

University of Texas Press
Society for Cinema & Media Studies

OWI Meets the Monsters: Hollywood Horror Films and War Propaganda, 1942 to 1945

Author(s): Rick Worland

Source: *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 47-65

Published by: University of Texas Press on behalf of the Society for Cinema & Media Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225689>

Accessed: 25/04/2009 12:51

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=texas>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of Texas Press and Society for Cinema & Media Studies are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Cinema Journal*.

OWI Meets the Monsters: Hollywood Horror Films and War Propaganda, 1942 to 1945

by Rick Worland

Certain 1940s horror films were revised to meet the needs of wartime propaganda; Return of the Vampire (1943), for instance, marks an intriguing genre variation in which vampire Bela Lugosi surfaces in Britain during the Blitz.

Standard historical accounts of the horror film consider the 1940s a dismal decade for the genre. Apart from the stylish films produced by Val Lewton at RKO from 1942 until 1946, films not so highly regarded in their day despite their current stature, forties horror cinema is commonly remembered for tired sequels to respected originals (*Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* [Universal, 1943]); numbing poverty row quickies (*King of the Zombies* [Monogram, 1941], *The Mad Monster* [PRC, 1942]); or mocking genre send-ups (*Zombies on Broadway* [RKO, 1945], *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* [Universal, 1948]). The broad explanation for the decline of the horror film to B-movie or programmer status, one not challenged here, points to the historical backdrop of World War II.¹ Hollywood horror films first attained great popularity and prestige as A-budget features in the worst years of the Depression, generally considered the genre's classic period. Critics have subsequently argued that the screen's rampaging monsters metaphorically embodied the widespread fears and disillusionment that followed economic collapse.² The traditional account contends that in the 1940s, however, the horrors of global war so far exceeded mere anxiety and the capacity of distanced metaphor that the genre ceased to command both wide audiences and critical respect. Put simply, real horrors overwhelmed fake movie scares and made them irrelevant except as purely escapist, increasingly puerile entertainment.³

Against such meager competition, the Val Lewton cycle with its moody lighting and Freudian overtones continues to draw the major attention of critics who write about 1940s horror films.⁴ The general disdain for the genre's aesthetic depletion in the war years, however, has tended to forestall consideration of how such common movies might still yield other historically interesting subtexts, particularly in those horror films that engaged the contemporary wartime background overtly and directly. We can at least redeem forties horror films from critical neglect by considering them foremost as specifically historical texts.

This essay examines certain studio horror films produced after Pearl Harbor primarily as historical products influenced by wartime propaganda themes defined by the government's Office of War Information (OWI). Considered in relation to

Rick Worland is head of and associate professor in the Cinema Department at Southern Methodist University.

©1997 by the University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819

Hollywood's uneasy recruitment into the government's far-reaching war-information campaign, World War II horror films offer a unique insight into how a particular group of genre films illuminates the historical circumstances of its production. Unlike the classic studies of the Weimar Expressionist films or the alien invasion movies of the 1950s, which made worthy subjects for symptomatic probing for larger sociohistorical crises, here we needn't rely solely on critical readings, however nimbly made.⁵ Hollywood's cooperation with the government in the creation of wartime propaganda is tangibly documented in the vast records of the OWI maintained by the National Archives. This wealth of primary documentation reveals how OWI exerted its institutional influence on movie content in addition to the more familiar effects of studio politics and the rigid constraints of the Production Code Administration. By establishing where and when particular horror scripts were criticized by OWI and/or subsequently altered to fit government propaganda policy, as frequently occurred, we will be on firmer ground probing these wartime genre films for other historically revealing subtexts.

As Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black argue in *Hollywood Goes to War*, their extended study of the film industry's World War II propaganda role, the extent of OWI's impact on wartime filmmaking has been generally underestimated. While OWI aimed to affect the broad range of Hollywood product, the agency's major efforts were understandably consumed with influencing those films that bore most directly on the war: typically, movies depicting the armed forces, images of America as a united, democratic society, the ideology of the Axis enemy, and so on. Accordingly, the authors mainly concentrate on the kinds of movies OWI itself deemed most crucial to the war-information campaign, for example, *Little Tokyo, U.S.A.* (1942), *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943), *Tender Comrade* (1943), and *Gung-Ho* (1944). Still, the historians note that OWI scrutinized many nonwar films, being particularly watchful, for example, for racist portrayals of nonwhite characters and nations that could potentially damage Allied unity.

Extending their work with primary documents from OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) files, I consider how certain horror films—from a genre at first glance far removed from the timely issues and images of global war, and one with its own long-established history and conventions—were revised to meet the national needs of wartime. Changes in film content can often be traced to the process of direct OWI/studio interaction. Moreover, various evidence indicates that the war informational climate established by OWI's presence in Hollywood tempered movies with which the bureau was not directly involved. Columbia's *Return of the Vampire* (1943) is one such film, a particularly intriguing genre variation in which Bela Lugosi, reprising his signature role as Count Dracula in all but the name, stalks England during the Nazi Blitz. Unique among vampire tales, the film places a woman, Lady Jane Ainsley (Frieda Inescort), an aristocratic medical doctor, in the Dr. Van Helsing role of vampire-hunting savant. Particularly in its portrayal of a strong female protagonist assuming a traditional male role, the film retools familiar conventions of the vampire narrative for the tasks of wartime propaganda. Although BMP reviewers strongly disapproved of its theme and content,

Return of the Vampire conforms in its own way to principles the agency sought to instill in Hollywood's wartime output.

Throughout the first half of 1942 Hollywood studios large and small released dozens of sensational, often exploitative pictures that capitalized on national war fever and stoked America's collective dread. Lurid quickies like *Remember Pearl Harbor*, *Menace of the Rising Sun*, *Texas to Bataan*, and *The Devil with Hitler* preceded the first big-studio combat film, Paramount's *Wake Island*.⁶ Among this initial flood was a group of mostly B pictures from the minor studios and major studio B units that combined topical war plots with the horror genre. Notably, as the genres blended, these war-horror movies often invested the enemy with supernatural malevolence.

