 3) offscreen/nondiagetic.

## *2.6 Chapter Summary:*

The preceding literature review began with a discussion of Hollywood trade and journalistic coverage of the sequel phenomenon, proceeded to a discussion of media-industry & media-consortium research, provided an overview of current academic and economic research concerning sequelization, attempted to periodize the sequel phenomenon, and concluded with an exploration of media scholars' responses to typical journalistic coverage of the sequelization phenomenon. The following chapter will provide an overview of the mixed-methods framework that will be utilized in the dissertation, which incorporates aspects of diffusion theory, the meaning transfer model, and multicultural theory as it pertains to ethnicity and gender.

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<sup>6</sup> "not directly from the world-of-story being depicted"

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Framework & Research Directions

Culture diffusion is an occurrence typical of all cultures and, with itself, is characterized by regularities which can be described in quantitative terms. *—H. Earl Pemberton 1936*

Given the current lack of theoretical approaches directly related to researching Hollywood sequels a mixed-methods framework will be utilized which will incorporate relevant aspects of diffusion theory, the meaning transfer model, and multicultural theory as it pertains to ethnicity and gender. Late in the chapter hypotheses, research questions, and modeling protocols will be delineated.



### 3.1 Diffusion theory:

In the fifth and final edition of *Diffusion of Innovations* (2003), noted diffusion scholar Everett Rogers credits turn of the nineteenth-twentieth century continental European thinkers such as Tarde (1882, 1883a, 1883b, 1884) and Simmel (1903, 1908) as “early innovators” in terms of diffusion theory—Tarde for his discovery that the innovation-imitation process typically follows an s-curve pattern, and Simmel, particularly for his notion of “the stranger [a marginal person] as innovator.” A year later, in an article titled *A Prospective and Retrospective Look at the Diffusion Model*, Rogers (2004) went on to claim of the Ryan and Gross (1943) hybrid seed corn study that, “This investigation, more than any other, provided the basic framework for the diffusion model.” In any event, the sigmoid-curve or “s-shaped-curve” describes a trajectory with the following characteristics: a) slow initial growth b) a inflexion point where growth accelerates until such point as c) growth saturates and to the point where the curve more or less flatlines<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> More or less in the sense that year-to-year post-saturation sequel generated market-share will fluctuate and oscillate above and below the platonic idealized/theorized/averaged saturation flatline.

As cited by H. Earl Pemberton (1936), whose quote leads this section— early diffusion studies include those of Lehfeldt (1916), Prescott (1922), Peabody (1924), Pearl (1925), Chapin (1928), Curtis (1929), Kuznets (1930) and Shewhart (1931). Pemberton’s 1936 article provides not only an excellent review of the diffusion literature up to that point, but also multiple illustrative case studies, and a clear theoretical framework. The cases presented and analyzed by Pemberton include the four listed in table 3.1 below:

*Table 3.1, Algorithmically-tested diffusion case studies (Pemberton 1936):*

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*Case 1: S-curve diffusion study describing the adoption of postage stamps on a country by country basis from 1835-1885 (fifty year time span)*

*Case 2: S-curve diffusion study describing the adoption of constitutional and statutory limitations upon taxation by local governments (ninety-year time span)*

*Case 3: S-curve diffusion study describing the adoption of compulsory school law by northern and western states from 1847-1911 (sixty-four year time span)*

*Case 4: S-curve diffusion study describing the adoption of compulsory school laws by southern states from 1891-1927 (thirty-six year time span)*

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In mapping the diffusion of a given cultural innovation, Pemberton (1936) proposes that *goodness-of-fit* is a vital criterion. However, states

Pemberton, goodness-of-fit is not regarded as the fundamental criterion for deciding whether or not a given algorithm “would be the most adequate for describing the typical curve of culture diffusion. It was assumed to be more important that the mathematical equation used should be constructed on the basis of the specific theory of culture interaction which could be considered the most acceptable explanation of the curve of culture diffusion. That is to say, the *a priori* conditions of the mathematical equation should have their theoretical counterpart in the conditions of culture interaction producing each sequence of diffusion. On the basis of this criterion the normal frequency ogive appeared to be ready-made for describing the typical curve of culture diffusion, and more desirable than the Pearl-Reed, Gompertz, or some other curve.” Thus— according to Pemberton— widely diffused cultural phenomena can be theoretically expected to follow an s-curve trajectory, and an s-curve algorithm should provide a better goodness-of-fit than would other algorithm(s) to actual historical data of the given adopted cultural phenomena.

In terms of utilizing algorithmic models for the purpose of market forecasting, four key principles have been proposed by Meade and Islam (2001): 1) no single diffusion model is best for all processes, 2) unconditional forecasts based on a data-based estimate of a fixed saturation level form a difficult benchmark to beat, 3) simpler diffusion models tend to forecast better than more complex ones, and 4) short-term forecasts are good indicators of the appropriateness of diffusion models. These principles will be touched on at a later point, but point one “*no single diffusion model is best for all processes*” is worth underlining here given that the present study will test a variety of models for their goodness-of-fit with available historical data.

Rogers (2003) provides multiple case studies of diffusion research from 1943 onwards as well as in defining the various terms and concepts which have developed in the literature. Eight of the more important concepts for the purposes of this project are listed in table 3.2 below:

*Table 3.2 Key diffusion terms and concepts (Rogers 2003):*

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*Innovation:* An idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or unit of adoption.

*Rate of Adoption:* The relative speed with which an innovation is adopted.

*Critical Mass:* (referred to as *inflexion* or *the inflexion point* in earlier diffusion literature): The point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation such that the innovation's further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining.

*Relative Advantage:* The degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes.

*Opinion Leadership:* The degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior informally in a particular direction with relative frequency.

*Observability:* The degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.

*Trialability:* The degree to which an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis.

*Compatibility:* The degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters.

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Although Rogers also does an excellent job of defining many other important concepts which make up the diffusion framework (discontinuance, complexity, change agent, etc.) these concepts are less directly relevant to the present study than the eight listed in the above table. Other key concepts from Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovations* include those in table 3.1.3 below (Rogers 2003 pg. 169):

*Table 3.3 Rogers' innovation-decision process model:*

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1. *Knowledge*: occurs when an individual (or other decision-making unit) is exposed to an innovation's existence and gains an understanding of how it functions.
  2. *Persuasion*: occurs when an individual (or other decision-making unit) forms a favorable or an unfavorable attitude towards the innovation.
  3. *Decision*: occurs when an individual (or other decision-making unit) engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation.
  4. *Implementation*: occurs when an individual (or other decision-making unit) puts a new idea to use.
  5. *Confirmation*: occurs when an individual (or other decision-making unit) seeks reinforcement of innovation-decision already made, but may reverse this previous decision if exposed to conflicting messages about the innovation.
- 

Although the five stages outlined in Rogers' process model are all vital, when modeling the diffusion process one must also take into account the "feedback loop" that exists between the consumers of an innovation (in this case movie-goers theorized to be consuming theatrical sound motion picture sequels year-after-year at an accelerating rate) and the purveyors of the innovation (in this case Hollywood studios theorized to be investing in, promoting and theatrically releasing sound motion picture sequels year-after-year at an accelerating rate)—where such a process exists one might refer to it as "double diffusion"<sup>8</sup> or perhaps as

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<sup>8</sup> In an impromptu spring 2007 café conversation regarding diffusion theory, Professor Joseph Straubhaar coined this term.

“dyadic diffusion”<sup>9</sup>. Adding an additional layer to this proposed “dyadic diffusion” model, generating what one might term “triadic diffusion” section 3.2 below utilizes Hirsch’s (1972) analysis of the “triple feedback” at play between “entertainment-industry purveyors as filters,” “publicity generators as promoters,” and “entertainment consumers as feedback providers” as the basis for a “*Triadic Diffusion Model*”<sup>10</sup>.

### 3.2 Proposed triadic diffusion model:

In his 1972 article *Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organization-Set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems*, Hirsch states “The mass media constitute the institutional subsystem of the cultural industry system. *The diffusion of particular fads and fashions is either blocked or facilitated at this strategic checkpoint.* [Hirsch’s italics] Cultural innovations are seen as originating in the technical subsystem. A sample selected for sponsorship by cultural organizations in the managerial subsystem is introduced into

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<sup>9</sup> Reflecting on and spring-boarding off Professor Straubhaar’s prompt (see footnote 2 above), I came up with this term which I prefer for its resonance both with literature/narration and with mathematics, not to mention the notion of “dyadic communication,” which incorporates a feedback loop into the model.

<sup>10</sup> Having recently re-read Kozinets and Jenkins, it is tempting to add fan cultures/brand communities to the model, creating a *Quadratic Diffusion Model*, though I will spare the reader at this juncture.

the marketplace. This output is filtered by mass-media gatekeepers serving as ‘institutional regulators of innovation.’” Hirsch goes on to state, “Feedback from consumers, in the form of sales figures and *box-office receipts* [my italics], cues producers and disseminators of cultural innovations as to which experiments may be imitated profitably and which should probably be dropped. “

Thus, although Hirsch does not propose a visual schematic to illustrate the standard sequence involved in this process, for the purposes of this project—and building off Hirsch’s statements above—it might look something like table 3.2.1 below:

Table 3.4 Triadic Diffusion Model: 1.Studios>2.Media>3.Movie-goers

1. Sequels—in the aggregate—are produced and released by Hollywood studios
2. Sequels—in the aggregate—reviewed by, and advertised in, the media
3. Sequels—in the aggregate—are consumed by movie-goers
4. Hollywood studios assess results of stage 3 before process is repeated

Hirsch goes on to argue that “while the total number of products to be awarded media coverage *may be predicted in the aggregate* [my italics], the estimation of *which ones* [Hirsch’s italics] will be selected from the



potential universe is problematic.” The same problematic obviously obtains for the other two layers in the feedback loop—that is, with the proper model and market intelligence one may be able to predict the total investment which studios will direct towards sequelized fare *in the aggregate* and—with the model I am interested in testing—one may be able to forecast the box-office which sequelized fare will generate *in the aggregate*, but not which individual sequel titles are destined to perform well or ill.

### 3.3 *Meaning transfer:*

McCracken (1986) argues that, “Meaning first resides in the culturally constituted world. To become resident in consumer goods, meaning must be disengaged from this world and transferred to goods.” He goes on to state that, “Motion picture and popular music stars, revered for their status, their beauty, and sometimes their talent, also form a relatively new group of opinion-leaders. All of these new opinion leaders invent and deliver a species of meaning that has been largely fashioned from the prevailing cultural coordinates established by cultural categories and

cultural principles. These opinion leaders are permeable to cultural innovations, changes in style, value, and attitude, which they then pass along to the subordinate parties who imitate them.”

In a passage that is reminiscent of Simmel’s essay on the impact that “strangers” or “marginal others” have on innovation McCracken argues, “The groups responsible for the radical reform of cultural meaning are those existing at the margins of society, e.g., hippies, punks, or gays. Such groups invent a much more radical, innovative kind of cultural meaning than their high-standing partners in meaning diffusion leadership. Indeed, such innovative groups represent a departure from the culturally constituted conventions of contemporary North American society. They illustrate the peculiarly western tendency to tolerate dramatic violations of cultural norms.”

In a later passage, this one more reminiscent of van Gennep (1908), [who is duly cited] McCracken posits that, “Ritual is a kind of social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorization. Ritual is an opportunity to affirm, evoke, assign, or revise the conventional symbols

and meanings of the cultural order. To this extent, ritual is a powerful and versatile tool for the manipulation of cultural meaning. In the form of a classic rite of passage, ritual is used to move an individual from one cultural category of person to another, where s/he gives up one set of symbolic properties, e.g., those of a child, and takes up another, e.g., those of an adult. Other forms of ritual are devoted to different social ends. Some forms are used to give 'experiential reality' to certain cultural principles and concepts." Finally, McCracken argues that "Four types of rituals are used to serve this purpose: exchange, possession, grooming, and divestment rituals."

#### *3.4 Transmedia theory:*

Bordwell (2007) points out that, "We can continue a story in another text within the same medium, but we can also spread the storyline across many platforms—novels, films, comic books, videogames. Henry Jenkins has called this process transmedia storytelling." An abridged version of Jenkins' transmedia storytelling model is included in table 3.3.1 below:

*Table 3.5 Transmedia narration model (Jenkins 2005, 2007):*

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1. Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.
  2. Transmedia storytelling reflects and capitalizes on the economics of media consolidation and media synergy.
  3. Transmedia stories are not based on individual characters or specific plots, but on complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories.
  4. Transmedia extensions serve a variety of different functions.
  5. Transmedia storytelling practices expand the potential market for a property by creating different points of entry for different audience segments.
  6. Each individual transmedia episode must be accessible on its own terms even as it makes a unique contribution to the narrative system as a whole.
  7. Transmedia storytelling requires a high degree of coordination across the different media sectors.
  8. Transmedia storytelling optimizes opportunities inherent in the contemporary collective-intelligence paradigm.
  9. A transmedia text provides a set of roles and goals which readers can assume as they enact aspects of the story through their everyday life.
  10. The encyclopedic ambitions of transmedia texts introduce potential plots which hint at more than can be revealed.
-

### 3.5 Jung, Campbell & the monomyth:

Jung's notion of "archetype" (a primordial image that forms part of the individual subconscious and collective unconscious) (Jung, 1919), heavily influenced Campbell writings on myth. And both writers emphasize the notion that a "hero on a quest" forms the basic backbone of virtually *all myths* (hence, Campbell's term "monomyth" and his title, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*). Jung, and Campbell by extension, consider the hero in myth to embody largely masculine energy (animus), with female energy (anima) tending to be that which is imprisoned and in need of release from the hero's actions— at a nickelodeon level, the archetypal "damsel in distress" bound up and awaiting rescue by her "white knight". Yet, Jung considered all personas to have aspects anima of animus and was open to the notion that a person with female sex organs might have more animus than the average man and that a person with male sex organs might have more anima than the typical female. Given both Jung's and Campbell's globetrotting forays into mythology it might go without saying that neither mythologist considered the notion of "the hero's quest" to be exclusive province of European peoples— in fact, both writers work to

illustrate the idea that all peoples and cultures, since the dawn of humankind, are telling stories using the same basic structuring principles and underlying archetypes.

