

The recut trailer as networked object: Anticipation and nostalgia in the YouTube era

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The recut trailer as networked object

Anticipation and nostalgia in the YouTube era

Kathleen Williams

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy



School of the Arts and Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

March 2014

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Recut trailers have been uploaded to YouTube since its launch in 2005 and remain one of the site's most popular forms of video. Recut trailers can involve a number of practices: some trailer creators shoot original footage for a film that will never exist, others splice together existing footage to bypass the typical path of feature film promotion, while some seek to change the genre of an existing film. The recut trailer adopts the form of an advertisement and yet does not advertise an end product. This study analyses recut trailers uploaded to YouTube in the period of 2005-2012.

This dissertation contributes to the limited literature available on the film trailer by arguing that the recut trailer should be considered as a networked object. I map the traces and residues left by the recut trailer on YouTube, as well as the spatial, temporal and textual connections that they make to feature films, cinematic space, and online cultures and practices. I argue that the recut trailer can be used to show how cinema has been negotiated into online and networked space, and the recut itself is a form of networked object.

I identify two modes present in recut trailers: anticipation and nostalgia. Recut trailers demonstrate a willingness in audiences to see a past film in the mode of anticipation. Simultaneously, recuts can also operate nostalgically, by playfully revisiting a past film or placing a contemporary film in a nostalgic mode. Finally, I consider the spatial and temporal conditions that help trailers circulate in networked spaces.

I situate my analysis in relation to previous negotiations of emergent technologies into new spaces, including historical practices of recutting in early American cinema and the adoption of cinema into the home. I chart the history of the trailer from independent trailer houses to drive-ins and into online spaces. This thesis contextualises the recut trailer in a longer history of recutting, arguing that recut trailers demonstrate how older media forms such as film are negotiated into new networked spaces, and reflect altered practices of production and consumption.

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Relevant Publications

Williams, K 2013, 'Recut film trailers, teen films and nostalgia', in K Barton & J Lampley (eds.), *Fan Cultures: An Examination of Participatory Fandom in the 21st Century*, pp. 47-60, McFarland Press, Jefferson, NC.

Williams, K 2012, 'Fake and fan film trailers as incarnations of audience anticipation and desire', *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 9, <<http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/360>>

Williams, K 2010, 'Re-reading the trailer: The production and consumption of recut trailers', in K. McCallum (ed.), *Media, democracy and change: Refereed proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Communications Association Annual Conference*, held 7-9 July, Canberra, Australia, <<http://www.canberra.edu.au/anzca2010/attachments/pdf/Re-reading-the-history-of-the-trailer.pdf>>

Williams, K 2009, 'Never coming to a theatre near you: Recut film trailers', *M/C Journal*, vol. 12, no. 2, <<http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/139>>

Presentations

Williams, K 2012, 'Anticipation and nostalgia: Fake film trailers and the spatial dynamics of YouTube', invited talk presented at Microsoft New England, Boston, 2 May.

Williams, K 2012, 'Desire lines and the production and consumption of media', paper presented at *Making Tracks: UNSW Postgraduate Symposium*, Sydney, 3-4 September.

Williams, K 2012, 'Nostalgia for the unknown: Film trailers and their representation of past and future', paper presented at *Crossroads: Cultural Studies Association Conference*, Paris, 3 July.

Williams, K 2011, 'Brokeback to the Future: Spatiality and temporality in fake and recut film trailers', paper presented at *UNSW Postgraduate Symposium*, 9 September.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In 2005, just prior to the launch of YouTube, Robert Ryang entered a video in a competition for the New York branch of the Association of Independent Creative Editors (Halfbinger 2005)¹. The competition required participants to modify the genre of a film trailer by altering the sound and dialogue. Ryang recut Stanley Kubrick's cult horror film *The Shining* (1980) as a family comedy; instead of depicting the story of a father terrorising his wife and son in a remote hotel, the recut *Shining* followed a father trying to connect with his son while finishing his novel. Peter Gabriel's upbeat and reflective song "Solsbury Hill" transformed the genre of *The Shining* instantly – the lyric "my heart going boom boom boom" was not describing terror-induced anxiety, but familial love and inspiration.

Ryang's trailer became famous in the days after he secretly uploaded it to his employer's website. Their server crashed under the unprecedented downloads, and Ryang received calls from Hollywood producers asking him if he had any good ideas (Halfbinger 2005). It immediately struck a chord with industry and audiences, eventually finding a home on YouTube. YouTube brought into existence a central place to access video such as recut trailers, encouraging others to create and upload their own. As YouTube grew in popularity, so too did recut trailers; they have remained a popular and consistent presence on YouTube since its launch (Williams 2009, 2012). YouTube has aided the spread and success of these videos, and its architecture allows users to find similar videos with comparative ease.

¹ All trailers mentioned in this thesis are available to view at www.kathleenwilliams.net

Recut trailers most typically involve the splicing together of footage from one or more sources to create a trailer for a film – or a version of a film – that will not exist. Thousands of recut trailers have been created and uploaded to YouTube since 2005. They exhibit a wide range of practices, and have an even broader range of relationships to the films they evoke. Some recut trailers revisit a film that has long since been released and promoted, announcing an older film with the familiar anticipatory appeals of trailers: this summer an old favourite will be ‘coming soon’. Other recuts are generated in anticipation of an upcoming film’s theatrical release, in some instances creating a trailer for a film that has not been shot, or parodying marketing attempts of an overly-hyped blockbuster. Some recut trailers nostalgically revisit a film and alter the popular memories of that film: *Jaws* (1975) becomes an impossible love story between a man and a shark, *Mary Poppins* (1964) a horror film.



Figure 1.1: Still from *Sarah Palin Disney Trailer* (2008)

Recut trailers can also parody the industrial strategies of Hollywood more broadly, creating absurd sequels to existing films such as *Titanic* (1997), or films that

questionably should never exist such as *Sarah Palin: Disney Trailer*. Despite the fact that recut trailers have varying relationships to specific films, all recut trailers demonstrate the literacy of their creators. In co-opting the tools of Hollywood's marketing strategies, recut trailers have become a popular genre through which to play with knowledge, memories, time, and promotional cultures. They act as a vehicle to negotiate cinema into a social online space where 'amateur' creations sit alongside theatrically released studio trailers. They take the form of an advertisement and yet strip the advertisement of its primary function, by denying a future feature film to be consumed.

Prior to the existence of YouTube and of Ryang's genre-shifting trailer, film trailers have existed in some form for over a century, and have been integrated into a variety of mediated spaces. From being confined within the walls of the theatre and multiplex, to drive-ins and television, and later the mobility that VHS, DVDs and smartphones allowed, trailers have continued to be a media form designed to negotiate the entry of cinema into new spaces. As an advertisement they promote not only the upcoming feature film they depict, but also the technologies associated with cinema, the industrial strategies that influence movie-making and consumption, and the social aspects of film-going. Film trailers have attempted to sell emerging screens, such as television and mobile phones, and their associated spaces as prime places for movie consumption, and integrated cinema into numerous public and private spaces on screens of varying sizes and technological capabilities. Trailers were one of the early popular video forms online due in part to their comparatively small file size and their role as both an entertainment and marketing form, and they have since become increasingly delineated spatially and temporally from the cinema and the feature films

they sell. Trailers can now be watched at any time in a film's promotional life, arguably without the imperative to sell wares and win patrons (Staiger 1990).

Trailers, as Keith Johnston notes, have been integrated into new media forms quickly (2008), in part because audiences enjoy trailers, and in part because the film industry will happily extend their market reach as far as possible. In this study, I'm interested in how the trailer as form and the practice of recutting, have served as methods for *negotiating* cinema into new spaces. This is a history that extends beyond YouTube, that takes into consideration the practices of recutting from early American cinema when film was a new media, and that draws upon the role of the trailer in many emergent film-related media – television, drive-ins, VHS, DVD, mobile phones, the internet broadly, and YouTube specifically. I take into account the historical, technological, and cultural narratives that inform understanding and use of recut trailers. While recut trailers engage with online culture, they are also a marker of the ways that audiences engage with cinema, remaining as a trace of cinematic desire.

Typically, creators of recut trailers do not create more than one trailer. Differing from fan creations such as vidding and other forms of remix, users do not normally participate in a community that is centered on an object of fandom. If they do – such as in the *Twilight* case study in Chapter Four – this community is pre-existing and built around a particular fan culture. However, the majority of recut trailers do not pool around one text and are not necessarily the work of 'fans'. As such, this thesis will argue that recut trailers should not be considered as fan objects, intervening in current studies that position the objects in relation to fan studies. The majority of recuts that I have studied cannot be considered fan creations; nor was a sense of

community necessarily evident, or central to the popularity or spread of the recut trailer. To consider the movement and uptake of the recut within the philosophical aims of fandom is to ignore the complicated networked conditions from which recut trailers emerge. Consequently, this is not a study of community or fandom, as detailed in Chapter Two. While there are notable exceptions to this lack of community – for instance the *Total Recut* website which aimed to build and cultivate a community around recuts – this study does not position the concept of community as being central in the production, consumption or dissemination of recut trailers.

I'm interested in identifying and analysing the reasons why the recut trailer is a persistent force on YouTube beyond encouragement in strong community ties. As a result, my approach does not focus solely on the producers of recut trailers, instead also considering the production and consumption of recuts, and their dissemination which is encouraged by the role of the networked space, and the specific architecture of YouTube. Instead of focusing on community, it is a study of trailers as objects that draw together traces of textual, spatial, temporal, social, and technological connections embodied within the recut trailer.

Since 2004 trailer studies have burgeoned, and trailers are mentioned in studies of online distribution, the blockbuster, and film exhibition in general (Johnston 2013). In short, trailers are increasingly considered a worthy object of study – which has not always been the case (Staiger 1990; Kernan 2004). Since 2007 there have been several pieces published on recut trailers, which are outlined in greater detail in the following chapter. The majority of these works consider recuts to be intertexts or paratexts – they offer an entry point into the narrative world of a feature film, or

expose connections between features (Gray 2010; Ortega 2013; Horwatt 2010; Tryon 2009). I argue in this thesis that the textual connections between recuts and the feature films they evoke form only part of the effectiveness of the recut trailer. Instead, I position textuality as one element of recut trailers that should be considered along with the temporal, social, spatial, technological and historical traces imbued in the object.

This is the first doctoral dissertation on recut trailers, and consequently I have developed a framework for analysing recut trailers that both builds upon and departs from existing work on the film trailer and film promotion. This study charts the evolution of the recut trailer by arguing that recuts and trailers should be considered *networked objects* that draw together multiple technological histories including the evolution of the film trailer and the practices of recutting from early American cinema. I use these media histories to position recuts as drawing upon a broader historical set of practices, to show the numerous sites and spaces where trailers have been produced and consumed, and to illustrate recuts' deviation from being a purely digital object. Rather they are aided and encouraged by the digital space they have emerged from.

Using Walter Ong (1982) and Ori Schwarz's work (2012) I argue that recuts function as traces and residues of the events of cinematic and digital culture engagement. An event "does not leave any physical residue, existing only when going out of existence", such as reading or speaking (Schwarz 2012: 78). By comparison, the object "can be moved or stored" transmitted and traced (Ong 1982: 79). The object serves as a material trace and evocation of events: if the event is for instance, watching a film or

desiring to see a film, the objects left in the wake of that event could be understood as online comments, recut trailers, reviews, or fan sites. The material nature of the recut brings into being actions or events that may not have been traced, such as reworking memories of an existing feature, drawing connections between films, or imagining a ridiculous sequel to a film that does not warrant revisiting. The object allows for these events to be consumed and shared in a networked space. Recuts, then, serve as reflections of the negotiation of cinema into online spaces as well as serving as material traces of desire and use.

Drawing upon the work in Charles Acland's edited collection *Residual Media* (2007), I argue that residues and traces are a critical element of understanding recut trailers. This thesis is concerned with "[c]onfronting the historical traces that reside in 'the new'" (Acland 2007: xiii), in part to understand the media practices and objects that have lead to the emergence of the recut, as well as to resituate scholarly discussions of the recut trailer as an inherently 'new' and digital object. Looking to residues in recut trailers allows for a historically oriented analysis of what appears to belong to the contemporary moment. A focus on residues is also a concern with value, and the ways in which value can be reordered or reworked according to nostalgia, memory, and use (Acland 2007: xv). This argument is central to the aims of this thesis: I focus on two temporal modes – anticipation and nostalgia – through which the recuts and their creators and viewers make sense of the sheer amount of cinematic and televisual material available, as well as the industrial strategies that inform them.

While these two temporal modes seem at odds to one another – one involves looking forward while the other involves looking back – trailers are at once anticipatory and

nostalgic. They require an audience to both anticipate the content of a feature film and to look forward to seeing the end product, while evoking their memories of past films. I argue that recut trailers play with these two temporal modes and in the process, co-opt, participate in, and upend the marketing tools employed by Hollywood studios to sell feature films to audiences – all while seemingly selling nothing.

YouTube is a social space that encourages and facilitates discussion and interaction with video. In my archiving of the trailers – an archive spanning seven years of YouTube’s history from 2005 to 2012 – I have taken into consideration features such as the related videos, the information and tags supplied by the uploader, and the comments provided by users. Where these comments deviated from the typical responses that either applaud the uploader or critique their work, I have included them. As this thesis does not seek to present a study of YouTube’s community or specific social interactions, these comments are not privileged above the video, links to other videos, and the textual, technological, temporal, and spatial residues housed in the trailers themselves.

Defining and analysing recuts

While there has been an increasing amount of scholarly interest in recuts during the course of conducting my research, there is no common term for the types of trailers I analyse. One of the primary aims of my project has been to develop a lexicon for the trailers, reflecting upon their meaning as an object and the practices that inform their creation. Following the archiving process of recuts – which has been an ongoing

activity throughout my thesis up until the end of 2012 – I undertook analysis of the trailers. Out of this analysis, I determined that there are two distinctive technical practices of recuts.

- a) *Remixing and recutting*: These trailers involved splicing together material from existing sources and editing them into the form of a trailer.
- b) *Originally shot*: These trailers involve shooting material specifically for a new trailer. While some of these trailers reference an existing film, they add a new film to an existing cycle such as *Goats on a Boat* for the existing *Snakes on a Plane* (2006), or *Titanic: The Sequel* for *Titanic* (1996).

While the originally shot trailers do not include recutting in the popular use of the term – as splicing or reordering an existing edit (Ivory 1976; Ibranyi-Kiss 1974) – I argue that they should still be considered as recuts. This requires considering ‘recutting’ as not merely the presence of re-edited footage, but understanding recutting as a distinct genre. In other words, both types of trailers are recuts as they ‘recut’ existing ideas, films, film cycles, as well as other existing content.

Recutting as a term also refers directly to the relationship between trailer recuts and cinema more broadly, making explicit the role that cinema editing can play in altering meaning. The term also reflects the historical focus that I posit in the following chapters in this thesis, demonstrating a link between recutting film stock by exhibitors in early American cinema and the rise of recut trailers online.

Recuts go by many names. They are most often referred to as ‘trailer remixes’ (Tryon 2009), ‘spoof trailers’ (Ortega 2013) ‘handmade trailers’ (Dornaletche Ruiz and Gil Pons 2011), ‘recut trailers’ (Shifman 2013), ‘pseudo-trailers’ (Chua 2011) and ‘fan-

made trailers' (Gray 2010). The lack of a unified term for recuts in part reflects the newness of the form. While they draw upon historical practices, recut trailers were not a mainstream or popular type of video prior to the spread of YouTube. Though recutting might be considered under the umbrella term of remix, my use of the term is deliberate. I seek to differentiate recuts from other types of remix, and argue that while recuts may be considered as remix video, they share particular characteristics worthy of a separate title. These techniques co-opt marketing and advertising tools from film studios to subvert and parody attempts made to appeal to audiences and build hype². The following technical aspects found across most recut trailers reflect the formulaic nature of theatrically released trailers, which are easily mimicked by recut creators to present their edit as aesthetically 'professional' as possible.

Some technical aspects are uniform across almost all trailers, which can be identified as:

- a) *MPAA screen*: The presence of the Motion Picture Association of America copyright screen.
- b) *Voiceover*: While not used in all trailers, voiceover is commonly used to help guide the narrative particularly in trailers that use recutting. Voiceover also helps to place the story that is being revisited in a state of anticipation through language such as 'this summer' and 'coming soon' which is used in theatrically released trailers.
- c) *Text*: Text functions in a similar way to voiceover, and is sometimes used in place of voiceover. It appropriates techniques used by studios to make intertextuality apparent, such as pointing out the related films of actors,

² This relationship to film studios and the tools of marketing may differ according to cultural, industrial, and national contexts. This project focuses specifically on films originating from Hollywood, or tied to the Hollywood studio system through distribution.

producers, writers, or directors. Again, the text can be used to create anticipation by making clear the potential future for the film.

- d) *Montage*: Montage is used in all trailers, and while not restricted to trailers, a recognisable trailer trope.
- e) *Music or non-diegetic sound*: Music is used in the majority of recut trailers to help establish mood and consequently genre. Some sound effects are present across several recuts (such as a vinyl record being stopped suddenly – a sound effect associated with unexpected moments in a trailer).

The lack of a definition for these types of trailers has created obstacles in the course of my study. Some trailer uploaders refer to their creations as fake trailers, remix trailers, or trailer mash ups, and others do not alert viewers to the fact that the video is recut, hoping to trick their future viewers into believing the video they are about to watch is an officially released trailer. Due to this, any automated data retrieval became next to impossible. Though I began this project with the intention of following a similar methodology to Burgess and Green (2009) in collecting videos under particular search terms (see Figure 1.2), this method would have resulted in missing out on a great number of videos and would not account for those videos uploaded without tags. For this reason acknowledging the formal structures of recuts listed above helped to identify a trailer from a fan vid or other type of video, as did understanding the tropes that help position recut trailers as a genre.

Due to these obstacles, I adopted what I call a type of *wayfinding* (Lynch 1960) to collect recuts. While YouTube's architecture in part dictates what types of videos you will find as a viewer, their algorithms are not made public, and so I relied on

‘following the leads’. This method also reflects, in my opinion, popular usage of YouTube. YouTube encourages wayfinding, though its algorithms ensure that certain videos open up as paths, while others may not appear as easily. The sidebar on YouTube is crucial to the experience: it populates with videos related to the one currently being viewed, as well as tailored content based on the history of the user if they are logged into either their YouTube or Google account. The latter is a relatively new function on YouTube, and has resulted in a more personalised network forming around the recut trailer. For a YouTube user in 2014, a recut trailer video offers a network to other recuts or videos from related films, television shows, and so on, as well as to moments in their past viewing history.

Lash and Lury’s study of the “biography of the object” (2007: 16) has been crucial in the design of this thesis. Their analysis is concerned with “follow[ing] the objects” (16) – the objects including films, advertising campaigns, and sporting events. A biography of the object mimics a human biography, which focuses on the key moments in the life of an object, a reflection on the relations that have led to its creation, and the understanding of the key actors of the life of an object. I have adopted their approach of ‘following the object’ and adapted it in line with wayfinding (Lynch 1960), in order to reflect common uses of YouTube. Lash and Lury argue that production should not be privileged over consumption and vice versa, and that all points in the ‘life’ of an object be considered in analysis (2007: 19). Crucially, this extends from the assumption that recut trailers are objects and not texts (2007: 29). In order to understand the object and to chart its life, Lash and Lury propose that “to follow, to track objects means the investigator must descend into the world with the objects and be on the move with them”, which results in an investigator who is “ontologized and

mobile” (2007: 29). My method allowed for inconsistencies, for unexpected results, and for an ability to gain insight into the architecture and algorithms of YouTube through immersion. This is different to a computationally-oriented study of trailers, but is better suited to the project’s aims.

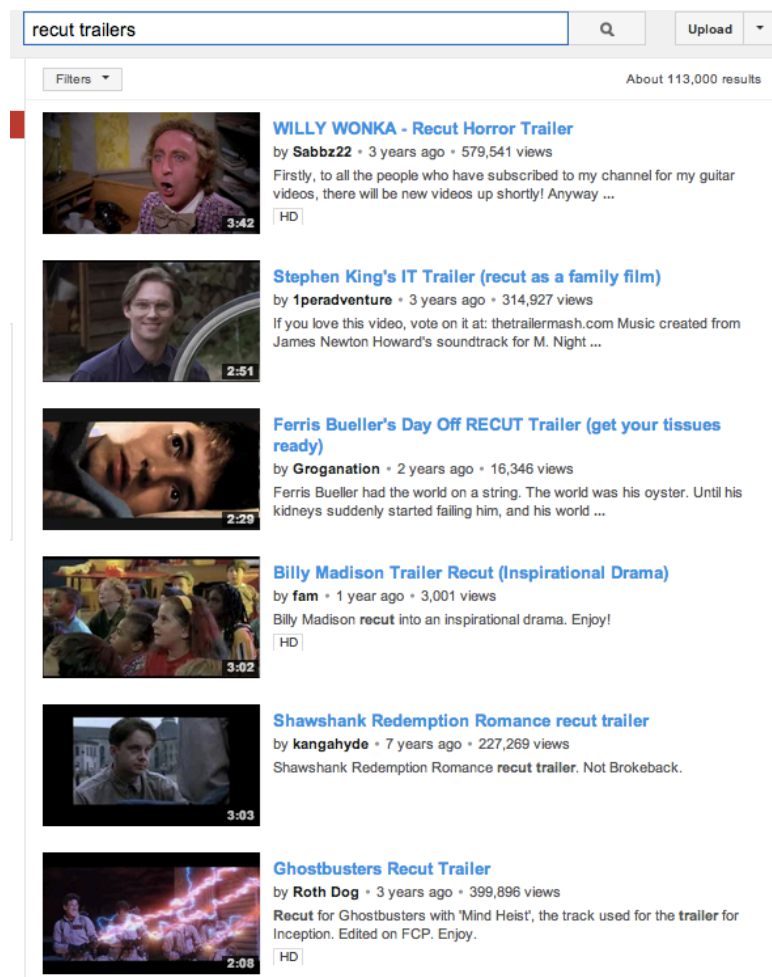


Figure 1.2: Example of recut trailer search results on YouTube

A historical approach

This thesis makes the argument that recut trailers should not be considered only as digital objects. Instead, they draw together a series of practices and other media from a longer technological history. In Chapter Three I offer two historical narratives to situate the recut trailer within these broader technological histories. Recutting was a

relatively common practice in the formative first two decades of the twentieth century; exhibitors were known to recut films in order to cut down their running time, make them more appealing to audiences, or for completely arbitrary reasons (Koszarski 1990). Recutting as a practice emerged in this time as a way to negotiate the filmic object into a space and to tailor it to audiences and exhibitors' taste. Films were a site of experimentation, as authorship did not end with the original creators of the film. As exhibitors were able to augment and omit elements of a film, different versions of a film would be shown across the country. While it is not known exactly how widespread this practice was, accounts exist of films being exhibited for decades after their release in an entirely different order than what was intended by their producers.

Combining this historical account with the history of the film trailer, I am interested in what exists in the margins of film history, and in drawing together a narrative of the practice of recutting alongside the screen-based evolution of theatrically released trailers. Despite existing in some form since 1912, trailers have remained a marginalised and often forgotten aspect of film history, even though they have been persistent sites of technological experimentation (Johnston 2009). Commonly positioned as a necessary extension of industry and commerce, the potential for trailers to be considered as legitimate objects of study largely went ignored in English language scholarship until the publication of an article by Janet Staiger in 1990, which attempted to shift film advertising from the margins of film history and sought to serve as a provocation for future analysis. Following this, Lisa Kernan's substantial study of the history of American film trailers was published in 2004. Her work focused on how rhetoric is a useful framework through which to undertake analysis on the textual and industrial components of trailers: how do trailers seek to appeal to their

audiences? Kernan's study is comprehensive, but it positions trailers in relation to the feature films they evoke, and focuses on the specific aesthetic and narrative strategies that accompany considering the trailer as text. Her work does touch upon the role of the film trailer as a seemingly contradictory combination of anticipation and nostalgia; arguing that trailers make nostalgic appeals to audiences for a film they have not yet consumed, while also making anticipatory appeals.

Likewise, Jason Sperb identifies this complex temporal dynamic in his study of cinephilia (2009). He argues that cinephilia involves revisiting memories of films while simultaneously anticipating what is to come. This thesis develops these arguments, recognising anticipation and nostalgia as both complimentary and contradictory temporal modes present in recut trailers that reflect both the audiences' desire for the film trailer, and for the cinematic memories revisited. In particular, this thesis develops this argument in relation to the unseen: audiences anticipate the content of a recut trailer based on the title or their memories of a film while those memories are simultaneously reordered and augmented, and they are nostalgic for a version of a film or a depiction of a film that will not exist. This thesis extends Sperb and Kernan's recognition of the dual roles of nostalgia and anticipation by working these into a model of analysis.

Anticipation

I define anticipation as originating from audiences, and encouraged by the use of language and evocation of temporality in the trailers themselves. Anticipation involves looking forward to the release of a film, as well as anticipating the content of that film.

Trailers are an embodiment of enthusiasm for the release of an upcoming feature film; they were originally designed to draw an audience to the space of the cinema to consume an upcoming feature. However, as trailers have detached from the space of the cinema and from the feature film, recut trailers can serve as traces of the function of anticipation in cinematic cultures in digital spaces. As recut trailers do not function as advertisements, the recut trailer reflects anticipation for the release of a trailer, and that anticipation is a playful and engaging mode of participation.

In this Chapter, I discuss the construction of anticipation. Recut trailers demonstrate not only literacy of films and cinematic culture, but also their familiarity with the tools used by studios to create anticipation in audiences. Although recuts will often not eventuate in a finished product or feature to be consumed, anticipation is still present in the recuts through audience desire. Audience desire to see a certain kind of text – one that is augmented or has shifted the genre or meaning of the original text – can be seen throughout all recut trailers.

I define anticipation as tangential to “hype”. Hype is emphatically aligned to cinema, and is something that studios seek to create by exposing audiences to advertisements and other promotional material. Jonathan Gray argues that hype is created by “completely surrounding a text with ads, the goal being not only that as many people as possible will hear about a text, but that they will hear about it from industry-created hype” (2008: 33). Thus, hype is something that originates from studios; the objective is that through immersion and exposure to as many mentions of a text as possible, audiences will desire to see the final product. I argue that anticipation is a co-option and subversion of hype; it adopts the tools and techniques used by studios

and removes the goal of profit. Some trailers, such as the trailer for *Trailer for Every Oscar Winning Movie Ever*, poke fun of the creation of hype by evoking several tropes used to sell films around Oscar time. This fake film will be full of motivational speeches, transformational roles that will lead to Oscar nominations, and love stories that will come to characterise contemporary relationships. Indeed, as trailers attempt to show that a film has something for everybody (Kernan 2004), many recut trailers play this trope out to absurd excess.



Figure 1.3: Still from *Trailer for Every Oscar-Winning Movie Ever* (2010)

A desire line is a concept taken from urban planning that refers to the paths created in public spaces by use, rather than being paved or designed. Desire lines are unpaved paths appearing in urban spaces (Tiessen 2007). They deviate from the paved path, reflecting how a space is used, rather than how design attempts to impose usage. Once a desire line becomes an obvious deviation in the landscape through repeated

use, it encourages more people to use it, signaling that individual desire can lead to mass desire. The desire line is a valuable concept through which to discuss how audience anticipation and desire is manifested in recut trailers. Likewise, recut trailers are unofficial and unpaved paths appearing in the space of YouTube. They bypass the typical path of film promotion and hype encouraged and enforced by studios, and instead creates strange hybrid objects that can pre-empt the release of a feature film, or result in a hybrid creation between two films or more. The use of desire lines as a metaphor for the analysis of media objects and practices is a unique contribution to existing work. It allows for a networked understanding of space that draws upon both individual and mass desire, while revealing tensions between architecture and use. This work builds upon de Certeau's (1984) study of the use of spaces that rejected the notion that a user of a space is passive. Instead, de Certeau pointed to the "ways of operating" in a space, which result in interacting with design while simultaneously exhibiting agency (1984: xi). Indeed, desire lines make the types of hidden production that de Certeau describes in the uses of space material and abundant, encouraging others to produce in the same way.

I present several case studies to analyse various modes of anticipation. I look at the most popular forms of recut trailers that take a film released some years ago and recut the footage to switch the genre of the film (Tryon 2009), in the process undermining the intention of the original film. Examples include *Must Love Jaws*, which recuts shark thriller *Jaws* to depict a love story between a man and a shark, and *Sleepless in Seattle Recut as a Horror Movie*. These recuts demonstrate that the audience, as a producer of knowledge and meaning, has the ability to alter and augment any film. These recuts take a film often released decades before the creation of the recut and place it into a

mode of anticipation: one that allows audiences to engage in mutual desire to see a film anew. The architecture of YouTube means that users will see the title of a video before they see the content of it. This leads to anticipating what the recut trailer will be like; the more outlandish the recut, the greater the anticipation may be – a title such as *Sleepless in Seattle Recut as a Horror Movie* prompts those familiar with *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) to imagine what moments of *Sleepless in Seattle* could be reappropriated into a horror film.

Anticipation does not necessarily build around the source text, as in the above examples of *Jaws* or *Sleepless in Seattle*, but at the hybrid object that is brought into being. Some recut trailers do level anticipation at the source text alongside the new hybrid object. Fans of *Twilight* (2008) created a series of recut trailers prior to the release of the film, and in some cases prior to the release of the theatrically released trailer, and even before the cast had been announced. In seeking to depict a narrative and aesthetic world of *Twilight* through piecing together unrelated footage of the cast, the trailer creators crafted, engaged, and participated in forms of fandom. Unlike most other recut trailers, the *Twilight* trailers are examples of how recut trailers can become an object of fandom; while they are not objects of fandom themselves, the intent of their creators, and the significance they hold to fan communities can make them a fan object. These trailers are not about achieving fidelity, but rather creating material objects out of the event of fan engagement, and creating a space for interaction with other fans through YouTube.