In Monogram's *Black Dragons* (1942), Nazi doctor Bela Lugosi surgically alters Japanese spies to impersonate and replace prominent American industrialists; like movie gangsters, his ruthless allies reward his efforts with attempted murder. The surgeon escapes and progressively slays the disguised agents, dumping their bodies on the steps of the shuttered Japanese embassy in Washington. Lugosi brought to *Black Dragons* a decade's accumulation of roles as mad scientists, sorcerers, and oily foreign villains that followed *Dracula* (1931), performances never far from the persona of the Master Vampire. Despite the detective/mystery plot that prevails through much of *Black Dragons*, Lugosi's *Dracula* image links the classic thirties horror films to such wartime variations. (A scalpel-wielding Lugosi mutilates the top Japanese spy just as he had sadistically disfigured Boris Karloff in *The Raven* [1935].) Though he is portraying a Nazi spy, Lugosi's menacing presence is tellingly characterized in *Black Dragons* as he plots his revenge by repeating a particular element of *mise-en-scène* from *Dracula*—inserted closeups of Lugosi's searing eyes, originally used to signify the hypnotic threat of the vampire.

Within its limited means, *Black Dragons* thus associates the supernatural threat of *Dracula* with a popularized caricature of fascist ideology. In one of the most florid lines of the time, *Dracula-as-Nazi-fanatic* coolly avers, "Anything I can do to hasten the establishment of our New Order and to destroy the archaic democracies is an honor and a privilege." At the climax, though, his purely personal vengeance complete, the dying Lugosi laughs madly as the Japanese spy master reveals his now "monstrous" features, and a newspaper headline, "Jap Spy Ring Smashed," lap-dissolves over shots of Old Glory and the U.S. Capitol. Here is a movie (and an industry) struggling uncertainly with diverse formulae, genres, and attitudes in the first months of war.

Opportunistic and impulsive as they were, the many low-brow war movies of early 1942 might at least be said to reflect the heightened passions typical of the dismal months after Pearl Harbor. Coming just before the height of fascist expansion, the Japanese attack shattered not only American isolationism but a fundamental sense of national security. The impression of national vulnerability expressed by repeated images of Axis spies wantonly spreading terror and sabotage within U.S. borders and the dread of closely coordinated German and Japanese war plans pervade many Hollywood releases of the period. Rather than a cavalier underestimation of the enemy threat OWI would come to read into such episodes, scenes of

the Axis partners turning on each other as in *Black Dragons* may have revealed instead apprehensive wishful thinking on the parts of filmmakers and audiences alike. Produced before OWI set up shop in Hollywood, however, such movies represented the very kind of irresponsible exploitation the agency would most strenuously seek to curb or discourage entirely in the years ahead.

President Roosevelt had created OWI by executive order on June 13, 1942. The order instructed the organization to “undertake campaigns to enhance understanding of the war at home and abroad; to coordinate government information activities; and to handle liaison with the press, radio, and motion pictures.”⁷ The Bureau of Motion Pictures of OWI’s Domestic Operations Branch, overseen by Roosevelt loyalist Lowell Mellett, established an office in Hollywood in mid-1942 to interact with the studios. Using the guiding principle “Will This Picture Help Win the War?” the BMP staff directed by Nelson Poynter reviewed story treatments, script drafts, or completed movies voluntarily submitted by producers; evaluated them for their positive or negative impact on the government’s propaganda program from the perspective of both domestic and overseas effect; and offered suggestions for changes.

OWI had no censorship powers, and the studios were not obligated to cooperate. Most Hollywood producers did comply to varying degrees, though Paramount refused to submit virtually anything to BMP’s reviewers. The bureau’s power was mainly that of persuasion based on patriotic appeals to aid the war effort. Over the course of the first year, Mellett and Poynter achieved mixed results but increasingly ran afoul of the industry establishment by suggesting that all prospective scripts ought to be submitted to the Hollywood office and making ham-handed attempts to insert specific dialogue into a few movies.⁸

As of July 1, 1943, the entire Domestic Operations Branch of OWI was defunded by resurgent congressional Republicans convinced the division was little more than a mouthpiece for the New Deal. Ulric Bell, formerly of OWI’s Overseas Branch, assumed leadership of the Hollywood office. Bell courted the cooperation of Watterson Rothacker, an industry insider who had been vice president of Martin Quigley’s *Motion Picture Herald* publishing empire, then heading the Los Angeles Board of Review, the West Coast branch of the federal Office of Censorship. On the firm grounds of national security, this wartime agency was empowered to determine which films could receive an export license required for distribution in foreign markets. Bell increasingly allied BMP’s Hollywood reviewers with the Office of Censorship (which was developing its own tougher standards for exported movie content) once BMP began evaluating films exclusively from the standpoint of their potential impact in overseas distribution. As Koppes and Black explain:

OWI’s liaison activities in Hollywood . . . were, if anything strengthened. The reviewing staff simply moved over to the Overseas Branch and continued operations without missing a reel. . . . The hobbling of the Domestic Branch . . . ironically strengthened OWI’s hand in Hollywood. No one in the industry denied the government’s interest in policing what films were exported. Freed from Poynter’s opposition, Bell strengthened his ties with the censor. . . . As Allied armies liberated potential markets, Hollywood’s interest perked

up. For now the propaganda agency could use something besides patriotic appeals in negotiations with the studios—on the one hand, the club of censorship, on the other, the carrot of reconquered markets.⁹

Exactly what constituted the government's propaganda aims as understood and championed by OWI and advocated with the studios can only be briefly summarized here. More specific discussion will follow in relation to how BMP evaluated particular horror film content. In mid-1942 Nelson Poynter's staff drafted a key document called "The Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry" that was distributed to the Hollywood studios and, as evidence suggests, seriously read and taken into consideration. Ideologically, the manual was a compendium of FDR's "Four Freedoms"; Vice President Henry Wallace's "Century of the Common Man" speech of 1942; and the overriding idealist internationalism summed up by the title of Wendell Wilkie's 1943 best-seller, *One World*.¹⁰

Submission, evaluation, and sometimes bargaining between the bureaucrats and studios occurred on a case-by-case basis. The BMP files indicate that producers were most likely to submit scripts that directly addressed the war in content or genre, though BMP sought to examine a broad selection of stories that could have a bearing on the war information campaign, however indirect or implicit. We must emphasize that the interaction between BMP and Hollywood over the content of any given movie was foremost a process of negotiation. Internal memos between top OWI/BMP officials and their correspondence with Hollywood producers record a range of outcomes across a variety of movies and genres.