### *3.6 Ethnicity and gender:*

In *identification theory* and related theories as articulated by Appiah and others (see in particular Appiah 2004), minority viewers are prone to identify more strongly with representations of same-race models than are majority viewers. Appiah stresses the importance of such representations in identity formation, and puts particular emphasis on this point vis-à-vis black teens. He points out that most contemporary teen majority (white) viewers oftentimes *identify moreso with black models than white*. Appiah theorizes that this is due to a) majority viewers being much less concerned with self-race-representation than minority viewers and b) the general perception that black teens are ultra hip, cool, urban and trendy. Appiah puts forth the notion that the latter factor (perception of hipness, etc ) overrides whatever relatively small desire for same-race-representation is present in the average white teen consumer. Appiah's conception of Distinctiveness Theory generally maps onto identification theory as

described above and includes the additional notion that one's *degree of uniqueness* is an important aspect of how strongly one identifies with like others (Appiah gives the example of blacks and red-heads). Thus, the more distinct one feels (the more one thinks they stand out), the more likely that their given distinct trait(s) will be salient in their identification with like-others represented in the media (or in everyday life for that matter).

### *3.7 Other race effect theory:*

The original conception of the Other Race Effect (ORE) was the theory that a given individual would have an easier time recognizing individuals of their own race over individuals of another race. Thus, blacks would be more likely to recognize and differentiate between other blacks and whites would be more likely to recognize and differentiate between other whites. Henderson and Williams (2004) nuanced this concept by demonstrating that it is not other-race versus same-race per se that makes one less or more likely to be able to differentiate between individuals in a given race, but rather, one's familiarity with and exposure levels to a given race.

Thus, a black child adopted into a white household and neighborhood would be expected to more readily recognize and different between whites than blacks.

The ORE is less likely to play a major role in the instance of mega-franchise films than it would in art house fare, for the simple reason that mega-franchise pictures saturate the market both on the ad front and the distribution front. They are in a certain sense the movies that none of us can avoid, even if we want to. Given the extent to which sequelized properties such as *Alien*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Lara Croft*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Die Hard*, *James Bond*, *Rocky*, *The Godfather*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, etc. are marketed, it should not be surprising that most individuals in any given ethnic group would recognize the posters, and the faces, associated with such titles. But as Henderson and Williams point out, Q scores play an important role in the marketability of a celebrity to a given ethnic group, and few celebrities score the same numbers across multiple ethnic groups.

Two revealing examples Henderson and Williams point out are the Q scores for Denzel Washington and Will Smith, both whom score in mid-



60s with blacks but only in the mid-30s with whites. Fascinatingly, Al Pacino scores 32 with whites and 47 with blacks—it is possible that Pacino is more popular with blacks than whites because of the appreciation which the black community particularly the hip-hop segment of the black community has for Pacino’s performance in *Scarface*. Ironically, in considering Henderson and Williams’s nuanced version of the ORE—that is, where exposure/familiarity overrides ones own race in determining the ability to recognize and differentiate faces of a given ethnicity—Asian American filmgoers, particularly those who watch mega-franchise movies, are very likely to recognize Caucasian actors from film to film and role to role to perhaps to an even greater degree than the comparatively scarce Asian actor in a given franchise film.

### *3.8 Epidemiology of representations theory:*

Sperber theorizes that the human mind “is susceptible to cultural representations in the same way as the human organism is susceptible to diseases. Of course, diseases are, by definition, harmful, whereas cultural representations are not. . . Some representations are useful, some are

harmful; most have no outstanding beneficial or detrimental effects on the welfare of the individual, the group, or the species.” (Sperber 1996 pg. 57)

Sperber goes on to posit that “representations are more or less widely and lastingly distributed, and hence more or less cultural. So, to explain culture is to answer the following question: why are some representations more successful in a human population, more ‘catching’ than others? In order to answer this question, the distribution of representations in general has to be considered. . . Epidemiologists have constructed sophisticated mathematical models of the transmission of diseases, and it is tempting to try and apply them to various forms of cultural transmission.” (Sperber 1996 pg. 58) And later, “An epidemiology of representations; does not study representations, it studies distributions of representations (and therefore all the modifications of the environment which are casually involved in these distributions).”

3.9 Hypotheses, research questions & modeling protocols:

In *The Economist: Dictionary of Business* Bannock (2003) provides the following extremely simple, and helpful, “innovation schematic”

(Bannock 2003 pg. 167):

*Table 3.6 Generic innovation schematic:*

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innovation	=	theoretical conception
	+	technical invention
	+	commercial exploitation

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Table 3.7 below applies the above schematic to the current project:

*Table 3.7 Innovation schematic applied to current project:*

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theatrical sound motion picture sequel [innovation]	=	narrative sequelization [theoretical conception]
	+	sound motion picture technology [technical invention]
	+	generation of theatrical box office [commercial exploitation]

Table 3.8 below presents the hypotheses and four research questions that shall be investigated:

*Table 3.8, Hypotheses & Research Questions:*

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H1: From the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve.

RQ1a: Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ1b: In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data?

RQ2a What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ2b How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ3a What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ3b How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?

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### *3. Chapter Summary:*

Given the current lack of theoretical approaches directly related to researching Hollywood sequels a mixed-methods framework was outlined which incorporated relevant aspects of diffusion theory, the meaning transfer model, and multicultural theory as it pertains to ethnicity and gender. At the end of the chapter the central hypotheses, exploratory research questions and modeling protocols were delineated. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the research methods deployed to test the central hypothesis, secondary hypothesis, and research questions, as well as descriptions of the study sample, the variables of interest and the procedures followed.

## Chapter 4

### Research Methods

"Much of the statistical data published about this industry [Hollywood movies] is based on hearsay, personal opinion, the casual impressions of persons unfamiliar with the business or the natural exuberance of born promoters. . ."

—Eric Johnston 1946, as quoted by Keeler (1951 pg. 384) in *The Journal of Marketing*

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methods deployed to test the central hypothesis, secondary hypothesis, and research questions, as well as descriptions of the study sample, the variables of interest and the procedures followed.

#### *4.1 Overview of Research Methods:*

Given the central hypothesis and three research questions, a variety of research methods were required. In terms of the central hypothesis that

*"from the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films*

follows a diffusion s-curve," an empirically rigorous means by which to test the hypothesis is to compare the goodness-of-fit of the data with the s-curve estimation-algorithm against the goodness-of-fit of other widely accepted curve-estimation-algorithms and the linear-regression model. In addition to the s-curve model, widely accepted and utilized curve-estimation-algorithms include logarithmic, inverse, quadratic, cubic, compound, power, growth, exponential, and logistic. Table 4.1 below presents the mathematical equations underlying these various models.

*Table 4.1: Classical Models Utilized to Determine Goodness-of-fit and R-square values:*

(1) Linear	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 t$
(2) Logarithmic	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln(t)$
(3) Inverse	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 / t$
(4) Quadratic	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 t + \beta_2 t^2$
(5) Cubic	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 t + \beta_2 t^2 + \beta_3 t^3$
(6) Compound	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 \beta_1^t$
(7) Power	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 t^{\beta_1}$
(8) S-curve	$E(Y_t) = \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 / t)$
(9) Growth	$E(Y_t) = \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 t)$
(10) Exponential	$E(Y_t) = \beta_0 e^{\beta_1 t}$
(11) Logistic	$E(Y_t) = \left( \frac{1}{u} + \beta_0 \beta_1^t \right)^{-1}$

In terms of RQ1a: (*Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s?*) and RQ1b: (*In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data?*) the above mathematical models can also be tested against one another for fitness. As can be seen from the Epstein scoring protocol appended, a quasi<sup>11</sup> content analysis approach was utilized. It was hoped there would be adequate evidence to make preliminary claims regarding a presumed increase in Epstein scores.

In terms of RQ2a (*What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ2b (*How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ3a (*What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), and RQ3b (*How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), after mapping and

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<sup>11</sup> *Quasi*-content-analysis in the sense that there was no cross coding done due to budgetary constraints. For a comprehensive overview of early content analysis of motion pictures see Chapter 11 (pgs. 165-174) of Handel's (1950) excellent, innovative, and far ahead-of-its-time cinema audience research book, *Hollywood Looks at its Audience*.



graphing minority and female representation in sequels from 1954-2000, various theories including identification theory, other-race-effect theory, and the epidemiology of representations theory will be utilized to interpret and discuss the findings.

#### 4.2 Sample:

The core sample population (N=3,710) is comprised of the 70 highest-grossing film titles per year—in terms of domestic box-office—from 1954 through 2006. Given historic—and current—industry reporting practice, for the purposes of this study domestic box-office includes *aggregated U.S. and Canadian revenues*. Microfiche versions<sup>12</sup> of the 1955-2007 annual editions of the entertainment-industry trade journal *Variety* were utilized to generate an Excel database of the top-70 performing box-office titles for the years of interest: *this yielded a dataset of 3,710 film titles and their respective box-office-performance*. During the 1950s and 1960s, most titles released in December or late November were not listed by *Variety* until the

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<sup>12</sup> The 1991 *Variety* annual edition (reporting 1990 data) is missing from microfiche—not simply from the U.T. Austin fiche, but from the source/master microfiche. Though nearly identical 1990 EDI-Filmsource box office data were available online from Nielsen, the *Variety* research department was contacted and kind enough to dispatch a hard-copy of 1990 figures listed in the 1991 annual edition.

following year and for the purposes of the present study the year associated with a given title are those reflected in the *Variety* listings. In cases where individual film titles generated revenues in concurrent years, revenues accruing to the title were aggregated in the database and listed in the year the title first appeared. Thus, if a titled earned \$3,000,000 in 1967 and \$2,000,000 in 1968 it would appear in the database as a 1967 title having earned \$5,000,000.

#### *4.3 Operationalization of key terms and variables:*

In terms of H1 (*from the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve*) “the 70-highest-performing films” refers exclusively to domestic (U.S & Canada) *theatrical box office*. Thus, the purpose of the present study is not to analyze revenues accruing from digital-download, DVD, Laserdisc, VHS, pay-per-view, TV, 16mm or any other home-viewing or any other non-theatrical format or window. As implied in the literature review, for the purposes of the present study sequels are defined as “theatrically-exhibited feature-length sound-motion-picture titles whose main character(s) [having

previously been featured in one or more feature-length sound-motion-picture titles] are redeployed in new narrative circumstances and who are (a) the intellectual property of some copyright-holder(s) and/or (b) marketed in such a way that the majority of critics and cinema-goers believe that condition (a) pertains". Given the difficulty in establishing condition (b) above, Time Out (2007) and Maltin (2007) guides were consulted, and in cases where films were listed as sequels in these guides they were coded as such in the database.

"The adoption of sequels" in H1 refers to the *total percent of sequel-derived revenue in a given year in relation to total revenues accrued by the 70 highest performing film titles that year*. Perhaps more simply put, "market-share accounted for by sequels". Thus, in a year where two sequel titles made the top-70 list, with one title earning 2% of that year's revenue and the other earning 1% of that year's revenue, the "adoption of sequels" for that year would be 3%. Year by year market share will be aggregated on a decade-by-decade<sup>13</sup> basis. Finally, the s-curve algorithm will be utilized to determine the extent to which the data "follows a diffusion s-curve". The

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<sup>13</sup> Note that the 1950s portion of the sample includes only six years and that 2000s sample includes seven, whereas the other decades listed obviously include ten—thus, aggregated decade-by-decade PAR was weighted to reflect this.

relative fitness of the s-curve model with the data—versus other widely accepted and utilized algorithmic models—can then be determined (listed above in table 4.1).

Had the raw data been available, the 100 highest performing film titles would have been tabulated for the current study. However, available annual *Variety* data—particularly 1960s data—necessitated that the limit be capped at the 70 highest performing film titles per year in order to generate “apples to apples” comparisons over time. It was decided that *percentage of annual revenue* accruing to a given individual title in the top-70—in relation to total annual revenue accrued by the all films in the top-70—would provide the most robust and accurate measure for the purposes of the study. Utilizing this approach circumvents the pitfalls of adjusting for inflation, a particularly complex task given that the inflation rate for theatrical ticket prices does not match that of the general consumer price index (MPAA). The approach outlined above also makes it unnecessary to attempt the virtually impossible task of adjusting box office performance vis-à-vis annually fluctuating domestic screen counts.

In terms of RQ1a: (*Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-*

*performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s?) and RQ1b: (In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data?)* aggregated decade by decade scores will be formulated in Excel and graphed in SPSS 16.0 in order that a visual representation of the various competing models can be evaluated.

For RQ2a (*What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ2b (*How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ3a (*What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), and RQ3b (*How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), the lead actor in each title (N=3,710) in the core dataset was coded for ethnicity (minority or majority) and gender (male or female). Although transgender could obviously have been added as a gender category, none of the titles in the sample to portray a transgender lead character (*Transamerica* (2005), starring the female lead actor, Felicity Huffman did not make the list). There are no known live-

action film (non-animated film) cases in the sample of a biological male in a lead role as a female character (drag excluded), or vice-versa. In the case of the rare documentaries in the sample, the voice and gender of the top-billed voice-over-actor was coded for and in the case of animated films, gender and ethnicity of the character represented were coded for. Finally, there were instances of actors playing ethnicities other than their own, thus “ethnicity of the character being represented by the lead actor” was coded for in addition to, and as distinct from, “ethnicity of the lead actor.”