Several originally shot trailers were uploaded to YouTube following the release of the trailer for *The Social Network* (2010), a movie about Facebook founder Mark

Zuckerburg. These trailers took the colloquial name for *The Social Network*, ‘The Facebook Movie’ and applied the concept to other websites such as YouTube, Twitter, and eBay. The trailers created a narrative and mythology for the website, then placed it into the aesthetic and hyper-dramatised world of *The Social Network* trailer. Popular moments in a website’s use or design become major players or plot devices in the potential film’s narrative: for instance, the creation of the ‘fail whale’ in *Twitter the Movie*, or the popular video of a panda sneezing in *YouTube Movie – The video website*. In the process websites used in everyday life were brought into the anticipatory realm of the film trailer; a narrative was created around the use and creation of the site. These trailers directly mocked the manipulative trailer for *The Social Network*, which took a site from everyday experience, Facebook, and presented it as the origin of global mythology. The music choice in the trailer – a children’s choir singing the ballad “Creep” by Radiohead – was easily transferred to screen shots of tweets or played over footage of a panda sneezing on YouTube to mythologise what would be considered mundane. *The Social Network* recuts also exposed a backlash against the viral nature of recut trailers, with newspaper and online articles decrying the speed at which the parody trailers were emerging (Valentino-De Vries 2010), as well as accusing the recut trailers of giving *The Social Network* “free publicity” (McCarthy 2010), demonstrating that recuts released in the lead up to a feature can become enmeshed in the anticipation for a feature, as well as the backlash to attempts to build hype.

As Johnston notes (2009), up until the 1970s trailers were exhibited at the end of the feature film. They were moved to the beginning of the presentation, as audiences would leave without watching the trailers, although the name of the trailer was never

altered to reflect this temporal shift. Kernan argues over the course of her book that trailers require anticipation on behalf of their audience, yet make them nostalgic for a film they have never seen by virtue of being familiar with it. Recut trailers play with this temporal tension by placing older films in the mode of anticipation, in turn making the familiar unfamiliar. In this thesis, I seek to further develop the role of anticipation and nostalgia and consider them as a model through which to discuss online networked objects such as the recut trailer.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia provides a lens through which to understand the spread and popularity of recut trailers as digital networked objects, implicated in the cultural specificities of their distribution. That is, I see nostalgia throughout YouTube: present in both the videos that are uploaded, and in the popularity of videos, and reactions traceable through user comments. Building on the previous discussion of anticipation, I position nostalgia as an evocation and play with temporality, that does not necessarily involve looking back to a lived past, but revisiting a shared or communal mediated history that can be reworked and reordered temporally and spatially. I argue that recuts co-opt nostalgic culture, in the process gently mocking cinema's attempts at continuity. Nostalgia has traditionally been defined as wanting to return home (Natali 2009: np). More broadly, nostalgia is commonly understood as a longing – both melancholic and pleasurable – to remember and evoke a past. As Boym (2002) argues, nostalgia can be both collective and individual. It can also derive from false memories, as it is possible to be nostalgic for a time you have not experienced, or for a country that you never lived in. Common objects of nostalgia at this time include vintage clothing, vinyl

records, or antiques, which act as representations of a past that can be modified into a future. Taking my prompt from Grainge (2000), I define nostalgia as both a mode and a mood. Davis charts the “nostalgia boom” (1979: 90) in 1970s film and television that represented the bygone era of the 1950s in media such as *Happy Days* (1974) or *Grease* (1978). For Davis, nostalgia can be understood as a “distinctive aesthetic modality” that points to times of change through social or technological upheaval (Grainge 2000: np). Grainge’s suggestion of media nostalgia positions nostalgia not as a melancholic yearning, but as demonstrative of the way we “transmit, store, receive, reconfigure, and invoke the past in new and specific ways” (2000: np).

I’m interested in utilising studies of nostalgia – cross-disciplinary in nature – to act as a provocation to how we situate digital objects such as recut trailers. Nostalgia has been central to considering objects and practices, for example retro-gaming (Suominen 2008) or collecting vinyl records (Plasketes 1992). While nostalgia has been employed throughout film studies to help account for the popularity of representing the past (Davis 1979; Kleiser 1978; Shary 2002), nostalgia has not been a primary mode of analysis when it comes to the negotiation of those cinematic discourses online. By referring to the way that nostalgia has been present in the study of past media objects such as film, and the continuing popularity of older media forms in vinyl, VHS, and gaming, I argue that nostalgia can be seen as a central way that media is enjoyed.

I argue that nostalgia is a significant affective mode present in YouTube’s culture and consequently, through the objects that circulate within its space. This is seen in

several ways, not only in the sheer presence of older material on YouTube which invites reworking, revisiting, and the gaining of further media knowledge, but also through YouTube's very architecture, which has increasingly focused on representing a user's viewing history and integrating their past viewing into their present. I do not suggest that nostalgia is a cultural mode specific to YouTube; rather it is amplified and accelerated through YouTube's architecture and popular use.

In the Chapter on nostalgia, I present three case studies that chart differing modes of nostalgia across a temporal spectrum. Firstly, I consider trailers that recut footage into the teen film genre as exhibiting what I term "faux-nostalgia". Faux-nostalgia refers to being nostalgic for a time that is collective and universal, but may not have been directly experienced in the way it is being represented. For instance, while being a teenager is a common experience, these recuts co-opt methods used by film studios to create a totalising teen experience, where all teens go through the same trials and tribulations. These teen films also depict a time that its target audience was not alive to experience directly, speaking instead to the collective nature of nostalgia, seen in films such as *Grease* or *American Graffiti* (1973). Nostalgia helps to place new teen culture that seems to break from tradition into a longer narrative. The teen recuts also draw upon media "histories that have been lived through" (Chua 2011: np), suggesting that there are universal tropes in media that become communal knowledge and experience – now reordered and reworked by recut trailers.



Figure 1.4: Still from “*Premakes*” *Raiders of the Lost Ark (1951)* (2009)

The second case study, “pre-makes” looks at trailers created by YouTube user *whoiseyevan*. Pre-makes involve recutting footage from a number of sources from films generally released prior to 1970, often in black and white. The footage is recut to mimic the narrative of a more contemporary film such as *Ghostbusters* (1984) or children’s film *Up!* (2009). The intention behind these trailers is to reflect the mood and tone of the source film, and to recast the film using actors from a bygone era. The nostalgia present here is a technological nostalgia (through the presence of black and white, intertitle frames and music), a rhetorical nostalgia (in the appeals made by audiences), and faux-nostalgia for a time not experienced by the majority of the audience. The nostalgia is directed at an idea of pastness, spanning over several decades, a mediated past not directly experienced. Pre-makes demonstrate a willingness to see the past in a new way – one that need not be linear, but one that is temporally playful.

Lastly, I discuss *Brokeback Mountain* (2007) parody trailers uploaded in the lead up to the release of the feature and beyond. The *Brokeback* trailers recut footage from another film or television show to fit the narrative and aesthetic world of *Brokeback Mountain*, which follows the love story between two cowboys. These trailers are one of the most well known examples of recuts, and one of the few examples (alongside *The Social Network*) of recuts proliferating around the release of a feature film. Part of the appeal of the *Brokeback* trailers was in queering another text identifying a latent romantic storyline between two male leads in films diverse as *Dumb and Dumber* (1994), *Back to the Future* (1985), and *2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003). These trailers are nostalgic in their uncovering of latent romantic storylines of past films. While these trailers mock the emotionally manipulative style of *Brokeback Mountain*'s trailer (Creekmur 2007: 105) and deride the way masculinity is presented in film (Horwatt 2010: 85), they also demonstrate a desire to revisit a film, and place its contents into a new context and to play with memories of the past.

Traces and residues

In the final chapter, this thesis argues that trailers should be considered as networked objects that are a hub for a series of expanding connections. It looks at how recut trailers as objects circulate in the networked space of YouTube, and what propels them. Recuts, differing from other remixed objects, co-opt the tools of marketing cinema and subvert them by creating an advertisement for a product that cannot exist. The previous two chapters, Anticipation and Nostalgia, considered the recut in relation to temporal events, and this chapter analyses the other events and practices

that are materialised in the recut, including screen and media memory, technological residues, and the networked space of YouTube.

I argue that residues are a valuable concept through which to describe media knowledge and literacy, particularly in relation to technology. Past media is made to persist with online media, which results in the negotiation of both – the residues of past technology remain in new spaces for interaction. This interaction between past and present is networked, with ties and connections between present spaces and past practices coalescing as material traces in objects, such as recut trailers. As many recuts involve the splicing together or cutting of footage from one or more older sources in order to identify a latent storyline or to alter the narrative or genre of a pre-existing film, recuts force past media texts to be drawn into new practices and networked spaces.

The recut trailer is an embodiment of a series of practices from throughout cinema's history, including the evolution of the trailer on multiple screens and spaces, and the presence of recutting from early American cinema (Koszarski 1990; Gunning 1994; Musser 1986). Those who project it, as described in Chapter Three, have altered the cinematic text and the recut denies the feature film final authorial control – demonstrating that narratives are up for negotiation and reworking. While temporal affective modes are appropriate lenses through which to understand recuts, the architecture and use of YouTube must be taken into consideration when analysing recut trailers, as its space shapes and is shaped by the recut. YouTube, as a space that is full of past cinematic and televisual artefacts, encourages the networked sensibility of the trailer. However, the trailer has long been networked; it is amplified and

propelled in an accelerated manner by the specificities of YouTube and digital culture.

The sense of ‘pastness’ in the recut trailer mimics the relationship to the past of the internet more broadly. Will Straw, in a discussion of a site that sells perfumes that are no longer in circulation (2007), argues that digital culture and online spaces help reorder and reattribute value to long forgotten objects which might otherwise be left as debris. The presence of older videos (which in turn can be edited, shared, or reworked) and other such objects allow our mediated past to exist materially, and be given a temporal order and logic that can be drawn upon and reworked. As Straw argues, the internet puts particular objects in the “limelight”, drawing attention to their materiality, and allowing them to be reworked into the present day with a new value and meaning. The recut trailer achieves this by pulling an older filmic or televisual text, drawing attention to its persistence as an object, and reordering it in a networked space.

I argue that the recut trailer is a vehicle through which to chart the negotiation of cinema into online spaces. This is not to claim that YouTube is a clean break from past practices and objects. Rather it is my intention throughout this thesis to demonstrate the historical residues of technology, practice, and culture that persist in the recut trailer, existing alongside the accelerated networked space of YouTube. As a result, this thesis seeks to understand how cinema has been negotiated into the space of YouTube through the recut trailer, and how the recut trailer co-opts the tools used in attempts to market to audiences. As a networked object, recut trailers demonstrate tensions between architecture and use, remaining as traces of engagement with

cinema, and interaction in digital spaces. In the next chapter, I outline the relevant literature and methodology undertaken in this thesis.

Chapter Two

Frameworks, approaches and methods

As recut trailers are considered as new objects, theoretical considerations of recuts are also in their infancy. I'm interested in drawing out the significant fields and disciplines that relate to the recut trailer in regards to their production, consumption and dissemination. This chapter addresses each of these fields from across media and cultural studies, media history, fandom, promotional cultures, and digital culture in order to tease out the critical narratives surrounding academic reception of recuts. I aim to address two critical questions: how have recuts and related objects been discussed, and how can we understand the recut trailer in relation to the spaces it inhabits, the practices it embodies, and the objects it relates to? As recut trailers do not strongly adhere to one field of study, this chapter follows the numerous theoretical trajectories with which recut trailers are aligned.

This chapter sets a framework for film promotion through the broad study of film advertising, film trailers, and recuts trailers specifically. In the process, I position the recut trailer in relation to considerations of promotional discourses and film history – of which the trailer and the recut has sat in the margins. Following this, I turn to studies that consider objects similar to the recut in fandom and digital culture, analysing the how these objects have been discussed in related fields. I then look to studies of YouTube as a space and the use of that space, and the role of a networked screen. Finally, out of these conceptual frameworks, I present the methods undertaken in this study that compliment these theoretical aims, and the methodology that supports them. In doing so, I set up a method of inquiry for the recut trailer that

reflects on both the practices of consumption, production and dissemination, alongside the analysis of the recut trailer as object.

Selling films and the experience of cinema-going in film advertising

Film advertising takes on multiple forms through posters, commercial tie-in products such as t-shirts or toys, and film trailers. Film advertising has not been a focus of traditional film scholarly. Trailer studies make up a small (though increasing) amount of film theory, and studies of film advertising are comparable in size (Johnston 2008, 2009; Kernan 2004; Gray 2010; Klinger 1986; Heath 1976; Stubblefield 2008; Staiger 1990; Adams and Lubbers 2000; Kerr and Flynn 2003; Wyatt 1994). The studies of film advertising that are selected in this chapter are indicative of the major debates surrounding film advertising, though not an exhaustive account. The following literature focuses on the role of film advertising in relation to advertising more broadly, the social history of film advertising, and the economic and cultural discourses that inform the perceived importance of these advertisements. The role of the economic, industrial and cultural discourses surrounding film advertising speak to how film advertising is understood in relation to its industrial strategy as well as what meanings it has come to hold for audiences. Studies of film advertising are often situated as a subset of film promotion and exhibition, and as a result, one of the dominant ways of thinking about film advertising has been in relation to the success of advertisements in gaining audiences, selling wares (Staiger 1990), and economic measures of success.

Approaching the filmic advertisement in an economic or commercial analysis does not respond to the specifics of the trailer as a medium, and instead places the film

advertisement's function as being purely commercial. This then results in the advertisement being an indicator of the blurred boundaries between art and commerce rather than widening discussion to consider how the film advertisement lends itself to active consumption and creation, and the role that networks can play. Staiger claims that the study of film advertising tends to categorise the film advertisement as being an embodiment of the gross commercialisation of cinema, which in turn positions the audience as passive spectators, unable to resist the product they are being sold (1990: 3). Staiger argues that while other advertisements have been increasingly considered in relation to active audiences in media and cultural studies, the film advertisement has not been considered in the same way.

Adams and Lubbers outline the economic importance of film advertising to both gathering an audience for a feature, and to gather an audience for cinema (2000). They argue that a film is perceived as a "luxury item", which audiences choose to see as an "impulse decision" (2000: 235). For Adams and Lubbers, film advertising capitalises on this impulsiveness in its appeal to audiences. While employing an entirely different focus from this thesis, they identify the value of the film advertisement beyond the space of the cinema, and beyond the promotional life of a feature film. By looking at the lingering economic value of the film poster, they suggest that the film poster is both steeped in monetary value in its potential to lure an audience, and then through an increasingly interest in its collectable value (2000: 256). The film poster in this instance becomes defined by both aesthetics and commerce; it is a commodity even if the end product of the feature film cannot be consumed in the space of the cinema.

The film advertisement throughout film history has perpetually been considered the lesser object to the feature film and yet is constantly attached to the feature in order for meaning to be made; this ensures that the film advertisement is placed in a troubled binary of art and commerce (Staiger 1990). Historically, the film advertisement has both intimated and departed from other modes of advertising both in reception and creation:

Hollywood's advertising practices have been thought of as part of the apparatus of the cinematic institution that calls forth the consumer to occupy a social and economic relation set out within the film industry's ideology. Moreover, advertising and its related practices of publicity and exploitation have been considered capable of influencing people not only to buy the movie show but also the lifestyles and ideologies represented in the film. Thus, in which some historians have termed a 'culture of consumption,' film advertising seems a potentially significant instance of capitalism's penetration of our cultural unconscious. (1990: 3)

There are several debates at play here. Firstly, Staiger extends the economic importance of the film advertisement into the *social* realm of the cinema; the consumption of film is both economically and socially important. As Staiger identifies, the early film trailers were an exercise in branding, designed to ensure the audience buys into the "lifestyles and ideologies represented in the film", reflecting back the reality of the audience, or their aspirations (1990: 3). These advertisements were designed also to appeal to audiences to integrate cinema into their everyday lives, to situate going to the cinema as part of their lifestyle.

As the novelty of early cinema wore off and the narrative feature became the dominant form, film advertisements changed:

Adopting the notion that merely supplying a product was insufficient in the new age of capitalism, film producers, distributors, and exhibitors accepted the prevailing discourse that stated that demand for a product could be stimulated directed, and controlled by industrially produced representations. (Staiger 1990: 6)

Thus demand was created for appeal to stars, while also relying on the hype surrounding the act of going to the cinema. As film advertisements evolved from their original position as advertising a new medium, competition became a central part of the purpose of these advertisements, setting up differences between film studios and their products (Staiger 1990: 6). This is different from other forms of advertising, as Staiger notes although the “film industry has become an oligopoly in production and consumption”; the focus on studio ‘brands’ in contemporary film advertising is minimal (1990: 6). Film advertising such as posters and trailers pit each product competitively against all others currently distributed, “individuating each item it makes” (1990: 6). Consequently, conflating film advertising with other types of advertisements does not take into consideration the specificities of film advertising as a genre.

With this context of complicated competition and product differentiation in mind, Elsaesser argues that the film advertisement effectively forms a type of contract between the potential audience and the creators of film advertisements:

When buying a movie ticket, we are effectively taking out a contract, by which in exchange for our money, we are guaranteed (temporary access to) a normative, quality-controlled product. Conversely, our part of the deal is to be prepared to pay: not for the product itself and not even for the commodified experience it represents, but simply for the possibility that such a transubstantiation of experience into commodity might ‘take place.’ Neither the term ‘product’ nor ‘service,’ neither the idea of ‘consumption’ nor the concept of ‘leisure’ quite capture the nature of this act of faith. (2001: 16)

Thus, while other studies acknowledge the role of the film advertisement in amplifying, and often misrepresenting, the content of the feature film in order to gain an audience (Kernan 2004; Wyatt 1994), Elsaesser argues that the audience has expectations for the end product of the feature film, but also for the experience the advertisement depicts, as it permits the audience ‘temporary access’ to the world of the product (Elsaesser 2001). Unlike other advertisements, in which your purchase guarantees the object advertised, a version of that product is what film audiences expect. The film advertisement and its relationship to the feature need to extend beyond the notion of the ‘product’ and purchasing; proposing that the film advertisement and the feature encompass other debates outside the traditional models of advertising and consumption (Elsaesser 2001). This argument is particularly relevant to this thesis, both in relation to the contract between the audience and the film advertisement – which the recut trailer playfully denies – and how the experience of the cinema is figured. Although recut trailers and online theatrical trailers are delineated from the space of the cinema, watching trailers draws upon this contract, memories of cinema-going, and the cinematic commercial apparatus.

Hype plays a central role in film advertising, which positions the feature film as a commodity. Klinger (1989: 5) argues that film advertising and other commercial tie-ins seek to function as “an intertextual network specifically designed to identify a film as a commodity”. This notion reflects the complex way in which viewers encounter filmic objects: as they leave, enter or never approach the cinema itself. Klinger’s understanding of the decentralised spatial aspects of the cinema are central to this study’s approach, acknowledging that film advertising creates multiple pathways in and out of a text. The industry who creates these pathways is “not primarily concerned with producing coherent representations of a film”, but rather “the goal of promotion is to produce multiple avenues of access to the text that will make the film resonate as extensively as possible in the social sphere in order to maximise the audience” (1989: 10). It is from this commercial and social context that recut trailers have emerged; self-aware of the role of incoherency in film advertising, film trailers co-opt these approaches, offering yet another entry point into a film, even if it leads to a dead end.

Decentralising the film advertisement in urban space

Film advertising is increasingly encountered in everyday urban life and not restricted to the walls of the cinema. Considering the film advertisement in relation to this social space outside the cinema is of prime importance to this thesis – rather than understanding online filmic consumption as private, YouTube constitutes a social site of consumption. In *Leaving the Movie Theater*³ Roland Barthes describes leaving a cinema and reflecting upon the “lure” and the “festival of affects” that is the cinema

³ Richard Howard’s (1986) translation omits the ‘Upon’ that is used in other translations.

(1986: 346). Barthes' positions the cinema as an important part of urban life, while showing the ways that cinema makes its way into spaces outside of the walls of the theatre. The film poster, in particular, is entangled in the city on bus stops, the sides of buildings, and on billboards. Barthes uses the film poster and his feeling of hypnosis to open the cinematic experience from outside of the walls of the theatre into the city, wedding it to the city streets. It is this idea that this thesis develops, in relation to how cinema is negotiated into spaces – rather than the urban streets, film advertising has been a way to integrate and embed cinema into online spaces and, consequently, everyday experience.

Barthes claims the cinemagoer is subject to:

...the darkness of the theater is prefigured by the 'twilight reverie'...which proceeds it and leads him from street to street, from poster to poster, finally burying himself in a dim, anonymous cube where that festival of affects known as a film will be presented. (1986: 345-346)

While this may seem at odds with one of the central claims of this thesis – that the recut trailer does not aim to physically draw an audience to the cinema to consume a feature – the lure of cinema for Barthes is one that does not consist only of the feature film. Barthes likens being drawn to the cinema to being under a type of hypnosis; the cinemagoer is seduced and drawn by images, and the experience of the cinema extends outside of the "indifferent cube". Barthes also describes consuming these posters upon *leaving* the cinema, which works to reinforce the act of consumption of the feature film and extend the walls of the cinema into the city streets and into the

brightness. The consumption of posters outside of the theatre is part of a bombardment of images, which are heavily integrated into urban experience.

Film advertisements are physically decentralised from the space of the cinema, appearing on billboards on highways, in newspapers, on the back of buses. Victor Burgin argues that this leaves audiences being familiar with films prior to having seen it as the film advertisement is so saturated in everyday life (2004: 11). As Barthes talks about consuming the film poster after leaving the theatre, the notion of an advertisement that has been stripped of its advertising imperative to draw an audience for a specific feature is diminished. Instead, the presence of film posters throughout a city reminds the viewer of the cinema more broadly, building a movie-going audience beyond the feature film it depicts. Consequently, meaning can still be taken from the advertisement outside of its commercial imperative, and outside of the linearity of the normal path of film promotion. Here Barthes draws upon this decentralisation by describing the consumption of the poster after the film; reinforcing the cinematic experience while paradoxically not leading the audience into the cinema. It guides the viewer both in and out of the cinema, leading cinematic culture to infiltrate the city space outside of the walls of the theatre, and not necessarily tied to a specific feature film.

Burgin also focuses on the role of film advertising outside of the space of the cinema. He describes how film advertising makes an audience familiar with a film prior to having seen the feature (2004). He argues that “beyond the frame” of the film text, analysis of the cinematic space and filmic advertising can negotiate the cinematic image and reinforce the importance of cinema on everyday life (2004: 10). The

intended linearity of a film and its narrative are interrupted as segments of the film enter popular culture as utterances outside of the spoken or written formulated sentence, to employ Burgin's linguistic analogy (2004: 11). Discussing the promotion for the film *Eyes Wide Shut* (Kubrick 1999), Burgin argues:

From poster to trailer to film there was a progressive unfolding: from image to sequence, to concatenation of sequences = as if the pattern of industrial presentation of commercial cinema were taking on the imprint of the physical structures. (2004: 12)

This unfolding ensures that the feature film is part of several paths in which other objects inform how the feature film is read – which aligns with Klinger's account of the “multiple avenues of access” that film advertising seeks to create (1989: 10). This also signals that the feature film need not be the end destination, rather, that the ‘sequence’ Burgin describes can be the only consumption of that particular feature film outside of the cinema.

Thomas Stubblefield argues that Barthes' paper “delivered two damaging, if not fatal blows to prevailing models of film spectatorship at the time” (2008: 84). Namely, that Barthes identified the space of the cinema as the primary source of enjoyment, as he “admits going to the cinema as much (if not more) to revel in the eroticism that its darkness provides than the film itself” (Stubblefield 2008: 84). The other “blow” delivered to film spectatorship is how Barthes is lured into the cinema: through moving between poster and poster (1986: 346). Stubblefield argues that such a focus on the film poster in both the film-going experience and the city results in Barthes

being “more faithful to the cinematic than the film which it represents” (2008: 85). Furthermore, moving from poster to poster acts as displacement “of the film image onto visual artifacts of the surrounding spaces of the theater” and that this:

...provides us with a model of spectatorship that not only extends beyond conventionally cinematic contexts, but also alerts us to the pull or perhaps even appellation that the ‘film’ may have been viewed beyond both the simple lure of advertising or the identification of the onscreen image. (Stubblefield 2008: 85-86)

The study of film advertising achieves the same mode of spectatorship, as it requires focusing on what has traditionally been conceived of as the peripheral elements of cinema. Thus, while the feature film is of course cinematic, the film advertisement is also cinematic and serves a purpose beyond merely advertising a film. Film advertising is synonymous with the cinematic image – at times it is the only cinematic image consumed – and it in turn delineates the space and experience of cinema. And yet, film scholarship has traditionally considered the film inside the space of the cinema or the domestic space, and textual analyses of film rely upon this spatial orientation and temporal unfolding of narrative as it was intended. But as Barthes and Stubblefield suggest, the act of watching a film or engaging in cinematic culture cannot be understood in such restrictive ways.

Film advertising also occupies a unique temporal positioning; it both advertises a ‘coming attraction’ and also comes to represent the past:

[t]he ‘artifact’ that Barthes finds in the trail of posters is therefore both the anomalous element within our conventional understanding of the cinematic experience and also a record of the past. The latter, however, points simultaneously back to the birth of commercial cinema at the same time it prefigures the migration of the cinema against digitized formats where the materiality of film and its space of presentation brings this process of portability to near completion. (Stubblefield 2008: 88)

Stubblefield labels this delineation of the space of the cinema and the feature as portability, seen here as the movement of the individual, but also as the shift of the cinematic from outside the walls of the cinema. He sees the role of film advertising as an inherent part of this portability, and consequently, an essential element of how the cinematic is understood. Burgin argues that film advertising “spills onto the contents of everyday life” (2004: 12), which results in the film advertisement appearing in multiple spaces and places, across numerous technologies and in entirely different contexts; acting as material traces of film and cinema. While Barthes describes a cinema that is physically part of a city, this study demonstrates that this sense of urbanity, collectivity and connectivity can be seen through networked spaces such as YouTube.

Positioning the film trailer as an object of study

Recut trailers are a form of film trailer, while acting as a genre in their own right. The study of film trailers offers insights into how recut trailers can be understood, particularly in relation to promotional discourse, the relationship between industry

and consumer, as well as how we can go about analysing film trailers as objects. And yet film trailers have not always been considered as a worthy object of study. The attempts to forge ‘trailer studies’ is a theoretical history relevant to the recut trailer, and attempts to move trailers from the margins of film and media history have often been concerned with justifying film trailers or advertising as a worthy object of study (Staiger 1990; Kernan 2004).

The majority of what could now be considered as ‘trailer studies’ draws upon the pioneering work of Lisa Kernan (2004), who offered the first lengthy study of American film trailers. Prior to Kernan’s work, trailers were largely treated as promotional tools for the far more interesting feature film. The trailer was consistently positioned in relation to the larger cinematic text of the feature, and was perpetually tied to advertising discourses. Janet Staiger (1990), offered an overview of the discussions of trailers up until 1990, and offered a provocation to film studies to consider the trailer as a force in its own right – one that demanded further research. It would be 14 years until such a study would be published, with Kernan detailing the history of film trailers for American motion pictures through focusing on their rhetorical appeals, opening the door for more sustained research on the film trailer and setting theoretical parameters for future work. Writing in 2013, Johnston argues that the study of cinematic promotional materials – of which the film trailer is a crucial part – still remains in its infancy.

As trailer studies were emerging, trailers were considered as a promotional tool and “brief film text” (Kernan 2004: 1), which is a “limited sample of the product” of the feature film (Kerr and Flynn 2003: 103), one that directly markets to demographics in

order to draw an audience to see the associated feature film. The film trailer is imagined as a “brief film text” (Kernan 2004: 1) while also being described as being able to frame “many of the interactions we have with texts” (Gray 2010: 48). The trailer, rather than being positioned in relation to the larger cinematic text of the feature, is also seen as an entry point into cinematic culture. No longer tied to advertising discourses, theorists such as Gray (2010) and Johnston (2009) have sought to position the film trailer within film history, and associated scholarly frameworks, to understand the lingering appeal of the trailer. The trailer is a cultural product that extends beyond the boundaries of promotional and advertising discourses, while also circulating beyond the feature film, and increasingly, cinema itself.

One of the central questions addressed or posed in studies of film trailers and promotional objects more broadly, is how to consider the relationship between the feature film and promotional discourse. Heath (1976) presents the notion that films “must exist” before the cinema is entered; consequently, not only must a future audience be imagined, but that audiences must have some idea of the film, or allow their imaginations to be shaped by promotional objects. This has been taken up further by Kernan (2004) and Gray (2010) in particular, who positions the film trailer as a paratext – understood as an entry point into the world of a feature film, that helps to shape audiences’ expectations as well as exist as existing in its own right. This focus on film trailers is a textual one: trailers are understood as texts in their own right (to an extent), and exist as paratexts; they also embody intertextual connections to multiple other films or objects. The trailer is then a “guide” to the feature film, as well as to future film-going experiences. It is not only an entry point into the narrative and aesthetic world of the feature, but also to filmic culture more broadly. In this

approach, the trailer is tied to the feature film and to other cinema, rather than existing as an object in its own right.

The spatiality and temporality of film trailers

Film trailers, and the study of them, have typically been linked to communal consumption of trailers in the cinema. The focus on communal consumption has been dependent largely on how they have been distributed and viewed prior to technological developments and the spatial spread of trailers. Kernan (2004) in particular focuses on theatrically released trailers in cinema that become temporally bound to the release of an upcoming feature, and spatially tied to the walls of the cinema (though, notably, she addresses the future of online trailers in the end of her study). Johnston (2009), by comparison, dedicates a large portion of his study to the movement of trailers as a cross media object, detailing their adoption on television, through mobiles, VHS and DVD and online. His focus is decidedly through a technological lens, in order to chart and understand the popularity of the trailer through a variety of media. Johnston highlights how technological change has aided in shifting the trailer from being understood only as a communal and public marketing tool to also existing in the domestic space.

Critically, the shift of the trailer from the theatre and from preceding a feature film screening means that the trailer can be watched long after the film it depicts, stripping the trailer of the importance of selling an object. Watching a trailer online or on a DVD in particular requires choice on behalf of its audience; it is not forced upon them. While choosing to watch a trailer – potentially longer after the theatrical release

of the film it promotes – may suggest a growing “interactive relationship between film studio and audience” (Johnston 2008: 145), it also marks the beginning of an increasing interactivity between the trailer and the audience; a relationship which has altered the function and purpose of the trailer beyond the control of a studio.

Johnston provides the most relevant foundation to this thesis in terms of timeliness and relevance; instead, this thesis will depart from his work in several ways. Notably, this study positions the recut trailer as having a complex relationship to the promotional value of the trailer. As recut trailers do not appear to promote anything, it is in contradiction to the perceived function of the trailer; instead, they primarily advertise themselves. Moreover, while Johnston provides an overview of the different methods by which trailers are disseminated and the methods in which the studios marry their products to the existing online space this study deconstructs and evaluates the way the Internet, as a space for the trailer, evokes and negotiates cinematic space.