A few dozen horror films were submitted to OWI's Hollywood office for review. Significantly, the Bureau of Motion Pictures was never automatically hostile to or particularly worried about the negative propaganda impact of horror films per se. The U.S. government contemplated no restriction or ban on horror movie distribution as the British government had ordered in mid-1942.¹¹ While the British, who had suffered terrible civilian casualties in the Battle of Britain and a series of costly military defeats in 1940–41, saw good reason to minimize cinematic shocks and gore, it was unnecessary for OWI to police this central feature of the horror genre since depictions of violence, sadism, blood-letting, and so on were already firmly regulated by the Production Code Administration.¹² Virtually no BMP reviews of horror films decry their violence or morbidity nor claim any deleterious effects on civilian morale arising from movie terrors.

Indeed, BMP sometimes gave horror movies wholly neutral evaluations. A typical example, Universal's *Son of Dracula* (1943), featuring the unlikely casting of Lon Chaney, Jr., as the thirsty count skulking about the Louisiana bayous, raised no official eyebrows upon review in May 1943. Analyst Larry Williams wrote: "This is a story of pure fantasy which could not possibly be confused with reality anywhere in the world. In consequence, it has no bearing whatever on the War Information Program, domestic or overseas."¹³

Yet horror movies could prove troubling to OWI reviewers from several standpoints. The BMP film analysis files suggest that the two greatest potential problem areas for horror films were wartime settings for "fantasy" films and racist portrayals of nonwhite characters, as frequently occurred, for example, in the zombie

cycle that proved popular in the war years. Misleading images of U.S. allies was the most frequent variation of the two major categories. When these trouble spots were avoided, BMP seldom objected to horror stories; when they were transgressed, the bureau used its influence to attempt to modify the movie's content or discourage its distribution abroad.

Trying to allay the industry's fear of censorship, "The Government Information Manual" affirmed near the beginning that despite the profound emergency, purely entertaining, nonwar pictures were still needed. Indeed, traditional entertainment genres should stay as far away from war content as possible, because "escapism and war seldom, if ever, mix well."¹⁴ Despite the mildly worded advice, this was in fact one of the bureau's most strongly held and vociferously argued principles. Regardless of genre, BMP could never abide movies that used the war simply as a topical backdrop or whose treatment implied that the greatest conflict in human history could ever be rendered with less than total gravity.

Among the first films reviewed by BMP staffers in late summer 1942, Universal's *Invisible Agent*, already in release, contained many elements the propagandists themselves wished to see disappear. The movie's striking advertising imagery made its war/fantasy combination plain, as parachutists drop from bombers caught in enemy searchlights while the *Invisible Agent's* transparent outline looms menacingly over the scene. The wartime variation of the series that began with James Whale's well-regarded *The Invisible Man* (1933) finds scientist Frank Griffin (Jon Hall) using his amazing power to infiltrate Germany, where he steals a list of Japanese spies operating in America and finally wipes out a Nazi air fleet primed to attack New York. In between Griffin provokes a mortal struggle between a Gestapo chief and a Japanese agent played by Peter Lorre. "[T]he equivalent of Superman vs. the Nazis," wrote BMP's irked reviewer.¹⁵

The bureau was less bothered by the film's imaginary superhero than by its comic treatment of the very real Enemy: "German officers and their men become modern Keystone Cops"; "The head of the Secret Police is a burlesque edition of Heinrich Himmler, an awkward nitwit who . . . in moments of apoplectic rage, jams his cap on backwards." Baron Ikitō's (Lorre's) murder of the Gestapo officer and subsequent hara-kiri were especially dangerous because they "would serve to prove that the Germans and the Japanese are unwilling partners and really hate each other"—the trope that appears in *Black Dragons* and many other films of 1942.¹⁶

Invisible Agent was produced without any government tutelage. Yet to understand the leverage BMP soon exerted on the content of many Hollywood films (despite the bureaucrats' own ongoing sense of frustration at what they perceived as lackluster industry cooperation generally), one has only to review the agency's files, many of which document close BMP/studio consultation and frequent producer acquiescence to a range of bureau concerns even on movies that would seem unlikely propaganda vehicles. The case of Monogram's B horror feature *Revenge of the Zombies* (1943) provides a cogent illustration of the impact OWI could have on the treatment of propaganda themes identified as execrable in *Invisible Agent*. The wrangling over war information content in this lowly B illuminates several areas of perceived importance for OWI propaganda policy.

OWI insisted that Hollywood's depictions of non-Western peoples at the very least ought to avoid characterizing them as backward and superstitious as this carried the unambiguous stigma of white supremacy. BMP's strongly liberal-leaning personnel made the dilution or elimination of racist stereotypes and slurs from Hollywood movies a high priority. From both a socially committed and purely pragmatic standpoint, the agency regarded the removal of negative stereotypes central to mobilizing American Negroes for the war effort and to counter Nazi racist doctrines and Japanese propaganda bids to peoples of color. Unsurprisingly, though, government bureaucrats juggling a variety of problems in a dynamic political and military situation could scarcely hope to eradicate centuries of pernicious racial ideology in a few dozen months. Yet the attention the agency devoted to a lurid genre entry like *Revenge of the Zombies*, whose zombie/voodoo plot inevitably surfaced the most retrograde imagery, attests to the urgency of the issue for OWI.¹⁷

Monogram producer Lindsley Parsons and BMP officials corresponded regularly for over two months beginning in late April 1943 as the studio scripted its horror melodrama set in bayou country in which a covert Nazi scientist named Von Altman (eventually played by John Carradine) labors to produce an invulnerable army for his führer by raising corpses as reanimated zombies. While the result was scarcely an aesthetic or social triumph (it still included stereotypical shuffling and quaking from Mantan Moreland), OWI's direct influence unquestionably altered the final release in relation to agency propaganda principles.

Reading a script draft submitted in April, BMP regretted the fantasy portrayal of *The Enemy* but was more disturbed by the scenario's overt racism. Von Altman murdered his American wife to further his experiments, but the white woman when reanimated proves more resistant to the process of subjugation than the area Negroes, whom he describes as being "of a lower mentality." Worse, this characterization of the Nazi hardly differs from that of the white American hero, who in the early version dismisses local Negroes as "a lot of ignorant natives."