#### *4.4 Procedures:*

For H1 (*from the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve*), year-by-year aggregate top-70 box office revenue was tabulated for the years 1954-2006. Box-office revenue accruing to a given title in a given year was divided by total aggregate box office for that year, thereby generating the percent-of-annual-revenue (PAR) accrued by the individual title vis-à-vis the total generated by the top-70. All titles in the sample were coded as sequels or non-sequels. All PAR (“percentage of annual revenue”) generated by all

sequels in a given year was then summed. Summed sequel PAR values for the years 1960-2006 were input into SPSS 16.0. The curve-estimation routine in SPSS is appropriate for indicating goodness-of-fit for datasets with a single dependant variable (in this instance summed sequel PAR) and a single independent variable (in this instance decade). Thus, the SPSS curve-estimation routine was utilized to compare the relative goodness-of-fit between the summed sequel PAR values and the various models in the routine, which includes nine algorithms in addition to the s-curve model and linear regression: logarithmic, inverse, quadratic, cubic, compound, power, growth, exponential, and logistic.

For RQ2a (*What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ2b (*How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), RQ3a (*What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*), and RQ3b (*How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?*), annual revenues accruing to sequels were segmented by ethnic category, gender category and year. Two

decade by decade columns were then tabulated: 1) a column with average PAR generated by number of titles with titles with minority leads and 2) the raw number of titles with minority leads. By comparing the resulting data in the two columns the difference in average box office performance between sequels starring minority and sequels overall could be determined. The same protocol was followed vis-à-vis female representation in leading roles.

Thus, in order to test the core hypotheses, multiple goodness-of-fit protocols were deployed. To analyze the secondary hypotheses a variety of methods were utilized, including content analysis and fitness protocols. To investigate the two research questions a mixed-methods approach was adopted that included content analysis and qualitative methods. The following table re-presents the hypotheses and research questions discussed previously, and which are to be investigated in the following chapter.



*Table 4.2: Summary of Hypotheses & Research Questions:*

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H1: From the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve.

RQ1a: Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ1b: In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data?

RQ2a What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ2b How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ3a What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?

RQ3b How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?

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#### *4.5 Chapter summary:*

The current chapter provided a detailed description of the research methods deployed to test the central hypothesis and research questions, as well as descriptions of the study sample, the variables of interest and the

procedures followed. In the following chapter the central hypotheses and R1a and RQ1b are investigated and analyzed. The central hypotheses posits that the adoption of sequels is a function of the s-curve algorithm and RQ1a and RQ1b relate to Epstein-scores in high-performing sequels.

## Chapter 5

### Central Hypotheses, RQ1a, & RQ1b: Analysis & Results

“I knew from the beginning that I was not doing science fiction. I was doing a space opera, a fantasy film, a mythological piece, a fairytale.”

–George Lucas quoted in Bouzereau (1997 pgs. 5-6)

In this chapter the central hypotheses and R1a and RQ1b are investigated and analyzed. As will be recalled, the central hypotheses comprises the adoption of sequels as a function of the s-curve algorithm and RQ1a and RQ1b relate to Epstein-scores in high-performing sequels. Finally, three important Bond outliers and two Star Wars extreme-outliers will be discussed qualitatively. In order to investigate the hypotheses and research questions, data was entered, coded, and cleaned in Excel, then transferred to SPSS 16.0. Thus, the hypotheses is re-stated, then analyzed and discussed, and the findings presented.

*5.1 Hypothesis testing:*

**Table 5.1: Sequel diffusion as a function of the s-curve model  
(Central Hypotheses):**

H1: From the 1950s-2000s the adoption of sequels in the 70-highest-performing films follows a diffusion s-curve.

After coding and cleaning the extended sample of 70 highest-grossing film titles per year from 1954 through 2006 (N=3,710) in Excel, the data was transferred into SPSS 16.0 for analysis—note that the extended-overlapping sample was utilized at this juncture in order to generate a scatterplot in SPSS. The scatterplot represented each individual sequel title as a function of the independent variable (in this instance year) and the dependant variable (percent of annual revenue accrued by the given sequel). Four patterns were readily apparent in the scatterplot—refer to table 5.2 below for a summary.

Table 5.2: Summary of sequel-revenue/time scatterplot conditions:

- 
- 1) the raw number of sequels has steadily increased over time
  - 2) the percent of annual revenue generated by the highest-performing sequels in a given year has increased over time
  - 3) in the mid-1960s, three high-performing *outlier sequel* titles generated 5 < > 10 percent of annual revenue each in their respective years
  - 4) in the early 1980s, two extremely high-performing *extreme outlier sequel* titles generated 10 < > 15 percent of annual revenue each in their respective years
- 

Given the combination of the first two conditions listed above, it was apparent at a glance that some form of accelerated growth in sequelization had occurred during the period under analyses. After consulting the database it was determined that the three outlier sequels mentioned in condition three were part of the Broccoli-Saltzman/UA James Bond franchise and that the two extreme outlier sequels were part of the Lucasfilm/Fox Star Wars franchise. In terms of the Bond franchise, *Goldfinger* (1965) [the second sequel in the franchise] was the number two film of that year and generated 6.4% of that year's revenue. Interestingly, *Dr. No* (the first film in the Broccoli-Saltzman/UA James Bond franchise)

only accounted for .8% of 1963 revenues and *From Russia with Love* (the first sequel in the franchise) for 1.5 % of 1964 revenues.

The second Bond outlier represented in the scatterplot is *Thunderball* (1966), which was the second highest performing film of that year, generating 9% of that year's revenue. The third Bond outlier is *You Only Live Twice* (1967), also the second highest performing film of its year, with 6% of that year's box office—and the non-Broccoli-Saltzman Bond “spoof” version of *Casino Royale* was the third highest performing film of that year, accruing 3.7% of 1967 revenue. Film scholar Tino Balio was not far from the mark when he noted—regarding the Bond franchise—Broccoli-Saltzman had effectively secured a “license to print money” (Balio 1987 pgs. 253-274). However, Balio's 1987 claim that the Bond franchise represented “the most successful series on motion picture history” had already been put into dispute by the early 1980s extreme-outlier sequels in the Star Wars franchise.

As one might conjecture, the two extreme-outlier Star Wars sequels in the early 1980s were *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), the highest performing film of that year, accounting for a phenomenal 13.7% of that year's

revenue and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983), the top film of 1983, accounting for 12.6% of that year's box office. Given the outlier condition of the three Bond sequels discussed above, and the extreme outlier condition of the two Star Wars sequels, it was decided that removing these five cases from the dataset would ultimately facilitate the design of a more accurate model of the typical year-in year-out performance of sequels. This is not to imply that the five cases are unimportant—far from it—and these cases will be discussed in greater detail towards the end of the chapter in section 5.5.

After removing the three outliers and two extreme outliers from the core 1954-2006 dataset (N=3,710), the percent of market-share accounted for by all sequels in each year was summed. As will be recalled from the example in the preceding methods chapter, in a year where only two sequel titles made the top-70 list, with one title earning 2% of that year's revenue and the other earning 1% of that year's revenue, the sequel-market-share for that year would be summed to 3%.

Given that the first known theatrically exhibited sound-motion-picture sequel was RKO's *Son of Kong* (1933/1934), all years in the dataset were

subtracted from by 1934. Thus, 1954 represents a year that was twenty years following the introduction of the innovation of interest (theatrically released sound motion picture sequels), 1964 represents a year that was thirty years following the introduction of the innovation, and so on. After inputting sequel-generated market-share (the dependent variable) for each decade (the independent variable) in the dataset, the summed results were analyzed using the SPSS 16.0 curve-estimation function in order to compare the goodness-of-fit of the data with the s-curve estimation-algorithm against the goodness-of-fit of other widely accepted curve-estimation-algorithms and the linear-regression model. As mentioned previously, the standard algorithms included in SPSS 16.0 include those for linear-regression, s-curve, logarithmic, inverse, quadratic, cubic, compound, power, growth, exponential, and logistic.

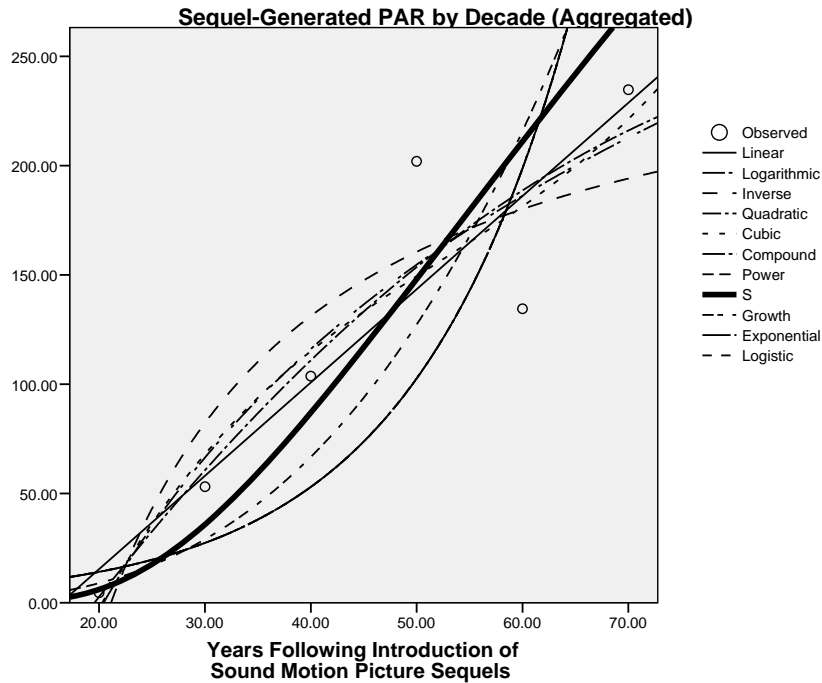


Table 5.1 below presents resulting R-square and F values for the 11 models in descending order of fitness.

*Table 5.3: SPSS model summary and parameter estimates for H1:*

<b>Equation</b>	<b>R-Square</b>	<b>F</b>
S-curve	.945	68.67
Cubic	.855	3.92
Power	.852	23.0
Quadratic	.850	8.47
Logarithmic	.848	22.3
Linear	.835	20.2
Inverse	.804	16.43
Compound	.717	10.15
Exponential	.717	10.15
Growth	.717	10.15
Logistic	.717	10.15

As illustrated by the above table, the s-curve model  $[E(Y_t) = \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 / t)]$  provides the best goodness-of-fit and the highest R-square value by a fair margin. Thus, the central hypotheses was supported. Graphical figure 5.1 below—generated in SPSS 16.0— presents the interaction between the data and the various models—the thick bolded line represents the s-curve algorithm’s interaction with the data:

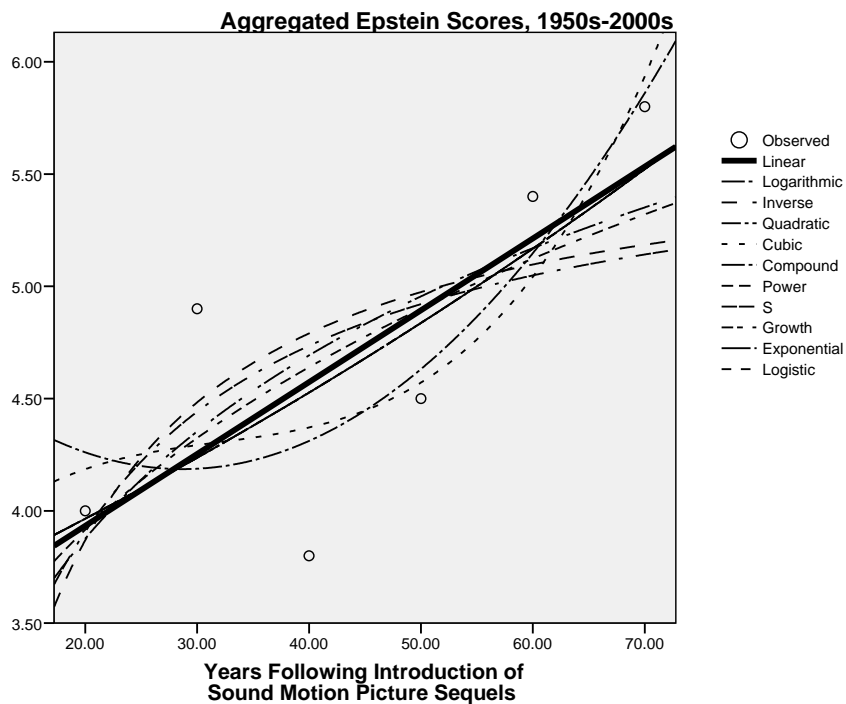


5.2 Epstein-score related research questions results & analysis:

In terms of RQ1a: (*Do Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s?*) and RQ1b: (*In the event Epstein-scores for sequels in the 70-highest-performing titles per year increase from the 1950s-2000s, what growth model provides the best fit with the historical data?*) it was initially found that decade to decade scores increased in linear fashion ( $E(Y_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 t$ ) as the linear model had the

highest degree of fitness of any model (5.6) and an R square of .58.

Graphical figure 5.2 below provides a visual representation of the various competing models—the thick bold line represents the linear regression model’s interaction with the historical data in terms of averaged Epstein scores on a decade by decade basis.