Kernan (2004) and Johnston’s (2008; 2009) studies are relatively recent, with Johnston’s work drawing heavily upon the work of Kernan. Each delineates the field of ‘trailer studies’ and provides a comprehensive overview and foundation for theoretical consideration of trailers. While focusing on a historical survey, their studies differ in the theoretical underpinnings of the trailer, the methods of analysis, and the focus on the significance of studying the trailer. Kernan situates her analysis of the trailer in a historical discourse, providing discussion of trailers since their inception and focusing on their use of movie stars, genre and narrative. She seeks to place the trailer as a text that sells to an audience and creates a catalogue for future film going. Her positioning of the trailer as a “brief film text” (2004:1) places the textual elements

of the trailer as primary, while considering the trailer in relation to cinematic technique and the amplification of directorial decisions.

For Kernan, the trailer is perpetually tied to the communal aspect of the cinema. From the space of the cinema and the audience's interaction comes the concept of vaudeville; the trailer is a theatrical experience in itself, which creates a circus-like atmosphere, in which audiences show their appreciation or rejection of a trailer by booing or stomping their feet (2004: 20-23). While the trailer has over time entered new spaces that were not communal in the same way that we might imagine a cinema or a circus (her book being published before the advent of YouTube), Kernan conceptualises the trailer as being perpetually tied to the space of the cinema – communal by its very nature. The claim that trailers need to advertise something in that audiences are “being told and sold to watch a film” informs her positioning of the trailer through to the digital era (2004: 208).

The temporality of film trailers is inherently paradoxical, and this is developed throughout this thesis within the dual modes of anticipation and nostalgia. Kernan sees nostalgia as playing an ever-present role in the function of trailers. Trailers function:

...as nostalgic texts that paradoxically appeal to audiences' idealized memories of films they haven't seen yet, they attract audiences not only to themselves (as attractions), nor even only to the attractions within the individual films they promote, but to an ever renewed and renewable desire for cinematic attraction per se. Like magnets, they attract (or occasionally,

repel) in an attempt to draw bodies to a center, assembling their assumed audiences in a suspended state of present-tense readiness for a future that is always deferred. (2004: 208)

This study analyses trailers that play with this notion of a “deferred” future, as one that cannot come to fruition. In what will be argued is a playful treatment of an understanding of the suspended temporality of the trailer (for, is the feature film the future?), recut trailers question the notion of an ‘attraction’ as figured in the form of the trailer. Kernan’s argument of being drawn toward a “center” will be tested against the space of YouTube, and the self-referential parodying of the use of celebrity, genre, and appeal.

Johnston presents an historical analysis of the film trailer that positions the trailer in relation to industry, technology and temporality. He argues:

...the film trailer is a distinctive source of historical and textual information that allows us to investigate how the Hollywood film industry (or any other national cinema) saw itself, imagined its products, and built up its public persona. (2009: 1)

Johnston goes further than considering the film trailer only in relation to the feature film it promotes, instead claiming that the trailer is a “unique short film” (2009: 2), impacted by its historical and social contexts. He liberates the trailer from the feature film by arguing that it should be considered as its own text, and not a lesser derivative of the feature. Arguing that the trailer should be understood as a signifier, or

extrapolation, for the discussion of film history, he argues that they are a “key text in understanding the creation and delineation of distinct sales messages and formats” (2009: 3). Positioning the trailer as a way of understanding the film industry and the areas of a film that will be amplified in order to attract an audience does increase understanding of the preferences of audiences. While Johnston claims that his study is not concerned with reception studies, he nonetheless notes “the trailer [is] a site of negotiation between the studio and the intended audience” (2009: 3). Johnston’s study focuses on the role of production over consumption; he invokes an imagined audience through the choices made in the trailer, leading to a negotiation between consumption and production, despite not studying audiences specifically.

Analysing the trailer through technological and rhetorical appeals

The two major studies of trailers focus on different appeals made in trailers: technology (Johnston 2009) and rhetoric through focus on stars, genre and narrative (Kernan 2004). My approach takes elements from both of these studies, while shifting focus from the visual and the textual. Johnston argues that Kernan’s work “adopt[s]...a rhetorical approach to trailers, thinking of them largely in linguistic terms rather than visual” (2009: 4). Johnston, then, while focusing on the visual also seeks to extract or reflect upon the technological impact on trailers. This is presented as an historical study, one that while providing a chronological overview also serves to legitimise the study of trailers. Johnston ultimately seeks to discuss trailers as “historical sources” (2009:8) while also taking examples from the beginning of the trailer into contemporary Internet based sources. The work also intends to offer a new

method of ‘unified textual analysis’, where context is also considered in relation to the linguistic, visual or overall textual clues.

Kernan addresses the effect of the growth of the Internet on the way trailers are viewed, namely, that this led to “heralding major new elements in the ‘dialogue’ between Hollywood and its audiences” (2004: 166), but that the trailer in the age of the Internet shows a “continuation” of the production of trailers from the sound era onward. Although her study pre-dates the popularity of recut trailers and the launch of YouTube, her comments can be productively applied to both recuts and YouTube. Her argument lends itself to considering the meaning made through film trailers from both consumption and production practices; the two can be understood as intertwined well before the launch of YouTube or other social internet-based media. Indeed, the creation of theatrical trailers involves a process of reading an existing text and then producing a new object – trailer makers edit a version of a film that already exists. The recut trailer seeks to parody this process by advocating misreading in trailers and playing into the amplifications and omissions that trailer creators choose while editing a trailer.

The ability to re-watch, share and publicise on third party websites only increases the saturation for potential market for the feature film. This ‘sold to’ model is only bypassed if the trailer can be accepted as being of cultural importance outside of being an advertisement. This thesis proposes that the recut trailer is in ongoing circulation within a network, and as a result, demonstrates that the trailer and the recut trailer can exist outside the model of selling to an audience the product of the

feature film. As Gray argues, the trailer's "contribution to meaning may be growing, given their increasing presence in all forms of media" (2010: 70).

Kernan argues that trailers "assume we want to go to known yet new cinematic spaces; while there experiencing narratives that offer at once secure, familiar story types and endless open possibilities", and that these are:

...appeals designed to keep a range of audiences wanting more and continually coming back to the theater, enable trailers to perpetually hover in the consciousness of the viewer as incomplete, unformed "ideas" of movies rather than as a sample of particular movies or as merely ads for movies.
(2004: 210)

The recut trailer exemplifies the trailer as an "idea", it too is quotational and "unformed", and is a realisation of the idea of re-reading a source text. The recut trailer also requires imagination on the behalf of the viewer, which enacts the same mode of viewership as the original trailer: being able to recognise possibilities for the end product of the feature film. However, in the case of the recut trailer, the feature film will not eventuate, instead signalling that there is a desire in an audience to experience the "unformed" idea – and the process of accepting the possibility for the new potential, but non-existent, film is demonstrative of the "anticipatory consciousness experience" (Kernan 2004: 11) of the trailer – there need not be an end product. Kernan argues that the "anticipatory, utopian dimension of trailers" exists in the "spaces between the images of the trailer montage" (2004: 216).

The recut trailer, then, exists as the space in between images of the original trailer – becoming the “utopian and anticipatory dimension” of the trailer. Just as most of the recut trailers utilise the generic terms used in trailers to give a timeline for the release of the feature film (“coming this fall”, “this year”, “coming soon”), the perpetually deferred future of the feature film ensures these quotational “ideas” remain consistently anticipatory, greeted with the same excitement and hype that a trailer can bring to a collective audience. Kernan states that:

...a trailer’s truth claims “claim” different kinds of “truth” about the films they promote than other ads do, thus potentially creating a range of responses in audiences that may vary from their responses to ordinary advertising rhetoric.
(2004: 11)

Following this logic, the trailer, to an extent, invokes a misreading. The end product is manipulated and framed in such a way that while it is there to create audience expectation, it also cannot provide all the information for the film, leaving the audience to imagine its potential. The recut trailer plays into the cultural circulation of the trailer and its function by adding a corpus of trailers for which the feature may never be seen, and encouraging a culture of misreading the technique and rhetoric of a body of trailers. They also allow the audience to relive a feature film in a new way, contributing to the culture of Hollywood and the cinema, even if the space and temporality they are viewed in is skewed and expanded.

The recut trailer thus challenges what can be considered cinematic, in that its relationship to the cinema as a space is troubled and yet it still advocates an entry into

the experience of cinema. The more literate an audience is about the films that are invoked in the recut trailer, the more effective this displacement is. The recut trailer can make meaning without knowledge of the films or texts it references. The recut trailer challenges the analysis of the role of the trailer thus far, and suggests that a new mode of analysis is necessary in order to fully comprehend the networked space the trailer occupies, and the cultural importance that it holds.

Texts, paratexts and intertexts: The recut trailer as an emerging object of study

Current studies of the recut trailer are typically concerned with the interplay between textuality, fandom and technology. Over the course of this study, academic attention to the recut trailer has exponentially increased. Upon undertaking this project, Tryon (2009) dedicated a chapter to the recut trailer, and recuts also garnered attention from Johnston (2009), Horwatt (2010), and Hilderbrand (2007). During the past four years, studies of the recut trailer have been present not only in the English language, but notably in Spanish (Dornaletche Ruiz and Gil Pons 2011; Guarinos and Delmar 2011), as well as being the subject of dedicated studies (Ortega 2013; Jensen 2013; Williams 2012, 2009). As trailer and promotional studies has continued to emerge as a discipline or a field, the study of recut trailers has been understood as a subset of promotional and trailer academic discourse, informed by fan studies, internet studies, audience studies, and digital convergence.

The lack of an agreed upon terminology has reflected the divergent approaches to the recut trailer. Dornaletche Ruiz and Gil Pons (2011) position recuts as a model with

three subsets: re-cuts, mashups and fake trailers. They understand these three subsets as existing under the umbrella term “homemade trailers”, under which re-cuts refer to those that involve “genre-switching” (Tryon 2009), mashups as those which combine elements of two or more films such as the *Brokeback* trailers, and fake trailers are created for a non-existent film using original footage. While this model is comprehensive and takes into account the role of different technical practices and relationships to source footage, the term “homemade” does not account for trailers created by comedy groups or for commercial benefit. These trailers are difficult to label as they encompass a number of practices, and as such I argue that they should be considered as recuts.

As I briefly discussed in the preceding chapter, different types of user-generated trailers are identified as ‘recuts’ in my study, despite some of the trailers involving the technical practice of recutting. This is for numerous reasons. Firstly, the term ‘recut’ draws upon and evokes the cinematic history of recutting that has been present since cinema’s very inception; drawing attention to the role of the user of cinematic technology ‘reworking’ or ‘reordering’ the intended final product of a film. It reflects how the meaning imposed on a film or trailer by its creators can be subverted and changed resulting in no finite end to the reading of a film: a film’s intended meaning can always be shifted by audiences who draw attention to latent storylines in a queer reading, or by shifting the genre of the feature film by reordering the edit. While recut trailers can be placed into two categories based on production techniques used (footage originally shot for the trailer and trailers which mash together material from one or more existing sources), the intent across the two trailers is the same.

Privileging production over the consumption and dissemination of the trailers would

result in seeing only part of the entire picture, and only part of the way that meaning is made through the recuts.

Taking from Genette's (1997) definition of paratextual, Gray argues that the paratext is in essence anything that accompanies a text. In the case of a film, this would include trailers, posters, and conversations about the film, reviews, and articles written about the film. Gray does not privilege the feature above what could be considered peripheral objects, by arguing that the paratext "constructs, lives in, and can affect the running of a text" (2010: 6). The paratext for Gray is not something that merely informs the meaning of the source text, but it produces and manipulates meaning. They "are not simply add-ons, spinoffs and also-rans: they create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them" (2010: 6).

Gray outlines the two ways an audience can come to a paratext, firstly as "entryway paratexts", which are the first interaction for the audience, attempting to guide their reading of the source text, and secondly as "*in media res* paratexts", which are viewed by an audience "during or after" consuming the intended source text (2010: 23). The recut trailer could fall into either category, as it can be the only interaction an audience has with the source texts, or the recut trailer can be watched in relation to the source text, potentially informing and manipulating how the source text can be viewed. One recut trailer is also an entryway into other recut trailers and promotional material – as Burgess (2008) argues, some videos on YouTube act as hubs that encourage the creation of other related videos. In recut trailers, this can mean that one recut acts as the opening to the world of others, separated from the feature film.

If trailers and other seemingly peripheral materials can “give birth to a text” in their announcing and anticipatory functions, trailers or similar objects can “create wholly different texts” (Gray 2010: 63). Gray discusses the role of the recut trailer, and the “pleasures” of watching the recut *Shining*:

While the pleasures and humor involved in watching this trailer depend on being aware of how accurately it advertises Stanley Kubrick’s film about a father who goes crazy in an isolated and haunted mountain hotel, and while it was unlikely to have changed an audience member’s understanding of *The Shining* as such, it once more illustrates a trailer’s ability to play with and radically augment a film’s genre. (2010: 63-64)

Using Gray’s dichotomy of media paratexts, the *Shining* recut trailer is only humorous and pleasurable, Gray suggests, if the trailer is being consumed as an “*in media res* paratext”, in that the feature has already been consumed. The displacement of genre leads to a rereading or reframing of the text, as Gray argues, and production is consistent and open-ended (2010: 64-65). While the concept of the paratext is a valuable lens through which to discuss recut trailers, this thesis does not adopt this terminology or mode of analysis. In the above passage, the potential meaning of the recut trailer is contingent on watching the feature film it refers to, and yet other objects can be consumed to make an audience literate and aware of the displacement of the trailer. One of the crucial elements of recut trailers is the awareness of the tropes of advertising, and this can be achieved through watching other recut trailers, or being aware of a film in a generalised way.

Johnston refers to recut trailers briefly in his comprehensive work on the history of film trailers and technology. He argues that because “trailers are always early adopters of technology”, they will often be one of the first media artefacts to experiment (2009: 158). Johnston suggests that the recut trailer, and in particular, the communal nature of the recut may notionally hint to an increasing popularity.

Technology has also allowed fan cultures to re-image the trailer format as a site of empowerment, creating participatory works that still reflect dominant trailer conventions, while gently mocking the format. YouTube has revolutionized how fans access a variety of trailer texts...(2009: 158)

Similarly, Johnston positions technology as an active agent in the creation of the text. Johnston also notes the play with the form of the trailer, and the fan-like intimate knowledge of the form of the trailer that the recut creator “gently mock[s]”. Jensen takes this further to argue that recut trailers “lampoon” popular culture, in their adoption of marketing techniques to disassemble and reassemble a film (2013).

Johnston argues that the recut trailer “exist[s] because of the changing technological opportunities open to trailer producers, both amateur and professional, and the development of new dissemination venues” (2009: 158). As he also notes, the recut trailer exists in order for the user to “disseminate their work, expand their reputation in the fan community” (2009: 151), and ensure that their favourite film continues to exist in popular culture. This is true of some recut trailers, mainly those that specifically engage in fandom such as the *Twilight* trailers discussed in Chapter Four. Recuts exist in part because of technological developments throughout cinema’s

history, but the social cultural dynamics of those spaces also lead to their creation.

The recut trailer for Johnston is heavily tied to notions of the dedicated fan who is part of a community – rather than a casual consumer who stumbles across the recut trailer – with a focus on the *production* of the trailer, rather than its *consumption*.

Considering recuts as fan objects limits analysis of their dissemination and consumption; Johnston refers to *Brokeback Mountain* recuts as fan objects, which this thesis argues do not exhibit fandom of the source film, but rather a demonstration of knowledge and play with film marketing, genre and intertextuality. Rather than purely being considered fan creations, recut trailers can be created and watched for other reasons, as per Gray's argument, as a demonstration of a deeper engagement with textual, marketing and cinematic conditions.

Shifting from recut as text to the networked object

This thesis seeks to open up these theoretical conditions of the recut trailer to a larger context; one that draws upon the role that space and temporality play in how recut trailers are consumed and produced. *Contra* Johnston and Gray, this thesis situates the recut trailer as a networked object, rather than a peripheral text or fan object. I argue that recuts are networked objects that extend beyond fan practices or the promotional narrative for a feature film.

More recent work on the recut trailer responds to the specific networked conditions of YouTube. Vicente Ortega (2013) refers to recuts as “spoof trailers” that “are trailers for a non-existent film that typically has a parodic tone, changing the genre of the

source film or films” (2013: 1). Ortega argues that recuts “re-define the role of the movie fan as an editing pasticheur who cuts and pastes diverse clips together to create a final product that, while inherently derivative, it also opens up new signifying and stylistic paths” (2013: 2). They exist as nodes, which create “their own relational networks”. Significantly, Ortega recognises how recuts or spoof trailers also feed back into cinematic culture, by playing into current trends, popular forms, and other cultural artefacts.

YouTube’s architecture helps to contribute to this feedback, by creating a space for this network to play out.

The hyperlinked functioning of the Internet has trained spectators in chains of relational audiovisual consumption. Understood in these terms, the success of spoof trailers in engaging the spectator in an aesthetic of appropriation works in partnership with this contiguity with similar contents that exist only a click away. Sites like YouTube or Vimeo present a set of choices to users once they have finished watching a particular clip, encouraging them to keep watching. Consequently, the media artifact is conceived within a chain of cultural objects that is potentially never-ending. This fact fundamentally alters the interface viewer/artifact in as much as it often fosters a chain of short viewing experiences that are inherently relational, pointing to a multifarious variety of aesthetic choices and ideological meanings. (Ortega 2013: 2)

The relational nature of YouTube helps to situate the recut trailer in amongst numerous other videos, as part of a longer chain of audiovisual material. Ortega

acknowledges the role of networks in understanding the recut trailer, shifting it away from fandom for a particular film to movie fandom more broadly. Recut trailers embody how users navigate, consume and produce a wide array of cultural artefacts, of which cinema forms a part, alongside television, music and other videos. Gray discusses these chains of connectedness as ‘highlighters’ or ‘underliners’ (2010: 154), which emphasise elements of the source film, and show unearthed connections, and omit other elements of the source. This reflects how users encounter and recycle content online, choosing elements from a broad range of material, constantly seeking more. Ortega labels users as “poly-network subjects” who “know well there are too many other stimuli waiting to be activated, discarded or simply forgotten” (2013: 14).

While recut trailers embody elements of digital culture, online conditions are not solely responsible for the emergence of the recut trailer. Ortega characterises the recut trailer as a “web-specific” form (2013: 3). By comparison, this thesis seeks to situate the recut trailer in a longer history of practices that draws upon early cinematic histories of recutting and mash-ups, and is emblematic of a history of experimentation in the form of the film trailer.

Fandom, practices and fan objects

Digital objects created by users have often been considered in relation to fan studies. While fan studies as a discipline originally acted as a provocation to how audiences and users of media were considered (inherently passive, or as non-producers), fan studies scholars have actively, and crucially, helped to reposition the debate. Instead, I wish to outline the limitations of fan studies in studying other forms of productive

labour online; objects such as the recut trailer may be indebted to previous fan practices but they are not solely fan objects.

Everybody knows what a ‘fan’ is. It’s somebody who is obsessed with a particular star, celebrity, film, TV programme, band; somebody who can produce reams of information on their object of fandom, and can quote their favoured lines or lyrics, chapter and verse. Fans are often highly articulate. Fans interpret media texts in a variety of interesting and perhaps unexpected ways. And fans participate in communal activities – they are not ‘socially atomised’ or isolated viewers/readers. (Hills 2002: ix)

Hills’ definition of a fan is characteristic of fan studies to date. The considerable emphasis placed on films in media and cultural academic discourse tends to centre around validating fans as the subjects of study; championing their articulate nature and media literacy; their engagement with production and consumption; and, above all, how their ‘obsession’ with a media text is not deviant. These observations of fan culture are important interventions, and these studies have greatly contributed to staking claim as to how audiences are perceived (active, not passive; creators, not receivers). This intervention has often been a personal one for researchers, who ‘out’ themselves as fans (see Bird 2003; Jenkins 1992) either of the specific texts they discuss, or as fans more generally. This brings authenticity to the researcher studying fan communities – demonstrating that being positioned in the field allows for a type of speaking on behalf of fans. More importantly, this outing serves as both an admission of personal interest, but also as a way of placing the fan in academic discourse; attempting to negate the idea that fans are isolated, young, deviant and strange.

The history of the fan is one that is marked by media coverage as being deviant and frivolous (Jenkins 1992; Barbas 2001). As Jenkins identifies, this treatment of fans “calls into question the logic by which others order their aesthetic experiences” (2006a: 39). This treatment is one that situates interaction with cultural objects in a high/low divide, and the fan is seen as the excess of the low; they not only consume ‘low’ media, but they become *obsessed* with it. Fan studies sought to act as an intervention in this discourse, to appropriate how cultural capital is understood – portraying fans as articulate, and allowing the objects of their fandom to speak for a broader interaction with culture. Jenkins characterised this intervention as “an effort to intervene in public policy debates that have a significant impact on the communities” he researches (2006: 6).

Arguing against the notion that media viewers are passive, the fan is characterised as active, as a non-casual consumer, regardless of the medium they are consuming. Bird argues that “[m]ost people, most of the time are fairly casual media users. Surrounded by media on every side, we pick and choose the moments when we really pay attention and genuinely become involved” (2003: 51). Taking this idea that the fan is a dedicated media viewer who pays particular attention to an object, Barbas in discussing film fandom argues, “it is the story of the way that fans refused to accept mass culture passively and, instead, became actively involved in their entertainment” (2001: 4). Jenkins, reflecting on his foundational study of fandom, acknowledges that the rather utopian descriptions of the practices of fans are to do with defensive motives, rather than critical consideration:

Poachers described a moment when fans were marginal to the operations of our culture, ridiculed in the media, shrouded with social stigma, pushed underground by legal threats, and often depicted as brainless and inarticulate. (Jenkins 2006: 1)

As Williamson (2005) suggests, this characterisation of the ‘duty’ of the researchers to change the perception of fans is in need of perspective. Williamson argues that fans are “likened to guerilla fighters, making tactical raids on the structures of the powerful by poaching from their texts” (2005: 98). This utopian embrace of fandom as a story of those rising up and overthrowing power in a bloody coup is perhaps a mischaracterisation; situating “the middle-class, white, educated fan” as an “oppressed rebel”, ignoring the “elitist distinctions that fans make” (2005: 102).

Fan culture was originally conceived as a “mode of resistance” (Williamson 2005: 97), and this history is an important one in the broader evolving discussion about audiences, producers and consumers. Although the rush to claim fans as revolutionaries (according to the tropes Williamson identifies in Jenkins’ work) is not engaged with actual fan practices, and by comparison, likens ‘normal’ media consumers as inadequate or lacking in engagement – negating the initial purpose of the study of fans – giving power back to audiences:

The radical claims about the character of fandom are related to view of the fan as socially subordinate. For instance, as part of his original claims of resistance, Jenkins argued that all fans operate from a position of cultural marginality and social weakness (1992: 26). Jenkins conceives of fandom as an

alternative community ‘whose values might be more humane and democratic than those held by mundane society’ (1992: 281). (Williamson 2005: 100)

The fan is thus the more intelligent spectator; *he* is consistently active. Here, the fan is the bastion of democratic media; fuelled by the spread of the internet, the fan is the leader of an intelligent active community.

In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins proposes that there is a difference between interactivity and participation – terms that are generally used in the place of the other (2006).

Jenkins argues that interactivity can be understood as the way in which a user or audience interacts with the available technology, such as using a remote control, accessing a DVD’s special features menu, or creating a playlist (2006: 133).

Participation is “shaped by the cultural and social protocols” surrounding production, such as social norms permitting a certain level of polite conversation, situating it “less under the control of media producers and more under the control of media consumers” (2006: 133). Tied to these definitions are demarcations between amateurs and professional, a binary that while blurred at times in Jenkins’ discussion is central to his charting of the movements and interactivity in fandom.

Nostalgically, fan practices are perpetually linked to the “DIY culture” of punks (Jenkins 2006: 132), long periods of time where the fan engages with a text or networks (Hills 2002), and other trademarks of the obsessed amateur. Jenkins, for example, likens fan practices disseminated by new media to that of photocopied zines and pamphlets of earlier fans, proposing that these practices – such as the recut trailer – have always existed, but now they are more visible, “push[ing] that hidden layer of

cultural activity into the foreground” (2006: 133). This calls into question the role of space in fostering networks.

Characterisations of fans often situate them historically in an allegedly depoliticised domestic sphere, emerging from their homes where they subvert ‘professionals’ to perform their fan status; either through written or otherwise expressed texts, or through conventions or meetings. Once in the public sphere, the fan then becomes an object of study – the traces they leave such as zines, fan made tributes, dossiers and so forth, become publicly available capital with which to define fan practices. However, the popularity of recut trailers – often directed at several films or materials at once, not demonstrating a particular longstanding fondness and obsession that has previously defined the fan – suggests a re-categorisation of some fan practices, and perhaps of what constitutes a fan.

While recut trailers are not always created by fans and should not be characterised as a fandom, fan studies offers a framework through which to understand elements of the group dynamics behind the creation of recuts. Nancy Baym, in her study of Swedish independent music fandom argues that fandoms “pool and generate collective intelligence and affect”, and they are a “harbinger of cultural phenomena to come” (2007: np). Fan communities encourage the production of objects, and new readings of older texts. While these connections and interactions with culture may now be seen in a multitude of spaces and through a variety of objects such as the recut trailer, fan videos can be seen as a “harbinger of cultural phenomena to come” and in relation to cinema history cultural phenomena that was. While the creators of recuts

may not be fans of the source films or programs they augment, they have appropriated the tools of fandom.

Participatory culture and memes

Related to the aims of fan studies, recut trailers are also discussed in relation to memes and participatory culture. Richard Dawkins defined the term “meme” in 1976 “to describe small units of culture that spread from person to person by copying or imitation” (Shifman 2013: 2). The term ‘meme’ is now used to describe a wide array of objects online, from viral videos to image macros (memetic images with text added), it is often misused, particularly by the news media, to refer to anything online, regardless of whether or not it is copied or imitated. As Shifman notes, the terms ‘meme’ and ‘viral’ are often interchangeable, and there is little agreement as to the meaning of either term. Popular memes have included videos such as recut trailers, lip-synched videos, image macros such LolCats which overlay an image of a cat with text in Impact font. Memes embody “some of the most fundamental aspects of contemporary digital culture”, which “diffuse from person to person” while they “shape and reflect general social mindsets” (2013: 4). Memes are thus a way of labeling imitation, reproduction and copying, while also crucially, easily disseminated. Online social spaces thus encourage memes through their architecture, but this is also through the agency of meme creators and consumers that memes spread and become popular, and creativity is central to the spread of memes (Burgess 2008: 108).

This thesis adopts Shifman’s definition of memes as:

(a) a *group of digital items sharing common characteristics* of content, form, and/or stance; (b) that were created *with awareness of each other*; and (c) were circulated, imitated and/or transformed *via the Internet by many users*. (2013: 7-8)

This reworking of the original definition of meme proposed by Dawkins reflects the specifically digital nature of contemporary memes. Moreover, Shifman's definitions pays attention to the mode of distribution and dissemination online; memes are created to be shared with many people. Whereas Dawkins' original definition of memes included examples such as catchphrases, parts of a song, and so on (1976), Shifman's updated definition speaks to the role that digital culture has played in the content of memes, the awareness of other memes that existing in a networked space brings, and crucially the interconnectedness of memes to popular culture and public events. Memes are incredibly self-aware objects created by pop culture-literate users, who demonstrate insider knowledge of their referents, and are a way of publicly engaging and intervening in culture. They can also be a way of participating in civic life, and serve as commentary on politics and ideology, demonstrating connections that people make between events, objects and texts. In this way, they reflect back popular culture, serving as objects of the event of consuming popular culture. Memes tend to build and be shared "gradually" (2013: 6), and they are symptomatic of the conflation of producer and consumer in digital media. Thus, memes are an entry point through which to analyse and contemplate digital culture.

Memes can be understood as a product of "participatory culture", which has become a widely studied area in the work of Jenkins (2006), Lessig (2008) and Burgess and Green (2009). Participatory culture refers to the blurring of boundaries between

producers and consumers, between amateur and professional – if these terms can still be considered productive categories. As Burgess and Green identify, participatory culture is at the heart of YouTube; it is no longer the domain of DIY productions, but has been monetised and commoditised. Broadcast media, often considered on the opposite of an oft-quoted binary between digital media, turns to participatory culture in its coverage of events – tweets are included on news broadcasts, viral videos are reported on talk shows and in current affairs, and newspapers request and use photographs and videos from audiences in their coverage. Despite how ubiquitous participatory culture appears in all facets of the media, broadcast or otherwise, as Ryan Milner identifies, gatekeepers and hierarchies still operate in the development, dissemination and consumption of participatory culture (2012: 6). Speaking of the charms of an amateur-led participatory culture can also imply a clean break with prior practices.

So while a culture may certainly be more ‘participatory’ when amateur media networks allow for increased voice and reach from cultural participants, wrapping the phenomenon under the moniker ‘participatory culture’ can imply the wrong things. It can imply that we *weren’t* participating during eras of oral communication, print communication, or broadcast communication. (2012: 7)

For these reasons, Milner argues for distinguishing participatory culture from “mediated cultural participation” (2012: 8). He recommends using “mediated cultural participation” to refer to “circulation-mediated engagement with public discussion or social representation, particularly within those amateur media networks that so mark

the potential for voice and reach in digital culture”, while participatory media refers to the “specific artifacts and networks themselves” (2012: 8).

Replicability is central to the success and distribution of memes: as Milner notes, digitally mediated communication allows for the sharing of clips and other objects across time and space (2012: 12). In short, “replicability affords remix”, without remix Milner argues, “there are no memes” (2012: 12). The ability to augment is central to meme culture, as well as to the transmission of memes. As memes are easy to reproduce and change, they encourage the creation of future memes. Memes are consequently not fixed or finite; by their very nature they are transient. While intertextuality is an important element of memes, in their literacy of popular culture and interconnectedness, memes also generate their own contexts. This understanding of digital culture and the objects that are created and circulated online provides a theoretical foundation for the claims made in this thesis. While recut trailers are in part dedicated to practices that have emerged from fandom and fan objects as well as the process of closing reading and subverting popular culture, the study of memes takes into consideration the role that change plays in a networked space as a method to encourage and propel future creations.

Mememes cannot be separated from the discourses that they draw upon. As Milner claims, mememes “often reappropriate dominant discourses: summer blockbusters...public figures...pop culture staples...and political movements” (2012: 22). But this reappropriation does not liberate the mememes from the content they appropriate; “mememes are used to represent discourses and identities, and anytime this occurs there’s political work occurring too” (2012: 22). For these reasons, mememes can

be considered as an exemplary embodiment of participatory media, as well as a clue into how audiences interact and engage with representation, identity and other discourse (2012: 22-23). Recut trailers have acted as political intervention or commentary, for instance, College Humor's *Head of Skate* was based on comments made by actor Matt Damon about the suitability of Sarah Palin to be the vice president of the United States in the 2008 presidential election. But in a broader sense, recut trailers act as commentary and a mirroring of the ways that Hollywood attempts to sell films to their audiences, and the lengths to which they go to construct a film as appealing. Trailers are known to mislead audiences, and recuts co-opt the act of being misled to make it appealing, humorous and playful. They also demonstrate superiority in the knowledge of these tools, the generic tropes that are used, and the way that Hollywood seems to construct audiences in their appeal to them. Recut trailers encourage misreading, and they cannot be separated from the marketing, advertising and commercial interests that they upend.