Calling the script "at variance with our government's war information policy abroad," reviewer Lillian Bergquist wrote: "The Negroes . . . are presented as a strange, uncivilized and superstitious group of people living in a world quite apart from that of other Americans. They are either comic servants, zombies, or in the case of Mammy Beulah, a voodoo-ist. There is not one real Negro American in this story."¹⁸

Bergquist stressed that the film's hackneyed, insulting portrayal of American Negroes "serves to confirm Japanese propaganda which tells dark-skinned peoples that under fascism they will receive fairer treatment than under democracy" and worried too that "this could also have the effect of alienating our dark-skinned allies from the United Nations' cause." In a terse internal memo Ulric Bell labeled the script "the most irresponsible story I have yet seen out of Monogram" and raised the veiled threat of censorship, urging that "Monogram should be advised that it will in all probability be impossible to obtain an export license for *Revenge of the Zombies*," a point duly communicated to Parsons.¹⁹

Monogram proved particularly attentive to BMP entreaties. Reviewing the release print on July 23, a BMP analyst noted that all specific objections raised by

the bureau's appraisal of the early script had been rectified, though one key problem implicitly remained:

Von Altman no longer makes zombies only of Negroes as was the case in the script. Of his six zombies, three are Negro and three are white, and references to the Negroes' being "ignorant natives" and of "a lower mentality" have been eliminated. Von Altman now refers to "my country" to which he will return for the creation of his zombie army, and nowhere in the film is his nationality named. The obvious inference, however, is that he is a German.

Because the story presents our Nazi enemies unrealistically, the Overseas Branch of OWI cannot recommend its distribution overseas.²⁰

When Von Altman's racially apportioned zombie troop predictably turns on him in the climax, *Revenge of the Zombies* affirms a familiar genre pattern. At the same time one also witnesses a weird compliance with OWI's entreaties for ethnically mixed combat platoons whose melting-pot democracy would defeat an arrogant "master" race.

Any portrayal of major Allied nations in an unfavorable or misleading light automatically raised alarms at BMP. The government agency that had opened its own public relations campaign in Hollywood by singling-out MGM's *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) as a stellar example of how the industry could positively influence the public's perception of ally and enemy alike seethed at the "detrimental" horror-tinged spy plots of *The Gorilla Man* (1942) and *The Mysterious Doctor* (1943), two now-forgotten efforts from the Warner Bros. B unit set in wartime Britain.²¹ OWI's understandable sensitivity to images of contemporary Britain, China, and Russia in various big-studio war movies does not quite prepare us, however, for discovering the lengths to which the agency went to effect a more accurate rendering of Egyptian culture in Universal's *The Mummy's Ghost* (1944), a routine entry in the studio's series of formula chillers.

The plot had no war reference whatsoever. Yet in an unusually long review of the script on August 12, 1943, for the project then titled "The Mummy's Return," BMP's analyst denounced the story's portrayal of the religion, culture, and peoples of contemporary Egypt and the Middle East:

Ahmed Bey, a modern Egyptian, is sworn to carry out the will of the ancient gods. He controls the will of the monster-mummy killer. Besides Amina (the girl of Egyptian descent who shudders at the mention of Egypt), Ahmed Bey, the monster, and the weird priests of Karnak are the only representatives of the Egyptian people in the story. . . . How would Egyptians (or the many people who look to that country as the leader in the Arab-Moslem world) react to this presentation of the cult of Karnak, which is an actual part of their history? . . . Could they infer that Amina's reference to Egypt, as a place of "dark tombs and passages . . . rot, decay and death" is representative of American attitudes toward their country?

. . . The script should definitely be checked by OWI authorities on the Middle East before any recommendation is made by this office, to avoid any misrepresentation which could prove offensive to our allies in this strategic war theater.²²

This last recommendation is quite unusual among BMP reviews. OWI's strong reservations and concerted action on "The Mummy's Return" should be seen in

light of the recent Allied triumph over all Axis forces in North Africa (mid-May 1943) in which Egypt had played a strategically important role, the successful invasion of Sicily, and the overthrow of Mussolini on the Italian mainland (July and August), which had riveted American attention on fighting in the Mediterranean theater.²³ Heeding its Los Angeles reviewer's advice, OWI's Washington headquarters hurriedly sought an opinion on the script from Dr. John S. Badeau, a top American expert on the Near East. Badeau, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the American University of Cairo before the war, had recently authored *East and West of Suez: The Story of Modern Egypt*, part of an informational series by the Foreign Policy Association that discussed the history and culture of the region in terms of their immediate relevance to the current war.²⁴ Not long after, Professor Badeau applied his expertise to a horror programmer in which a mute Lon Chaney, Jr., swathed in bandages and gobs of fuller's earth, dragged about the Universal backlot spooking and strangling various folks with one hand.

Dr. Badeau evidently warmed to the task, telegraphing a long series of comments to OWI that were forwarded to BMP's Los Angeles Office and eventually to Universal. In a memo to the studio front office on August 18, the movie's executive producer, Joseph Gershenson, wrote, "I have read the OWI comments on our script, 'The Mummy's Return,' and wherever specific objections were mentioned, we have tried to correct them."²⁵ Remarkably, all this transpired in little more than a week to accommodate the studio's shooting schedule. Most of Badeau's culturally sensitive suggestions were heeded for the release of *The Mummy's Ghost*. The ancient Egyptian cult of Karnak was changed to the anagrammatic "Arkham"; the heroine's name was changed from Amina El-Harun (dubbed "an Arabic phony" by Badeau) to the more authentic surname Mansoury he supplied; and Ahmed Bey likewise became Yousef Bey to avoid a specifically Moslem name attached to a villainous character following the beliefs of the ancients, a practice Badeau deemed heretical to modern Moslems: "to picture a Moslem forsaking his faith to become a priest of the old idol-worship of Egypt would certainly be highly unpalatable to any Moslem audience," a "major difficulty" of the script he emphasized that "makes [the movie] practically unusable for Near Eastern countries."²⁶

Yousef Bey ultimately remained a villainous priest of the mummy cult. However, Gershenson altered or removed several objectionable lines of dialogue, including those that characterized Egypt by the words "rot, decay, and death," which had incensed BMP's original reviewer. The producer reasoned that the disciples of the ancient cult represented "a group within a large country [that] is not necessarily recognized by the people in that country, any more than certain gangs and subversive groups in this country are an indication of the general American public."²⁷ In conjunction with the studio's other script changes, this interpretation evidently satisfied OWI. Subsequent internal correspondence praised Universal's cooperation and compliance with government concerns about the project.

So far, we have examined cases of direct OWI/BMP influence on studio horror movies. Now I want to follow a different though related line of analysis in discussion of *Return of the Vampire*, a wartime variation in which the monster surfaces amidst the Battle of Britain. Lady Jane Ainsley, the film's distaff Van Helsing

figure, faces a formidable opponent, as the blood-sucker in question is none other than Bela Lugosi, virtually reprising his culturally iconic role as Dracula. From BMP's perspective this movie, made without any agency consultation, was a detrimental throwback to those prebureau days of early 1942 when reckless producers used the war as an exploitable backdrop or mixed global war with escapist fantasy. Even so, the movie is redolent of the issues, images, and themes OWI sought to introduce into wartime entertainment.