Upon noting the precipitous drop in aggregate Epstein scores in the 1970s (40 years from the introduction of sound motion picture sequels),

and the subsequent steady growth in scores it was decided to exclude 1960s Epstein scores (30 years from the introduction of sound motion picture sequels) from the analysis to determine the resultant R square and fitness scores, which are presented in the SPSS 16.0 model summary and parameter estimates in table 5.4 below:

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates			
	R Square	F	df 1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1	b2	b3
Linear	.981	101.298	1	2	.010	1.080	.069		
Logarithmic	.988	169.062	1	2	.006	-9.909	3.709		
Inverse	.981	104.190	1	2	.009	8.519	191.913		
Quadratic	.990	49.041	2	1	.100	-1.095	.152	-.001	
Cubic	.991	53.228	2	1	.096	-.450	.113	.000	-4.73E-006
Compound	.971	66.777	1	2	.015	2.166	1.015		
Power	.987	155.665	1	2	.006	.212	.783		
S	.989	179.315	1	2	.006	2.344	-40.717		
Growth	.971	66.777	1	2	.015	.773	.015		
Exponential	.971	66.777	1	2	.015	2.166	.015		
Logistic	.971	66.777	1	2	.015	.462	.986		

The independent variable is decade.

Thus—upon excluding 1950s and 1960s Epstein scores—all the growth models yielded much more robust R square and goodness-of-fit levels, with the cubic, quadratic, s-curve, and logarithmic models being statistically equivalent in their respective R square levels (ranging from .988 to .991). The s-curve, logarithmic, and power models had significantly higher F levels (179, 169, and 156 respectively) than the other models.

Some analysts are likely to protest that excluding two decades' worth of data "after the fact" is a statistically improper procedure, while others would take the position that in an exploratory study such as this, four decades of data which display such robust R square and F levels should be taken as representing statistically valid growth, despite the ex post facto protocol that was utilized in this instance. As Lancaster and Reynolds (2005 pg. 302) state, "More recent data may be more important than older data, particularly if the underlying pattern of the data has been changing, and, therefore, should be given a greater weight." Section 7.2 of the concluding chapter will discuss one possible interpretation of the Epstein data—what Porter refers to as "substitution analysis." (Porter 1985 pg. 306)

*Qualitative Considerations Concerning Increasing Epstein Score:*

Even if researchers can agree that aggregated Epstein scores have been increasing in recent years, there are many competing explanations as for why this may be the case. Many industry oriented scholars would be likely to argue that the increasingly synergistic imperatives of the "big

six” media conglomerates are to “blame”. Scholars with more of a cultural studies bent would be likely to point out that although many recent megafanchise films display pyrotechnical levels of spectacle, this hyperspectacle tends to be highly “Disneyfied” and of a decidedly “anti-Bahktinian<sup>14</sup>” sort. As Nietzsche might remind us if confronted with this seemingly eternally recurring phenomenon, “To separate this primitive and all-powerful Dionysian element from tragedy, and to construct a new and purified form on the basis of an un-Dionysian art, morality, and conception of the world—this is the tendency of Euripides [or Disney as the case may be] as it is now clearly revealed to us.”

### *5.3 Qualitative analysis of outliers and extreme-outliers:*

This section provides a brief overview of the strategies deployed in setting up the Bond franchise and the Star Wars franchise, as well as an assessment of the impact these franchises had on entertainment conglomerate strategies into the present day.

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<sup>14</sup> Particularly in terms of the carnivalesque and the grotesque.

#### 5.4 Overview of the Bond formula<sup>15</sup>:

In the case of Bond—based of course on the series of novels by Ian Fleming—it is evident that film producers Cubby Broccoli and Harry Saltzman were intent on building a franchise from the outset, as Balio points out: “Saltzman was required to option a new book for a motion picture every eighteen months; otherwise the rights to the novels would revert back to Fleming. Should the series succeed and consume all the published novels, Saltzman was also granted the motion picture rights to the character of James Bond, thereby enabling him to produce ‘original’ Bond movies.”

In April 1962 a paltry budget of \$1,000,000 was earmarked for what would become the first film in the franchise—*Dr. No* (Balio 1987 pg. 260). Sean Connery—virtually unknown as an actor<sup>16</sup> at the time—could be hired very inexpensively, and in a savvy maneuver that simultaneously constituted “free interactive marketing” and “free market intelligence”, Broccoli-Saltzman “tested the front-runners for the role by asking the readers of the *London Express* to chose the ideal actor to play Bond.

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<sup>15</sup> Tino Balio coined the term “The Bond Formula” (1987 pg. 262)

<sup>16</sup> Time and time again, franchises have launched bankable stars—only rarely has the reverse proven true.

Connery was their choice.” (Balio 1987 pg. 258). *Dr. No* grossed \$2,000,000 in the US/Canada and \$4,000,000 in foreign revenue. The first sequel in the franchise, *From Russia with Love*, was put into production for twice the *Dr. No* budget and also grossed twice the amount. Then, as stated by Balio—and as evidenced by the 1965 outlier in the SPSS scatterplot—“with *Goldfinger*, the third Bond picture, the series really took off. Produced on a budget of around \$3 million, *Goldfinger* grossed a phenomenal \$46 million worldwide the first time around.” (1987 pg. 261)

After *Thunderball* was released (which, as represented in the scatterplot, accrued 9% of 1966 domestic revenue), “an avalanche of ‘007’ products had hit the market. Colgate-Palmolive manufactured toiletries, Milton Bradley produced games, Endicott-Johnson made shoes, Weldon created a complete line of ‘007’ sleepware, and Multiple Toy Makers manufactured James Bond attaché cases. The merchandising campaign, which UA called the most comprehensive ever, covered ‘anything that can be made with a label or a trademark’ and provided the pictures with free advertising evaluated at \$30 million by 1965” (1987 pg. 262). Balio’s last point here is worth nuancing somewhat—namely, once the Bond film



franchise had achieved astronomical successes via sequelization, the franchise owners were effectively *being paid by merchandising licensees to have the franchise brand promoted*. Although some discussion of McCracken's meaning-transfer-model would be relevant here, it will become exponentially more relevant in addressing the Star Wars franchise later in this section.

Umberto Eco, semiotician and self-described Bondologist, provides a Vladimir Propp<sup>17</sup>-meets-Joseph Campbell analyses of the limited set of "moves" and "functions" to be found in the narrative world that is Bond (Eco, 1965). But, at an most essential level, what exactly was it about "the Bond formula" which made it so successful as a franchise? Calling on descriptions made by Penelope Houston (Sight and Sound 34, Winter 1964-1965) and Alexander Walker (Hollywood UK), Balio does as good and as concise a job as any at answering this question (Balio 1987 pgs. 262-264). Balio states, "The formula consists of the famous gun-barrel logo, which begins every picture, followed by the distinctive 'James Bond theme,' the precredits sequence, and then the main titles, the latter

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<sup>17</sup> *Morphology of the Folktale* (Propp, 1928) is likely the single-most influential piece of applied work to come out of the Russian formalist tradition— Sklovskij's analysis of *Tristram Shandy* notwithstanding..

typically accompanied by a title tune. The plot consists of a series of what Broccoli called 'bumps' — that is, a series of self-contained action sequences strung together as set pieces."

Balio quotes Houston: "Most of the plots are just variations on *Jack the Giant Killer*, with appropriately extreme trimmings. Dispatched by M, the Prospero of the Secret Service, Bond stages a one-man assault on a fairytale stronghold furnished out of *House and Garden* and the travel supplements. The ogre (Dr. No, Mr. Big, Ernst Stavro Blofeld) captures him; there is a great smash-up; and Bond swims, skis or shoots his way out." (Houston 1964-1965). Houston's notion of a "fairytale stronghold" — and of the fairytale more generally — are actually more pertinent to discussing the Star Wars franchise. Also more relevant to an analysis of Star Wars than Bond, is Alexander Walker's notion that the Bond franchise was, in a way, "a return to those Saturday afternoon serials (Walker quoted in Balio 1987 pg. 266).". Both Balio and McCracken emphasize the extent to which Bond is outfitted with high-tech gadgets "watches that worked as buzz saws, lighters that worked as cameras. . . objects that came from relatively high up the progress cascade. Bond was

as much a machine as a man, a cyborg in Saville Row tailoring. Like the outer-directed organizational man, he was a marvel of preparedness.”

(McCracken 2005 pgs. 87-88)

### 5.5 *The Star Wars franchise, or: “a return to those Saturday afternoon serials”:*

If—as the quote that heads the current chapter indicates—Lucas knew from the outset that he was “doing a fairytale,” Lucas also seems to have known that he was “doing a franchise,” with multiple sequels in store in the event of the first title’s success. Regarding the use of the opening scroll which commences *Star Wars* (1977), Lucas states “The roll-up came out of the serial concept, which was that *this was a series of movies and not a single movie*” (Bouzereau 1997 pg. 6, my italics). Yet, given that these quotes are provided twenty years after the fact, the strongest piece of evidence that Lucas was intent from the outset on building a franchise comes from his having retained *both merchandizing and sequel rights* to *Star Wars* (1977) in his deal with Fox. In a 1999 interview Lucas stated that his main rationale and motivation for retaining merchandizing and sequel rights was not

fiduciary, but rather sprang from a desire to maintain creative rights over potential sequels<sup>18</sup>.

However, in light of Lucas' more entrepreneurial than auteurial endeavors such as Industrial Light & Magic (founded in 1975, two years prior to the release of *Star Wars*), LucasArts (a videogame enterprise founded in 1982), and THX (a high-fidelity sound reproduction standard for movie theaters developed at Lucasfilm in 1982)— not to mention Lucas' assigning of *Star Wars*' first sequel [*The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)] screenwriting duties to Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan and directorial duty to Irvin Kershner, one might take Lucas' stated motivations *ad eposum*.

In any event, we are left to ponder what exactly was “The Star Wars Formula” and how might we explain the still unparalleled success of the franchise? By utilizing McCracken's meaning-transfer-model—as well as recent heuristic work of my own (Dalecki 2008)—I hope to provide at least a rough, if partial, qualitative explanation to this question. In terms of

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<sup>18</sup> Lucas stated, “I acquired the sequel rights, because I didn't want them to bury the sequel. I wanted to make these movies and I was determined to make these [three] movies regardless of whether they wanted to, or the movie made any money or not. And then I got the merchandising rights, which weren't anything at the time because there was no such thing as merchandising on movies.” See:<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/luc0int-5>

merchandizing, the unparalleled success of Star Wars—particularly with children—puts the success of the Bond franchise to shame. McCracken’s model can help us to account for how small pieces of plastic taking the form of characters (Luke, Han Solo, Boba Fet, etc.) represented as characters in media franchises such as Star Wars can be valued so far beyond their manufacturing costs. I have argued that four pillars seem to support contemporary media franchises—namely a certain type of story, a certain style of spectacle, the use of media synergy generally and the deployment of sequelization in particular—refer to table 5.4.2a in the appendix for a heuristic model of what I have termed the 4-S Megafranchise Model.

In terms of the story element, the importance of Star Wars’ mythological and fairytale narrative qualities should not be underestimated. As Lucas puts it, “I had a longtime interest in fairytales and mythology, that sort of thing. I had decided that there was no modern mythology. The western was the last American mythological genre, and there had not been anything since then. I wanted to take all the old myths and put them into a new format that young people could relate to.

Mythology always exists in unusual, unknown environments, so I chose space. I liked *Flash Gordon* as a kid, the Republic serials (Bouzereau 1997 pg. 27).” Lucas’ claim regarding the death of modern mythology with the waning of the western is arguable—consider that the “outlaw of the city” as represented in the gangster genre often contains mythological and fairytale elements, particularly iterations by Lucas’ friend and mentor Francis Ford Coppola in the form of *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II*. But it is true that “young people” are less likely to relate to gangster genre fare than to western or science fiction fare, particularly of the Saturday serial ilk.

Lucas states, “I read a lot of books about mythology and theories behind mythology; one of the books was *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell, but there were many others, maybe as many as fifty books” (Bouzereau 1997 pg. 35). Perhaps one of those fifty-odd books which Lucas read was Arnold van Gennep’s *The Rites of Passage* (1908), which is to a very great extent the template around which Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is constructed. Hollywood story analyst Christopher Vogler would go on to simplifying Campbell’s model into an

abridged Hero's Journey Model (Vogler 1998 pg. 14) which includes the following twelve step sequence of events and circumstances for the main character: 1) ordinary world 2) call to adventure 3) refusal of the call 4) meeting with the mentor 5) crossing the first threshold 6) tests, allies, enemies 7) approach to the inmost cave 8) ordeal 9) reward 10) the road back 11) resurrection, and finally, 12) return with the elixir. Both *Star Wars* (1977) and the sequels *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983) follow the template religiously. And despite—*actually, perhaps in large part because*—the *Star Wars* universe is set “a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. . .” the world-of-story seems to have achieved widespread relevance.

Like story, the importance of spectacle to the *Star Wars* franchise can not be underestimated. Both the high degree of quality as well as the often hyperkinetic pacing of spectacle in the *Star Wars* films are impressive even to viewers who may not be die-hard fans. (Schatz 1997), “A high-speed, hip-ironic, male action-adventure yarn whose central characters are essentially plot functions, with the plot itself eminently adaptable to ancillary media forms. The Lucas-designed ‘space epic’ surpassed *Jaws* as

Hollywood's all-time box-office hit, while securing the future for adolescent, by-the-numbers, male action films. Indeed, from *Jaws* to *Star Wars* and onward into the 1980s, Hollywood's dominant products would be increasingly plot driven, increasingly visceral, kinetic, and fast-paced, increasingly 'fantastic' and reliant on special effects, and increasingly targeted at younger audiences."