Recut trailers can be considered as memes, particularly in the role of collective intelligence that Kate Miltner (2011) identifies as being central to the production and popularity of memes. This is particularly seen when many recut trailers are produced around one source text, building upon individual elements of the original trailer. For instance, *The Social Network* parody trailers consistently copied and slightly altered dialogue from the theatrical trailer for comic effect. Similarly, the *Brokeback Mountain* trailers used the soundtrack and text from the theatrical trailer to reposition an existing film into the narrative world of *Brokeback*. While recuts can be considered as memes, this study seeks to extend understanding of recuts to include connections that may not be textual. Studies of memes provide a framework through which to consider

the relationship between recuts, digital culture, and collective intelligence that draws upon the role of creativity, humour and interconnectedness.

Reworking content and YouTube

It is impossible to consider the recut trailer as an object of study without first understanding the specific qualities of YouTube as a space, and the cultural practices that emerge from YouTube. One of the central ways that I am interested in exploring YouTube's dynamics is through the tension between the 'new' and the 'old'. YouTube has been considered as a repository for older material, making large amounts of audiovisual material more easily available. An advertisement can exist on YouTube long after the product it refers to is available; a breaking news clip can become archived footage removed from its immediacy; and a long cancelled television show's theme song can be watched for nostalgic purposes. Hildebrand argues that YouTube "offer[s] new and remediating relationships to texts that indicate changes and acceleration of spectatorial consumption" (2007: 49). He proposes that YouTube functions as a collection of memories, which in turn form a "portal of cultural memory" (2007: 54), amplified by the ability to create playlists and channels, the design of YouTube encourages curation and sharing of these mediated memories. The process of archiving is central to the function and popularity of YouTube, as is the encouraging of new material made by users.

YouTube is a platform for numerous debates surrounding production and consumption within 'new' and 'traditional' media. As Burgess and Green outline:

Although it isn't the only video-sharing website on the Internet, YouTube's rapid rise, diverse range of content, and public prominence in the Western, English-speaking world make it useful for understanding the evolving relationships between new media technologies, the creative industries, and the politics of popular culture. (2009: vii)

Snickars and Vonderau discuss the rise of the popularity of YouTube as the place for online video as YouTube was able to attract audiences "in its ability to attract and distribute content" (2009: 10). They argue that in characterising YouTube as a "platform" to be "filled with" community content, YouTube was framed as something to be shaped by users (2009: 10). This, they argue, allowed YouTube to promote their site as an

... "empty" platform to be filled by the YouTube community with originally produced content of various kinds. In addressing amateurs, advertisers and professional producers alike, YouTube in fact made the term "platform" what it has become: a sales pitch that skips over tensions in services to be sold, as well as a claim that downplays the way YouTube as a cultural intermediary has fundamentally shaped public discourse over the past few years. (9-10).

Thus, YouTube has always been framed as a depository for content, but a depository that is guided by user desire, and dependent on their desire to access films in such a manner. YouTube claimed from the outset that this space was available for producers of all types – be they amateur or professional – and it was the "platform" that allowed this.

Alongside the dynamics between ‘old’ and ‘new’ is the perceived tension between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ content that YouTube’s platform allows to exist side by side. This has influenced popular culture and “public discourse” (Snickars and Vonderau 2009: 10) by both the diversity of content available in videos, the ease with which the site can be used, and how it aggregates content from both an amateur and professional divide (2009: 11; Uricchio 2009: 24). In this sense, YouTube has created “a clip culture that outpaces cinema and television...that holds the broadest repository of moving-image to date” (Snickars and Vonderau 2009: 11). While the presence of corporations helps to shape YouTube’s culture, the presence of corporate content does not equal views, interaction or sharing – this at the whim of other users.

...the purposes and meanings of YouTube as a cultural system are also collectively co-created by users. Through their many activities – uploading, viewing, discussing, and collaborating – the YouTube community forms a network of creative practice. (Burgess and Green 2009: 61)

These creative practices are at times at odds with the architecture of YouTube, which does not easily allow for “collaboration or collective participation” (Burgess and Green 2009: 63). The recut trailer can be understood in relation to this context, wherein recut trailers both embody amateur creations while also using professionally created content, while subverting the original industrial strategies.

These conditions make studying YouTube as a space difficult. Burgess and Green argue that YouTube is an “unstable object of study”, one that is “marked by dynamic chance...a diversity of content...and a similar quotidian frequency, or ‘everydayness’ as television” (2009: 6). There is a conflict between the “top-down” approach to

distributing culture, and a “bottom-up” approach to being a “platform for vernacular creativity” (2009: 6). YouTube is both a place for the mass media to broadcast their videos, and for user-generated content to reach an audience. This serves to challenge the traditional models of media distribution in the aforementioned ways; however, YouTube’s archival potential also makes its history traceable. That archive is also unstable: videos are deleted at whim, and the sheer amount of available videos can be difficult to navigate, as their accessibility relies on their uploader tagging it and naming it appropriately. The interplay between amateur and professional content in the same space presents challenges for researchers of YouTube.

YouTube has been “often spoken about as if it were a library, an archive, a laboratory or a medium like television”, mimicking previous debates about the introduction of new technologies being compared to other types of media, seeking to place a new space into “existing culture” (Snickars and Vonderau 2009: 13). Snickars and Vonderau argue that there are similarities between YouTube and existing types of media, but that the specific technical directives that YouTube provides to its audience allow for increased interaction. The tagging system on YouTube, for instance, makes the networked nature of content visible, traceable and interactive. Lange’s (2007) study of YouTube participants and interactions provides a comprehensive foundation through which to understand the social dynamics of the site-specific participation. Her typology of YouTube users ranges from those who do not log into their account to view content to those who have become famous through their interaction on YouTube (2007: 4-5). This range of categories allows for a more inclusive picture of YouTube’s functions, tying together the use of the site alongside its architecture. While this thesis does not include an ethnographic study of the users who upload and

consume recut trailers, Lange's typology forms the base assumptions to which this study is aligned. Comments, tags and descriptions form part of the ways that users can interact with videos, yet part of this network is silent, traceable only in views on each video. Furthermore, the presence of YouTube celebrities or YouTubers (those who have an intense engagement with YouTube and see themselves as part of a community) in Lange's study also speaks to the status that individual users will have to a broader community, and how this status may in turn influence the amount of interaction of views a video may receive.

Burgess and Green argue that YouTube "forms a network of creative practice", as its purposes are "co-created by users" (2009: 61). These creative practices are at times at odds with the architecture of YouTube, which does not easily allow for "collaboration or collaborative participation" (2009: 63). More involved users of YouTube do collaborate and participate collectively, however, these interactions may be filtered out to the more casual user in Lange's typology. As the "website's visual design is consistently dominated by thumbnails or videos, not user profiles, groups or conversations; groups are far from easy to find using keyword searches and, like videos, they are ranked quantitatively (2009: 63). The "community rhetoric" present throughout YouTube's design is at odds with the architecture of the site, which encourages "individual participation, rather than collaborative activity; any opportunities for collaboration have to be specially created by the YouTube community itself, or by special invitation from the company" (2009: 65). This argument recognises the limitations of considering subsets of videos such as recut trailers as a community; while users have made do with the aspects of YouTube's architecture that allow them to track other recut trailers by creating playlists and or

subscribing to channels of users who create them, coming across a recut trailer would involve keyword searching and rely on the uploader's correct use of tagging and video description. Some users do attempt to navigate this deficiency by appropriating available tools in YouTube to create a traceable network: annotations in videos are used to link to videos that inspired the creator or to similar work (Burgess and Green 2009: 67). In this way, YouTube has inspired "user-led innovation", which reflects the role that users have played in the evolution of YouTube, both in the content of videos and the conventions that have been adopted by users which liberate them from the architecture of the site. For these reasons, it is crucial to understand the networked screen of YouTube – as one that both fosters and hinders connections, through the interplay between use and architecture.

Networked screens and computation

I argue that recut trailers should be considered in relation to a broader historical study of sets of practices and the objects that remain as traces of those events. In doing so, paying attention to the variety of spaces in which the trailer has been consumed is integral. While the recut trailer has evolved out of the screen histories that I have gone into so far in this chapter, attention must also be paid to the unique conditions of the networked screen of YouTube. What role does the screen play in the evolution of the recut trailer? Haidee Wasson (2007) argues that "screens provide a primary interface between the forms and inhabitants that constitute digital culture" (74). As cinema has evolved – and with it, the "material, corporate and technological conditions" of the production of cinema and its dissemination – viewers and producers have been forced to "reorient their conceptual tools" (2007: 75). In other

words, as cinema has been shifted onto different screens and through different delivery technologies, a conceptual negotiation has taken place. This can be seen in each different application of the trailer to a new delivery technology, but perhaps no more pertinently than the experimentation and failure that went along with the introduction of trailers to television. As will be explored in Chapter Three, the first attempt to introduce trailers as advertisements on television failed, as the grandeur of theatrically released trailers did not reflect the popular uses of television (Johnston 2009). These approaches were later abandoned for close-ups, which better understood the television as a *screen* – becoming advertisements not only for the cinema as a separate site of consumption, but for cinema as a cultural object that could be integrated into the home through the television screen.

Wasson argues that

Screens are nodes in complex networks. They indicate a moment of performance when otherwise indistinguishable inscriptions – whether composed of chemical and light or code and cable - become an encounter between a viewer and intelligible image. These encounters can, of course, occur in the context of screens that are both permanent and impermanent. (2007: 76)

Screens are thus linked in networks, and remain material residues of the moving images that frequent across them. In the case of many screens, they “endure through times”, intruding into our everyday practice by their presence in lounge rooms, computer desks and public spaces (Wasson 2007: 76). They “are not autonomous

forces but intimate consorts of specific material and institutional networks”, reflecting the “logics of the systems and structures that produce and sustain them” (2007: 76). Screens are a material reminder of what was fleeting, remaining an object left from an event. They are spatial, and given meaning in specific temporal moments by that which is projected onto them or through them, but also by their lingering potential. Screens in this sense come to embody anticipation.

Online video is projected via two screens – the computer screen or the screen of the mobile device that acts as a delivery technology, and the screen through which the video is watched – whether it is a QuickTime window or through a YouTube player. Online videos on YouTube become visible through these two screens. This duality is not specific to online video. As Wasson points out, movies “have long been a part of temporally and spatially specific material networks, made up of film canisters, the methods used to transport 35mm prints, and so on” (2007: 77). Each actor in this network is central to the delivery of cinema – a film would not exist without the methods by which it is circulated and distributed.

Distribution and exhibition networks shape the cultural life of any given film or group of films, sending cameras but also spreading their products – images – over vast expanses of geographic space and time, linking centre to periphery, then to now. In other words, technologies of distribution and exhibition constitute key elements of the ideological circuits in which moving images have long travelled, through which they have been thought about, and how they have come to look. This fact implicates films necessarily in highly rationalized and also makeshift networks, ranging from federal mail systems,

trade borders, and global transportation grids to newspaper swap pages and clandestine exchange among private collectors. (Wasson 2007: 77)

The mobility of the object and the screen is important to consider. Not only is the narrative of a film, or the technical methods used to tell that narrative the only thing to consider when analysing film, but the other aspects of the material network in which the narrative is a part. Each element of this network impacts upon the other – cinema is an object, a system of distribution, and a “screened aesthetic” (Wasson 2007: 77). Wasson’s approach reflects considering cinema as an integral part of everyday life, in its role as a material object. It is networked not only to this role, but also to our everyday practices through its presence in spaces such as shopping malls and online, but also by representing everyday existence. QuickTime, for instance, as a network, consists of code, the browser through which the video is accessed, networks, and servers which all play a part in the final product of the video (Wasson 2007: 81; Sobchack 1999). The video is then subject to being downloaded and potentially augmented and shared.

The mobility of the screen has increased the likelihood of encountering images in everyday practice (Acland 2009: 149). As we move into, occupy and leave space, images enter our field of vision and then disappear (2009: 149). Screens and our relationship to them are consequently both temporal and spatial, “represent[ing] links between dispersed spectatorial conditions, and are best seen as a network built to move texts around” (2009: 149). With the ability to gather people around them, or “moving with people”, they act as an entry point into a multitude of networks, where more content than ever before is available on demand. This mobility also brings with

it an increased ability to access the past, to use networked screens as part of everyday practice and encounters with urban environments. Through new screens we access, invite or deny images, and the recut trailer has been one method to project individual and mass desires onto this networked screen.

Analysing the recut trailer on YouTube: Methods and approaches

One of the primary aims of this thesis is to position the recut trailer as a networked object – as a hub that houses a series of connections. I understand these connections as spatial, temporal, technological, cultural and social. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks in meme studies, fandom, YouTube and participatory culture, and studies of film advertising and trailers, I have set out to create an inter-disciplinary framework through which to approach recuts. Considering recuts as a text promotes an approach that only defines and analyses those textual elements. By comparison, I look at the spatial, temporal and textual dimensions of the recut. Before launching into this analysis, it is important to lay out this focus on the object and to define the methodological bounds of this study.

Upon embarking on this study, I adopted Lash and Lury's approach to charting "things" in a global media landscape. They identify seven different media objects and chart their presence in a variety of spaces and contexts. In their words, I have endeavoured to "follow the object" (2007: 16). In doing so, the intent of this study is to create a "biography of the object" which has tracked the history of the object, and how it has been produced, circulated and consumed paying particular attention to "how the object has transformed – and does it transform from stage to stage, context

to context” (2007: 16). Drawing upon the work of Appadurai (1986), they argue “this approach does not privilege or focus exclusively on one moment in an object’s life: its production, or its circulation in, for example, publicity or advertising, or its reception” (2007: 19). Instead, what emerges is a set of relations that the object is imbricated in, and which it embodies. In understanding this set of relations, it is crucial to give equal measure to the roles of distribution, consumption and production (2007: 19). By conflating the distinction, or to place importance on one to the detriment of all others leads to ignoring the “delicately balanced sequence of relations”, instead replacing them with “a simplistic set of reductions, ignoring changes in objects as they circulate network trajectories, cycles of ‘lives’ of production, promotion and reception” (2007: 19; Lury 1993).

In going about “following the objects”, I have followed these guidelines:

Very simply, you find out as much about them in as many places in time and space from as many points of view as possible. To do this, we decided to employ not only situational observation, but also processes of observation that were attentive to the temporality of the (subjects and) objects concerned. Our assumption was that an object only makes sense if it is experienced (Crary 1992). And it must be experienced from a point of view. (Lash and Lury 2007: 20)

Consequently, by approaching recuts as objects that moved through temporal and spatial networked trajectories, I began archiving the trailers. This archiving needed to be limited in scope, and so by looking at recut trailers uploaded between 2005 and 2012, I limited my archive to 200 trailers. This archive allowed me to identify

common trends of production. However, the archive was insufficient in taking in information other than what was included in the trailer. While common tropes quickly became apparent (such as the inclusion of the Motion Picture Association of America ratings slide, the use of music, voiceover and text), it also became apparent that the meaning made by recuts extended beyond looking at how the trailers were put together and what source texts they evoked. In order to understand “how things actually move, how they ‘transition’ between many states”, a new approach had to be adopted that came to the recut with the “methodological assumption that media are objects” which calls into question the common understanding that media are texts (Lash and Lury 2007: 19-29). This required shifting beyond ‘reading’ the trailers to instead consider “perception experience and operability” (2007: 29). This requires the researcher to be “ontologized and mobile”, descending into the world inhabited by the objects studied, and tracking their movements (2007: 29).

YouTube’s social and technological dynamics played a crucial role in the methodological design of this thesis. The archive did not have the capacity to reflect what was potentially one of the important facets of the recut trailer in a networked space: its relationship to other videos and media. Following the objects also became difficult in the vast space of YouTube. Burgess and Green’s study of YouTube videos involved collecting videos based on a particular quantifiable quality – looking at videos labeled ‘most popular’ at points in time in 2007 (2009: 9). While I originally intended to follow this method, identifying recut trailers by their name and labels alone relies on uploaders to correctly identify the video.

Furthermore, descending into the space of YouTube as a researcher required paying attention to the social dynamics of YouTube, and the tensions between its architecture and use. Analysing videos on YouTube allows the researcher to both reflect on the “vernacular creativity” (Burgess and Green 2009: 6) of uploaders, as well as the way in which videos are consumed. Defining YouTube as a social space, Burgess and Green claim asks “us to think about the uses of YouTube by real people as part of everyday life and as part of the mix of media we all use as part of our lives, rather than thinking about YouTube as if it is a weightless depository of content” (2009: 8-9). Therefore, in order to analyse all facets of YouTube requires looking beyond the amount of videos or relying on statistical data. That approach does not engage with the role that social interaction plays, or other qualitative virtues of the site. Instead, looking at a subset of videos can help to understand the “common culture” of the site (2009: 10); of which recut trailers form a part.

Snickars and Vonderau characterise researching YouTube as:

[i]nteracting with YouTube is reminiscent of using archives or libraries, but it is also similar to zapping through televisions channels, the difference being that tags link content to similar content in YouTube’s media flow. If a clip turns out to be uninteresting, there are still millions of other trails to be followed, either by clicking on a linked video or by performing a new search. (2009: 15)

The seemingly complicated organisation of YouTube’s architecture makes retrieving relatively easy for the viewer who is searching for something, but difficult for the

researcher attempting to capture a widespread trend. The increased focus on personalised results in YouTube's design only magnifies this issue. Consequently, this study works from the assumption that consumers come to a recut trailer through a variety of ways that are characteristic of their use of YouTube more broadly and speak to Lange's typology of YouTube users who range from casual consumer to celebrity (2007). That is, recut trailers can be accessed by directly searching for them, stumbling across a video, through it being shared directly in an article or by a friend, or by accident. In conducting the research for this project, I wanted to capture these movements. Searching by 'recut', 'fan trailer' or 'fake trailer' delivered many videos, but left others out that were popular. As such, I turned to a combination of searching and 'wayfinding' (Lynch 1960) as a method to retrieve trailers and understand their position in the space of YouTube.

Lynch's study of wayfinding in American cities found that users of a space tended to move in predictable ways, taking information from five common elements of spaces: landmarks, paths, edges, nodes and districts. These elements help a user to orientate themselves in a space, and make the use relational to its design. The design of a city is a "temporal art", in which a user draws upon their memories, surroundings and "the sequences of events leading up to" their use of the space (1960: 1). Lynch calls for understanding the static elements of a space alongside the movement, and applying this to a way of using YouTube, this requires drawing attention to the markers that help guide a user through the space. For instance, the search function of YouTube, tags, descriptions, related videos, categories and the playback features lead to a certain use of the space that aligns with its architecture. Wayfinding "devices" such as

maps and signs guide a user, alongside their particular memories and previous experiences of a space that exist as a “generalized mental picture” (1960: 3).

Individual and mass desire plays a vital role in the use of YouTube and online, dynamic social spaces. Psychogeography and the Situationist International movement further allows us to consider the effects of an urban environment on the movement and desires of individuals (Taylor and Harris 2007: 111). Psychogeography involved wandering the city – at times using a map for a different city to navigate (Taylor and Harris 2007: 112). The Situationists encouraged spontaneous group behavior that resisted the order of the city imposed by urban design, and allowed for individuals to move amongst it according to their own desires and responses to that environment.

The aim of the psychogeographer is to pay attention to the use of a space, to co-opt and subvert its design (Stein 1987: 3). This relates to Burgess and Green’s (2009) description of user-led innovation in YouTube, which involves utilising structural qualities of YouTube to create social links that are not encouraged by its architecture. In a ‘beginner’s guide’ to psychogeography MacFarlane recommends picking up a map and drawing a ring anywhere on the map, which you then go out and follow, paying attention to the visual and physical elements of that space. Rather than only studying how humans affect space it is also the study of how space affects humans (Lefebvre 1991). The map in this study is the space of YouTube; in which recut trailers are uploaded and shared. I limited space by searching for objects, and then following links through related videos in order to find similar videos, interchanging this technique with searching for videos. One of the primary questions emerging from this thesis is how recut trailers can demonstrate uses of YouTube from its launch,

reflecting the relationship between users and architecture in a networked space.

Wayfinding and following the objects ensures reflection on this dynamic, and has fed experience into analysis of the archive.

Conclusion

As recut trailers have not been the subject of a lengthy study, a range of methods and disciplines have been drawn upon in this thesis. This chapter has reiterated the current characterisations of film advertising, film trailers and recut trailers and highlighted the points of departure this thesis will take from existing work. Shifman (2013) and Milner's (2012) discussion of memes serves as a foundation from which to approach objects such as recut trailers, while looking more broadly to the role of digital objects that draw upon a range of other social uses of technology. This chapter has outlined how considering recut trailers alongside historical accounts of media use can develop a broader understanding of the co-option of media and technology to create, disseminate and consume networked objects. Rather than positioning recut trailers as a rupture from an antiquated past, this study shows how recuts have evolved from a long history of cinematic and participatory practices, while still remaining emblematic of the contemporary negotiation of cinema into online, networked spaces.

Chapter Three

Recut Trailers and Technological Histories: The Evolution of Film Trailers and Historical Precedents of Recutting

In 1912 or 1913, one of the first trailers was screened for a film that was part of a popular serialisation, *The Adventures of Kathlyn*, which starred Kathlyn Williams as a woman who explored the world and consequently often encountered trouble (Kernan 2004: 27; Greene 2013: np). The trailer literally trailed the film, and asked audiences to watch the next installment to see if Kathlyn would survive her ordeal (Greene 2013: np). This trailer was projected outside – not held within the walls of a theatre. While there is no definitive evidence that this was the first film trailer, the notion that one of the first trailers was part of a serial, and screened outside of the walls of a theatre begins a long history of the trailer as a site of experimentation. Trailers are consumed in various spaces, for a multitude of reasons that indicate an increasing delineation between the feature film, the cinema and the trailer, and point to its unstable nature from its origins.

This chapter develops two technological and cultural narratives that inform the recut trailer, demonstrating the practices, objects and histories they are indebted to. It also establishes the recut trailer within a marginalised account of media history. Firstly, it looks at the various methods in which film trailers have been distributed. This history charts the ways that the trailer has been introduced and integrated into a variety of modalities, demonstrating, as Johnston claims, that the trailer is an early “cross media” adopter (2010: 145), which has been crucial in negotiating cinematic culture

into emergent technologies. That is, the trailer has been a site for experimentation in attempts to negotiate cinema onto emerging screens, in both public spaces and the home.

Secondly, this chapter presents an evolution of the practice of *recutting* – the act of cutting and splicing together footage – from its origins in early cinema. This section will compare the practice of recutting in early American cinema (primarily in the first two decades of the twentieth century) to the recut trailer. My intention in providing both of these accounts is to place the trailer in relation to prior production and screening practices, demonstrating the practices and technological conditions that the recut trailer has drawn upon. These precedents are present throughout popular film history, and show how cinema has been a site of experimentation and negotiation. By drawing out moments from film and media history, this thesis outlines the broader historical biography of the recut trailer as object and practice.

Acland argues that there has been a “fetishization” of the ‘new’ in studies of media (2007: xix). As a result, these studies have largely not taken into consideration “continuity, fixity, and dialectal relations with existing practices, systems, and artifacts” (2007: xx). This chapter lays the groundwork for a longer history of practices and material artefacts that have led to the creation of recut trailers, in the process reading the old against the new. Which practices persist in contemporary media forms? How has the practice of recutting been used as a way to negotiate emergent media? How have trailers evolved, and what continuities, discontinuities, successes and failures are parts of this history? This chapter seeks to present relevant

historical narratives of the trailer and the practice of recutting, to avoid situating the recut trailer as a new or inherently digital object from a divorced past.

The shifting modalities of the recut trailer

This section outlines the various modes of screening the trailer, since its inception in 1912. The history of the trailer is presented chronologically, while also being demarcated by the impacts of technological change. The historical account below also focuses on depicting how emergent technologies have impacted upon the aesthetics of the trailer. I present this history as follows:

1. *1912-1940s*: The first trailer was arguably screened in 1912. During the first few decades of film trailers, there was a wide-ranging set of practices. For most of this time, studios did not create trailers; instead the National Screen Service created them. Trailers during this time experimented with the use of text and footage from the film. They also literally trailed the feature.
2. *1950s – 1960s*: These decades reflect the negotiation of the trailer into two new modes:
 - a) *Television*: Television trailers attempted to negotiate cinema into the home, using a domestic “rival screen” (Johnston 2009) to advertise the benefits of the cinema.
 - b) *The Drive-In*: The format of trailers was co-opted to help audiences navigate the drive-in, and was used by exhibitors to help sell products.
3. *1970s*: The 1970s saw the emergence of ‘high concept’ films (Wyatt 1994), in which the film industry attempted to create successful formulas for films, based

on the past successes of directors, actors or genre. Trailers reflected this change in the industry approach.

4. *1980s*: This decade saw the development of trailers on VHS, which made trailers portable for the first time, and allowed audiences to fast forward or replay trailers.
5. *1990s*: In the 1990s inclusion of the trailer on DVD as a special feature became common, which provided intimate knowledge to audiences of how a film was marketed. Trailers – for a film that was already purchased or rented – could be viewed on demand for the first time. At the same time, trailers were also forced upon their audience by the gradual inclusion of trailers that could not be skipped through – a change from trailers included on VHS. The 1990s also saw the first internet-based trailers released on promotional websites for specific, individual films. These trailers often relied on the soundtrack to convey the majority of information due to limited bandwidth. Mobile trailers were trialed as ‘push’ technology – sent to a customers’ mobile, rather than retrieved by the consumer.
6. *2000s*: Apple’s trailer website is launched, allowing audiences to view a catalogue of trailers outside of the cinema. YouTube is launched in 2006, which leads to trailers being uploaded by both individual users and studios. Recut trailers begin to be uploaded as well.

From silent films to talkies: Trailers from 1912 – 1940s

Trailers have long been a site for experimentation – a way of negotiating cinema into a multitude of spaces throughout media history, reflecting various degrees of studio

control and ties to promotion. Unfortunately, prior to 1922 “trailers were routinely destroyed, recycled, left to rot, over-exploited or rubbished” as they were “considered of little importance” (Green 2013: np). Richard Kozarski (1990) notes that advertisements and newsreels were present in the exhibition of features; forming audience expectations of what film curation would include – cinema was not only about the feature. Before the advent of the contemporary trailer, feature films were sold to potential audiences and exhibitors through print advertisements (Kozarski 1990). Exhibitors decided on the films that would appeal to an audience based on these advertisements, as films were sometimes only shown once in the period prior to the 1960s, and films were circulated faster than advertisements could make their way to audience members (Kozarski 1990). The need for trailers suggests that audiences and exhibitors were becoming more concerned with the *content* of the films they were viewing, rather than merely being drawn to cinema as a new and novel technology.

Although trailers later became synonymous with the cinematic space, one of the first trailers was shown outside of the theatre at an amusement part in New York (Kernan 2004: 12). The emergence of trailers points to the increasing role that the taste of audiences would play, rather than relying on the choices made by exhibitors. Early cinema typically involved a series of shorts, newsreels and other material curated by an exhibitor, and shown to the audience regardless of their preference for particular types of film (Korszarski 1990). As film-going became more commonplace, trailers became a way to appeal to audiences: the trailer for *Kathlyn* depicted a series of promises made to the audience of what was to come in the *Kathlyn* serial. The very first trailer also communicated directly to audiences, a trope that has not been abandoned throughout the history of trailer making. This mode of address has

evolved since its first appearance in 1912, but has remained in either spoken or written form, and has become one of the primary characteristics of the genre. According to Green (2013) and Hediger (2003), the “distributors of the Edison series *What Happened to Mary* thought to use the trailing, unexposed end of the reel – used to wrap and protect the film – to deliver salient information to an audience that had just consumed an installment” (Greene 2013: np). They argue that *The Adventures of Kathlyn* trailer built upon this idea by raising a question directly to audiences – will Kathlyn survive the pit of lions? (Hediger 2003; Greene 2013). In the following few years, these techniques of direct address and anticipation were developed to more closely mirror the trailers recognisable today. The trailer for *The Red Circle* used “copy, graphic design, moving images and the face of an acknowledged star...to alert the public to this coming attraction” (Greene 2013: np). Again, a question was posed to the audience: “What is the Red Circle?” and the trailer also used language that would become familiar to all film-goers, “Coming to this theater soon” (Green 2013: np).

Trailers in this era also occupied a complex relationship between industry and audiences, becoming a popular promotional form outside of studio control. Following the first trailers, trailers were not created or endorsed by studios; instead an outside body often created them. Although trailers were being experimented with since 1912, in 1919 “a company called National Screen Service (NSS) made crude 35mm film ads from transferred film stills (without the studio’s permission) and sold them to exhibitors to run following the feature film – hence the term ‘trailers’” (Kernan 2004: 25-26). Trailers were only one part of an evening’s entertainment, alongside films, newsreels and so on. Once these early trailers proved to be successful, the “studios soon realized the potential of trailers and began supplying NSS with film footage”

(2004: 25-26). Consequently, it was not only the studios that identified the need for an object such as the trailer, but the widespread adoption of trailers was due in part to their popularity following the NSS's creations. This demonstrates the crucial role that audiences have played in the enduring appeal of trailers that have enjoyed a history outside of studio-directed hype with a commercial imperative.

Furthermore, trailers during this period of cinema were every bit as experimental as the cinematic objects they conveyed and promoted; trailers followed cinema in its transition from silent to sound, and from existing as part of a night of curated footage to dedicated narrative features. Thus the trailer can be seen as an articulation of how cinema evolved and was sold to audiences, both as an object and a technology. But this selling of cinema did not necessarily originate from studios, nor was it necessarily screened within the walls of the cinema: these dynamics alter the prevailing characterisations of trailers, demonstrating a longer history of amateur productions that did not necessarily lead to profit for their creators. The history of early cinema trailers demonstrates experimentation with advertising forms in appealing to both exhibitors and audiences in attempting to situate film as an enduring form of entertainment.