While "The Government Information Manual" asked movie producers to broadly address several major categories of war information ("Why We Fight," "The Enemy," etc.), the document also contained many more specific suggestions for depicting various aspects of America at war. These suggestions were in essence story ideas around which OWI implicitly asked movie producers to create scenarios or, just as importantly, themes to weave casually, even subtly into movies to remind citizens of their public responsibilities. In its introduction to presenting issues of "The Home Front" the manual avowed that

there is no more important morale problem than that of keeping up the spirits and the drive of the great body of civilians whose activities are not directly involved in war production or some other phase of the struggle . . .

These are points that might be emphasized:

a) Sequences which reflect the current scene. People cheerfully making small sacrifices for war: Buying bonds, donating blood, working for the Red Cross . . . serving as air raid wardens. People cooperating in food rationing and mileage rationing . . . Obviously well-to-do people using street cars and other public transportation rather than wear out their tires. People do these things because they want to, not because they are forced to.²⁸

Compare these official suggestions to the understanding of such points held by Sam White, the widely experienced Hollywood professional who produced *Return of the Vampire* for Columbia's B unit. Speaking of the background to the production of *Reveille with Beverly* (1943), a consummate wartime musical comedy he produced just prior to the Lugosi vehicle, White acknowledged the commonly understood need for war-related content in movies of the time:

The government had to have a tremendous amount of entertaining film made for the armed forces overseas and for propaganda purposes in order to keep the American public aroused for the war effort. We had to inject into almost every picture something that had to do with World War II, like rationing. We'd talk about it in the dialogue. "I'm sorry, but I don't have any tires. We can't go on a trip. Besides, I'm only allowed three gallons of gas this week." Many pictures were based on those things.²⁹

This is not to say, though, that the perceptions of a Hollywood veteran seeking to make mass commercial entertainment fully meshed with the conception of Hollywood's charge imagined by OWI, which was often the crux of conflict between the agency and the studios.

Return of the Vampire casts Lugosi as Armand Tesla, an eighteenth-century Rumanian scientist who appears as a vampire in 1918 London. Tesla is aided by Andreas Obry (Matt Willis), whom he has enslaved and transformed into a werewolf. Professor Walter Saunders and his young protégée, Dr. Jane Ainsley, pursue and

destroy the monster. In 1941, Luftwaffe bombs blow open Tesla's crypt, and two civil defense workers remove the stake they perceive as a bomb splinter from the vampire's corpse, restoring him to life. Tesla again mesmerizes Andreas and stalks Lady Jane's son, John, and his fiancée, Nicki (Nina Foch), granddaughter of the late Professor Saunders. Lady Jane's efforts are hindered by Sir Frederick Fleet, a skeptical Scotland Yard inspector who won't accept the existence of vampires. The doctor finally triumphs in a psychological/spiritual battle with Tesla for the soul and allegiance of Andreas. At the crucial moment, remembering Lady Jane's teachings of "goodness," the wolfman turns on his master, who's been stunned by another timely Luftwaffe attack, and drags Tesla into the sunlight to his destruction.

Like any popular text, *Return of the Vampire* lies at the intersection of any number of historical and intertextual currents. Capped by Bela Lugosi's lurking menace, the story follows the basic narrative contours of *Dracula: The Vampire Play* produced in the 1920s and Universal's famous 1931 film version it inspired. Still, the World War II setting is central to the movie, where, for example, John and Nicki appear in British military uniform and the vampire infiltrates England by murdering and assuming the identity of a continental scientist recently escaped from a Nazi prison camp. Rumania, the nation from which vampire Tesla is said to hail, was a minor member of the Axis partnership, and the role of Luftwaffe bombing in the resurrection of the undead links resurgent vampirism with Hitlerite aggression as only an audacious B picture can. Shortly before Tesla's reappearance in 1941, Lady Jane helps smuggle scientists across the channel from occupied Europe. Even without BMP consultation, her stoic rationale—"I feel we're doing a good thing for humanity, helping a fellow scientist escape the Nazi yoke"—bespeaks the kind of one-world, antifascist idealism OWI sought to instill in wartime propaganda.

Writing in *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, David J. Skal remarked that "*Return of the Vampire* is one of those fascinating junk films that, relying on warmed-over clichés and aiming for broad popular appeal, becomes a vessel for unintentional historical subtexts."³⁰ Skal implies that the vampire's return may be equated with German militarism-cum-Nazism in that the monster is initially defeated in 1918, then resurrected to draw innocent blood once more during the Blitz. However, this analysis can be pushed much further. Given the film's wartime setting and the experience of two years of wrenching social changes for Americans, a no less insistent historical subtext is the casual acceptance of a strong, independent, and professionally skilled woman in a wholly nontraditional role, one implicitly related to wartime necessity. That is, *Return of the Vampire* instantiated the metaphorical figure of "Rosie the Riveter," that pervasive symbol of one of the most significant rearrangements of feminine gender roles to that time, in genre-specific form as Lady Jane, the Vampire Slayer.

Robin Wood argues that the classic or traditional horror film typically revolves around three central figures: the Woman, the Monster, and the male Hero, for example, Ann Darrow, Kong, and Jack Driscoll in *King Kong* (1933).³¹ However, this basic structure, which usually ends with the socially disruptive monster destroyed and the heterosexual union of man and woman affirmed, yields at least

power through casting and performance that emphasized her place at the opposite end of the spectrum from the desirable ingenue, the figure most likely to become the victim in horror films. The ingenue-victim in fact appears in Nina Foch's Nicki, whose slightly aroused surrender to Tesla while clad in a wispy negligee predictably alarmed the Hays Office, and she remains a minor character.³⁵ Ms. Inescort was aged to appear about fifty for the 1941 section of the film so that Lady Jane seems roughly the age of Greer Garson's Mrs. Miniver, a similarly youthful middle-aged woman with an adult son. In both films, the star-image connotes a woman at once typical and extraordinary, the perfect model for democracy's "New Woman" of wartime.