As argued in *Hollywood Media Synergy as IMC* (Dalecki 2008), "Spectacle—big sets, big action, bleeding-edge computer generated imagery (CGI) and other special effects, high production value in any form—does not simply attract and provide enjoyment to audiences, it also increases the given megafanchise's brand value." Not only were *Star Wars* and its sequels among the first titles to utilize CGI to spectacular effect, the special effect model-work, and the pace of the action "set pieces" or "bumps"—as Broccoli might term them—provide a roller-coaster like ride through Lucas' fairytale world(s).

If the importance of sequelization to the *Star Wars* franchise needs no further discussion here, in terms of media-synergy more generally Schatz's assessment of *Jurassic Park* applies just as aptly—perhaps even more



aply—to Star Wars: “Film franchises such as *Jurassic Park* comprise a profitable product line and a cultural commodity whose form directly reflects the structure of the media industry at large. It also indicates that the industry can scarcely be treated in terms of movies and videogames and theme-park rides as separate entities or isolated media texts. Rather, they are related aspects or ‘iterations’ of entertainment supertexts, multimedia narrative forms which can be expanded and exploited almost ad infinitum, given the size and diversity of today’s globalized, diversified entertainment industry. The essential UR-text within these media franchises is the Hollywood-produced blockbuster film and, thus, the key holding for today’s media conglomerates is a film studio” (Schatz 1997).

Or—as former Fox studio executive Jason Squire (2006) puts it—“Star Wars rewrote the economics of the movie business... When the dust cleared, brand-new businesses had been established that changed the profile of movie economics by generating substantial revenue in the other media. With Star Wars, product merchandising went through the roof. The success of a variety of movie-related books solidified the publishing off-shoot of movie-tie-ins; and soundtrack album sales came into their

own, proving that an orchestral score could shoot to the top of the charts. Other well-known franchises would follow, but at the time there was nothing—nothing—like the economic impact of Star Wars.”

#### *5.6 Chapter summary:*

In this chapter the central hypotheses as well as R1a and RQ1b were investigated and analyzed. The central hypotheses, which posited that the adoption of sequels as a function of the s-curve algorithm, was supported. RQ1a and RQ1b related to Epstein-scores in high-performing sequels. In order to investigate the hypotheses and RQ1a and RQ1b, the pertinent data was entered, coded, and cleaned in Excel, then transferred to SPSS 16.0. Finally, three Bond outliers and two Star Wars extreme-outliers were analyzed qualitatively. The subsequent chapter will discuss the various research questions related minority lead-actor representation in sequels, as well as female lead-actor representation in sequels.

## Chapter 6

### Representations: RQ2a, RQ2b & RQ3a, RQ3b Analysis & Results

*It's all how you look at stuff—and America gives you an awful lot of stuff to look at.*

–Melvin Van Peebles, 2007 quoted on PBS' *Life (Part 2)*

In the preceding chapter the central hypotheses and R1a and RQ1b were investigated and analyzed. As will be recalled, the central hypotheses comprises the adoption of sequels as a function of the s-curve algorithm and RQ1a and RQ1b relate to Epstein-scores in high-performing sequels. The present chapter will discuss the various research questions—RQ2a, RQ2b, RQ3a, and RQb—related to minority lead-actor representation in sequels, as well as female lead-actor representation in sequels. In order to investigate the following research questions, the pertinent data was entered, coded, and cleaned in Excel, then transferred

to SPSS 16.0. Thus, in this chapter the representation related research questions are re-stated, then analyzed and discussed, and the findings are presented.

6.1 Minority representation in sequels:

**Table 6.1 Minority representation in sequels (Research Questions 2a):**

RQ2a *What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*

In terms of RQ2a the SPSS 16.0 model summary and parameter estimates in table 6.2 below illustrates that the s-curve model provides the highest level of fitness with the data (24.2) as well as the highest R square level (.89).

**Model Summary and Parameter Estimates**

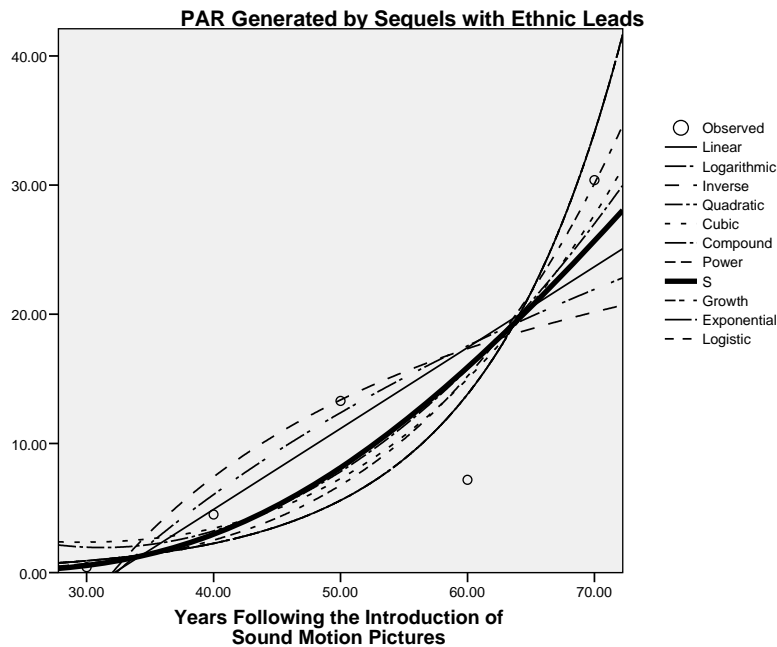
Dependent Variable: VAR00002

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates			
	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1	b2	b3
Linear	.713	7.466	1	3	.072	-20.151	.626		
Logarithmic	.657	5.740	1	3	.096	-98.672	28.387		
Inverse	.592	4.348	1	3	.128	37.186	-1190.891		
Quadratic	.784	3.633	2	2	.216	18.200	-1.041	.017	
Cubic	.801	4.029	2	2	.199	4.747	.000	-.008	.000
Compound	.782	10.763	1	3	.046	.061	1.095		
Power	.845	16.310	1	3	.027	1.96E-007	4.436		
S	.890	24.162	1	3	.016	6.120	-201.232		
Growth	.782	10.763	1	3	.046	-2.796	.090		
Exponential	.782	10.763	1	3	.046	.061	.090		
Logistic	.782	10.763	1	3	.046	16.376	.914		

The independent variable is VAR00001.

The following SPSS 16.0 graph—figure 6.1—provides a visual representation of aggregated PAR generated by sequels with an ethnic

lead on a decade by decade basis—note that because there were no minorities in the sample in lead roles in sequels in the 1950s, that decade was excluded from analysis. The bolded thick line represents the s-curve model’s interaction with the historical data.



6.2 Female representation in sequels:

**Table 6.3: Female representation in sequels (Research Questions 3a):**

RQ3a What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?

In terms of RQ3a the SPSS 16.0 model summary and parameter estimates in table 6.4 below illustrates that the s-curve model provides the highest level of fitness with the data (16.0) as well as the highest R square level (.84).

**Model Summary and Parameter Estimates**

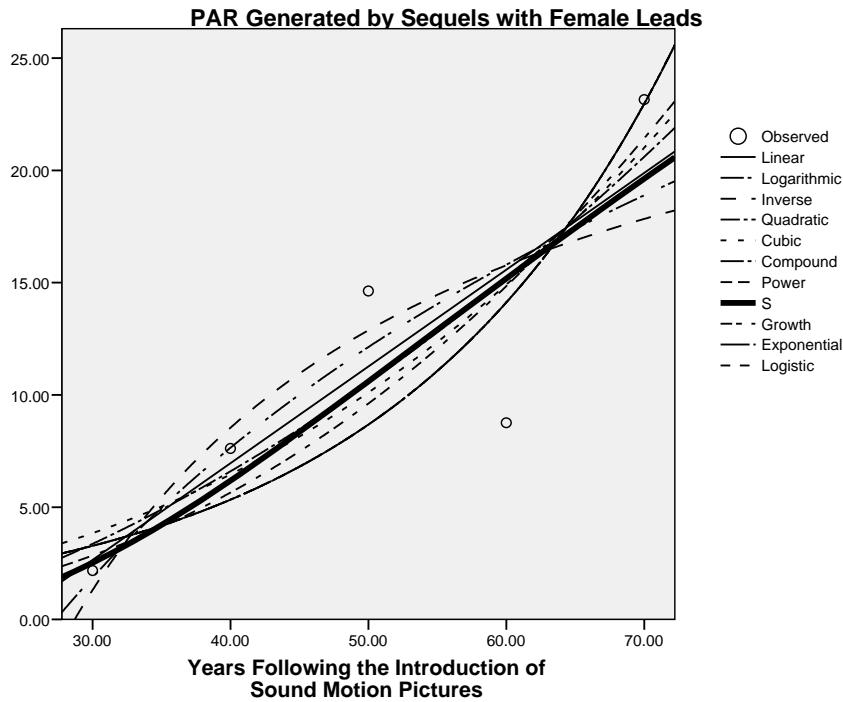
Dependent Variable: VAR00002

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates			
	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1	b2	b3
Linear	.729	8.059	1	3	.066	-10.277	.431		
Logarithmic	.710	7.329	1	3	.073	-66.461	20.090		
Inverse	.678	6.309	1	3	.087	30.235	-867.807		
Quadratic	.736	2.785	2	2	.264	-2.014	.072	.004	
Cubic	.737	2.800	2	2	.263	.921	.000	.003	2.12E-005
Compound	.749	8.943	1	3	.058	.762	1.050		
Power	.804	12.275	1	3	.039	.001	2.382		
S	.842	16.046	1	3	.028	4.517	-107.777		
Growth	.749	8.943	1	3	.058	-.272	.049		
Exponential	.749	8.943	1	3	.058	.762	.049		
Logistic	.749	8.943	1	3	.058	1.312	.953		

The independent variable is VAR00001.

The following SPSS 16.0 graph—figure 6.3—provides a visual representation of aggregated PAR generated by sequels with a female lead on a decade by decade basis—note that because there was only one arguable (and thus an extreme outlier) example in the sample of a female in a lead role in a sequel in the 1950s, that decade was excluded from analysis<sup>19</sup>. The bolded thick line represents the s-curve model’s interaction with the historical data.

<sup>19</sup> In 1954 Marjorie Main received top-billing as Ma Kettle in the Saturday-morning-serielesque *Ma and Pa Kettle at Home*, which tied for 69<sup>th</sup> place out of 70 in that year’s *Variety* list. The



In terms of RQ2b *How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?* and RQ3b *How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?* table 6.5 below illustrates the results that were obtained:

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storyline actually focuses for the most part and Ma and Pa Kettle's son, Elwin, played by Brett Hasley. The title generated 0.78% of that year's PAR.

	<b>Sequels Overall</b>	<b>Sequels w. Ethnic Lead</b>	<b>Sequels w. Female Lead</b>
	PAR/Titles	PAR/Titles	PAR/Titles
1950s	1.17	0	0.78
1960s	0.9	0.42	1.09
1970s	1.42	0.9	1.52
1980s	1.96	1.66	1.33
1990s	1.72	1.03	1.25
2000s	1.88	1.3	1.29
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.69</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>1.21</b>

Bond outliers (3) and Star Wars extreme outliers (2) were subtracted from dataset

100/70                      1.428571429

1.69/1.43                      1.181818182                      (thus sequels have generated 18% more than non sequels on average)

The sole instance of a decade where either ethnic or female sequels outperformed sequels in general was in the 1960s wherein sequels with female leads generated an average of 1.09 PAR, whereas sequels overall generated .9 PAR that decade<sup>20</sup>. As it turns out the PAR performance of ethnic leads in sequels stands in contrast to PAR generated by films overall with ethnic leads—see additional findings below for a discussion of these results.

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<sup>20</sup> However, it should be recalled that because three extremely well-performing Bond films were pulled from the data-set due to their outlier status, that it is not the case strictly speaking that sequels starring female leads actually out-averaged sequels overall in the 1960s.



### 6.3 Additional findings related to minority leads & PAR:

It is worth illustrating general findings related to minority representation in the sample. Table 6.2 below illustrates non-white lead actor representation across the entire sample and is not restricted to sequel generated revenues. Note that the 1950s portion of the sample includes only six years and that 2000s sample includes seven, whereas the other decades listed obviously include ten—thus, the total average PAR below is weighted to reflect this. PAR indicates the “percentage of annual revenue”.

*Table 6.6: Ethnic representation rates:*

Years	Average PAR Generated by Titles with Non-White Leads	Number of Titles with Non-White Lead Actors
1954-1959	.8%	4
1960-1969	2.7%	19
1970-1979	4.3%	46
1980-1989	6.1%	39
1990-1999	10.3%	86
2000-2006	11.3%	67
<b>Total Average:</b>	<b>8.13%</b>	<b>Total # of Titles: 261 (= 7% of 3,710)</b>

Though extremely underrepresented in the 1950s-1970s, the increasing percentage of annual revenues accruing to films starring non-white leads is encouraging. As the dataset included 3,710 titles—a total of 261 which represented ethnic minority leads—an average of 7% of titles in the sample featured non white lead characters. Taken in comparison with the average box—office accruing to titles featuring ethnic leads, this is a significant finding for academic and industry readers alike in that it indicates that, on the whole, films starring an ethnic minority in the lead role generated slightly north of 15% greater box-office than did titles featuring white leads.

This is all the more remarkable when one considers evidence that titles featuring ethnic leads tend to be comparatively less well funded—in terms of production and marketing budgets—than titles featuring white leads (Rhines 1996). As Sony Pictures Classics executive, and U.T. RTF alumni, Michael Barker noted during a SXSW panel in response to a question from Elvis Mitchell regarding ethnic under-representation in motion pictures, “there’s a dereliction of duty happening—in a business and economic sense—that’s been going on for a long time.”