The 1930s – 1940s

In the two decades that followed early trailers, we see continued experimentation with an increased focus on narrative and star appeal – two of the rhetorical categories that Kernan (2004) argues are central to trailers selling individual films and cinema more broadly. While early trailers may have appealed directly to audiences, trailers in the

1930s and 1940s became increasingly uniform in this mode of address, helping to cement these modes of communication as central to the trailer as genre, as seen in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1: Still from *Babes in Toyland Trailer* (1934)

While the trailers during this time might have “simply” been “scenes spliced together” from the completed feature film, they also began to demonstrate “increasingly sophisticated editing and graphic techniques” (Kernan 2004: 25). The use of graphics overlaid on footage improved upon the use of graphics in earlier trailers. Trailers also reflected industrial changes in cinematic history; in these two decades in particular, the format of trailers and their methods of appealing to audiences reflected the studio system at the time through appealing to audiences by focusing on studio star “machinery” (Kernan 2004: 25-26).

During these two decades some of the major studios also started producing trailers in house, though Warner Bros “was the only studio to do so throughout the early sound

era” (Kernan 2004: 25-26). The production of trailers has been fluid throughout trailer history, reflecting industry culture and economic institutions: here, the emergence of the major studios and the studio system. The studio system involved stars being signed contractually to a major studio and required to act in a stipulated amount of films. Studios chose actors and actresses to reflect their brand and competed to attract better stars and unearth unknowns; and, studios also released actors from contract if they did not perform well enough at the box office (Kernan 2004). Kernan argues that trailers appeal to audiences based on genre, narrative and stars. In the period of 1930s and 1940s, stars were increasingly considered to be a draw for audiences, whereas in the previous decades, film was itself enough of a draw as a new technology and a new form of leisure. Consequently, the focus on stars and the studio of production in trailers altered the methods through which film was sold, and led to the emergence of movie fandom (Barbas 2001), with audiences aligning themselves to particular stars or studios. Appeals to audience based on narrative also became more recognisable during this period:

The narrational component of trailers is also key to their production of meaning. Early trailers of course relied on intertitles, but beginning in the 1930s titles would work in conjunction with voice-over narration. Both modes were sustained through trailers’ history, although contemporary titles were more sparse and schematized. Many trailers have experimented with minimal narration, but the persistence of the (nearly always male) narrational voice is often a striking feature of the trailer, again functioning to maintain viewers’ awareness of the promotional message. (Kernan 2004: 13)

Throughout the history of trailers, trailer creators have attempted to demonstrate the appeal of upcoming features and implore audiences to see films based on stars, genres, or narrative (Kernan 2004). Although this mode of address might be present in other types of advertising, its consistency throughout the history of the trailer is one of the ways that trailers have emerged as their own distinct advertising form. During this period, the trailer emerged as a distinct genre – one that was not only increasingly recognisable to audiences, but also recognisable to the film industry as having financial benefits.

Mid century trailer design: 1950s-1960s

The period of the 1950s and 1960s saw the introduction of two new cinema-going spaces, and consequently, trailers evolved to respond to the technological and social specificities of each. These two decades saw the introduction of the drive-in theatre, the television, and thus new promotional strategies. Trailers increasingly became a method to advertise a new *technology* as much as the films they depicted. Trailers not only drew audiences to the space of the cinema, but they also demonstrated the possibilities afforded by technological developments. Kernan argues that in the 1950s, trailers enter a new era, altering the techniques that had to this point been familiar to audiences (2004: 26), which led to new promotional strategies emerging in the 1970s.

Introducing the trailer into the home: the success and failures of television trailers

Many trailers, particularly during this era, were created with projection in a cinema in mind. As a result, film trailers have been defined and studied in relation to the spatial and temporal bounds of the cinema. Although as Johnston (2009) notes in his comprehensive study of the history of trailers on television (“the rival screen”), there is a long history of trailers being included on television, originating in the 1950s.

Johnston argues that the inclusion of the trailer on television demonstrates not only attempts to help sell cinema as a separate space in the home and on the new technology of the television, but also to show cinema’s superiority to the television screen.

Television trailers were forced to alter their mode of appeal from theatrical trailers. Johnston notes that the early television trailers were often used to draw attention to technology through their use of “technology-specific messages” (2009: 60). These messages would draw attention specifically to the potential for sound and image on television. This argument adds another dimension to Kernan’s (2004) model of the way that trailers have rhetorically appealed to audiences: technology should be added to star, genre, and narrative appeal. While trailers might have been used to sell television as a technology, as Johnston notes, the trailer’s inclusion on television was also intended to emphasise the difference between the larger screen of the cinema and the inferior smaller television screen. In effect, television trailers advertised a “rival screen” (2009: 60).

Television trailers brought about significant changes to the aesthetics of the trailer in the 1950s and 1960s (Johnston 2009). If the overbearing sound of an action movie or its 3D Cinemascope technology were draw cards for audiences, why would this be advertised on a small black and white television (2009: 60-61)? Johnston argues that the technological advances are now encoded in these trailers, as “television trailers demonstrate unique structural conventions that are imposed and inspired by the technology that underpins them” (2009: 61). This reflects the limitations of the space of the televisual screen, as well as the possibilities that television offered in delineating cinematic space and the culture of emerging viewing patterns that television was shaping.

Trailers for television were not instantly successful. Television trailers have included “long dialogue scenes with no editing”, animation, voiceovers and text-based trailers (Johnston 2009: 61). By the end of the 1950s television trailers did not have a uniform aesthetic, instead demonstrating experimentation with form and methods to appeal to audiences’ desire to see films (2009: 81). By the end of the 1960s, television was present in 91 per cent of American households and had “become the mass medium that cinema used to be” (2009: 88), becoming the destination for trailers to be exhibited from a purely commercial perspective. From both a technological and genre perspective, the televisual trailer influenced the form of the trailer – theatrically released and otherwise – particularly in the use of press spots in the 1950s and 1960s (Johnston 2009: 88-89).

Television was a different format from the cinema, and trailer creators recognised that their approach to the trailer had to be different. Instead of relying on shots that

would be visually impressive on a big screen, trailers had to appeal to audiences in other ways. This historical context impacts greatly on the conditions that have led to the rise of the internet trailer and the recut trailers, where the screen is even smaller. The history of experimentation and movement onto the mass mediums of the time is repeated in the rise of recuts. The act of re-editing and splicing footage together – or filming entirely new footage – is in the historical spirit of the trailer, which was heavily negotiated in its technique and various modes of address.

The televisual trailer was only one advertisement of many in the constant stream of television that altered viewing patterns: something was always available to watch, and in the home (Williams 1974). The television trailer not only integrated a cinematic presence on television, but made cinema of the many products advertised on television. Television trailers not only had to adapt through experimentation to the smaller screen, which limited the potential for cinematic impressiveness, but they also had to provide enticement for audiences to return to the cinema.

While the domestication of cinema suggests that Hollywood studios and those involved in the film industry attempt saturation wherever possible in everyday life, the inclusion of film into the home from its early beginning demonstrates that there is also a demand from audiences. Film trailers have served a vital role in this negotiation, and as a site for trial and error as the film industry navigates new spaces and new technologies. Klinger's study of the multiplex and the home cinema poses the question of how home cinema can possibly replicate or compete with the "darkened establishments illuminated by projector beams and dedicated to film screenings" (2006: 3). Once the film is taken out of that "ideal space", it competes with all manner

of other images, texts and activities. It is worth noting that the inclusion of trailers, and eventually features, on television is not the first instance of home cinema. As Klinger argues, home cinema has been present since the beginning of the medium in the origin of the parlour cinema in the late 1800s (2006: 6), suggesting that it was always preferred that the cinematic medium would be consumed in the home. Instead of the theatre, it was assumed that people would watch films in the parlour, resulting in the term ‘parlour cinema’ that Klinger argues “distinguishes the medium’s domestic exhibition as an intimate part of its total history” (2006: 6). Klinger proposes:

These early experiments suggest that efforts to ‘domesticate’ cinema were necessary moves toward the new medium’s manifest destiny – its expansion into the household conceived as a means of additionally securing its place in American life. (2006: 6)

Following the early adoption of cinema in the home, the evolution of technology has ensured its continued presence. This need not be by even watching films, but by consuming advertisements to evoke memories of the cinema.

At the Drive-In: Trailers Return to the Outdoors

Drive-in theatres opened across the United States following the Second World War, rising to prominence in the 1950s (Segrave 1992). Heralded at the time as “the most promising new development in the motion picture industry”, in 1950 they accounted for 20% of ticket sales (Luther 1951: 401). While drive-ins were popular amongst

audiences, they were met with opposition from owners of theatres. Drive-ins were designed to create a new space through which to consume cinema, tied to the values attached to car ownership and the spread of urban areas (Sanders and Sanders 2003; see Figure 3.2). Sanders and Sanders outline the various ways that audiences demonstrated a desire to watch movies outside prior to the commercial developments of the drive-in (2003: 10). The drive-in, during the 1950s and 1960s, became the quintessential suburban entertainment space: as immortalised in scenes of teenagers breaking in to view movies for free, or back seats providing an intimate film-going experience as directly cautioned against in a drive-in trailer ad shown in Figure 3.3.



Figure 3.2: Still from a collection of drive-in trailers, original year and source unknown (2012)

Drive-ins have housed double features, as well as becoming a popular space for exploitation and ‘B’ movies (Clark 1995). They have not only served as a space to house feature films, as Luther describes, some exhibitors attempted to create “super drive-ins” that would not only show films, but newsreels, vaudeville performances,

and so on (1951: 402). This reflected the exhibitor's program that characterised much of early American cinema (Korszarski 1990).

Advertising in drive-ins often centred around marketing the space of the drive-in and the unique aspects afforded by this space. The marketing for drive-ins themselves drew attention to the privacy brought about by being in your own car, attractions at the site such as picnic areas or rides – even laundry services (Luther 1950: 42), and the concession stands or diners available. As Segrave argues, the success of drive-ins relied not just on a desire to see movies, but also a “love affair with the car” (1992: viii). In this way, drive-in trailers not only advertised the space of the drive-in and the screen, but the space audiences would bring to the drive-in.

Advertising food remained a crucial part of marketing drive-ins, and brought about a new way of using trailers to build a perpetual movie-going audience. The form of the trailer, consequently, was instrumental in advertising objects other than feature films, and reflects the importance of the *experience* in marketing the consumption of features. Trailers for food were introduced to the drive-in to “expand the intermission period” that would occur during the film, allowing people to go and purchase refreshments, thus bringing more revenue in to the drive-in. A Wisconsin division manager, Henry Tollette devised the trailer for food:

He reported that snack bar sales at his theaters increased when a new trailer was used just before the newsreel. This trailer simply announced that the newsreel would be next, followed by the intermission...Another method he suggested was to run a cartoon or coming attraction trailer right after the

intermission – instead of in their usual spot after the main feature. (Segrave 1992: 94)

Consequently, during this time trailers were used not only to advertise upcoming features but also to advertise other elements of the experience of cinema-going and something else that could be consumed. Film trailers were also used here as distraction; they weren't something to watch so much as they were an alert that patrons still had time to go to the snack bar. The drive-in era of trailers demonstrates the role of the trailer as a genre in helping to market a new space for film consumption, as well as re-positioning individually owned cars as a site for movie-going. Drive-in trailers also help to diversify the genre of the trailer, reflecting the potential for trailers to help guide audiences through a relatively new movie-going space.



Figure 3.3: Still from drive-in trailer, original source and date unknown (2012)

High concept: Marketing, Narrative and Regulation of 1970s trailers

Kernan identifies a third era of trailers: the “contemporary trailer” from 1970s onwards. Since the 1970s, film studios have considered trailers a necessary part of the promotion for a film. They exist for each cinematic release of a feature, and are shown before most motion pictures. Trailers have become an identifiable part of cinematic culture, as they are emblematic of the cinematic space.

From the 1970s onwards, audiences have become used to the ways in which trailers appeal to audiences. Decades after many marketing gimmicks that oversold a film or promised, for example life-threatening scares, film advertisements came “under the jurisdiction of the same regulatory bodies as feature films....because the industry acknowledged the importance of heightened sensationalism in the selling of films” (Kernan 2004: 26). The trailer was thus reduced to the same level of scrutiny as films. It was verified as being a formidable promotional tool for studios, and confirmed as being of importance to audiences in their selection of feature films to watch in the future.

From this point, the importance of marketing for studios became increasingly important and a direct correlation between marketing and cinematic culture became increasingly strong – the role of marketing started directing narrative choices in unprecedented ways. As Justin Wyatt discusses in his book *High Concept* (1994), films were increasingly produced on the basis of what audiences would want, moulded in part from previous box office successes – according to genres, stars, narrative or

directors. The notion of high concept amalgamated these attributes in an attempt to create a formula for a successful feature based on the successes of past films. Kernan notes:

In addition to being a genre of sorts of their own, trailers (along with other promotional discourses) have been instrumental in the formation or legitimization of Hollywood genres, steering our interests in a given film into established or emerging generic categorization and heightening our interest in the genre as a whole, facilitating the film's positioning as a commodity. (2004: 14)

Hence trailers allow a film to reflect on its place within a genre, referencing other films and amplifying our experience of a genre. While trailers may often contend that the feature film they advertise is like no film before it, such appeals place the feature film within the boundaries of expectations from the audience, particularly when it comes to genre. Film trailers, while building a perpetual cinema-going audience, also build the importance of genres, as well as the relationship between one film and others that precede it, or the other films in competition with it.

1980s – 1990s: VHS trailers, portability and networks

The inclusion of trailers on VHS made trailers portable for the first time, as tapes could be shared and moved (Johnston 2009: 124). Johnston claims trailers were not included on early “mainstream video releases” as “the technology of the video recorder and the notion of the mobile film product appear to have been a strong

enough marketing pull in itself” (2009: 124). VHS trailers differed in form and aesthetic appeal from television trailers. Most notably, these trailers made reference to, and reinforced, a home video culture, as seen in Figure 3.4. Rather than television drawing audiences toward the cinematic space, the VHS trailer sought to build a perpetual home video audience through showing similar titles as coming attractions.

Structurally, the temporal imperative of the cinematic trailer (“coming soon”, “this summer”) is mimicked in the VHS trailer while being fundamentally altered. VHS trailers announce when another title will be released on video and available in the home. But due to fact that videos can be watched at any time, the ‘newness’ of the films depicted in the trailers became increasingly irrelevant. Johnston argues that the VHS trailer has its “own temporal zone” (2009: 127). A VHS trailer may depict a film an audience has already seen and wish to rewatch in the home, for instance. For Johnston, the temporal zone present in VHS trailers allows the audience to anticipate seeing a film that they have already consumed, but in a new space. Using the example of *Star Wars* and its trailer on VHS, Johnston notes how the VHS trailer also importantly assumes “prior knowledge” with the text by using past tense in its direct address to the audience (127). Even if the audience has not already seen the feature film, the trailer use of past tense will inform them that they should have seen the film, or at least be intimately aware of it. Consequently, while theatrically released trailers led to audiences being familiar with a film they haven’t seen yet, as discussed in Chapter Two, the VHS trailer allows audiences to anticipate a film they have already seen in a new space and, importantly, on a new screen.



Figure 3.4: Still from VHS trailer for *Tweety's High-Flying Adventure* (2000)

Rewatching a film in your own home is a performance of greater intimacy, where a film can be rewound, disrupted, fast-forwarded through, or stopped. This is true of VHS trailers: it became easy to fast-forward through the trailers before a feature. Johnston identifies a dual relationship to technology present in VHS trailers. On one hand, they attempt to show the freedom that comes with being able to consume cinema and trailers in the home. On the other, they seek to “restrict access” to the trailer by ensuring that it can only be consumed on certain types of hardware, where there is always a better way to watch the feature film (2009: 126).

1990s-2000s: Trailers are a special feature on DVDs

From the 1990s onwards, trailers have been inconsistently included on DVDs, which replaced VHS as the primary mode of home video. While the intention of including

the trailer on VHS was to advertise other feature films that would be available in the home, the dominant way that trailers are included on DVD has been as one of the “special features” for a film that’s already been bought or rented. Other special features include behind the scenes documentaries, interviews with cast and crew, or biographical information; trailers are included as one element of this package. There have been attempts to include trailers for other features, but the presence of the special feature trailer has become ubiquitous. The special feature trailer is stripped of its promotional imperative – the product being promoted has already been consumed. In some cases, these theatrically released trailers serve as historical retrospections into how the film was marketed at the time of its release (Figure 3.5). This is often the case with movies released in a time well removed from the potential audience, for instance, trailers for films released decades ago. In this way audiences are made aware of the evolution of trailers themselves, and can see the evolution of appeals made to audiences by comparison to contemporary trailers.



Figure 3.5: Still from *Child's Play Special Edition DVD Menu* (2008)

Trailers form only part of the special features typically present on DVDs; they are most commonly situated alongside feature length documentaries. Skopal argues that the special feature trailer acts to “imply an act of initiation, a revelation of truth”, that is, the role of special features on DVDs is to provide the viewer with intimate knowledge of the production (2007: 189). The presence of trailers as a special feature also suggests allegorical readings of the film, inviting the audience to reflect on the film’s magnitude. This often means drawing attention to the special effects used, the blockbuster nature of the movie, or depicting the way that it has become important in popular culture. Skopal argues special feature trailers and other special features such as behind-the-scenes content “can promise to expand the experience of the diegetic world...that is, they can offer a ‘narrativised’ elaboration of the text” (2007: 189). Not only do special feature trailers offer insight into the way the film was marketed, but they also place the film into a broader cinematic narrative through the appeals made to audiences. Special features “may foreground the intimacy of extra features and the parallelism between the story of the movie and the process of filmmaking” (2007: 189).

Klinger’s use of the term ‘domestication’ is significant for this study of cinema in the home for a number of reasons. Firstly, as she notes, the term ‘domesticate’ connotes the taming of something from the outside, something wild, into the secure space of the home. It implies safety and comfort, away from the challenges of the outside world. Klinger claims that “domestication begins with ‘bringing objects in from the world’ – that is, from public spaces” and that as “they are incorporated into the structure of everyday life, these ‘wild’ things are tamed brought under personal control and subordinated to personal subjectivities” (2006: 10). This process is one of controlling

the dual modes of production and consumption and contextualising them within the space and sanctuary of the home.

This process is not only concerned with placing the cinematic into the personal, but instead relies on a “reciprocal relationship between producing and consuming desire” (2006: 10). From the very basic structure of the ways home cinema is projected and exhibited, viewers instantly become more in control of the way they interact with media, and the way that it is shown and shared. On a more complex level, the way that audiences internalise the relationship between producing and consuming cultures in the home can be seen through direct interjections into the ways that films were designed to be shown and watched. But this is not a purely private act, as the seemingly private sphere of the home is constantly influenced by “social discourses” that “surround the experience of home consumption” (Klinger 2006: 10). Consuming special features and the presence of short reviews often included on DVD covers help to negotiate a film into a broader social context, situating individual and private consumption of a film alongside the industrial strategies of cinema, and the reception of a film beyond its theatrical release.

Trailers on mobile phones

Trailers were introduced to mobile phones in the late 1990s. Initially, trailers were included as a push technology – in that they were sent to mobile phones, rather than sought out by their audiences. Enthusiasm for mobile trailers in the 1990s was an inversion of the way that trailers had been used to demonstrate the potential for new screens: as a smaller screen, rather than widescreen or 3D, mobile trailers were

designed to show the *smallness* of the screen, and capitalise on its portability (Johnston 2009). Johnston claims that prior to being able to watch the trailer on a mobile device, the “mobility was finite” on other dissemination technologies (2009: 143). The mobile device instead allows the trailer to be “truly mobile” for the first time (2009: 144). Unlike the VHS and DVD trailer, the mobile trailer does not come as part of a package; it is not bundled with a feature, or other ‘special features’.

Mobile trailers were specifically designed for mobile phones and iPods, and through specific telecommunications carriers such as Orange (Johnston 2009: 144). These trailers altered their aesthetic from the previous incarnations. Just as the television trailer required the trailer to alter its mode of address to fit a small screen yet still make the cinema an impressive place to visit, the mobile trailer with its even smaller screen also alters the focus of the trailer and its modes of appeal. Johnston argues that the mobile trailer invites the viewer to enter the narrative world of the film and interact through the guise of interactivity and intimacy. As mobile phones are portable, the world of a film can be entered from anywhere and at any time (2009: 144).

The restrictions of videophones (prior to the release of the iPhone and Android) meant that the screen was too small to adequately reflect cinematic editing, and large amounts of information led to images appearing blurred and unimpressive. This left the soundtrack to be the “strongest structural element” (Johnston 2009: 144). Mobile trailers drew attention to the choice of music as never before, and were an instant indication of the genre of film. Music was able to carry across information about the future lost in blurred images on a small screen. Indeed, the focus on soundtrack can

be seen in a great deal of recut trailers as being able to alter the genre of a feature film.

The mobile trailer as a push technology enjoyed a very limited success. Smartphones eliminated the need for trailers to rely only on soundtrack as mobile screens grew larger and data connection speeds increased. Trailers are more easily shared with integration to Facebook, Twitter and other social networks, built into the mobile browser and associated apps. Despite its early lack of success, the mobile trailer also played a role in developing the cultural weight attached to the trailer, and demonstrated new ways that trailers could be integrated into everyday viewing and consumption practices, as well as demonstrating how trailers have once again been used to negotiate cinema onto new screens.

1990s – 2000s: The internet-based trailer

The trailer is an important object in the unfolding of internet video. I argue there are three ‘ages’ of online trailers: early trailers shown on promotional websites, catalogues of trailers on Apple’s trailer website, and the inclusion of trailers from the beginning of YouTube. The history of online trailers demonstrates that the trailer was a technologically and socially compatible site for the experimentation of online video, and helped to extend the presence of cinema into online, networked and shared communication.

The release of the trailer online seemed to herald a future based on interactivity and targeted marketing towards an individual (Johnston 2009: 136). While the trailer was

still being consumed at home, the nature of the Internet as a networked space would allow for people to discuss, share, rate or ignore the trailer. The trailer became a very popular form of Internet video following the release of Apple's trailer website (www.trailers.apple.com). Prior to this, the trailer could be uploaded on promotional websites for films – an early example of this was Fox's teaser spots for *Fight Club* (Johnston 2009: 138). Just like television and mobile trailers, the limited data speeds and screen size of early online trailers meant that images were often blurred and viewed through small screens. They thus relied on close-ups and non-intricate images (Johnston 2009: 138).

Early online trailers also drew audience attention to the act of editing, even as programs such as Final Cut Pro made in-home editing more easily accessible. For instance, *Fight Club* teaser spots were edited to look as though they were pieced together from old film stock (Johnston 2009: 139). In this way, the online trailer is a “self aware” trailer that draws attention to editing techniques and the screen that it is being viewed through. In order to know about a promotional website for a feature, a viewer would likely have to either see a trailer on television or in a cinema, or read about it. Apple's new trailer website worked in a similar way to the cinematic trailer in that it showed a number of trailers for upcoming films, seeking to build a collective audience for cinematic products. But in order to come across the trailer catalogue on Apple's website you had to consciously do so by choosing to go to Apple's trailer website to specifically watch trailers rather than encountering them embedded in other online sites, thus revealing the emergence of a space where consuming trailers occurs by choice and is pleasurable.

Similar to VHS and DVD trailers, online trailers can be stopped, paused or skipped. Johnston discusses online trailers through studio creations for fan audiences, such as the trailer for *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* (2009: 136-138). He notes that by placing the trailer with a specific audience in mind, fans of *Star Wars*, the trailer was “‘modeling’ texts for the fan/cult audience that can be seen by the rise of more intricate, complex and layered montage sequences within trailer structure” (2009: 137). The prime example Johnston uses is studios releasing trailers online with small amounts of information that could be easily missed in casual viewing. The fan who is skipping, pausing and playing back the trailer, will notice this information and develop insider knowledge about the upcoming release of the film, which in turn produces a great intimacy with the film. Consequently, it can be seen that online trailers not only allowed studios to more specifically target audiences, but also to have more *specific trailers*, with more complex information being conveyed that could be uncovered through repeated viewing or pausing and replaying. Online trailers thus responded to the technological specificities of the online, networked space, while also tailoring trailers to social uses of technology.

Online trailers can also be shared easily, either by email or via social networks such as Twitter or Facebook. Jenkins notes that the trailer was able to be an early cross media adopter in internet video, as it was short and could be easily downloaded with slower connections (2006). The trailer was, consequently, a site through which to experiment and introduce online video that demonstrated both the limitations in its blurry images, and possibilities. As feature films were beyond the capacity of most internet connections at the time of Apple’s trailer website launch and the inception of YouTube, the inclusion of trailers on these sites also marks the inclusion of the

cinematic apparatus and the film industry into the space of the internet, showing the possibilities of the internet as a playback medium.

The popularity of the online trailer has led to trailer releases becoming more of an event, as studios and online articles have increasingly built up to the release of a trailer (Johnston 2009: 143). This is true not only of fan communities but also of casual viewers who are interested in cinema. The online trailer has allowed the trailer to become an integral reference point in online discussion. The trailer being online has also ensured that trailers can be viewed wherever the viewer is situated, regardless of the demographic choices imposed by studios and distribution companies, dictating some trailers not make it to a local multiplex.

Kernan's study of trailers only contains brief mention of the online trailer (2004). As her work was published before the launch of YouTube – which has been instrumental in the spread and impact of the online trailer – this is not surprising. Kernan notes that although online trailers exist in a new space, they still rely on editing methods used in earlier trailers to ensure that an audience knows that they are being sold to, and are not merely watching a short film (Johnston 2009: 208). Johnston claims that the popularity of the internet trailer “confirm[s] their status as unique short films in their own right” (2009: 143). While the trailer clearly evokes cinema, it need not be considered a ‘film’. To place it within the vocabulary and lexicon of the cinema only ignores the ways in which other technologies, social environments, space and temporality impact on – and are impacted by – the trailer. The trailer is also an advertisement; it is designed to not only sell a specific film, but to entice a future movie-going audience. Trailers might more appropriately be considered as an object

or a type of filmmaking practice, which has been negotiated onto numerous screens in a multitude of media practices. This, however, does not discount Johnston's argument, particularly in relation to how a trailer should be considered as its own genre, which can have intricate relationships to feature films and the space of the cinema.

Consuming trailers online delineates them from the space of the theatre, the home theatre, and the feature film. On Apple's trailer website, there is no available architecture to link to snippets from related feature films for context or guidance. This is more akin to window-shopping trailers – an array of trailers are available in one spot, and it is the viewer's choice which one to watch, without necessarily having any prior knowledge of the film. The online trailer on promotional websites, by comparison, force a viewer to enter the narrative and commodified world of the feature film through a heavily marketed and aesthetically niche promotional website, where all graphics, text and design reflect one film as opposed to neutrally displaying many. The architecture of YouTube takes the repository aspect of Apple's trailer website and places the trailer amongst a litany of other videos which may be – in varying degrees – related to the trailer. This creates the expectation from the consumer that they can seek context to a video or seek out similar videos. For the trailer this also means interactivity and portability well beyond the ability to rewind a trailer or physically take a VHS to another location. And just as loudly reacting to a trailer in a theatre could impact upon how other audience members view a potential movie, so too do comments left on a trailer leave traces of how other individuals have reacted, reflecting in part the viewing conditions of a collective audience.

2006 – Present Day: The emergence of the recut trailer

In 2002, a trailer appeared on theforce.net for *Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones*. Dedicated fans quickly spotted that the trailer was a ‘fake’ containing footage from a number of sources, including a “Jedi attack [that] was actually a scene from *Braveheart* with lightsabers added digitally” (Johnston 2009: 139). This trailer led to other fans sharing the trailer and in turn creating their own trailers (2009: 139-140). Johnston claims that the timeline from the arrival of *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* (1999) trailer to users creating and sharing their own trailers was only a period of 18 months (2009: 139). Since that point in time, user created trailers have become much more widespread and popular.

Johnston claims “[t]echnology has...allowed fan cultures to re-imagine the trailer format as a site for empowerment, creating participatory works that still reflect dominant trailer conventions, while gently mocking the format” (2009: 158). In a brief discussion of how recut trailers function online, Johnston reflects on the role that YouTube has played in the spread of trailers, and the excessive encouragement that it provides by provoking others to create trailers of their own. This encouragement relies on the appeal of the trailer for audiences, as well as the competitiveness of other users in demonstrating their editing prowess or intimate knowledge of a source text or trailer conventions. While this can be related to fan communities, it does not necessarily come from fans or represent ‘community’ in a traditional sense, as argued in Chapter One. Through the architecture of YouTube, there is a space to share the trailer, and tags are used, as well as the related video function, and what connects the trailers are not necessarily the ties between users but the ties between trailers, films

and other source footage. Johnston's study of the technological history of the trailer and Kernan's focus on the rhetorical appeals of trailers have contributed to the trailer being considered as a form in its own right. Focusing on how knowledge circulates within and beyond the trailer through the recut trailer contributes to understanding the role that trailers play in the circulation of knowledge and cultural impact beyond the feature film they depict, and their perceived role as a text.

Historical precedents for the recut trailer

This section outlines the ways in which the practices seen in the recut trailers' production and consumption can be likened to the relatively unknown moments in early cinema history. While there are debates as to exact dates that these practices occurred, this thesis focuses on how early film-going culture – that takes into account the popularity of non-narrative feature films – shows a long history of negotiation between studios, producers and consumer. This history suggests that experimentation with form, narrative, and technology can be seen from a much earlier time, and that the types of play with this form can be seen in the recut trailer, have enjoyed a long history outside of what would typically be considered as amateur productions.

Vitagraph Studios, fake footage and the emergence of film

Musser, in his study of the Vitagraph Studios in the years prior to 1900, describes how the projector and the screen were experimented with in the years 1897-1898 (1983). While the Vitagraph only represents one film studio at the time, it also demonstrates the ways in which cinema was experimented with. Musser's account

suggests that the exhibitors at the time were only using one lantern, which allowed them to show a succession of images. Two lanterns were used by some exhibitors prior to the combination of the stereopticon and the moving picture machine, which resulted in “either showing several films spliced end to end or projecting slides and films from separate lanterns” (1983: 10-11). Narrative was not the most important aspect of how films were exhibited, and often images were juxtaposed and altered from the way they were intended to be shown. This is relevant to the practices manifested in the recut trailer, through experimentation with filmic form, the way the augmentation and combination of images and contexts can be seen well before the rise of the internet.

The owners of the Vitagraph Studios were also directly involved in new exhibition and production practices. In “the screening of war films in vaudeville houses, the development of the Kinetoscope would have a reframing device added...two parts of the screen projected instead of a whole” (1983: 12). The ways in which cinematic exhibition was experimented with signal that from its inception, the cinematic image was seen as something that could be played with, and audiences’ expectations could be displaced. This indicates that those adopting cinema and its related technological apparatus early would be experimental as the culture of cinema was not yet set. But it also forms an important part of cinema’s history outside of the feature film and the ways in which this early experimentation became the dominant form of the cinematic image, and the nexus of cinematic culture.