Social historian Maureen Honey and film historian Thomas Doherty concur that traditional gender roles and assumptions persisted in wartime mass media alongside potentially startling renegotiations of the familiar portrayals.³⁶ Still, *Return of the Vampire* falls more into the latter category. The notable lack of sexist condescension in Sir Frederick's opposition to Lady Jane's insistence on a supernatural threat characterizes the film as a whole. Though the inspector constantly scoffs at her belief in vampires, calling it "nonsense" and "rubbish," his rejection stems from pure rationality—there are simply no such things. Not once does the policeman dismiss her claims out of hand simply because she's a woman nor impute to her beliefs charges of hysterical emotionalism or childish superstition. (Notably, Dr. Ainsley never cries, screams, or faints in the vampire's presence any more than Dr. Van Helsing did.) "The strength of the vampire is that people will not believe in him," cautioned Van Helsing, so Lady Jane's identification and acceptance of a supernatural menace strongly affirms her generic role as the moral and intellectual authority figure.

Like *Black Dragons*, *Return of the Vampire* repeats the inserted closeups of Lugosi's searing eyes to signify the vampire's enslaving power. The special resolve of both Van Helsing in the 1931 film and Lady Jane are demonstrated by resisting the vampire's demonic gaze, the only characters in either film to do so. Van Helsing's immovability prompts a compliment from the count: "Your will is strong, Van Helsing." In the scene in which Lady Jane confronts Tesla alone, the vampire similarly commends her: "You're a very brilliant woman. But a foolish one to pit your strength against mine." ("How great must be your satisfaction to the Allies," her enemy adds, further associating the vampire with the fascist cause.) Yet both scenes end with the vampire hunters flashing hidden crucifixes to force Dracula/Lugosi to retreat while covering his eyes. Lady Jane's coolness and bravery prevail in this pivotal moment of the Dracula-inspired narrative, the point at which the vampire hunter takes the offensive.

The Tod Browning film, following the lead of the successful theatrical production on which it was based, established the essentially mythic nature of the struggle between Van Helsing and Count Dracula that climaxes with the doctor personally pounding a stake into the vampire's heart. (Waller notes that this marked a significant change from Stoker, who emphasized that Dracula could only be conquered by a united moral community of vampire hunters under Van Helsing's guidance.) Presented with a woman in the Van Helsing role, though, many layers

of social and cultural tradition prevented Lady Jane from using direct physical violence against Tesla.

That the struggle between Tesla and Lady Jane for control of Andreas is both ideological and psychological is indicated in the repetition and variation of two scenes. When Tesla first reappears in 1941 the vampire again enslaves Andreas (who was en route to meet the escaping scientist, Dr. Brucker, for Lady Jane), forcing the transformation from man to werewolf through the power of his stare. The film signals this with the familiar closeups of Lugosi's eyes. Yet in the penultimate scene, having internalized Her Ladyship's teachings, Andreas subjectively hears her voice assuring him of his fundamental virtue, which swiftly reverses the werewolf transformation. The now-human Andreas then saves Nicki and drags Tesla into the sunlight. Though Andreas rather than Lady Jane physically destroys Tesla, it is clearly presented as an act of her influence and will.

The ending of *Return of the Vampire* slightly compromises the image of its strong female protagonist, however. In the final scene Dr. Ainsley and the police arrive at the war-ruined church that had concealed the vampire's coffin. Andreas, returned to human form, is dead, and Tesla is a decomposed corpse. Though Nicki tells her what happened, no evidence remains of supernatural occurrences. Sir Frederick's skepticism remains steadfast. "That, my dear sir, is all that remains of Tesla!" Lady Jane implores to no avail. The incredulous inspector admonishes her one last time, then asks his two detectives, "You don't believe in this vampire business, do you?" The unnerved officers nod quickly, "We do!" However, Sir Frederick then looks directly into the camera and with a big smile asks, "And—do you people?" as we fade out.

Though not readily apparent today, this ending is indebted in a particular way to both *Dracula, the Vampire Play* and the 1931 film version. The play and the Universal movie in its original release concluded with a curtain speech by Dr. Van Helsing, adapted to the film by showing actor Edward Van Sloan standing before the proscenium of a blank movie screen. Beginning with seeming concern for the audience's nerves after seeing the frightful tale of *Dracula*, Van Helsing/Van Sloan offers the viewers mordant reassurance that "after all, there are such things!"³⁷

Although the ironic coda structurally descends from earlier *Dracula* texts, its function in *Return of the Vampire* may implicitly diminish Lady Jane's credibility by such an abrupt turn to comic self-consciousness. Giving Sir Frederick the last word by dismissing the entire proceedings as a ludicrous fantasy reverses the intention of the device in the play and film, raising a half-hearted possibility of linking the world of the drama with the world at large that nonetheless implies (again in contrast to Stoker) that evil is never wholly vanquished. Whether this at last mocks the position of an assertive female hero as well remains an open question. From BMP's perspective such a far-fetched context mixed with the true horrors of the Blitz could present few salutary lessons of any kind.³⁸

Though *Return of the Vampire's* unusual promotion of a woman to the vampire hunter role stands out to contemporary eyes, no original reviews took notice of this fact. The cultural disreputability of the horror genre and Bela Lugosi's swirling black cape evidently obscured all other considerations.³⁹ BMP's film analysis staff

headed by Dorothy B. Jones was largely female and “sharply attuned to what women meant to the war effort and what the war meant to women.”⁴⁰ Yet in a scathing review of the finished film, Lillian R. Bergquist saw only the cardinal sin of treating a war backdrop frivolously and failed to note any profeminist implication in Lady Jane’s role:

Return of the Vampire uses the war as a background for a sensational melodrama, mixing the very real horrors of this war with a fantastic story about the supernatural. Much of the action takes place while London is defending itself against the blitz, and there are numerous shots of ruined buildings and homes. Some documentary footage is used in this film. Besides being in extremely bad taste, a picture of this type suggests that Americans fail to take the war seriously and regard it merely as a convenient peg on which to hang a yarn.

This picture was granted an export license (10/30/43). However this office cannot recommend *Return of the Vampire* for overseas distribution.⁴¹

In a classic study of Hollywood’s compliance with OWI goals and directives published in 1945, Dorothy Jones did not even include *Return of the Vampire* in her list of 374 “war films” released between 1942 and 1944.⁴² Defining her criteria, Jones maintained that “many stories which are laid in wartime but which are not primarily concerned with a war problem are not classed as war films although they may contain incidental references to rationing and other wartime restrictions.” Such films were also omitted because they “contain only isolated sequences relating to the war.”⁴³ True, a movie that showed how to combat a profascist vampire in one’s hometown did not treat a significant war problem or issue as defined by OWI, yet in its portrayal of a competent and resourceful woman in a nontraditional genre and social role, *Return of the Vampire* remains a nonetheless historically intriguing variation of the horror film in the context of World War II popular culture.