#### 6.4 Qualitative findings related to ethnicity & gender:

White males appear were vastly overrepresented in top-performing megafranchises. A common pattern underlying several highly-successful franchises in the sample is to have an actor with a Celtic family name representing a character with an “Anglo-Saxon” name— rather ironic for anyone with a passing knowledge of British colonialism. This is the case in *Star Wars*— Mark *Hamill* (Scottish family name) as Luke Skywalker, *Spider-Man*— Toby *Maguire* (county Fermanagh’s ruling Irish family name) as Peter Parker, *Jurassic Park*— Same *Neill* (county Tyrone Irish family name) as Dr. Alan Grant, James Bond— Sean *Connery* (Scotsman with a county Cork and county Limerick Irish family name) as James Bond, and Batman— Michael *Keaton* (Scots-Irish) as Bruce Wayne. Though all the above named actors are the first to represent their respective franchise characters, the pattern continued with the likes of Pierce *Brosnan* (Irishman as Bond) and George *Clooney* (Scot family name as Batman), etc.

Key qualitative findings regarding non-white leads in top-performing sequels include the following decade-by-decade observations: there are no

top-performing sequels starring a non-white lead in the 1950s. The Japanese-produced “franchise meets franchise” *King Kong vs. Godzilla*—released in the US/Canada in 1963—is the first sequel released in America to feature a non-white lead and break into the top 70—it starred the Japanese actor Tadao Takashima as Osamu Sakurai and generated 0.42% of 1963 PAR<sup>21</sup>. The 1970s saw the release of *They Call Me MISTER Tibbs!* (1970), which earned .65% of that year’s PAR and starred Sidney Poitier as Detective Virgil Tibbs, as well as *The Organization* (1971), also starring Poitier in the final installment of Virgil Tibbs franchise and generating 0.77% PAR. Godfrey Cambridge—starring as Gravedigger Jones in *Come Back Charleston Blue* (1972)—became the second African American male to star in a sequel that made the top 70 list—the title generated PAR of 0.51.

*Return of the Dragon* (1974) starred Bruce Lee as Tang Lung (a.k.a. Dragon for marketing purposes). Significantly, *Enter the Dragon* (released in the US/Canada in 1973) was filmed after *Return of the Dragon*, but released before it was. Note that Bruce Lee actually starred as a character named “Lee” in *Enter the Dragon*, but that the marketing ploy was

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<sup>21</sup> See appendix 2 for a complete year-by-year list of sequel titles starring non-white leads and the PAR generated by each such title.

effective enough to convince movie-goers that *Return of the Dragon*, which generated .81 PAR, was a bonafide sequel to *Enter the Dragon*. Likewise in terms of this “same new character” phenomenon, Sidney Poitier starred as Steve Jackson in *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974), which was followed by his starring as Clyde Williams in *Let’s Do it Again* (1975) and finally his starring in *A Piece of the Action* (1977) as Manny Durrell. Despite the three different character names the two latter titles were marketed as sequels to *Uptown*—it seems likely there was a copyright issue with Richard Wesley, the sole credited writer on *Uptown*. Wesley was co-credited with Timothy March on *Let’s Do It Again*. And March, but not Wesley, was co-credited with Charles Blackwell on *A Piece of the Action*.

The 1980s was the first decade in which a Hispanic male starred in a top-performing sequel with the success of *Cheech & Chong’s Next Movie* (1980) which starred Cheech Marin as Cheech / Dwayne “Red” Mendoza and which generated a hefty PAR of 2.03 and was quickly followed by *Cheech and Chong’s Nice Dreams* (1981), which gave top-billing to Tommy Chong (half Chinese) as Chong and generated 1.5 PAR and finally *Things are Tough All Over* (1982) where top-billing reverted back to Cheech.

*Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip* (1982) was preceded by *Richard Pryor: Live in Concert* (1979) and followed by *Richard Pryor ...Here and Now* (1983).

It is not only the first instance where a black stand-up comic has a well-performing theatrically released feature length film (not to mention two “sequels”), it is the first instance for a stand up comic of any ethnicity to do so.

Another 1980s breakthrough was *Beverly Hills Cop II* (1987) which starred Eddie Murphy once again as Detective Axel Foley and generated an extremely high PAR of 6.017. In a sure sign that Murphy had arrived it is notable that in the sequel *Another 48 HRS.* (1990) Murphy received top-billing as Reggie Hammond, although Nick Nolte had received top-billing in *48 HRS.* The 1990s also saw the success of hip-hop themed sequels such as *House Party 2* (1991) which starred Christopher Reid as Kid. The 1990s was also the first instance when an ethnic female starred in a top-performing sequel as was the case with *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit* (1993) which starred Whoopi Goldberg as Deloris van Cartier / Sister Mary Clarence and generated a sizable 1.5 PAR. Film critic Leonard Maltin claims that *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit's* narrative was influenced by *The*

*Bells of St. Mary* (itself a mega-hit sequel in 1945). He states, "Though someone involved apparently saw *The Bells of St. Mary* a few too many times, needless sequel does send you out with a smile." (Maltin 2007 pg. 1208)

In the 2000s Eddie Murphy set up another hit franchise when *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000) earned 2.0 PAR and Murphy rapidly thereafter set up a yet another hit franchise with his starring turn as Dr. John Dolittle in *Dr. Dolittle 2*. And Ice Cube's turn as Craig Jones in *Next Friday* (2000) demonstrated that urban franchises would become a successful staple of the industry. Other key 2000s milestones included *Barbershop 2* (2004) which starred Ice Cube as Calvin Palmer—Cube is thus the third African American performer [he follows Poitier and Murphy] to star in more than one top performing franchise—Martin Lawrence, star of *Bad Boys 2* (2003), would soon follow Cube, Murphy, and Poitier, in this feat with the success of *Big Momma's House 2* (2006).

Remarkably, Sandra Bullock is the only woman in the sample to star in more than one top performing franchise. Bullock stars as the Annie

Porter<sup>22</sup> in *Speed 2: Cruise Control* (1997) and as the character Gracie Hart in *Miss Congeniality 2: Armed & Fabulous* (2005). Another notable female achievement is Sigourney Weaver's starring turn as Ellen Ripley in two successful sequels within the same franchise—*Aliens* (1986) *Alien: Resurrection* (1997). Jamie Lee Curtis also had the leading role in two successful sequels within the same franchise, in her case as Laurie Strode in *Halloween II* (1981) and as Laurie Strode / Keri Tate *Halloween H20: 20 Years Later* (1998).

#### 6.5 Key trends vis-à-vis African-American representation in leading roles:

As we have seen above in reviewing the rise of ethnic and/or female actors in leading sequels roles, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of individual stars. And the importance of individual stars seems to hold true in terms of successful non-sequel titles as well, particularly in the case of African-American representation in the cinema. It may come as a surprise to some that Sidney Poitier did not receive top-billing in the groundbreaking and highly profitable 1967 Columbia

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<sup>22</sup> *Speed* (1994) starred Keanu Reeves as Officer Jack Traven against Dennis Hopper's antagonist Howard Payne. Bullock received third-billing.



Pictures release, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*—that honor went to Spencer Tracy. Yet, a year before in the 1966 MGM release *A Patch of Blue*, Poitier had already become the first black to play the lead in a film which placed in the top-10 in terms of annual box office performance— he starred as Gordon Ralfe, a black man with whom a blind white girl falls in love. Remarkably, also in 1966, Poitier starred in another highly successful film titled *Slender Thread*, a film that was incidentally directed by Poitier. Though, if somewhat ironically, he did not receive top-billing in 1967's *Guess Who*, he did in yet another top-10 performer that year, a British-financed film titled *To Sir with Love*. And even more significantly for the purposes of this project, Poitier starred as Virgil Tibbs in a top-25 performer for that year—*In the Heat of the Night*.

Many film historians note that *In the Heat of the Night* is the first instance of a black character slapping a white character. And as culturally relevant as this may be, a much more commercially significant aspect of the film is that it spawned the well performing sequels mentioned above— *They Call Me MISTER Tibbs!* (1970) and *The Organization* (1971). Thus, a decade before Lucas went on to release the first sequel to *Star Wars*

(1977), namely *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), Poitier had been involved in what the Hollywood industry comes to describe as “franchise filmmaking”.

The early 1970s saw an explosion of commercially well-performing films featuring black leads. But unlike the relatively “high-brow” fare Poitier became associated with, many of the top performing African American themed films of the period fell squarely into what became known as the “blaxploitation” genre—which of course went on to have great aesthetic impact on contemporary filmmakers ranging from John Singleton to Quentin Tarantino. Film historians tend to associate franchise-filmmaking with exploitation cinema, yet, as pointed out above, it is actually the case that Poitier—a critically highly-esteemed actor and filmmaker and relative Hollywood insider—preceded the blaxploitation cycle when it came to deploying the franchise/sequel model. Another black performer in high critical esteem, Sammy Davis Jr. starred as Charles Salt in the highly successful British-financed *Salt and Pepper* (1968). And he went on to reprise the role of Salt in the aptly titled *One More Time* (1970).

Blaxploitation filmmakers were quick to pick up on the lessons first established by black Hollywood insiders such as Poitier and Sammy Davis Jr. One example, *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970), starred the African American comedic actor Godfrey Cambridge. It was quickly followed by the sequel *Come Back, Charleston Blue* (1972). Godfrey Cambridge also starred in “white face” as the bigoted character Jeff Gerber in the offensively titled *Watermelon Man* (1970) directed by the oft-begrudged (by fellow African American filmmakers), Melvin van Peebles. Another 1970 entry, titled...*tick... tick... tick...* starred Jim Brown in what was basically a race-reversal on *In the Heat of the Night*. By 1971 the first installments of wildly successful blaxploitation franchises began to spring up, including *Shaft*, starring Richard Roundtree.

1973 marked a milestone year for African American leading women. In that year “high brow” fare such as *Lady Sings the Blues* which starred Diana Ross as Billie Holiday and *Sounder*—the first top-performing title with an African American female lead that would go on to spawn a sequel, in this case *Sounder, Part 2* (1976)—did extremely big box office. 1973 was also a year that saw blaxploitation fare starring female leads

such as Tamara Dobson as the title character in *Cleopatra Jones* and Pam Grier's star turn in the U.S./Filipino financed title *Black Mama, White Mama*. Further strides were made in terms of black representation in leading roles during the years 1974-1983, particularly in 1982 when Richard Pryor starred both as Corporal Eddie Keller in *Some Kind of Hero* and "as himself" in the even more successful standup comedy feature mentioned previously, *Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip*—the first theatrically released standup routine by a comedian of any ethnicity to break into the top-20 releases of its year, beating out such high-budget fare as *Blade Runner*, *Road Warrior* and *The Sword and the Sorcerer*.

1984 was truly a watershed year in terms of African American representation, and "urban" representation more generally—Prince, starring in *Purple Rain*, took in more box-office than did Robert Redford's *The Natural*. And the hip-hop themed *Breakin'* as well as its rapidly-produced sequel, *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* (amazingly, also a 1984 release) and *Beat Street* were likely the most profitable films of the year in terms of budget to box-office ratio. The year also marked the successful release of *A Soldier's Story*, featuring Denzel Washington as Private First

Class Peterson. But the most commercially significant release with an African American lead that year was the smash success of *Beverly Hills Cop* starring Eddie Murphy, which went on to gross nearly \$230 million domestically, placing it just behind *Ghost Busters* which happened to star Murphy's Saturday Night Live colleague Bill Murray. *Cop*, which only cost the studio an estimated \$14 million had the distinction of having a budget less than half that of *Ghost Busters* which came in a slightly over \$30 million. And *Cop* beat out Spielberg's follow up to *The Raiders of the Lost Ark*, namely, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, also budgeted at roughly twice the cost of *Beverly Hills Cop*.

Murphy's success and the success of the *Cop* franchise did not end there. 1987's *Beverly Hills Cop II* was second in box office only to *Three Men and a Baby*, and that same year Murphy's standup-comedy theatrical release *Raw* outperformed Pryor's earlier accomplishment. And as previously touched on Murphy would go on to spawn several additional "franchises"; *The Nutty Professor*, *Dr. Dolittle*, and *Daddy Day Care* (though Cuba Gooding Jr. and not Murphy would go on to star in the sequel to this latter franchise). Notably, the first two franchises developed from

remakes of earlier titles that had featured white actors in their leading roles.

In terms of female African American actors Whoopie Goldberg enjoyed great success as the star of 1986's *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. But it was not until she starred in 1992's *Sister Act* that an African American female actor in a lead role broke into the year's top-10 box-office performers, beating out such mainstream competition as *Wayne's World*, *A League of Their Own* and *Basic Instinct*. And the film went on to spawn the sequel, *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit*. In less than five decades, both male and female African American actors in leading roles had gone from literally zero representation in mainstream Hollywood film to a significant level of representation. And if we can count Poitier, Davis Jr., Grier, Pryor, Murphy, and Goldberg as pioneering performers, we can also point out the continued success of savvy African American entertainer-entrepreneurs, ranging from commercially successful auteurs such as Spike Lee and John Singleton to the less auteurist—if equally commercial—Hudson brothers and Wayans brothers.

### *6.5 Chapter Summary:*

The chapter explored the various research questions—RQ2a, RQ2b, RQ3a, and RQb—related to minority lead-actor representation in sequels, as well as female lead-actor representation in sequels. In order to investigate the stated research questions, data was entered, coded, and cleaned in Excel, then transferred to SPSS 16.0. Thus, in this chapter the representation related research questions were re-stated before being analyzed and discussed. Value-added sections provided qualitative findings related to ethnicity and gender as well as key trends vis-à-vis African-American representation in leading roles.