Kernan notes that the history of vaudeville is important when considering the social role of trailers and the ways in which audiences consumed them. The owners of

Vitagraph came from a background of replication, employing mimics, ventroquillism, cartoons, and live shadowgraphists in their exhibitions of the cinematic image (Musser 1983: 19-20). In an effort to be at the forefront of exhibited films, Vitagraph Studios was involved in low-budget reenactments and trickery. For instance, a film depicting the Spanish War was actually shot using a small battleship toy submerged in water, with cigar smoke blown across the camera in order to obscure the quality of the shot (Musser 1983: 13). This homemade approach to cinema enjoys a longer history than the invention of the portable video camera or the launch of YouTube.

Recutting, splicing and mashing up

Writing about the period between 1915 and 1928, Koszarski (1990) offers a detailed account of the ways in which exhibition impacted upon the creation of a cinematic culture, and cinematic technological practices. He notes that during this time “the experience of viewing a film was far different from what it would at any time before or since” (1990: 9). This was due to a number of reasons, but most significantly to this thesis was the role that exhibitors played in the way films were created, circulated and altered. Exhibitors saw themselves as “showmen, not film programmers”, and they dictated the viewing conditions for the audience that extended well beyond the showing of a feature film. During this time, the space of the theatre heavily influenced the way that exhibitors would introduce and integrate the film. According to a 1922 exhibitor’s poll, the “feature motion picture was only one part of their evening’s entertainment, supplying about 68 percent of the total ‘attraction’” (1990: 9). Consequently, there was a lack of dependence on the feature, and while it comprised

an important part of the program, it was also joined by shorts, news reels, often live theatre and music, vaudeville acts and, at times, lectures (Koszarski 1990).

As Koszarski notes, in “some theaters, prologues were common, and part of the entertainment before the feature was just as – if not more – of a drawcard to the space of the theater as the feature” (1990: 51). This reflects on the method of integration of the cinema into the existing space of the theatre, which already was steeped in its own tradition and viewing methods. This also falls in line with claims made by Gomery (1992) that the cinema was not instantly accepted by audiences. The method of integration was instead to gradually introduce the cinematic into a space already used for entertainment, to make the film only part of what was to draw audiences. Despite the wonderment at the newness of the cinematic screen and its associated apparatus, Koszarski and Gomery suggest that the popular history of cinema – one of surprise, awe, and instant acceptance – is a false one. Instead, motion pictures had to be negotiated into an existing space and into existing entertainment practices, a history that continues beyond the initial cinema screens, and into the negotiation and adoption of cinema on its rival screens of television and the internet, as will be discussed below.

Because the film was not the sole draw card to a night at the theatre, film exhibitors were also not “above ‘improving’ their film subject by any means at their disposal” (1990: 9). Koszarski describes how at the Eastman theatre in Rochester the “standard bill included an eight-minute overture, a ten-minute news weekly (edited by the management from four rival ‘news services’), a ten-minute live act, and a ten minute comedy or novelty film” (1990: 53). Furthermore, the Eastman represents an

interesting and well-documented insight into the role that the feature film would play in the overall running time of the night of entertainment. Clarke, who ran the Eastman, kept the night to a two hour run time and “if the feature was too long, Clarke had three options: he could reduce the number of items on the program, shorten the films, or project the films faster than usual” (1990: 53). The option to lengthen the overall running time was not considered, which indicates “the importance of standard show times to the filmgoing habits of his regular patrons” (1990: 53). This is notable for a number of reasons, but bears relevance to this thesis in that, rather than drop an item from the program, Clarke was more willing to augment the film as it was not the most important part of the program.

Most notably, “the fact that he was prepared to cut down his films and project at inappropriate speeds suggests an essentially different approach to first-class film presentation than would be the case only a few years later” (1990: 53). That is, rather than give an audience perceived discomfort, Clarke saw that the film text could be altered using the very techniques that the film makers would employ in order to give what he thought the audience wanted. This was not only to keep to running time, however. Koszarski claims that Clarke at the Rochester had “an incessant, even arrogant, need to ‘improve’ his features by recutting them and speeding up the projectors during the dull parts. He was not alone”(1990: 55-56). The notion of improving upon films through techniques such as recutting and speeding up footage can be seen in the trailers discussed in this thesis, but also in trailers more broadly – the trailer omits the ‘boring’ parts of a film, speeds up the action, and focuses on the elements of a trailer that are presumed to be appealing to audiences. As discussed in Chapter Two, trailers are not only known to be misleading but to amplify and omit

based on what studios assume audiences want to see. This method of curation has a history outside of the studio system, and the recut trailer plays with these attempts to entertain an audience and selectively represent a longer feature film.

Given Koszarski's account of pandering to his regular patrons, we can see the filmic text was permeable, alterable, and adaptable according to specific screening circumstances. The role of the director as auteur was not of prime importance here; instead, it was the exhibitor who played the ultimate role in how the film would be seen by its audiences. This suggests that the cultural ways in which film was understood at the time was that it was something to be negotiated not just into a new space, but also negotiated into how audiences would allow it to exist, and entered into the program of a theatre itself. While the director may have made a choice to include certain scenes, the exhibitor may amend his decisions, negotiating the filmic object into the space and program he had directed. Likewise, the creator of the recut trailer augments an existing film beyond the intention of its director, negotiating narrative components of a feature into a new object.

Koszarski writes:

Until the introduction of talkies, it was not necessary to project a film at any particular speed. Likewise, the physical integrity of a motion-picture print was a chancy thing in the days before the soundtrack. These two factors were seen as variables under the control of the exhibitor, with any theater manager having the power, even the obligation, to change projection speeds to suit the circumstances of the performance. Recutting the film was a cumbersome

process, but even small theaters that might use a film only for a day could drop an entire reel if the need arose. (1990: 56)

It is suggested here that as recutting was a common practice in the exhibition of films it was a natural extension that exhibitors would further tamper with the film. As there was a lack of guidelines to how a feature film would be projected (Koszarski discusses at length in his study the history of how speed of cinema was standardised after a long process of negotiation), the speed of a film was up to the discretion of an exhibitor. So too was the final product of the film that audiences would see. As entire reels could be dropped, the film was something to be circulated, altered, and changed and was in no way to be considered a permanent or finished text to be consumed and appreciated.

Koszarski's claims about the role of recutting, speeding up and altering films, is not the only account in current scholarship. Nor is it only attributed to screenings at the Eastman. Gunning, following from Musser, claims that "the early showmen exhibitors exerted a great deal of control over the shows they presented, actually re-editing the films they had purchased and supplying a series of offscreen experiments, such as sound effects and spoken commentary" (1986: 231). While Musser debates that this occurred in the timeframe in which Gunning refers to in his influential essay, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde", he does not entirely refute it (1994). With accounts of this happening in the early part of the century as well as into the 1930s, as Musser claims (1994), this is a substantive component of early cinema, and influences its future use and history.

The recuts discussed in this thesis evoke this history and perform it to its excess – that a trailer not only makes audiences aware and familiar with a film prior to having seen it, but that the cinematic image can be replicated, altered and augmented for its perceived audience. The *Brokeback* parodies in particular make recut trailers that draw upon two films (*Brokeback Mountain* and another film, such as *Back to the Future*) that the audience should be familiar with, and create a hybridised film that is also seen to be recognisable. By recutting films to focus on longing looks between two male characters to imply that there is a homosexual relationship between them, there is also a performance of the notion that an audience would be familiar with the relationship from the original film, and can easily recognise it. This enjoys a history beyond recut trailers such as in slash fiction and later fan vids, which rework an existing fan text to uncover latent homosexual storylines (Hellekson and Busse 2006; Jenkins 1993). The trailer creators demonstrate the numerous ways in which an audience can be familiar with a feature film, through layers of its narrative, use of sound, and also the expectations of what an audience will read into a film. De Certeau highlights the importance of considering reading as an active practice: one that allows readers to demonstrate their knowledge of subtle differences in a text or draw out obscure meanings (1984: xxii). The recut trailer is an example of how the act of reading leaves in its wake an object that allows its watcher to follow its creator's reading acts.

Theatrically released trailers attempt to guide the ways in which an audience reads a film. Recut trailers co-opt this approach and encourage misreading of a feature. The historical precedence for this can be seen in the history of films being introduced and interacted with by early cinema exhibitors. Koszarski describes these accompanying

performances in his book – most of which preceded the film – which survived past the inclusion of sound, as well as into the feature film. He writes:

There is one further aspect of these accompaniments that deserves mention, namely the survival, until well into the feature era, of onstage lecturers and ‘explainers.’ As late as 1920, the *New York Times* found five theaters catering to immigrant audiences on the Lower East Side that included a live ‘presenter’ as part of the show. These men and women were on hand not to translate the titles into the language of an immigrant audience, but instead to read the English titles and provide dramatic commentary and explanation throughout the picture...The theater managers felt that this served as a language lesson for their patrons, but the lecturers felt differently. Audiences would complain if too much Yiddish was introduced, they said, citing a growing lack of familiarity with this tongue in the neighborhood. What the audiences really seem to have come for was the interpretive presentation (something most historians ascribe only to the Japanese benshi tradition). There are few records of such performances, and it is impossible to know how widespread the use of ‘presenters’ might have been in this period, or whether the practice existed at all outside of certain immigrant neighborhoods. (1990: 47)

Koszarski here presents a little known element of film exhibition history, one that demonstrates a demand from audiences to not only have the film explained, but to enjoy an individual’s interpretation of the film to complement their own interpretations. This can be seen throughout cinema’s history, in the use of film reviews read before or after the film to guide interpretation, in film marketing, film

festival programs, screening times which might indicate the intended audience, introductions to films shown on television, and blurbs on home cinema and DVD liner notes. The trailer was designed to be the first of these entry points to show how you can consider films, but Koszarski's account suggests that audiences take pleasure in having a film augmented or framed through one person's experience. While we do not know how widespread the practice of lecturers or interpreters onstage was, this point in cinema's history shows one of the ways the production and consumption of cinema have perhaps always been entwined.

This section has outlined the numerous ways in which the practices seen in the recut trailers' production and consumption can be likened to forgotten moments in early cinema's history. While there are numerous debates as to the exact dates that these practices occurred, what is of importance is the way they highlight that the narrative feature created by a studio has not always been the singular, dominant form of cinema, both for producers and consumers. Instead, the early film-going and producing culture suggests that experimentation with form, narrative, and technology can be seen from a much earlier time, and that the types of play with this form that we see in the recut trailer have enjoyed a long history outside of purely amateur productions.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines the history of the trailer through different modes of technological dissemination. By providing a discussion of the development of the trailer as form and the ways in which it has been viewed, this chapter presents context

for the rise of the recut trailer. The shift from the trailer being contained by the walls of the cinema to domestic and mobile technologies has led to a traceable rise in the popularity for the form of the trailer, which can now be shared and consumed without the feature film referent. The trailer has not only been used to sell new media technologies, but to constantly negotiate cinema into new spaces and modes of engagement.

By introducing early historical precedents for recutting, augmenting and exhibiting, this chapter demonstrates that the practices seen in the recut trailer are not only enabled by advances in software, hardware and the internet. Indeed, audiences and producers have enjoyed a long history of augmenting, annotating, and interpreting films, and recut trailers unconsciously draw upon these histories. The history of the trailer, curatorial aspects of early cinema, and the ways that cinema has been played with historically as outlined here, all form part of the context and precedent for recut trailers. Recut trailers have exploded in popularity due to increasingly accessible footage and the ability to share content online. Yet the technical and social histories of the trailer also have a direct impact upon how both the conventional and the recut trailer are viewed. The following chapter will introduce the first of the trailer case studies in regards to the concept of anticipation, to analyse how excitement and desire is present in the recut trailer and how they draw upon these historical contexts and practices.

Chapter Four

‘We can’t wait for the movie!’: Cinematic desire and anticipation

In 2006, New Line Cinema announced they were releasing a film titled *Snakes on a Plane*. It was rumoured that Samuel L. Jackson became involved in this production merely because of the name alone⁴. In the lead up to the release of *Snakes on a Plane*, users made recut trailers and circulated them online (acts which were encouraged by the studio), bloggers wrote blog posts, news articles reflecting on the buzz surrounding the movie were published, t-shirts were printed, and a participation script (a prompt sheet for audience reactions). The participation script was written and uploaded online to coincide with the film’s release without its author even having seen the film, its anticipatory prompts based entirely on the film’s name and trailer alone. The MTV parody *Snakes in a Boardroom* even mocked Hollywood studio attempts to create popular films by capitalising on a concept – after hearing about *Snakes on a Plane* one film executive responds, “we have our formula then! Animals on transportation, vermin in vehicles”. New Line studios infamously responded to suggestions from bloggers and fans prior to the release of *Snakes on a Plane* and shot new footage, which moved the film from its original PG-13 rating to R (Waxman 2006). The notorious line “I have had it with these motherfucking snakes on this motherfucking plane”,

⁴ Portions of this chapter were first published in:

Williams, K 2009, ‘Never coming to a theatre near you: Recut film trailers’, *M/C Journal*, vol. 12, no. 2, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/139>

Williams, K 2012, ‘Fake and fan film trailers as incarnations of audience anticipation and desire’, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 9,

<http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/360>

Williams, K 2013, ‘Recut film trailers, nostalgia and the teen film’, in K Barton & JM Lampley (eds.), *Fan Culture: Essays in Participatory Fandom in the 21st Century*, pp. 47-60, McFarland, Jefferson, NC.

delivered by Samuel L. Jackson, was a suggestion from online fans (Li and Bernoff 2011: 8).

Following its release, much of the online discussion surrounding the film focused on the ways in which the online marketing techniques used by New Line did not translate into box office takings (See Waxman 2006). Li and Bernoff claim that “New Line had lost control of the movie and its marketing” as “it had to court these hard-core fans to succeed” (2011: 9). In this sense, *Snakes on a Plane* was “co-created” by online audiences (Fisher and Smith 2010: 241). *Snakes on a Plane* demonstrates the role that anticipation and desire can play in the marketing and release of a film. This anticipation was not only restricted to fans; more casual consumers developed and demonstrated how a potential audience can be familiar with a film prior to having seen it – and anticipate it – through the consumption of trailers and advertisements. With its excess of audience anticipation, *Snakes on a Plane* demonstrated the ability to anticipate the content of a feature based on the title of a film alone, aided by the audience’s literacy of the lead actor’s work. *Snakes on a Plane* was an early attempt by studios to navigate online spaces, but it is also an example of how fans and more casual audiences can directly impact the way a movie is seen with anticipation. Like those fans that prompted New Line to alter the storyline of *Snakes on a Plane*, fans and users can alter the way a feature film is seen and anticipated. But they also create cultures of anticipation outside of the studio’s control. This chapter considers the ways that individuals contribute and create modes of cinematic anticipation, and how anticipation can be considered a creative act which pushes spatial and temporal bounds.

Anticipation is a vital part of our understanding of cinema. Trailers embody our (or show our lack of) enthusiasm for the release of an upcoming feature film. The original role of the trailer was to draw audiences back into the theatre to see another film, provoking a perpetual movie-going audience (Kernan 2004; Johnston 2009). Buzz follows films, and films follow hype; digital spaces and tools of dissemination such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, blogs and so on allow for this anticipation to result in visible traces of a network surrounding a film. A trailer only forms part of this anticipation, but increasingly the trailer is used as an example, a quotation, an embodiment of the enthusiasm and anticipation for a film. With this anticipation surrounding the release of a feature film, recut trailers play into cinematic discourses of release and hype. They allow for the creators and consumers to perform their cinematic desire, which may be levelled at elements such as the appearance of an actor, an adaptation of a popular book, or the new work of a director for example. In some instances, the recut trailer allows consumers and producers to bypass the typical path of promotion by pre-empting the release of the official trailer with their own. In others, recut trailer creators co-opt the marketing tools used by studios in order to demonstrate the role genre or star power in attracting an audience and generating hype demonstrating a performance of cinematic knowledge. Others take footage from a variety of existing films in order to create a new sequel for a film, extending the bounds of textual connections. This chapter discusses the various ways in which recut trailers play with the notions of anticipation, promotion and hype as performances of cinematic and digital literacy and how the spaces in which they are disseminated aid the formation of networks of literacy and anticipation.

Defining anticipation

The concept of anticipation that I am employing here is not based on one particular disciplinary perspective, but rather a deployment of the common use of anticipation:

“I am looking forward to a film coming out; I can’t wait for the film to come out”.

Anticipation is a concept that has not been studied in great detail in relation to cinematic desire and how audiences crave and create texts. However, the *desire* for texts and the creation of them is something that has been studied heavily in fan studies (see for example Jenkins 1992, 2006; Gray 2010; Hills 2002). As not all of the trailers discussed in this paper fall into the category of fan creations, there is an argument for discussing anticipation for a text as separate to ideas of desire and fan adoration. Kernan (2004) describes the anticipatory mode of trailers as being always situated in a suspended state in which audiences are guided toward a centre. I further this work by noting that the networked nature of trailers, and recut trailers specifically, offers up and encourages multiple trajectories. This understanding of anticipation is also indebted to Sperb (2009), who argues that anticipation is central to cinephilia – in assumptions made about the content of the feature alongside the excitement that builds amongst cinephiles and related communities.

A concept closely related to anticipation – and one more emphatically aligned with discussions of the film industry – is that of ‘hype’. Gray’s study of hype for television shows focuses on the role of the advertisement in bringing about desire for an end product. He argues:

Hype works best by completely surrounding a text with ads, the goals being not only that as many people as possible will hear about a text, but that they will hear about it from industry-created hype. (2008: 33)

Hype is therefore placed onto the text, in particular through instruments of hype such as advertisements and other promotional materials. Studios attempt to make hype immersive – it is a commercial strategy that is inescapable; hype is designed to create more hype by its very presence. Gray proposes that the goal of hype and advertising is to allow as many people as possible to hear about a text with the caveat that hype comes from industry-related sources. The recut trailer plays with the methods used to build hype through the theatrically released trailer. The trailers discussed in this thesis are often generated outside of industry intentions to build hype; they also cannot always be considered within the genre of fan practices. Either fans, casual consumers or anti-fans are able to build up the hype of a film through production and consumption practices. The recut trailers that follow may simultaneously build hype while mocking industry attempts to build hype in audiences, by portraying a film or a version of a film that will not exist. The hype built in the recut leads to nothing – it advertises something that cannot be obtained, but can be anticipated.

Gray argues that “[h]ype aims to be the first word on any text so that it creates excitement working to create frames through which we can make sense out of the text before consuming it” (2008: 34). This is similar to arguments made by Burgin, who claims that film promotion allows a film to “spill its contents into the stream of everyday life” (2004: 14), resulting in a potential viewer being familiar with a film before actually having seen it. Similarly, Kernan outlines how viewers are “nostalgic”

for a film that they have not yet seen through the consumption of film trailers (2004). This demonstrates not only familiarity with a film, but also highlights how hype is something that is traditionally understood as being created by studios in order to build anticipation. Anticipation in this chapter is used to demonstrate the ways in which audiences as producers, consumers and fans (and sometimes critics), build, enact and perform their desire and interest in a feature or trailer.

Anticipation and desire

A 'desire line' is a term used to describe a path created by users of a space that deviates from the paved or official path (Tiessen 2007). A desire line can be created for a number of reasons: it is more direct between two points, it can be a more scenic route, or it can be there for arbitrary reasons. The desire line is as much about the individual as it is about mass desire; once one person creates the path, the more likely other people are to take it, and the more likely the path is to become used and become an obvious deviation in the landscape.

The desire line can be used to analyse the meaning, purpose and popularity of recut trailers. If we take a paved path to symbolise the typical path of promotion for a feature film, the desire line can be seen as the ways in which users of the space create their own shortcuts between a feature, a cinema, and promotional texts. In some cases, there is not an attainable end product of the feature. Sometimes, the end point of this desire line is to revel in anticipation itself, co-opting the role that anticipation plays in cinematic culture.



Figure 4.1: Desire lines in Goteborg, Sweden.

There is limited literature available on the desire line (which can be also be known as the desire path), and most common uses of the term tend to incorrectly attribute it Bachelard (1954). The term instead “originates from the field of urban planning and has been around for almost a hundred years” (Myhill 2004: 293). Myhill claims that desire lines “are an ultimate expression of human desire or natural purpose” and have historically been used in urban planning. For example, “reconstruction of paths across Central Park in New York” were only paved once urban planners had charted the routes individuals took through that space (2004: 293). Tiessen takes the concept of desire lines outside of the bounds of design or architecture, and instead discusses how they “compel...us to follow particular trajectories as we go about our everyday lives” (2007: 11). Tiessen argues:

Conventionally desire lines are defined by architects and urban planners as those trampled down footpaths that deviate from official (i.e. pre-planned and paved) directional imperatives. These pathways of desire – physically inscribed on the earth due to the passage of people – cut across the fields of university campuses, they carve up the urban grid, they exceed the boundaries of the sidewalk; in doing so, these desire lines express the excess that premeditated constructions cannot foresee or contain. Frequently, desire lines are regarded as ‘eye-sores’ by city planners – as ‘scars upon the landscape’; however, they can also be thought of as solutions to the problem of how to efficiently and pleurably respond to and navigate the terrain that constitutes our sensorially mediated world. (2007: 1)

As Tiessen identifies, the desire line is an important indication of both ‘efficiency’ and pleasure, but also play. The desire line, then, is also about anticipation, or anticipating, which Point B might correspond to Point A on a line or path. Desire lines created by the movement of people outside of the bounds of the paved path create traces on the landscape, reflect heavy use of a space, and the role that pleasure, popularity and use play in everyday environments and spaces.

Tiessen suggests that desire lines are not only about human desire, or “merely a material expression of some aspect of the human imagination” but that they are:

...the product of an earth – a natural environment – that desires us, an earth that beckons to us and that offers us new pathways and potential circuits that expand the interconnected network – the interdependent relationship –

between us and itself. To trace a desire line, then, is to respond to an invitation, to accept that a particular trajectory has been revealed. (2004: 2)

Thus, desire lines are not merely about the role of human desire, but more about the “give and take that already exists between people and their environment” (Tiessen 2004: 4). The unique positioning of the individual between their potential as a consumer of cinema and a producer of cinematic texts against the space of the cinema, can be related to the ‘give and take’. The ‘give’ can be seen in engagement with prescribed hype and endorsed trailers, and the ‘take’ in using those elements to create new paths of desire. Trailers do not merely sell cinema to an audience, they also offer a space for audiences to enact and perform their desire, anticipation, and also rejection of cinematic modes of technology, narrative and star appeal. The desire line also is a performance of anticipation: the anticipation of what is to come as well as anticipation of time and space, which comes from familiarity with environments. Desire lines can be likened to the ‘wandering lines’ discussed by de Certeau. As de Certeau notes, “trajectories form unforeseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space” (1984: xviii); paths and lines follow their own logic. A path will be followed that takes into account desire (both mass and individual) which also makes sense of space and time, while seemingly following the specific need of the individual who follows it. Likening this to the desire line and cinema, an individual follows a path that works within the space of consumption and production, forming trajectories that respond to that specific space and time, as well as the technological, textual, cultural and computational connections that are forged and encouraged through spaces such as YouTube.

The spatial environment of the cinema is important here. The space of the cinema has traditionally dictated our social and technological understanding of the cinematic; the cinema itself has spilled outside the walls of the theatre, to become an integral part of the city and urban life. As film promotion is a part of everyday practice, added to bus stops and adorning the sides of buildings (Burgin 2004: 14), the cinematic is integrated with the city, and also with our understanding of everyday life (Stubblefield 2008). As trailers and films moved into the domestic sphere through VHS and television, they became part of the televisual stream (Williams 1974). The entry of the trailer into online spaces - thus becoming open to digital manipulation by professionals and non-professionals alike - also points to the ways in which we negotiate the cinematic into new spaces. This is not just technologically driven, but also driven by consumers and their desires. The typical path of film promotion invites play and pleasure; the methods of dissemination of promotional texts demonstrate and reflect use; and the technological capabilities that online spaces and services provide invite play with modes of anticipation and promotion.

Gray's discussion of the way that promotional materials attempt to direct our meaning making processes can be related both to the trailer, and to the concept of the desire line. He argues:

We may in time resist the meanings proposed by promotional materials, but they tell us what to expect, direct our excitement and/or apprehension, and begin to tell us what a text is all about, calling for our identification with and interpretation of what text before we have even seemingly arrived at it. (2010: 48)

Gray suggests that we may resist meaning imposed on us, however the recut trailer is an indication that the meanings intended and encouraged by promotional materials can also be appropriated, played with, and subverted. Just as the desire line shows that commercial directions for meaning and experience can be subverted, the recut trailers discussed in this thesis also show transgression. If studios wish to direct audiences' excitement, the audience is also capable of directing and distributing their own desire and anticipation.

By playing into the path of film promotion, the recut trailer becomes a performance of knowledge and intimacy of Hollywood genres, and a desire to share this knowledge. By capitalising on the ways in which people now seek out trailers, the use of tags and YouTube's related video architecture, the recut trailer creates a network of knowledge and cultural capital surrounding the original trailer (or the forthcoming trailer, as will be shown to be the case with *Twilight*). It promotes a network of literacy where, as this study argues, literacy can be shifted from an understanding of the textual components of an object to broader strategies, temporalities and spaces. YouTube's related video functions also create an instant network; a traceable line between one recut trailer and others, as well as the films and trailers they evoke.

Remakes, alterations and subversions

Shining: Jack Torrence is a family man who has retreated with his wife and young son to a hotel in the mountains to finish his novel. Shots of winding roads and large hills are accompanied by Peter Gabriel's 'Solisbury Hill'. *Shining* is a family comedy about the wacky things a writer can get up to in a big hotel while his novel and relationship with his son flourish.

The most popular and commonly referred to recut trailers work to either create a sequel to an existing film, or to re-imagine a feature by displacing the intention of the original. This is often achieved by shifting the genre of the original feature film, and what Chuck Tryon (2009) has argued can be considered “genre-switching”. Infamous examples of this type of trailer include *Scary Mary Poppins* (*Mary Poppins* [1964] re-imagined as a horror film), *Must Love Jaws* (*Jaws* [1975] as a romantic comedy between a man and a shark), *Shining* and *Sleepless in Seattle Recut as a Horror Movie*. Often, these trailers involve recutting a family film or romantic comedy as a horror film or the reverse.

These recut trailers demonstrate the underlying potential in any film to be augmented or read differently, illuminating the role of the audience as a producer of knowledge, as well as playing with the role of the Hollywood studio in manipulating the footage in trailers to greater appeal to audiences. Anticipation can be seen in these trailers in several ways. The trailers most commonly bring a film released at least a decade prior into the anticipatory realm, challenging the accepted temporality of a film. By seeking to place a past film that has long since finished being advertised in the mode of anticipation, the understanding of the feature and the advertising that precedes it is augmented.

Anticipation, genre-switching, displacement and networks

The trailers discussed in this section are the most commonly drawn upon examples of recut trailers, which recut one source text (usually a feature film) to create a narratively coherent trailer in which the tone or genre of the original feature is

displaced. Like the history of fan practices that predate the emergence of the recut trailer, this type of trailer involves closely reading a source text (most commonly of a feature film), and subverting its potential reading. Can something be anticipated if it cannot be consumed? The recut trailer suggests that not only is that possible, but that it has formed part of the way that trailers have been consumed since their inception as a media form. There is a desire in these trailers to revisit the world of a film that has already been consumed and is no longer being promoted. There is, consequently, a desire to see a past film in the *mode of anticipation*. In essence, the user then is able to promote the film to others, in the way they wish to see it promoted. This can be seen by the almost universal use of the language of anticipation in the rating screen which precedes all normal trailers, and also uses of the terms ‘coming soon,’ ‘this summer’ and so forth. By using these techniques, which help move any collection of footage from films into the recognisable format of the trailer, they also demonstrate how the use of these terms and images move old texts into future texts.

But this anticipation is not necessarily leveled at the source text, as *Must Love Jaws* is at *Jaws* (1975) for instance, but also at the hybrid creation of a future film that cannot exist. While the end product of the *Scary Mary* trailer clearly evokes *Mary Poppins* (1964) by its use of footage from that film, it also creates a new film that cannot exist. Part of the plausibility of this film is based on knowledge of genre, allowing for constant intersections between text and genre, and the forging of a new path between them to create the hybrid film. It cannot exist, but it can be advertised. The promotional text appears to be stripped of its base function – to promote – and that is partially where the playfulness of these trailers sits.

In one of the few academic discussions to date of the recut trailer, Chuck Tryon (2009: 161-163) addresses the “genre-switching” that can be seen in the recut trailers discussed in this section, such as *Shining* and *Must Love Jaws*. Tryon claims:

Instead of anticipating upcoming films, most fake trailers mock the rhetoric of anticipation using the clichés commonly associated with movie trailers and advertisements. In one version a film is converted from one genre to a significantly different genre, a process that I refer to as a genre remix. Genre remixes, more than movie mashups in general, depict the modularity of most high-concept films. (2009: 161)

Several points in this passage are relevant here. Firstly, while Tryon astutely claims that recut trailers mock the way that trailers attempt to build anticipation, I argue they mock attempts to build *hype* for an upcoming feature film. As I have differentiated earlier in this chapter, hype can be seen separately from anticipation as being created by studios, rather than reflecting the feelings and levels of affect that can be seen in audiences. Thus, rather than mocking anticipation, recut trailers that involve genre-switching *do* actively involve anticipation. But rather than levelling anticipation at a consumable feature film, the anticipation is for a film that will not exist. They also create anticipation to view other others. In this way, while certainly mocking the way that trailers amplify and manipulate a feature film to attract an audience, the recut trailers mimic the creation of hype in order to encourage their audience to feel anticipation for a product that will not exist.

Furthermore, Tryon's notion of genre-switching reflects the importance of genre in attempting to appeal to audiences through a trailer. Discussing *Shining* trailer, Tryon notes that "the use of the Peter Gabriel song and the voiceover seem to suggest that it is the trailer itself that is the object of parody" (162). The object of the trailer is not only being mocked or played with in the recut trailer, it is also a site of enjoyment. The recut trailer, while being something that mocks trailer conventions and the studios that distribute them, also shows willingness from audiences to view trailers. While they may be a site for enjoyment, recuts are also mocking the creation of trailers and, as Tryon suggests, might not be mocking the Hollywood feature films themselves, but "aim at an easier target, the Hollywood marketing machine that relentlessly promotes the latest films and by doing so emphasise the formulaic quality of all trailers and the Hollywood marketing machine in general" (2009: 162).