Hollywood’s extensive cooperation with the federal government in the creation of propaganda messages during World War II remains historically unique and largely anomalous. The OWI files open an important window onto this period in the case of those movies in which Hollywood producers voluntarily cooperated with the Bureau of Motion Pictures, allowing a government agency to influence film content much as the Hays Office had been doing for years. However, looking at the Hollywood/OWI connection along the particular genre axis of the horror film—one not at all approved by the agency as a proper carrier of its vital public information messages—also sheds new light on the institutional exchanges between the government and the industry. The *Motion Picture Herald*, noting OWI’s new relationship with the Office of Censorship after mid-1943, commented that no studio would make a picture “known in advance to be doomed to domestic exhibition exclusively.”⁴⁴ While this may have been a guiding principle for the studios vis-à-vis OWI’s influence over access to foreign markets, the case of wartime horror movies presents an important exception to this summation, especially if it is viewed as absolute, which it should not be.⁴⁵ After mid-1942, horror films continued to be produced in Hollywood with the sure knowledge that they could not be distributed in Britain for the duration. We have also noted how Universal had hardly begun shooting *The Mummy’s Ghost* before informing OWI that it did not intend to seek an export license for the film in virtually the whole of Moslem North Africa.⁴⁶

Grasping the extent of BMP influence in wartime Hollywood aids a more historically specific assessment of the horror genre itself in the 1940s, one that seeks to arrive at a more complex estimation of wartime horror films as something other than merely escapist or aesthetically depleted. While the BMP files reveal much about individual horror films they cannot tell us directly about productions in which the propagandists were not consulted. Here we must rely on more traditional textual analysis. Yet by understanding particular aspects of those horror films OWI did review (often negatively) we still gain material knowledge that aids symptomatic interpretation. Skal finds many prominent 1940s horror films resonant of the global war in some fashion.⁴⁷ In films such as *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, advertised as “the beast battle of the century,” though, the war resonance remains more implicit than textual. Not so in *Return of the Vampire*, where Dr. Jane Ainsley became a little-recognized but still suggestive instance of the new and vital role for women in society imagined (in more prosaic ways, admittedly) by OWI and validated and affirmed by a variety of wartime social and political discourses. The specifically historical dimensions of horror films more fully reveal their social qualities. From the government’s recruitment of an academic expert on Middle Eastern affairs to pronounce on a *Mummy* sequel to the unique creation of a distaff Dr. Van Helsing, there were many unexpected surprises when the monsters went to war.

Notes

I would like to thank the two anonymous readers of this manuscript whose constructive and supportive comments helped strengthen it overall. I also thank Greg Black, Ian Jarvie, and Brian Taves, who graciously lent their expertise at various stages of the research.

1. Carlos Clarens’s summation of 1940s horror films is representative: “Caught in the interregnum between the Gothic period and the age of science fiction, the horror movie could hardly match the newsreel reality of the day, far more impressive than any special effect and far more terrifying than anything the art of the makeup man could devise.” *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* (New York: Paragon Books, 1979), 104.
2. The most recent version of this argument is skillfully advanced by David J. Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), chaps. 5, 6.
3. Universal initiated the Depression horror cycle in 1931 with the success of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, part of a move to compete with the majors in the first-run market. Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 82–97. However, with few exceptions the majors virtually stopped making horror films after Pearl Harbor, especially A-budget films. By the early 1940s Universal had downgraded its earlier prestige releases to programmer status built on sequels to its earlier monster characters.
4. The Lewton films were in fact B pictures too, albeit the higher quality B product of a major studio. Joel E. Siegel, *Val Lewton: The Reality of Terror* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 20–21.
5. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Susan Sontag, “The Imagination of Disaster,” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Delta Books, 1966), 209–25.

6. "The war took center stage in 72 pictures that OWI analysts classified as 'war features' between December 1, 1941 and July 24, 1942" (Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* [New York: Free Press, 1987], 60).
7. *Ibid.*, 59.
8. *Ibid.*, 100–112, 134–38.
9. *Ibid.*, 139.
10. *Ibid.*, 65–70.
11. Neville March Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967), 141–42.
12. "Horror films were out, gone by the Board [i.e., the British Board of Film Censors] for the duration as liable to cause alarm and despondency. Those that did slip on to the circuits were mutilated beyond the dreams of their own mad doctors" (Denis Gifford, *A Pictorial History of Horror Movies* [London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1973], 126).
13. "Feature Viewing," March 15, 1943, *Son of Dracula* file. Hereafter, unless otherwise noted, all citations for files under specific film titles refer to the Office of War Information files, Bureau of Motion Pictures Division, Film Analysis section, Record Group 208, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
14. "The Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry," April 29, 1943, 2, Record Group 208, Box 15.
15. "Feature Review," August 17, 1942, *Invisible Agent* file.
16. *Ibid.*
17. For thorough surveys of racial issues in World War II movies and OWI's important role, see Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, "Blacks, Loyalty, and Motion-Picture Propaganda in World War II," *Journal of American History* 73, no. 2 (September 1986): 383–406; and Thomas Cripps, *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
18. "Feature Script Review," April 22, 1943, *Revenge of the Zombies* file.
19. Ulric Bell to Bill Cunningham, April 26, 1943; William S. Cunningham to Lindsley Parsons, April 27, 1943, *Revenge of the Zombies* file.
20. "Feature Review," July 23, 1943, *Revenge of the Zombies* file. The *Hollywood Reporter's* critic wasn't fooled about Carradine's nationality in the finished film either: "Carradine is the holder of a secret which can give Germany a whole army of indestructible dead soldiers—by making Zombies of almost everyone but Der Feuhrer and, of course, Carradine" (*Hollywood Reporter*, October 1943, clipping in *Revenge of the Zombies* file).

Various sources claim that *Revenge of the Zombies* was barred from foreign distribution due to its racism. BMP documents indicate otherwise. An addendum to a memo originally sent to Watterson Rothacker at the Office of Censorship by Warren Pierce of OWI, dated July 14, 1943, listed the script of *Revenge of the Zombies* among others containing several (unspecified) problems. Rothacker's reply in the addendum (stamped "Office of Censorship, Los Angeles Board of Review, July 15, 1943") states: "*Revenge of the Zombies* . . . was screened by one of our examiners and Mr. Geraghty, a member of our Board, and formally approved [i.e., for export] on July 14."