The following and final chapter will begin with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the central hypotheses and an alternate model to those available in SPSS 16.0 will be proposed. The chapter will proceed with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the Epstein-related RQ1a and RQ1b. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of managerial implications, future directions and

limitations regarding the representation-related research questions; RQ2a, RQ2b, RQ3a, and RQ3b.



## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

“The studio system is dead. It died... when the corporations took over and the studio heads suddenly became agents and lawyers and accountants. The power is with the people now. The workers have the means of production!”

--George Lucas, quoted by Peter Biskind (1999) in the context of the commercial success of *Easy Rider* (1969)

Despite Lucas’ neo-Marxist proclamation it is clear that—if the Hollywood studio system ever was indeed dead to the core—the system arose phoenix-like from the ashes of Olde Hollywood in freshly constituted and robust form: *Hollywood: The Sequel*, as it were. It is equally clear that Lucas himself—as well as other auteur-entrepreneurs such as Spielberg—played a key [perhaps *the key*] role in this reconstitution, along with the lawyers, agents, and accountants Lucas mentions and has deftly

deployed in his dealings with the ever more synergistic globe-spanning media conglomerates he has supplied. And, although much ado has been made about shorter technology product-lifecycles throughout the entertainment industry<sup>23</sup> and the globalized digitized marketplace more generally (i.e. film titles are branded in less time than in the past, and pulled from release window more quickly than in the past), the present study indicates that there are rather predictable, if relatively slow-moving, megatrends at work.

In any event, the following and final chapter will begin with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the central hypotheses and an alternate model to those available in SPSS 16.0 will be proposed. The chapter will proceed with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the Epstein-related RQ1a and RQ1b. Finally, the chapter will close with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the representation-related research questions; RQ2a, RQ2b, RQ3a, and RQ3b.

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<sup>23</sup> Marsh (2002) utilizes the example of the adoption of DVD technology, which reached critical mass rapidly in comparison to earlier consumer electronics entertainment audio-viewing platforms.

*7. 1 Conclusions, discussion, managerial implications, future directions, & limitations regarding H1*

Given that the s-curve algorithm ( $E(Y_t) = \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 / t)$ ) has an R-square value of .945 and thus can be said to “account for 95% of the variation in the growth of sequels on a decade to decade basis<sup>24</sup>,” it appears that it is not in fact “futile to attempt partition of movies into genre or budget categories because, no matter how detailed the categorization” (Vogel 2007 pg. 136) and that more can be predicted—at least on an aggregated-categorical basis—than “next week’s revenue based on last week’s”. And, in fact, the high R-square value is not the result of “detailed categorization” but was generated via the rather broad category of sequels, regardless of genre (comedy, action, western, gangster, etc.), sub-genre (romantic comedy, swashbuckler, revisionist western, heist film, etc.), or meta-category (documentary, narrative, stand up comedy, etc.) as well as being based upon the aggregation of box-office performance data aggregated on a decade-by-decade basis.

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<sup>24</sup> After pulling the 3 Bond outliers and 2 Star Wars extreme-outliers from the data and rerunning the models, the s-curve algorithm generated an R-square of .964, an F level of 107.962, with a significance level of .000

From a managerial perspective, disaggregating<sup>25</sup> the data on a year-by-year basis provides greater utility, given that studios strategically plan their slate of films on a year-by-year basis. The table below presents R-square and F values for the 11 models in descending order of fitness, after the data was disaggregated from decade-to-decade PAR to annual PAR<sup>26</sup>.

*Table 7.1: Year-to-year SPSS Model summary and parameter estimates:*

<b>Equation</b>	<b>R-Square</b>	<b>F</b>
S-curve	.628	75.933
Power	.597	66.733
Compound	.550	54.944
Exponential	.550	54.944
Growth	.550	54.944
Logistic	.550	54.944
Cubic	.530	24.783
Quadratic	.530	24.783
Linear	.529	50.551
Logarithmic	.529	50.551
Inverse	.513	47.442

As illustrated by the above table, once again the s-curve model provides the best goodness-of-fit and the highest R-square value by a

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<sup>25</sup> see Nigel and Towhidul (2001) for a discussion of the forecasting benefits of parsing data into smaller units of time.

<sup>26</sup> One could obviously further disaggregate the data into “quarterly” “monthly” and even “weekly” PAR, though Nigel and Towhidul (2001) argue that quarterly data is generally as granular as market forecasters should get.

rather fair margin. It is notable that, in comparison with decade-by-decade data, the year-by-year R-square value drops from .945 to .628 while the fitness value increases from 68.67 to 75.93. Given the still fairly robust R-square value of .628 associated with the s-curve model vis-à-vis year-by-year data, it is justifiable to utilize the data together with the s-curve algorithm to forecast annual sequel-generated PAR. Although forecasting growth two or three years out can be seen as a valid utilization of the current model and data, a more difficult problem is to estimate precisely when sequels as a category will hit their second inflexion point and reach saturation. My own intuitive sense is that this second inflexion point is rapidly approaching, and that 2010 or so will be when this occurs, after which point sequels as an aggregated category will still continue to generate a significant portion of overall revenues on the order of 25-35% per annum, oscillating around an average of roughly 30% per annum.

Limitations exist and improvements can be made in that higher year-by-year R-square and F values can be generated utilizing a different “start year” than theory would prescribe. Thus, one future direction would be to

test more flexible—if more exocytic— models such model<sup>27</sup>, represented below—an algorithm not currently supported by SPSS:

*Figure 7.2 The von Bertalanffy model:*

$$\frac{dF}{dt} = \frac{b}{1-\theta} F^\theta (1 - F^{(1-\theta)})$$

*7.2 Conclusions, discussion, managerial implications, future directions, & limitations regarding R1a/b:*

There are several competing as well as complementary conclusions and interpretations concerning the Epstein-model related data and findings. One interpretation of the data is that just as Saturday morning serials were substituted for by sequels—at the moment when Saturday morning serial’s narrative form migrated simultaneously to TV—so might one argue that “standard sequels” were eventually substituted by “megafranchise sequels” (Dalecki 2008). For an analogous example, Porter (1985 pg. 306) utilizes an innovation diffusion “substitution analysis” to

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<sup>22</sup> The unique characteristics of the von Bertalanffy model are described by Mahajan and Peterson (1985): “the The von Bertalanffy model accommodates both symmetric and nonsymmetric diffusion patterns with a point of inflection that can occur at any time during the diffusion process.”

describe the accelerated-adoption/drop-off/accelerated-adoption pattern before, during, and after the moment when aluminum cans were substituted for steel cans by beer and soda purveyors in the 1970s.

From a cultural studies or political economy perspective one might argue that the relatively high Epstein scores in the 1950s and 1960s reflect the relatively conservative morays of the pre-counter-culture revolution norms prevailing through the late 1960s, that the drop in Epstein scores in the 1970s is a function of “independent film brats” “running the asylum,” as Biskind might phrase it (Biskind 1999), with the growth of Epstein scores in subsequent decades resulting from the hyper-conglomeration of the media industry (Balio 1987, Schatz 1997, Biskind 2004).

In terms of managerial implications vis-à-vis the Epstein related findings, studio executives would do well to note that average Epstein scores of top-performing sequels have been accelerating at a predicable rate from the 1970s onwards, and adjust their future film slates accordingly—this is all the more remarkable when it is noted that there has been a concurrent increase in the number of low-Epstein-scoring sequels that make the top 70 list over those decades, particularly vis-à-vis

the growth of horror franchises such as Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, Nightmare on Elm Street, as well as the more recent Saw franchise.

One future-directions technique which may be of some value would be to multiply the PAR accruing to sequels in the sample by their respective Epstein scores, thereby “weighting” the success of a sequel with respect to its Epstein score—this would of course diminish the relative importance of low-scoring horror sequels since they tend to appear in the top 50s or top 60s in terms of the PAR they generate, versus top 10 PAR performers such as Harry Potter and Shrek sequels which tend to score extremely high vis-à-vis the Epstein criteria.

There are several limitations to the current Epstein related research. One is that—due to a lack of resources—no cross-coding was done in generating raw Epstein scores for the titles in the sample. Thus, the findings should be taken as tentative and exploratory at this juncture. Other limitations include the difficulty and complexity involved in interpreting the data—though some will be comfortable with the blend of “innovation substitution / political economy” arguments touched on above, others are likely to contend that there are many competing



perspectives and arguments which might be offered to explain the current Epstein related data.

*7.3 Conclusions, Managerial Implications, Future Directions, & Limitations re: R2a/b:*

Given that in the case of RQ2a *What is the growth rate associated with minority representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?*, the SPSS 16.0 model summary and parameter estimates demonstrated that the s-curve model provides the highest level of fitness with the data (24.2) as well as the highest R square level (.89) it is reasonable to tentatively conclude at this exploratory juncture that it is an appropriate predictive model. In terms of RQ2b *How have sequels with minority leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?* the findings indicated that, on average, sequels starring an ethnic leads have historically tended perform less well than sequels in general. Given that titles featuring ethnic leads tend to be comparatively less well funded—in terms of production and marketing budgets—than titles featuring white leads (Rhines 1996) this should not come as a surprise.

What is surprising is that overall within the sample [that is, incorporating titles that were not sequels into a comparative analysis], titles featuring ethnic leads have generated 15% more revenue on average than titles featuring white leads. Thus, studio executives would be wise to capitalize on what appears to be an undeserved market, particularly on the sequelization/franchise front. There are several limitations to the current findings. In particular, although the s-curve model has the highest degree of fitness and highest R-square value in comparison with the other models utilized in the study, this may be the result of the s-curve model's appropriateness in terms of sequel growth in general. Put another way, given that sequel growth as an overall category follows an s-curve trajectory, it should come as no great surprise that sequel growth featuring ethnic leads appears to be following an s-curve trajectory as well.

*7.4 Conclusions, Managerial Implications, Future Directions, & Limitations re: R3a/b:*

Given that in the case of RQ3a *What is the growth rate associated with female representation in lead roles in sequels from the 1950s-2000s?* the SPSS 16.0 model summary and parameter estimates demonstrated that the s-curve model provides the highest level of fitness with the data (16.0) as well as the highest R square level (.84) it is reasonable to tentatively conclude at this exploratory juncture that it is an appropriate predictive model. In terms of RQ3b *How have sequels with female leads fared in terms of box office performance, versus sequels overall from the 1950s-2000s?* the findings indicated that, on average, sequels starring a female lead have historically tended perform less well than sequels in general. Assuming that, on average, sequels featuring female leads tend to be less well funded than sequels featuring male leads, this should not be surprising.

Studio executives should note that not only have female leads carried profitable big-budget franchises (i.e., Sigourney Weaver<sup>28</sup>'s importance to the Alien franchise), but that there is in the past decade or so leading

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<sup>28</sup> Critical/cultural studies trained media scholars would likely point out that throughout this franchise Weaver is "coded" as "more masculine," "less feminine", or at the very least "more androgynous" than the typical female performer in Hollywood.

female actors have begun to appear in starring roles across multiple successful franchises--Sandra Bullock stars in *Speed 2: Cruise Control* (1997) and *Miss Congeniality 2: Armed & Fabulous* (2005). The same limitation that was the case with ethnic-related findings above apply here. That is, although the s-curve model has the highest degree of fitness and highest R-square value in comparison with the other models utilized in the study, this may simply be the result of the s-curve model's appropriateness in terms of sequel growth in general. Thus, once again, given that sequel growth as an overall category follows an s-curve trajectory, it should come as no great surprise that sequel growth featuring female leads appears to be following an s-curve trajectory as well.

#### *7.5 Chapter Summary:*

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The chapter opened with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the central hypotheses and proposed an alternate model to those available in SPSS 16.0. The chapter proceeded with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the Epstein-

related RQ1a and RQ1b. The chapter closed with a discussion of conclusions, managerial implications, future directions and limitations regarding the representation-related research questions; RQ2a, RQ2b, RQ3a, and RQ3b.