The recut trailer *Must Love Jaws* is a prime example of this attempt to subvert the Hollywood marketing machine. Once again, *Must Love Jaws* is concerned with genre-switching, by recutting footage from *Jaws* (a well known horror/thriller about a shark that terrorises an American beach) into a trailer for a movie about the love story between a man and a shark. The success of *Must Love Jaws* shows that any film, regardless of its notoriety and original intention (in this case to scare), can be genre-switched using the original footage. The trailer is also anachronistic in its use of soundtrack; 1990s pop/rap singer R. Kelly's "I Believe I Can Fly" plays over footage of the shark coming into the boat – originally a tense scene – to show the power of love between the man and the shark finally coming together, against all odds.

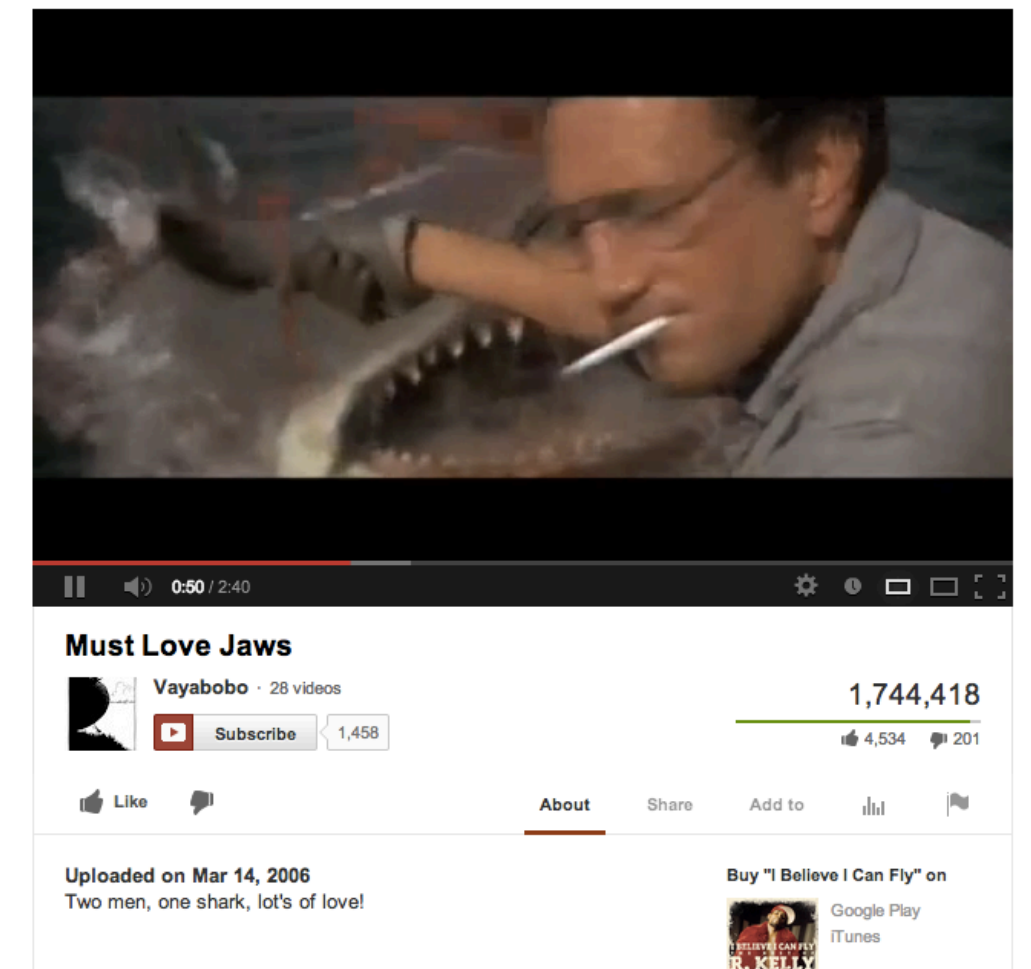


Figure 4.2: Still from *Must Love Jaws* (2006)

While these trailers may mock the Hollywood mechanisms of promotion, they can also demonstrate a fondness for the source text, which Tryon argues, is what Wes Gehring titles "parodies of affirmation" (1999). He suggests that this "affection", guiding the practice of recutting and consumption of the object themselves, also works to "establish what films are worthy of attention and commentary while ignoring others that seem less relevant or memorable" (2009: 162). There also is the potential for more esoteric films to be recut, suggesting that there is a willingness to appeal to niche audiences who would have seen an otherwise long forgotten film, and enjoy seeing it once again in the mode of anticipation.

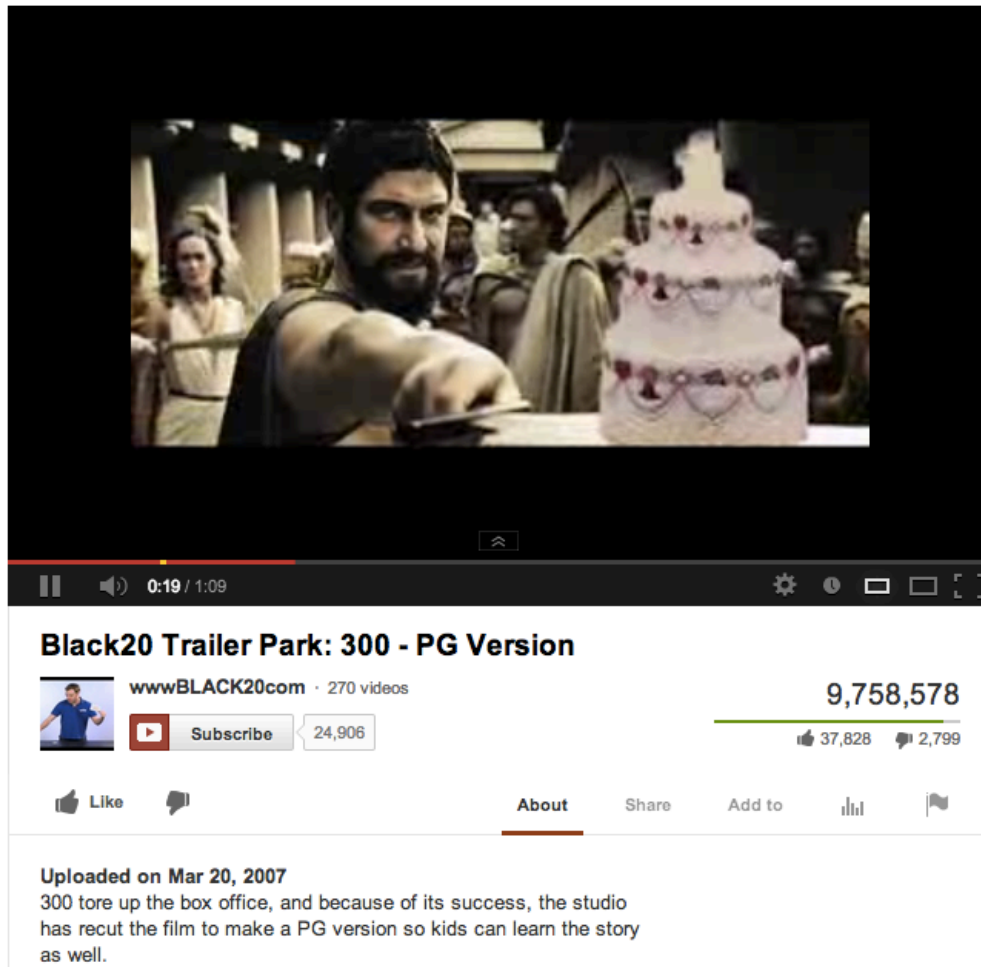


Figure 4.3: Still from *300 PG Version* (2007)

There are, however, recuts that definitively mock their source texts, by placing them alongside the trailers which reference films that are considered canonical, such as *The Shining* (1980) or *Jaws* (1975) – but mocking can be affectionate. While Tryon notes that *Scary Mary* - which recuts *Mary Poppins* (1964) as a horror film – in a sense parodies its source text (though perhaps it might parody the classification of films, and the enduring legacy of *Mary Poppins* as a popular children's film), other recut trailers parody a film by allowing it to be re-imagined in a mode of anticipation. For example, romantic comedy *Sleepless in Seattle* is recut into a horror film, as is children's comedy film *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993). Tryon notes that this may suggest that there is a culture of moving what appear to be "genres that are associated with women or girls"

into a masculine space (2009: 162). While this is certainly true of many of the recut trailers, there is also something larger at play. Specifically, these trailers manipulate the role of rating systems in appealing to audiences. By recutting original source footage to appeal to new audiences by shifting genre and narrative, the trailers seek to parody the rating systems and debates that can surround the release of violent feature films, suggesting that those elements can be seen in any feature.

The trailer *300 PG Version*, augments the extremely violent epic (*300* 2006) into a film that might appeal to children. This is not by changing the narrative or genre per se, but rather by censoring the footage of bloody bodies and other atrocities into cartoon images of cakes, and appeals from characters to "Brush your teeth!" The trailer is, of course, not meant to appeal to children at all, but rather to respond to the public concern and anxiety that surrounded the release of the film by censoring it to its most absurd conclusion. Furthermore, *300 PG Version* directly responds to the way that commercially released trailers omit sections of a particularly violent or sexual film to ensure that mainstream audiences are not confronted. Consequently, there is a humorous intention to parody the methods that are used to draw audiences into a film that they might not wish to see, based on censoring elements of a feature film.

As almost all recut trailers on YouTube begin with the MPAA rating screen (at times not including a rating, but indicating that the film is yet to be rated), recut trailers directly engage with the role that rating an upcoming feature plays in audience expectations. By not including a rating for an upcoming feature (a practice that is common in the early lead up to a feature's upcoming release), recut trailers parody and exploit the potential of a feature film in the release of a trailer, when even the age

of the potential audience has not yet been defined. It is a common trope in many of the trailers discussed in this section to change a film to appeal to families - as *Must Love Jaws* claims, "the family adventure of a lifetime" - or to change a film that would normally be family friendly, to be recut otherwise.



Figure 4.4: *MPAA Ratings Screen*

Considering these trailers in reference to a desire line, they do not subvert a typical path of promotion. However, they do involve revisiting a film away from its traditional path, resulting in a network of paths that intersect. The use of YouTube's architecture of tagging, naming and describing trailers is important to consider here. While these types of recut trailers are often curated outside of YouTube on blogs and websites to draw audiences towards the best of the trailers available, there is also a system of paths and connections within YouTube that create a sense of a body of work and connectedness. As recut trailers have evolved since the first trailer was uploaded, the architecture of YouTube has allowed for the trailers to appear as a connected body of work. While I have not observed a strong community with close ties in the way a fan community may exist, connections remain an important element of recut trailers: connections to feature films and other source material, as well as to other types of promotional material, or other user-generated content. The use of tags

and the related video function on YouTube allow for a traceable network between the recut trailers, other trailers, and the texts they evoke. It is also common for recut trailers to populate 'funny videos' lists, as they are indeed often created for a humorous effect.

While Google is not forthright with information regarding their algorithms for searching, it became clear from collecting data on the recut trailers that the related videos function is based on similarity in tags applied for videos, the name of the video itself, the creator of the trailer (if they have uploaded other videos), and the popularity of similar videos. Tags and video descriptions are applied at the uploaders' discretion, meaning that trailers often are incorrectly tagged for comic effect, or omit tags altogether. As recut trailers are often referred to by a myriad of names (recut trailer, fake trailer, fan trailer, remix, mash-up), there is no single tag to connect recut trailers.

In collecting the data for this thesis, I encountered difficulty in ensuring that I was covering a broad range of trailers due to the limitations of the search function in YouTube. Rather than being able to instantly access a database or collated group of videos, it was often through a method similar to wayfinding that I was able to become familiar with all types of recut trailers. For example, searching only for 'recut trailers' did not populate results that were categorised by the uploader in another way, and it was through the related video function that I was often able to access trailers either through their source text, or by videos that included numerous tags across the many ways that these trailers are categorised. Tags become increasingly instrumental in tracking anticipation for an upcoming film, and the recut trailers that play with this anticipation. When a user tags a recut trailer as being related to a feature film, the

related videos will populate with related material, for instance the theatrical trailer for the feature being evoked, as well as other recut trailers. This means that an officially released trailer can also evoke recut trailers. This can be explicitly seen in the recut trailers for *The Social Network*, discussed later in this chapter.

Tags thus remain a crucial way to make a network material and traceable, while also demonstrating the willingness to co-opt notions of authenticity and ‘official’ content being released from studios. Tags can also be considered in relation to the desire line, introduced earlier in this chapter. Recuts act as intervening paths in a desire line, intersecting the official or paved path of promotion, hoping to hijack a viewer intent on seeing the new trailer for an upcoming feature. Recut trailers, thus, have a presence in the anticipation for feature films in covert ways, and play into – by disguise – the typical path of promotion. Tags help manifest desire lines in a network as they trace connections between films and the source texts that they augment, allowing for a path that does not move in a linear fashion between two points, but instead show a series of networks and nodes. This also reflects the viewing patterns on YouTube. Rather than only searching for one video at a time, viewers capitalise on the connections between videos, their creators, and their content.

While trailers on television, in the cinema, and on DVD cannot be chosen in the same way, trailers can online – on Apple’s trailer website or through YouTube for instance – the method of consumption shares similarities. The pivotal difference between these methods of engaging with larger texts and cultural objects and the spaces they inhabit, is that trailers on YouTube also foster and encourage participation, interaction and creativity from their audiences, both in consumption

and production. Indeed, consumption on YouTube has the potential to be a creative act, both in the wayfinding that is encouraged through YouTube's architecture as well as engaging through comments and 'likes', and also by contributing to a video's popularity, ensuring that more people will witness it. To this extent, the recut trailer is not only promoted by its creator, but also by those who push it through the spaces it inhabits, and foster its networks.

My heart will go on and on and on: Resurrecting the dead through serialising the singular

Titanic: The Sequel: Jack was a passenger on the doomed Titanic in 1912. He was a working class passenger, who made his way onto the boat after winning a bet. Aboard the luxury Titanic, he falls in love with and woos a First Class passenger, Rose. Their love affair is ultimately brief, as the boat sinks and Jack dies. Or so it appears. Titanic: The Sequel shows Jack being retrieved from the ocean in a frozen block of ice. Once unfrozen, he is forced to enter a modern society that he doesn't understand, still in arrested development. He Googles 'Rose', his lost love, and seeks her out. But he is also running from scientists and governments who are hell-bent on finding him and controlling him.

Another common form of recut trailer involves creating a sequel for an existing feature film: this type of trailer is concerned with resurrection of dead characters and of films that cannot be revisited. Of course, these imaginary sequels will never materialise, but allow for a feature film's narrative world to be extended through the creativity of a trailer creator. While showing anticipation for a feature film to be revisited (or parodying a film that would not likely be revisited due to poor reception or implausibility), recut sequels also parody the way that studios attempt to build

anticipation for a sequel or create potential for a sequel by leaving the final scenes unresolved. As I noted in Chapter Three of this thesis, the very first trailer thought to be shown was for a sequel, *The Adventures of Kathlyn* (1912). From their very inception, trailers were considered as having the potential to create hype for a follow-on feature. As trailers originally followed the consumption of a feature film, rather than preceding it as they do now, trailers marked a way to instantly extend the narrative world of a feature film that has been consumed. As films and trailers have become decentralised from the space of the cinema, so too has the space for anticipation shifted.

As trailers moved to precede the feature film, the feature film embodied this open-ended potential, hoping to build anticipation in audiences to view a follow-up or continuation. This is most notable in the horror film genre, where the serial killer will disappear in the end shot from where his dead body was thought to be. This is a common trope in slasher films within the horror genre, most notably in serials and franchises such as *Friday the 13th* (1980) or *Halloween* (1978). In *Halloween*, killer Michael Myers is constantly resurrected in the following film despite his numerous presumed deaths. *Friday the 13th* launched a franchise after killing off the original murderer in the first installment and making the future killer her almost supernatural son, who appears nightmare-like out of the lake at the end of the first film. Resurrection in this way can be understood literally, but also figuratively – recut sequel trailers play into the potential latent resurrection of any feature film. Applying this typical horror convention to non-horror films results in parodying the attempts that Hollywood films use to suspend audiences in a mode of anticipation, and to let audiences leave the cinema in a state of desire for an upcoming feature.

Of course, this is seen in other texts outside of the cinema, including the serialised novel and television shows. However, films, unlike television, are imbued with a sense of finiteness, and the possibility of a sequel draws the temporality of the film into question, while also delineating the space that the film is consumed in. A film is not delineated to the space of the cinema: the audience leaves the cinema without a film having truly ended, and it is assumed that the potential for the next film will be mulled over in their imagination. Audiences also leave the cinema with anticipation for the next feature, providing, of course, that they enjoyed the film.



Figure 4.5: Still from *Titanic: The Sequel* (2006)

Titanic: The Sequel parodies this approach by studios. While horror films thrive on the potential for serialisation, *Titanic* (1997) recreates a historical event (with liberties) –

the Titanic sunk, limiting the potential for a sequel. The recut trailer shows Jack being unfrozen by scientists and the trailer implores, "as one journey ends, another begins". The trailer uses footage from a number of films that include Leonardo DiCaprio and other disparate films from across genres and eras such *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997). These other films provide entry points through moments that align with the trailer creator's vision, and that can be reworked to exist within the world of *Titanic: The Sequel*. The trailer directly subverts the attempts that unexpected sequels make in bringing someone back to life and extending their narrative into new surroundings by suggesting "now he's in a whole new world, but what happens when everything you ever knew is gone". The voiceover states that not only has everything Jack ever knew changed, but also now he "must live life all over again, in an unfamiliar town...and in the future". Directly referencing the mode of anticipation, the voiceover plays with temporality and familiarity: "this summer, Jack's back".

The intertextuality in the recut trailer is used for comic effect, outside of using shots that show Leonardo DiCaprio from other films for fidelity. For example, Jack goes to see *Titanic: The Musical* on Broadway, which extends Jack's narrative not only to the future as an individual, but as someone who must navigate the way that the story of *Titanic* has been appropriated into numerous sites, and for different effects, moving the intertextuality seen and expected in recut trailers to being beyond cinema. The trailer thus directly references the life of a text outside of the cinema, and demonstrates that the enduring legacy of *Titanic* is one that permeates a myriad of cultural forms and spaces, and occupies a troubled temporality. This trailer also demonstrates something beyond intertextuality. It reflects the specific networked

environment of YouTube, where content is available to promote literacy in a viewer if they do not understand a reference.

A number of other fake sequels for *Titanic* exist which generate numerous trajectories for the future life of Jack Dawson. *Titanic II: If Jack Had Lived* contains footage from *Titanic* interspersed with footage from *Revolutionary Road* (2008), which also stars Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio. *Revolutionary Road* follows the evolution of a relationship spanning from the 1940s to the 1950s as the couple's relationship turns to marriage, children, and eventually breakdown. This trailer encourages rereading – or misreading – feature films unrelated to *Titanic*, to upend cinematic memories: *Revolutionary Road* becomes the future story between Jack and Rose. Likewise *Titanic 2: Rose's Secret* uses footage from features shot after *Titanic* starring Winslet and DiCaprio separately including *The Reader* (2008) and *Gangs of New York* (2002), set in different eras and parts of the world. Serving as a networked object, trailers such as the *Titanic* sequels also promote connections to other trailers, to film promotion more generally, as well as to attempts by studios to create a never-ending latent story: they will live on and on.

In 2012 *Titanic* was released in 3D after a large promotional campaign to entice people to see the film yet again. The trailer placed *Titanic* in modes of both anticipation and nostalgia by referring to the popularity of the film at the initial time of its release, and by appealing to audiences who wanted to see it again in a new space and in a new time. Coinciding with the re-release of the film, a recut trailer, *Titanic Super 3D*, was released and shared across social media spaces that parodied the way

that the *Titanic* 3D trailer sought to build anticipation in audiences by claiming that there was a new way to experience the film.

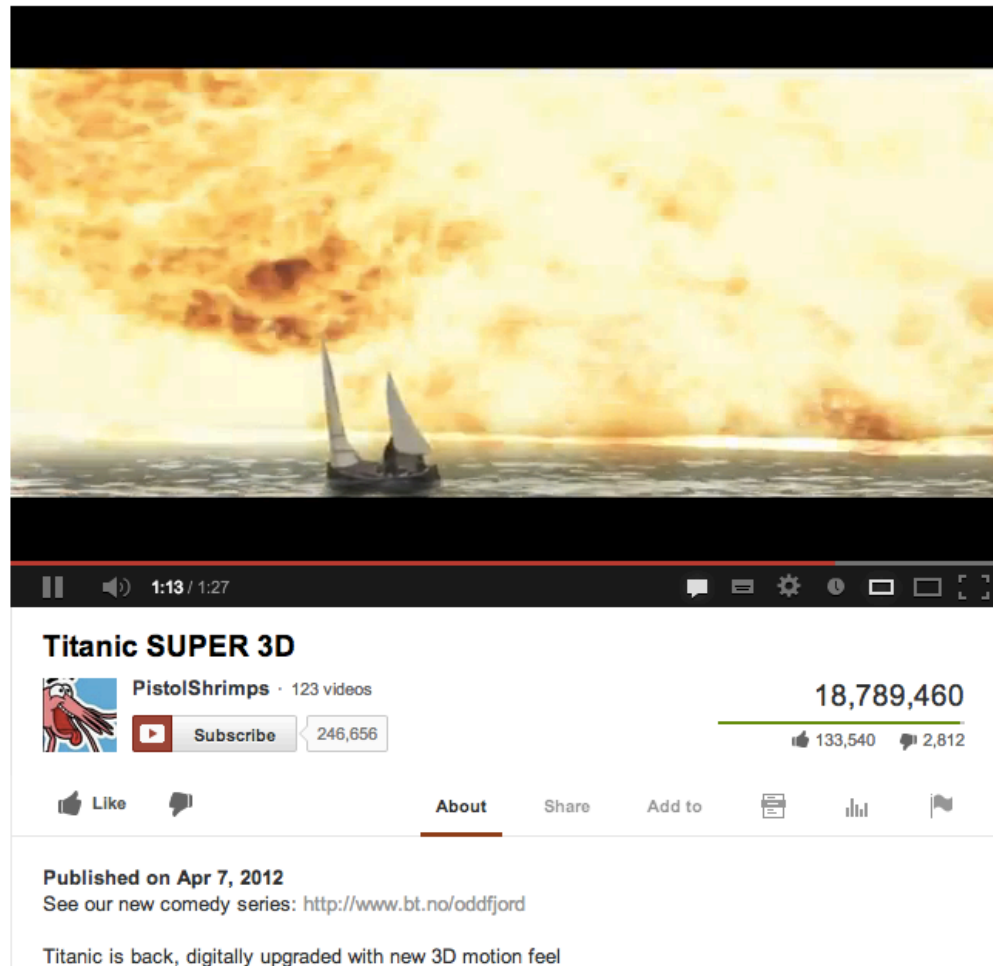


Figure 4.6: Still from *Titanic SUPER 3D* (2012)

The recut trailer mocked the hype around 3D as a technology, including shots of audiences in the cinema being spat on as Rose spits off the side of the boat, or having ice thrown on them as the ship hits the iceberg. The trailer also parodied the role that the director plays as an auteur in creating appeal to audiences through the trailer. Sections of the film are reimagined through the eyes of a new director, parodying the way that James Cameron, director of *Titanic* and *Avatar*, is considered one of the most important directors of our time. For example, scenes of the ship sinking and people

attempting to flee the boat are 'reshot' by Michael Bay, which leads to the ship exploding, people jumping into the ocean exploding, and the band who infamously played as the *Titanic* sank also exploding.

This recut trailer perfectly encapsulates fatigue that can be seen in audiences with the way that feature films attempt to build hype, and thus, anticipation in audiences. As Kernan (2004) suggests, this can be through appealing to particular stars, narrative and genre – trailers often literally spelling out connections between films that might hold value or significance for the audience; if you liked *Titanic* (1996), you'll love *Avatar* (2009). Increasingly this can be seen through appeals to technology, nostalgia for a text, actor, or director, or the related films that the stars, director, writers or producers have been involved in. Recut trailers draw out these appeals to their logical conclusion, by addressing the role that genre, stars, narrative, directors and other people and texts involved in the marketing of a feature film play in attempting to build an audience for an upcoming feature. However, as I show throughout this thesis, trailers do not only sell the contents of a feature film, but in their attempts to build a perpetual cinema-going audience, appeal to the idea of newness and the anticipation of technology, intertextuality, and placing the old or familiar in the new.

The trailer that advertises everything and nothing

Taking the recut trailers' claim to advertise a film that cannot exist to its most extreme conclusion, some trailers advertise everything that a film could contain, rather than an actual imagined film. *The Trailer For Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever* is an originally shot trailer that parodies the appeals made to audiences in films

anticipated to win an Oscar. The trailer creates characters based on problematic stereotypes and uses dialogue based on cinematic convention or script direction, rather than advancing any actual narrative.

Directly parodying the hype that is built around films that are in the run for an Oscar Best Picture, *Trailer For Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever* mocks the formulaic narrative and star devices that can be seen in trailers attempting to appeal to audiences. Tryon notes:

...while movie trailers and the Hollywood marketing machine may be ripe targets for satire, it is worth noting that these fake trailers, at least in part, may be expressions of a desire for more transparent media. (2009: 162)

Trailer For Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever may show desire for transparent media, but in its complete knowingness demonstrates that the methods used by studios and the Hollywood marketing machine are perhaps already too transparent. Trailers such as these also intend to demonstrate the command of the cinephile's subject: *Trailer For Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever* draws attention to the creator's (and consumer's) knowledge of marketing, film history and award shows situating that knowledge within a performance. It also serves as a provocation through mimicry: if we can unearth the formula to your marketing attempts, your future trailers will reinforce our point.

Likewise, on the Jimmy Kimmel show, a recut trailer was released that followed a similar structure and intent to the *Trailer For Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever*

entitled *Movie: The Movie*. The trailer, screened on television as a skit, involved a number of famous Hollywood actors and parodied the use of star appeal by making scores of actors appear in a film with a multitude of storylines, narrative devices and genres. Both of these trailers mock what Kernan (2004) identifies, that there must be something to appeal to everybody, and by showing everything that could possibly be released in a film to draw audiences, shows a lack of anticipation or an end product that would be desired by anybody.

Tryon outlines the ways that recut trailers have been co-opted by Hollywood studios in an attempt to engage with digital uses of media, but also explicitly as a new marketing tool to sell both technology, and the desire for interactivity between audiences and studios. In 2007, Twentieth Century Fox created Fox Atomic, which was a "genre label featuring horror films targeted at teen audiences" (2009: 171). Part of the launch of Fox Atomic included a tool on their website which allowed users to create their own trailers for films such as *28 Weeks Later* (2007) and *The Hills Have Eyes 2* (2007). As Tryon notes, this tool was a way of showing a dialogue between participatory audiences and the studio, but was a short-lived experiment, being dropped from Twentieth Century Fox after a year of operation.

By attempting to capitalise on anticipation seen in audiences for the release of upcoming feature films, Fox Atomic faced a difficult distinction between engaging with anticipation and fostering the creativity of their viewers, or only building hype. Studios are more likely to demand that a recut trailer or user generated clip is removed from YouTube if it is critical, rather than feeding into the path of production (Tryon 2009: 172). Both the Jimmy Kimmel trailer *Movie: The Movie* and

the *Trailer for Every Oscar Award Winning Film Ever* offer a meta analysis of the transparency desired by audiences, and the transparency of techniques used by Hollywood studios to attempt to engage an audience. The co-opting of these tools and practices has thus far failed in a studio sense, as copyright and other institutional obstacles can constrain a recut trailer from building into anticipation for an upcoming film, and they are not understood by studios as financially beneficial. These trailers also demonstrate that marketing of films is manipulative, but that this manipulation is obvious to the knowing audience, who can take those tools and parody those who built them.

Indeed, while studios may seek to capitalise on anticipation that is built on a grassroots level, placing that within the economic imperative of a Hollywood studio can be at odds with the intentions of the creators of recut trailers and their audiences. Although, as I will show, recut trailers are created without the interference from studios, reflecting audience anticipation in the lead up to the release of a feature film. This will be demonstrated in the discussion below of fan made trailers for upcoming *Twilight* (2008) films, and, in a more cynical way, the recut trailers created in the release of *The Social Network* (2010).

The co-opting of fan practices by studios (or the ignoring of them if they do help build hype for a studio release) does suggest that user generated practices in digital spaces are increasingly altering methods of both production and consumption of filmic texts in those spaces. Tryon suggests that:

...despite the revolutionary rhetoric that has come to define many of these changes, the rise of the fake trailer and other forms of web video implies not a radical break with the cinematic past, but a series of continuities and reinterpretations of it. And ultimately these fake trailers illustrate that, whatever else digital cinema is doing, it is also quite clearly a means for expanding the sites where cinema can be commodified, for bringing movies to the widest possible audiences. (2009: 173)

While the recut trailer is not indicative of the potential for studios to market their films in the future, they do reflect the way that cinema has been negotiated into new spaces, and the way that audiences have also navigated these changes. Importantly, recut trailers do allow for cinematic texts to be further commodified even while they are parodied, and for cinema to be brought to a new audience, often by reintroducing an older film into the mode of anticipation.

‘This is not an actual trailer!’: Fidelity and temporality in Twilight fan trailers

Twilight Movie Trailer: Kristen Stewart appears in a small town in a car. Images from several films are used here, including Panic Room and The Messenger. These are rearranged to appear as though Kirsten Stewart is now Bella from Twilight. Images of Robert Pattinson appear in her dreams. The images from the footage do not explicitly tell a story, but more generally show narrative movement: there is tense music over footage of Kirsten Stewart looking concerned. Letters are written by Kristen Stewart and read by Robert Pattinson, but the details are not made obvious. This trailer presents general and non-specific footage interspersed with text that locates it within the narrative of Twilight.

Once the cast for the first teen vampire *Twilight* (2008) film was announced, many users on YouTube created trailers that sought to create a look and feel of what the official trailer for *Twilight* might look like based on their knowledge of the book. Importantly, these recut trailers also bypassed the official release of the trailer – much like a desire line bypassing a paved path – and demonstrated the way the desire to see the trailer for *Twilight* could be seen as a performance of the desire to see the feature film. By collating and editing footage from press spots, features that the cast had previously appeared in, and other appearances in advertisements, the creators employed features of the trailer such as the use of non-diegetic sound, text and anticipatory appeals in order to create an atmosphere for *Twilight*. Through these trailers, the creators made an aesthetic narrative for *Twilight*, and fans were able to exhibit their intimate knowledge of the books by easily recalling and sharing their knowledge of the narrative. The producers of these fan trailers weren't striving for fidelity, but to be seen performing their anticipation for the feature film.