In BMP's July 23 analysis of the release print, the reviewer noted Monogram's alleviation of many of the script's racial problems but still recommended that the film be withheld from foreign distribution for its "unrealistic" portrayal of the Enemy. Given BMP's commitment to blunt racist ideology, this may really have been a last-ditch attempt to circumvent export of the movie for its racist stereotypes anyway, while claiming

the fantasy portrayal of the Enemy as its rationale. If so, this tack was further weakened since the reviewer acknowledged that Monogram had already eliminated specific references to Germany and Nazism from the shooting script at the bureau's behest. In any case, the Office of Censorship had evidently approved the film's export before BMP's official review of the release print (*Revenge of the Zombies* file).

21. Referring to *The Gorilla Man's* portrayal of the British military and police as "dull and incompetent," BMP's reviewer noted with some satisfaction that "it's just as well that this story will be classified as a horror tale and will, consequently, be barred from distribution in England" ("Feature Viewing," December 7, 1942, *The Gorilla Man* file).
22. "Feature Script Review," August 12, 1943, *The Mummy's Return* file.
23. Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean, 1942-1945* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1990).
24. John S. Badeau, *East and West of Suez: The Story of Modern Egypt* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1943).
25. Joe Gershenson to George Bole, August 18, 1943, *The Mummy's Return* file.
26. Telegram, Badeau to William H. Webber, forwarded to Ulric Bell, August 19, 1943. If Universal's ready compliance with OWI was simply motivated by issues of foreign distribution, the point needs qualification. Badeau had warned that if the first script went unaltered the subsequent film might not pass Egyptian censors. However, early in the process of consultation, Universal told OWI it did not intend to seek an export license for the film for Egypt or the whole of North Africa, so as one official noted, "There will be no danger of offending those audiences, regardless of the changes," information communicated to the Office of Censorship as well. Bill Cunningham to Ulric Bell, August 21, 1943; Ulric Bell to W. R. Rothacker, September 21, 1943, *The Mummy's Return* file.
27. Joe Gershenson to George Bole, August 18, 1943; Ulric Bell to W. R. Rothacker, September 21, 1943; Ulric Bell to William Webber, December 23, 1943, *The Mummy's Return* file.
28. "The Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry," April 29, 1943, 13, Record Group 208, Box 15.
29. David N. Bruskin, *The White Brothers: Jack, Jules, and Sam White*. Directors Guild of America Oral History Series (Metuchen, N.J.: Directors Guild of America and Scarecrow Press, 1990), 364.
30. Skal, *The Monster Show*, 222.
31. Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 81-83.
32. For an interesting analysis of *Cat People* that considers the film in relation to social changes in gender roles brought about by the war, see John Berks, "What Alice Does: Looking Otherwise at *The Cat People*," *Cinema Journal* 32, no. 1 (Fall 1992): 26-42.
33. Gregory A. Waller, *The Living and the Undead: From Stoker's Dracula to Romero's Dawn of the Dead* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 13-18.
34. "The Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry," April 29, 1943, 14, Record Group 208, Box 15.
35. "Please watch the costuming of Nicki, particularly her nightgown, so as to avoid any difficulty with the finished picture. See [script] page 91 for the same. Page 117: Watch the costuming of Nicki. Page 120: Again, the costuming of Nicki" (Joseph I. Breen to Harry Cohn, August 17, 1943, *Return of the Vampire*, Production Code Administration files, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, Calif.).

36. Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 149–74. Maureen Honey, who studied the portrayal of women in popular fiction in relation to OWI's Magazine Bureau guidelines and as represented in print advertising, argues that "the role allocated to women in wartime propaganda . . . was a complicated mixture of strength and dependence, competence and vulnerability, egalitarianism and conservatism" (Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984], 7). Film scholars who know of OWI's cultural impact primarily in relation to the Bureau of Motion Pictures will gain a greater sense of the agency's work overall in Honey's exemplary study.
37. This coda was apparently snipped off when Universal rereleased the film on a double bill with *Frankenstein* in 1938 and never restored (Phillip J. Riley, ed., *Dracula: The Original 1931 Shooting Script*, Universal FilmScripts Series, Classic Horror Films, vol. 13 [Atlantic City: MagicImage Filmbooks, 1990], 85).
38. In its early months of work in 1942–43, BMP would often note a few positive messages present in a movie of which it otherwise generally disapproved. See files on *Desperate Journey*, *The Mysterious Doctor*, and *Invisible Agent*. OWI's Magazine Bureau, in sharp contrast to BMP, urged authors to add war information content to women's magazine fiction in specific genre frameworks, including westerns and science fiction/fantasy (Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 47).
39. The *New York Times* derisively emphasized the movie's formulaic nature without noticing either the wartime setting or Lady Jane's unusual role: "[the wolf man] gets religion or something and turns the vampire into dust with a crucifix. Thus the forces of good triumph over evil and we all can feel much better—until next time" (B.C. [Bosley Crowther], "Any Blood Donors?" *New York Times*, January 29, 1944, 10). The *Hollywood Reporter* opined that "the performances of Frieda Inescourt and Matt Willis are outstanding, but are secondary to that of Lugosi, the master of horrors" (clipping in *Return of the Vampire* file, Production Code Administration files). William K. Everson is virtually the only critic to mention the woman's atypical role, noting in passing that "Frieda Inescourt [*sic*] was a refreshing change-of-pace as the businesslike British doctor, a feminine parallel to Professor Van Helsing" (*Classics of the Horror Film* [Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1974], 204).
40. Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 145.
41. "Feature Viewing," November 1, 1943, *Return of the Vampire* file.
42. Dorothy B. Jones, comp., "Hollywood's War Films: 1942–1944," in *Annual Communications Bibliography*, supplement to *Hollywood Quarterly* 1 (1946): 46–59.
43. Dorothy B. Jones, "The Hollywood War Film: 1942–1944," *Hollywood Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (October 1945): 1–19, 2.
44. Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 140.
45. A handful of American horror films was released in wartime Britain, passed with cuts as A-certificate films (for adults only) rather than rejected under the banned H (for horror) category. Most wartime Hollywood horror movies including *Return of the Vampire* debuted en masse in the British market in 1946 and 1947 (James C. Robertson, *The British Board of Film Censors: Film Censorship in Britain, 1896–1950* [London: Croom Helm, 1985], 134–35, 164–65).
46. See note 26.
47. Skal attaches particular importance to the werewolf archetype in relation to combat culture on both the Allied and Nazi sides. See Skal, *The Monster Show*, chap. 7.