*Appendix 1 (Epstein-Model Content-Analysis Scoring Sheet):*

**Epstein-Model Content-Analysis Scoring Sheet**

**Film Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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1) based on presold children's fare	___
2) a child or adolescent protagonist	___
3) protagonist is transformed into a powerful hero	___
4) fairy-tale plot	___
5) low sex quotient (allowing for a rating no more restrictive than PG-13)	___
6) bloodless violence (allowing for a rating no more restrictive than PG-13)	___
7) bizarre-looking/eccentric supporting characters (for licensing)	___
8) happy ending	___
9) elaborate spectacle	___
10) non ranking stars	___
TOTAL EPSTEIN SCORE (OUT OF 10)	___

---

***Appendix 2 (Top-Performing Sequels Starring Ethnic Leads, 1954-2006):***

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*King Kong vs. Godzilla* (Japanese, released in US in 1963)

Tadao Takashima stars as Osamu Sakurai

PAR: 0.419

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*They Call Me MISTER Tibbs!* (1970)

Sidney Poitier stars as Virgil Tibbs

PAR: 0.651

---

*The Organization* (1971)

Sidney Poitier stars as Virgil Tibbs

PAR: 0.772

---

*Come Back Charleston Blue* (1972)

Godfrey Cambridge stars as Gravedigger Jone

PAR: 0.513

---

*Return of the Dragon* (1974)

Bruce Lee stars as Tang Lung (A.K.A. Dragon for marketing purposes)

PAR: 0.813

---

*Let's Do it Again* (1975)

Sidney Poitier stars as Clyde Williams

PAR: 1.755

---

---

*Cheech & Chong's Next Movie* (1980)

Cheech Marin stars as Cheech / Dwayne "Red" Mendoza

PAR: 2.025

---

*Cheech and Chong's Nice Dreams* (1981)

Tommy Chong stars as Chong

PAR: 1.516

---

*Richard Pryor Live on Sunset Strip* (1982)

Richard Pryor stars as Richard Pryor

PAR: 1.493

---

*Things are Tough All Over* (1982)

Cheech Marin stars as Cheech / Dwayne "Red" Mendoza

PAR: 0.761

---

*Richard Pryor - Here and Now* (1983)

Richard Pryor stars as Richard Pryor

PAR: 0.491

---

*Revenge of the Ninja* (1983)

Shô Kosugi stars as Cho Osaki

PAR: 0.344

---



*Beverly Hills Cop II* (1987)

Eddie Murphy stars as Detective Axel Foley

PAR: 6.017

---

*Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach* (1988)

Bubba Smith stars as Sergeant Moses Hightower

PAR: 0.640

---

*Another 48 HRS.* (1990)

Eddie Murphy stars as Reggie Hammond

PAR: 2.127

---

*Predator 2* (1990)

Kevin Peter Hall stars as The Predator

PAR: 0.690

---

*House Party 2* (1991)

Christopher Reid stars as Kid

PAR: 0.554

---

*Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit* (1993)

Whoopi Goldberg stars as Deloris van Cartier / Sister Mary Clarence

PAR: 1.510

---

*Beverly Hills Cop III* (1994)

Eddie Murphy stars as Detective Axel Foley

PAR: 1.010

---

*Desperado* (1995)

Antonio Banderas stars as El Mariachi

PAR: 0.622

---

*Mortal Kombat Annihilation* (1997)

Robin Shou stars as Liu Kang

PAR: 0.673

---

*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000)

Eddie Murphy stars as Professor Sherman Klump / Buddy Love / Cletus 'Papa' Klump / Young Cletus Klump / Anna Pearl 'Mama' Jensen Klump / Ida Mae 'Granny' Jensen / Ernie Klump, Sr. / Lance Perkins

PAR: 2.070

---

*Next Friday* (2000)

Ice Cube stars as Craig Jones

PAR: 0.960

---

*Rush Hour 2* (2001)

Jackie Chan stars as Chief Inspector Lee

PAR: 3.447

---

*Dr. Dolittle 2* (2001)

Eddie Murphy stars as Dr. John Dolittle

PAR: 1.722

---

*Along Came a Spider* (2001)

Morgan Freeman stars as Alex Cross

PAR: 1.129

---

*Spy Kids 2* (2002)

Antonio Banderas stars as Gregorio Cortez

PAR 1.031

---

*Blade II* (2002)

Wesley Snipes stars as Blade

PAR: 1.180

---

*Bad Boys 2* (2003)

Martin Lawrence stars as Detective Marcus Burnett

PAR: 1.926

---

*Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over* (2003)

Antonio Banderas stars as Gregorio Cortez

PAR: 1.554

---

*Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* (2003)

Cameron Diaz stars as Natalie Cook

PAR: 1.402

---

*Shanghai Knights* (2003)

Jackie Chan stars as Chon Wang

PAR: 0.841

---

*Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (2003)

Antonio Banderas stars as El Mariachi

PAR: 0.777

---

*AVP: Alien vs. Predator* (2004)

Sanaa Lathan stars as Alexa Woods

PAR: 1.099

---

*Barbershop 2* (2004)

Ice Cube stars as Calvin Palmer

PAR: 0.891

---

*Blade: Trinity* (2004)

Wesley Snipes stars as Blade

PAR: 0.717

---

*The Legend of Zorro* (2005)

Antonio Banderas stars as Alejandro Murrieta / Zorro

PAR: 0.676

---

*Big Momma's House 2* (2006)

Martin Lawrence stars as Malcolm Turner / Big Mama

PAR: 1.026

---

*Madea's Family Reunion* (2006)

Tyler Perry stars as Madea / Brian / Joe

PAR: 0.925

---

*Appendix 3 (Top-Performing Sequels Starring Female Leads, 1954-2006):*

---

Ma and Pa Kettle at Home (1954)

Marjorie Main stars as Ma Kettle

PAR: 0.780

---

Return to Peyton Place (1961)

Carol Lynley stars as Allison

PAR: 1.808

---

Where Angels Go, Trouble Follows (1968)

Rosalind Russell stars as Mother Superior

PAR: 0.372

---

**The Trial of Billy Jack (1974)**

**Amazon and IMBD list Delores Taylor starring as Jean Roberts, Maltin lists Tom Laughlin as lead (thus, not coded as female for the purposes of the present study)**

**PAR: 3.397**

---

Herbie Rides Again (1974)

Helen Hayes stars as Mrs. Steinmetz

PAR: 2.737

---

Funny Lady (1975)

Barbra Streisand stars as Fanny Brice

PAR: 2.874

---

For the Love of Benji (1977)

Patsy Garrett stars (after Benji) as Mary

PAR: 0.471

---

Return from Witch Mountain (1978)

Bette Davis stars as Letha

PAR: 0.810

---

Other Side of the Mountain Part 2 (1978)

Marilyn Hassett stars as Jill Kinmont

PAR: 0.723

---

Herbie Goes Bananas (1980)

Cloris Leachman stars as Aunt Louise

PAR: 0.723

---

Halloween II (1981)

Jamie Lee Curtis stars as Laurie Strode

PAR: 0.903

---

Friday the 13th Part II (1981)

Amy Steel stars as Ginny Field

PAR: 0.861

---

Friday the 13th III (1982)

Dana Kimmell stars as Chris

PAR: 1.348

---

Friday the 13th - The Final Chapter (1984)

Kimberly Beck stars as Trisha 'Trish' Jarvis

PAR: 1.098

---

Breakin' 2 Electric Boogaloo (1984)

Lucinda Dickey stars as Kelly

PAR: 0.529

---

Aliens (1986)

Sigourney Weaver stars as Ellen Ripley

PAR: 3.531

---

Poltergeist II: The Other Side (1986)

JoBeth Williams stars as Diane Freeling

PAR: 1.693

---



A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3: Dream Warriors (1987)

Heather Langenkamp stars as Nancy Thompson

PAR: 1.588

---

Jaws: The Revenge (1987)

Lorraine Gary stars as Ellen Brody

PAR: 0.810

---

A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master (1988)

Tuesday Knight stars as Kristen Parker

PAR: 1.547

---

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze (1991)

Paige Turco stars as April O'Neil

PAR: 2.444

---

Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (1993)

Whoopi Goldberg stars as Deloris Van Cartier & "Sister Mary Clarence"

PAR: 1.510

---

Addams Family Values (1993)

Anjelica Huston stars as Morticia Addams

PAR: 1.169

---

Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997)

Sandra Bullock stars as Annie

PAR: 0.910

---

Alien: Resurrection (1997)

Sigourney Weaver stars as Ellen Ripley

PAR: 0.895

---

Halloween H20: 20 Years Later (1998)

Jamie Lee Curtis stars as Laurie Strode / Keri Tate

PAR: 1.060

---

I Still Know What You Did Last Summer (1998)

Jennifer Love Hewitt stars as Julie James

PAR: 0.771

---

**Rugrats in Paris: The Movie - Rugrats II (2000)**

**Elizabeth Daily stars as boy character Tommy Pickles (voice) (thus, not coded as female for the purposes of the present study)**

**PAR: 1.284**

---

102 Dalmatians (2000)

Glenn Close stars as Cruella de Vil

PAR: 1.124

---

**Pokémon: The Movie 2000 (2000)**

**Veronica Taylor stars as male character Ash Ketchum (voice) (thus, not coded as female in for the purposes of the present study)**

PAR: 0.735

---

Scary Movie 2 (2001)

Anna Faris stars as Cindy Campbell

PAR: 1.087

---

Return to Never Land (2002)

Harriet Owen stars as Jane & Young Wendy (voice)

PAR: 0.700

---

Scary Movie 3 (2003)

Anna Faris stars as Cindy Campbell

PAR: 1.525

---

Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde (2003)

Reese Witherspoon stars as Elle Woods

PAR: 1.251

---

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (2003)

Jessica Biel stars as Erin

PAR: 1.115

---

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life (2003)

Angelina Jolie stars as Lara Croft

PAR: 0.914

---

The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004)

Anne Hathaway stars as Mia Thermopolis

PAR: 1.302

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AVP: Alien vs. Predator (2004)

Sanaa Lathan stars as Alexa Woods

PAR: 1.099

---

Kill Bill: Vol. 2 (2004)

Uma Thurman stars as Beatrix Kiddo - The Bride, 'Black Mamba'

PAR: 0.906

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Dawn of the Dead (2004)

Sarah Polley stars as Ana

PAR: 0.806

---

Resident Evil: Apocalypse (2004)

Milla Jovovich stars as Alice

PAR: 0.694

---

The Ring Two (2005)

Naomi Watts stars as Rachel Keller

PAR: 1.132

---

Herbie Fully Loaded (2005)

Lindsay Lohan stars as Maggie Peyton

PAR: 0.984

---

Miss Congeniality 2: Armed & Fabulous (2005)

Sandra Bullock stars as Gracie Hart

PAR: 0.723

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**Madea's Family Reunion (2006)**

**Tyler Perry stars as Madea and also plays the male characters Brian and Joe. Not included as female-generated sequel revenue given that viewer's are "in" on male in drag status of the star.**

**PAR: 0.925**

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Underworld: Evolution (2006)

Kate Beckinsale stars as Selene

PAR: 0.911

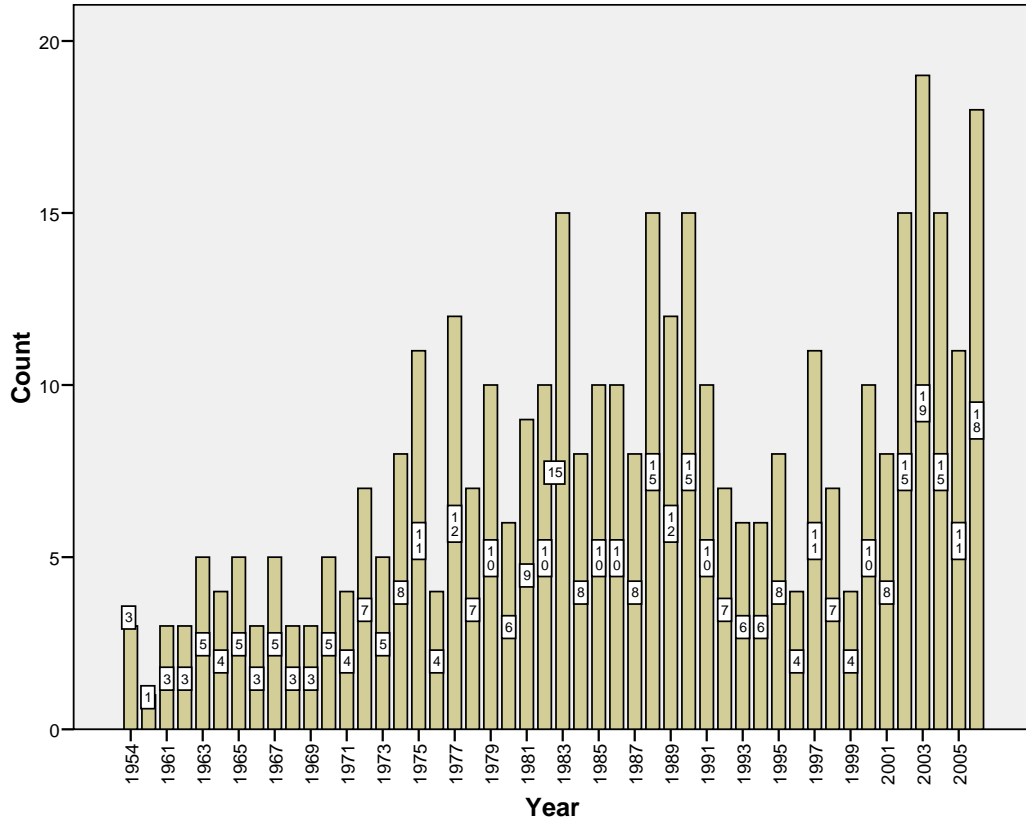
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Final Destination 3 (2006)

Mary Elizabeth Winstead stars as Wendy Christensen

PAR: 0.791

*Appendix 4: Histogram frequency count of sequels in the top-70 per year  
1954-2006:*



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Linden Dalecki was conceived in the Philippines and born in Neptune, New Jersey on December 23, 1968, the firstborn son of Alice and Kenneth Dalecki. After graduating a year early from Montgomery Blair High School, Silver Spring, Maryland, in May 1986 he adventured in Alaska for a summer. At the age of seventeen he enlisted in the U.S. Navy's Sea and Air Mariner program and completed Navy boot-camp in October 1986 at Great Lakes, Illinois before being sent to U.S. Navy "A" School at Naval Air Station, Millington, Tennessee where he was trained as an Aviation Electronics Technician—a program which completed with a 100-percent rating in April 1987. After four years as a Naval Reservist, Airman Dalecki was honorably discharged in 1991. He attended The University of Wisconsin – Madison where he received a B.A. in Radio, TV, & Film in 1995—as an undergraduate he spent his junior year in Paris enrolled in the CIEE Critical Film Studies Program. From 1996-2001 he worked in the advertising industry in a variety of capacities, including stints as a copywriter, naming consultant, and brand strategist. In September 2001 he entered Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin where he completed an M.A. in Radio, TV, & Film with a focus on Writing for Film and Electronic Media and a minor in English. The summer after completing his M.A. in May 2003, he enrolled in the Advertising doctoral program at The University of Texas at Austin. His first novel—*Kid B*—was published by Houghton Mifflin in October, 2006 and was featured in the 2006 Texas Book Festival.

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