Kernan argues that trailers function:

As nostalgic texts that paradoxically appeal to audiences' idealized memories of films they haven't seen yet, they attract audiences not only to themselves (as attractions), nor even only to the attractions within the individual film they promote, but to an ever renewed and renewable desire for cinematic attraction per se. Like magnets, they attract (or occasionally, repel) in an attempt to draw bodies to a center, assembling their assumed audiences in a suspended state of present-tense readiness for a future that is always deferred. (2004: 208)

The trailers for *Twilight* demonstrate that collective memories exist for feature films. While a *Twilight* feature would eventually materialise, these recuts were concerned with sharing individual imagined films and sharing those visions with others. Kernan's proposal that bodies are drawn to a centre with a "readiness for a future that is always deferred", does not appear to relate to the *Twilight* trailers as strongly as other trailers that advertise a film that will not exist; viewers are still suspended in an anticipatory temporal state by enacting their desire toward a particular version of a film that will not exist, purely for the act itself.



Figure 4.7: Still from *Twilight Movie Trailer* (2008)

For some trailers that build or work with anticipation, success is dependent on the temporal bounds of the way the trailer is watched: as being a route between two sites

in a space. For the *Twilight* recut trailers, the paradoxical nature of this anticipation ensures that much of its cultural capital is short-lived; once the ‘real’ trailer is released, the recut trailer becomes an antiquated and criticised form that continues to exist, archived on YouTube. These videos become non-linear in the typical film promotional cycle, as they no longer promote a forthcoming film. Open to scrutiny by their peers, they can now be compared to the finished product of both the trailer and the feature. Comments on these trailers created in anticipation of a trailer/feature typically tend to deride the lack of knowledge and skills exhibited by the creator once the film and trailer are released. The makers of these trailers often annotate their videos to show that they are aware that the trailer is not faithful to the end product but is prescribed and encoded in a particular mode of anticipation. These trailers rely upon certain temporal context in order to make meaning for some fans or more casual viewers.

Methods varied in the ways *Twilight* fans tagged their videos in order to reach their intended audience. Tags also provided markers to their viewers that the fan trailer should only be watched in a specific temporal window. Referring to ‘fan’ in the video title was common, although some trailers appeared to be concerned with trickery by calling the video ‘Twilight trailer’ or similar. Most commonly, the video description, and sometimes annotations, were used to alert the viewer to the fan-made nature of the video. For some of these trailers, this would not have been relevant at the time of publishing the video as there was no frame of reference to an ‘official’ trailer. These annotations and descriptions have been added based on critiques of the inaccuracy of the videos, such as the following comment, left in 2010 on a *Twilight* trailer from 2008:

Uhh...I hate to rain on your parade, but it sucks! I mean, wtf [what the fuck] is going on?!?!?! Nothing is even remotely like the movie, the actors don't look alike, etc, etc, etc – I could go on FOREVER!

This comment is symptomatic of comments I have observed on *Twilight* fan trailers since 2009. These comments function as both a critique of the technique of the creator and as an insult to their fandom; by pointing out the inaccuracies, the commenter asserts themselves as being more intimate with the text, and more capable of being a fan. For other commenters who are part of the practice of fan trailers and fan vids, their comments generally range from complimenting or debating choices in the video (generally in an amicable way), to discussing types of software used to recut and splice the source footage from a variety of movies or other texts.

The *Twilight* trailers often formed part of a competition started by a YouTube user. These competitions embody the 'one-up-manship' that often occurs in recut trailers: who can outdo the absurdity of one film being recut into the realm of another? Who can create the most lifelike and atmospheric *Twilight* trailer? The competitiveness of the trailers points to the role of literacy in the creation and dissemination of these trailers; knowing who the cast are is integral to understanding these *Twilight* trailers, and the comments become a place to share information about who has been cast as the lead characters and to debate their merits, but also to offer alternatives, or suggest how they pictured characters from *Twilight* while reading the books. This then is not only about fidelity, but also about acknowledging the difference in aesthetic interpretation that goes on in other fans' minds, while still being subject to taste judgments.

Sparkly Vampires and Crying Fans: Reactions to Twilight Anticipation

Reaction videos are common YouTube phenomena that typically involve a YouTube user filming themselves reacting to watching a video. Most of these videos are shot on a web cam or built-in camera on a computer and the viewer of the reaction video is typically unable to view the video the reactor is watching. Famous examples of reaction videos in YouTube's history have generally focused on horror, scary videos, pornographic videos, or videos that are considered distasteful. Fan interaction seen in the anticipatory recuts did not wane following the release of the Twilight films. After the release of the *Twilight* film *Eclipse* (2010) and later *Breaking Dawn* (2011), *Twilight* fans taped themselves watching the trailer for the first time and shared these videos with other *Twilight* fans, and of course, with other non-fans or anti-fans of *Twilight*.

The *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* trailer reaction videos are interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, they demonstrate that the release of a trailer was so anticipated that fans wanted to share their reactions with other people, serving as material residues of fan practices and allowing for these reactions to become communal and traceable through YouTube's architecture. Of course, this can be seen as anticipation for the feature film, but the performative qualities of these videos demonstrate an eagerness and anticipation for the trailer itself. Secondly, the users – who are almost all women – narrate their feelings to an audience they imagine, reflecting on how things differ or fall in line with their expectations of how the text will be shown. This is not only a reflection on what the film depicts and how it is shown, but how the trailer packages this and sells it to an audience, and what they choose to disclose in the trailer.

Furthermore, the videos act as communal participation in what appears as to be a private act in watching a trailer alone online. The equation between domestic and private is troublesome, as consumption in the domestic sphere can still be public, countercultural and political (Warner 2002). YouTube's architecture promotes the publicness of watching videos; while its slogan may have been "broadcast yourself", its history has consistently also advocated a two-way method of broadcasting. Features such as video sharing (being able to view who else is watching the same video as you at the same time), playlists, 'liking' a video or 'disliking a video', comments, and the amount of views a video has received all remain traces and reminders of the public nature of YouTube.

Taking fan practices outside of a closed and contextual space and into the space of YouTube means that interaction and appropriation from other users cannot be stopped (unless the video is made private). As such, the *Eclipse* reaction videos have been compiled by some users for comic effect, and shared across blogs and other sites online. This relates to the vaudeville history of the trailer and public responses to it (Kernan 2004). As viewing habits have changed from booing or cheering a trailer, the *Eclipse* reaction videos show the excess of this history of viewer interaction. In one example, a *Twilight* fan cries and swears her way through watching the trailer, emotional at seeing a story she has been anticipating being shown in live action as opposed to her imagination.



Figure 4.8: Still from *Fan Reactions to Twilight Breaking Dawn Trailer* (2011)

Reaction videos are an articulation and embodiment of fan culture. But they also reflect the event that the release of a trailer has now become, as well as hinting at the public aspects of watching a trailer online despite it being viewed physically in the home. Through the use of the reaction video, the fan also ensures that their reaction is a cinematic one, steeped in filmic literacy. The popularity of the fan reaction video also points to how fans are interested not only in watching the trailer itself, but also how other people react to it, in order to contextualise their feelings. This relates to the role of recut trailers as an object that serves as material traces of desire – these objects can also be understood as an attempt to make this desire public and communal.

Social networks, speed and literacy

Twitter Movie Trailer: A series of twitter updates appear on the screen from celebrities to a choral version of Radiohead's Creep. One of the creators of Twitter explains how he needs to create a website where people can vacuously discuss everyday things that happen to them. A fight breaks out between he and the other creator, as the other creator asks him to explain what the 'fail whale' is (an image that appears on Twitter when Twitter is in downtime). Scenes from the Social Network trailer are recreated with reference to Twitter instead of Facebook.

In 2010, a trailer appeared for the widely anticipated “Facebook movie”, which chronicled the life of Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg. The trailer and teaser spots were easily recognisable. The teaser spots did not include live action and presented *The Social Network* as being a film embedded in Facebook’s architecture and history. The trailer for *The Social Network* later introduced live action depicting the film as a sprawling epic over the course of one man’s rise to success. Accompanying high tension scenes in boardrooms and bedrooms, a choral version of Radiohead’s Creep plays, with text that will become easily identifiable: “You don’t get to 300 million friends...without making a few enemies”. Before the release of the feature film many originally shot trailers were made and distributed through YouTube as well as some commercial sites. This section will discuss the speed of the dissemination of *The Social Network* recut trailers, and the ways in which they exhibited and played with notions of literacy in online environments.

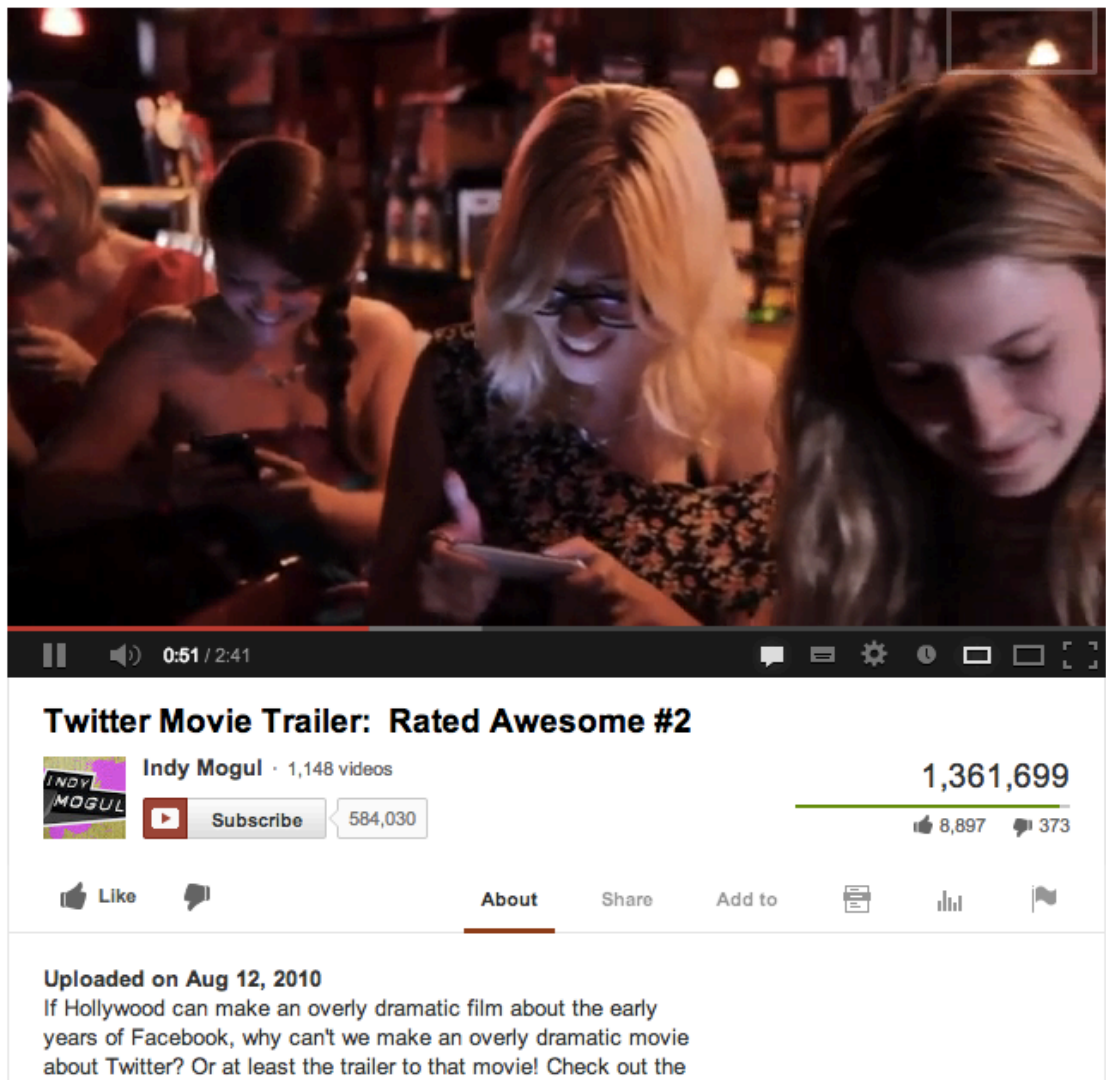


Figure 4.9: Still from *Twitter Movie Trailer* (2010)

The recut *Social Network* trailers sought to use the stylistic elements of the official trailer and apply the narrative to other websites or services (Twitter, YouTube, eBay, MySpace and 4chan). These originally shot trailers differed depending on the types of humour that they were seeking to convey. For some, it was the narrative of the website, such as the trailer that focused on the use of Facebook – introducing the ‘poke’, the ‘like’ and the ignore request into ordinary situations. More commonly, the trailers sought to create a narrative and mythology for the website of their choice

based on its design and use. This reflects the change in the teaser and trailers for *The Social Network* from being a film about Facebook to a film about Facebook's creator. Popular moments in a website's history became major players or characters. These trailers demonstrated literacy of internet culture, historicising popular sites and mythologising them to the extent that Facebook was mythologised in *The Social Network* trailer.

The wider online discussions of *The Social Network* trailers demonstrate the perplexing temporal position that trailers – and other items in networked environments such as memes – enjoy within a network. News articles charting the rise of *The Social Network* parody trailers seemed to appear almost instantaneously. Despite there not being a large amount of trailers – for instance much less than *Twilight* (2008) or *Inception* (2010) – media outlets were quick to label *The Social Network* as a phenomenon that exploded over night. Rather than reflecting on the reasons why these trailers might be so quick in appearing, mainstream articles tend to attribute the spread of the trailers to a “community” (Wee 2010), or “the Internet” itself (Valentino-DeVries 2010), “the good people of the Internet” (Abrams 2010), or even “comedians” and “pranksters” (The List 2010). The interest in these trailers, as opposed to other typical recut/fan creations, can be seen as privileging the form of an originally shot trailer as opposed to recutting existing material. The trailers are deemed “hilarious”, creative and clever (Abrams 2010; McCarthy 2010) and are also attributed to feeding into the “hype” for *The Social Network* (Wee 2010; McCarthy 2010).

There is a lack of perspective in the temporal unfolding and quantity of *The Social Network* trailers. *The Wall Street Journal* writes about the “evolution” of these trailers

while only naming two trailers (The Video Website and Twitter), while claiming that “[t]he possibilities are endless – as long as they keep using that awesome choral version of Radiohead’s ‘Creep’” (Valentino-DeVries 2010). Wee on *Penn Olson*, a technology site claimed two days after the Wall Street Journal article that these trailers are in a “boom” while also only listing the same two trailers as the *Wall Street Journal* (Wee 2010). Eight days later Grant, a journalist for Crushable, implores an end to these trailers: “But can we just call it quits already?” while linking to five parodies of *The Social Network* (Grant 2010). Similarly, within days of the first parody trailer appearing, most articles discussing the trailers put forward the “best” parodies, often only listing two or three.

Just as McCarthy (2010) claims that these trailers give “free publicity” to *The Social Network*, so too articles anticipating a “boom” of trailers that are spreading so fast “we can hardly keep track” (Huffington Post 2010), create publicity and viewing counts for trailers, which in turn, are likely to encourage others to create their own. The attempt to canonise certain trailers over others in “best of” pages is common in the majority of discussions of recut trailers outside of YouTube. A great number of blog posts discuss ideas surrounding the notion of these trailers and then present a curated list of trailers that they deem to be the best. This is no different with the media coverage for *The Social Network* trailers, which sought to preference trailers while they were still appearing, validating the type of trailer and their methods, but highlighting varying quality.

Trailer	Date	Views (as at 26/06/2011)	Authorship
YouTube Movie – The Video website	3 rd August 2010	520,003	Jeff Loveness
Twitter Movie Trailer: Rated Awesome #2	12 th August 2010	1,124,971	IndyMogul/Rated Awesome/Gregory Brothers
The Auction Site	12 th August 2010	98,230	DrCoolSex
The Social Network Trailer – a parody	25 th August 2010	6,169	MrPDHogan (Phil Hogan)
Chat Roulette Trailer: Social Network Parody	12 th October 2010	8,605	Maahseetv
The Kittch Network (“Social Network” trailer parody)	29 th July 2010	9,062	MikeCelestino
The Social Network PARODY (FACEBOOK)	21 st September 2010	130,995	Alphacat (Iman Crosson and Michael Gallagher)
Social Network Parody	1 st October 2010	8,527	RespectablyFrench (Johnny Bassett and Daniel Claridge)
The Science Network – A Social Network Parody	24 th March 2011	4,295	Bengood4000
The Social Network Teaser 3 (Spoof)	15 th July 2010	18,486	Danilic

Figure 4.10: *Reflecting the top ranking videos by searching for Social Network Trailer Parody on YouTube.*

The views reflect (almost a year on from the surfacing of the trailers) the success of some versus others. For example, the teaser trailer was viewed more in the build up to the release of the trailer, which then supersedes the teaser and becomes the recognisable marker of an upcoming film. As the above table shows, these trailers were attributed to authors (at times, entire production teams), and in the case of the most popular video a combination of people were involved in the production, most notably Rated Awesome and the Gregory Brothers, both well-known on YouTube

and in the case of the Gregory Brothers, the latter being infamous for creating viral videos.

The speed at which *The Social Network* trailers appeared and were discussed is fitting for a film made about online culture. The decision of the screenwriter and director of *The Social Network* to make this film an epic is one that was destined to be met with cynicism, particularly as the film's promotional discourse changed so many times before the release of the film. Simultaneously referred to as a "Facebook movie" as well as the story of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, the film appeared to historicise something that is still happening; this kind of anticipatory nostalgia is something that will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four, but falls in line with narratives about the speed and temporality of online spaces and an attempt to make permanent what can seem impermanent.

Anticipation, temporality, technology and textuality

Trailers and feature films have had a varying temporal relationship throughout history. Trailers' evolution from preceding a film, to following it, to being watched at any point in a film's theatrical release, speaks to our understanding of the role of time in promotion. Johnston argues that there is a causal link between technology and a troubled temporality in the trailer:

These new screens also complicate the temporal position of trailers. Since the 1910s, trailers have been defined as 'coming attractions,' a suggestion of pleasures yet to arrive, broad hints as to what audiences could flock to see

next. More so than the feature films they promote, trailers exist in a very specific temporal window – a week, month or year (in more recent blockbuster advertising) before the debut of the feature film they are advertising. This continual anticipatory sphere suggests trailers are always a coming attraction, always teasing audiences about what is forthcoming. (2009: 23)

As Johnston notes, the trailer up to the 1970s was exhibited after the feature film, temporally suggesting both ‘coming’ and ‘going’. Additionally, trailers are not consumed as only a catalogue for future-film going, and may not be consumed in a linear way in relation to the promotional life of a feature. The trailer has multiplied across numerous spaces and temporal trajectories, delineated both spatially and temporally from being tied to its promotional value or the space of the cinema. This is due to different methods of technological dissemination, but also a cultural willingness to play with the form of the trailer, and to ascribe significance to the trailer – whether or not Hollywood studios institutionalised it.

While Johnston claims that trailers exist in a specific temporal window, as has been discussed throughout this chapter, that temporal window is varied. In some instances it can exist well after the release of one of the source texts of a recut trailer; in the very specific lead up to a feature film that is sped up by the desire of fans, as in *Twilight*; and in the case of *The Social Network*, reflected upon specifically by online discussions surrounding the release of recut trailers. This suggests that the trailer may not always be held in a specific temporal window, but always evokes that temporal window. And in some cases this leads to nostalgia playing an important role in the consumption and production of recut trailers.

Rather than offering a specific temporal window in relation to the feature film and the cinematic, as proposed by Johnston, these trailers represent something more closely related to the pre-texts proposed by Gray (2010). While still being concerned with temporality, the pre-text, according to Gray, is more concerned with the time in which people enter or become acquainted with a text (2010: 120-6). This raises questions of where textuality begins, as Gray identifies, but it also questions the point at which discussion and interaction with a text can be considered as engaging with a text. Can a “pre-viewer” as Gray terms them (2010: 120), discuss a feature film without having seen it? Can *Twilight* fans discuss a trailer without having seen the official one? Gray proposes that there are intertexts that inform the pre-text and the text itself: they might refer to a star or a genre, for example (2009: 121). This evokes the rhetorical appeals that Kernan claims a trailer uses to sell its wares to an audience: genre, star and narrative appeal. As Gray notes, these are inherently intertextual – there is no way a genre or star can exist as an appeal without the audience having knowledge and being aware of the cultural capital they hold. But do these form a “pre-text”, which insinuates a line between the text and the end of a text, which must be arbitrary? And how does this account for trailers such as *Award for Every Award Winning Film Ever* which could be considered intertextual and yet makes no reference to specific texts but rather the meta formula that underpins the marketing of them? Likewise, how do we understand a ‘pre’ text in the *Titanic* sequels which extend the world of *Titanic* as they also retrospectively reorder other films, characters and narratives?

Gray discusses the ways in which intertextuality forms and is induced by viewers through his example of *The Lord of the Rings* books and movies (2010: 124-5). He claims

that viewers who read the books and watched the film were “engaging with a text in a new textual body, anticipating one with the other, already reaching to one by way of the other” (2010: 125). This can be seen at play in the *Twilight* trailers, most specifically in the reaction videos posted by users online; the users were anticipating the book as they were anticipating the film, and they were also anticipating the trailer. These, Gray argues, borrowing from Ganette, form layers of intertextuality, in which a viewer may draw upon any layer, but the top layer will always be the most vivid to them. The top layer will change dependent on the viewer. For those who engage most with the book, the book will form the top layer, or at times the film may move from the bottom layer and overtake the top, or at least, or constantly reinforce it, and so on. But for viewers of a recut who do not appear to be privileging a specific layer, this complicates the notion of layers.

The types of textual connections described in this thesis must be considered in relation to the networked space in which they are circulated and consumed. The architecture of YouTube encourages these connections to be made visible or easily found, in turn inspiring interconnectedness and a fluidity between texts. This thesis rejects the argument that a trailer forms only as a paratext or intertext and that the role of the network in fostering and spreading these connections is paramount. Therefore, the role of the trailer as a pre-text cannot sit within the categorisation of the trailer. Instead, the role of intertextuality – which can be identified but is not, as this chapter has shown, the only way of making or coding meaning in these trailers – is closer in line with the idea of residual elements of texts or concepts. In this network there are residual elements of the text, the audience and the producer.

Kernan argues that trailers have:

...unique temporal status as, paradoxically, nostalgic structures of feeling for a film we haven't seen yet cues us to their status as fundamentally contradictory texts. Their rhetorical appeals reify not only (fictionalized) past experience but also the future – the anticipated experience of moviegoing, and even future memories of past moviegoing. (2004: 15-16)

Kernan suggests that the anticipatory nature of a trailer forces us to recognise an “implied audience” for the trailer, and subsequently the feature film (2004: 216). The recut trailer is much more difficult to understand considered in relation to a future audience. Surely, users create these trailers because they assume there is an audience for the trailer, and that an audience would be interested in one facet of the recut trailer (often heavily relying on Kernan's claims of trailers appealing to star, genre, and narrative). The links accompanying the trailer on YouTube also visibly tie it to other audiences, or demonstrate how audiences might find and engage with the trailer.

The recut trailer ensures there is no tangible end product; while it cannot be attained, it can be anticipated. The recut trailer plays with this type of anticipation and also directly references those trailers for films that people might never watch – that their understanding of the narrative realm of the movie will be only what they viewed from the trailer, or what they assumed based on the name of the film, the genre, the director or the stars. This builds on the idea of a network of literacy, and that linear understanding of filmic texts and cinematic culture might not be how people visit

these films; that anticipation might extend well beyond its apparent temporal bounds, and be key to how cinema has been defined, produced and consumed.

Anticipating space

Roland Barthes discusses the role of the space of cinema both leading up to, and following the consumption of a feature film (1986). While the majority of his essay focuses on leaving the movie theatre; Barthes directly discusses the importance of what he terms the “cinema situation” (1986: 345), the reasons why one chooses to go to the cinema (desire, boredom, leisure, being among his reasons), and also of the “hypnosis” that the cinema beckons us with. He argues that it is “not in front of the film and because of the film that he dreams off – it’s without knowing it, even before he becomes a spectator” (1986: 245).

For Barthes the viewer is underneath a “pre-hypnosis” as he wanders the city, leading him “from street to street, from poster to poster” before finally submitting completely to the cinema (1986: 346). In the cinema, Barthes describes, “it’s as if a long stem of light had outlined a keyhole, and then we all peered, flabbergasted, through that hole” (1986: 347). This keyhole of light prior to the main attraction at first seems similar to the trailer, in that it is pre-figured to the main attraction, like the posters and streets that lead to the feature film. Instead, these all can be considered as feeding into the meaning and hypnosis of the cinema that Barthes describes. The moment, when that keyhole of light appears, is one that is truly anticipatory – both in the sense of awaiting what will appear, but also imagining the cinematic. This type of hypnosis and all that leads into the cinema, and out of the cinema that reinforces the cinematic

(as discussed in Chapter One) reflects more accurately on the notion of the presidual. Neither can be considered as merely existing before or after a text.

Moreover, the cinematic is made hypnotic not only by texts, but by space, temporality, light, other people, and urban experience. Merely considering the trailer in terms of the textual is restrictive and does not reflect the ways in which we encounter and experience the cinematic and the anticipatory mode. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, the conditions of the “cinema situation” are present in online spaces, such as the presence of other people and their reactions, and delineated temporality. However, the physicality of the darkness of a screen being illuminated by a keyhole of light before the main attraction can only be applied here metaphorically. The keyhole of light is a temporal window, which allows an audience’s imagination to anticipate and pre-empt the feature and to enjoy the feeling of awaiting the fulfillment of their desires.

The space of cinema, and by association its audience, is positioned in a mode of anticipation through cinematic advertisements. Traditional theatre ads such as for the candy bar, or those advising audiences to switch off their phones, announce to the audience the rules and expectations, but also reinforce the spatial dimensions and specificities that the movie theatre provides. The screen is the “lure”, as Barthes would have it (1986: 348), on which the audience fling themselves. Commonly, the space of the cinema will also act as a performance and reminder of this anticipation and desire for films, as patrons move from queuing for tickets, to buying snacks, to entering the cinema. To watch a film under these circumstances is to be absorbed into a movie-going culture, and before the film is allowed to commence, audiences must sit

through advertisements for the very thing they are trying to consume – to remind them of the role anticipation plays in the desire and pleasure that comes with the cinema.

The anticipation does not end after the film has been seen, however. As a patron leaves the movie theatre and the screen, they enter the theatre lobby, which promotes future films; the posters appear to glance over the audience, knowing that they will be back. As Burgin describes in his discussion of Barthes' essay:

On leaving the cinema, the cinema of society, we reenter a global cinema, where cultural and ideological differences come together in intimate electronic proximity. In this cinema, too, the image is a lure. Flickering on the hook is the alternative the mirror relation presents: narcissistic identification or aggressive rivalry. Here also, Barthes seems to suggest, we may defer taking the bait – but not in order to calculate a fine scale of 'correct distances' between fusion and abjection. (Burgin 1997: 28)

Here, Burgin evokes the idea that upon leaving the theatre, everything seems cinematic; that is, we potentially view the sights around us in the same state of anticipation that we did during the film. The space of cinema, as seen by Barthes and Burgin, is transformative. It alters the perceptions of people, and the way that things are viewed by its various lures, one of which is the image. While Barthes doesn't discuss the trailer, his inclusion of the role of the film poster in both contextualising and expanding the space of the cinematic theatre is critically important. Film posters act as both enticements and guides, into the cinematic realm. The trailer serves the

same function, but once the posters have lured the viewer into the theatre, the trailers put the audience in a suspended state of anticipation; waiting for what will appear on the screen before them, and anticipating the content of it. Recut trailers allow viewers to revisit this feeling by placing familiar source material into the affective mode, or by creating a trailer for a film that will not exist but which remains temporally bound to the future. Like the keyhole of light, a recut trailer relies on imagination and anticipation of what can be.

Conclusion

Snakes on a Plane (2006) showed us how viewers could be familiar with a feature film prior to having seen it, and anticipate it both in terms of excitement, and in terms of familiarity and knowledge. In the case of *Snakes on a Plane*, this could be achieved through consuming the name of the film alone. *Snakes on a Plane* represents the ways that studios attempt to create and capitalise on this knowledge, but more importantly how audiences have led studios to feel that they need to – and can – create films that are this high concept when it comes to audience anticipation. Consuming the elements of the advertisement, the star, the narrative, the genre, and even the name of the film, make seeing the feature almost unnecessary.

The *Twilight* trailers demonstrate the importance of cinematic desire and anticipation for the feature film. In relation to the spatial metaphor of the ‘desire line’, the *Twilight* trailers involve viewers creating a more direct link between two points. They also show the multilayered approach that creators use to play with textuality, and also with other modes of knowledge and categorisation. The *Twilight* trailers demonstrate

the ancestral link in these trailers to concepts discussed in fan studies, but the *Social Network* trailers reveal how recut trailers also depart from fan practices. While these may at times be more evocative of non-fan or even anti-fan practices, fandom is not the most important thing to consider either in their creation, their dissemination, or their consumption. Similarly, I demonstrated in this chapter how textuality may not be the most appropriate mode of analysis for considering recut trailers. In particular, the term intertextuality is inadequate for considering the exchange of knowledge and capital in anticipatory ways. Users create traceable lines of knowledge and capital to other texts, and also connections to actors, genres, producers, and viewing habits.

The troubled temporality of the recut trailer – and of the trailer itself – demonstrates that the anticipatory mode is just one way of considering the meaning making present in these trailers, and trailers more generally. The following chapter extends the role of temporality in the trailer to consider how nostalgia informs and enlightens our understanding of the trailer both in cinematic and non-cinematic spaces. It will also look at how nostalgia can be considered in relation to the anticipatory mode of viewing and creation that this chapter outlined. Moving beyond the temporal bounds of the anticipatory – the keyhole of light before the feature – the following chapter examines the way the past is considered and treated in the consumption and production of trailers. As the desire line offers “new pathways and potential circuits that expand the interconnected network”, recuts remain as material traces inscribing the various temporal trajectories that audiences make in cinematic culture.

Chapter Five

Déjà vu all over again: Nostalgia, YouTube and Cinematic Memory

In 2007, directors Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez released a double feature called *Grindhouse*⁵. *Grindhouse* consisted of two genre features, *Planet Terror* and *Death Proof*, and numerous recut trailers that preceded each feature. These trailers were made by well-known actors and directors, and paid homage to the B-grade films of the past. One of the trailers was later made into a feature film, *Machete* (2010). *Grindhouse* was not only about the features but also about recreating the feeling of grindhouses – older cinemas that showed B-grade films and typically involved interaction from the audience. Technical failures were reproduced in the films, such as scratches on the film, missing footage in anticipated sex scenes, and audio errors.

Grindhouse was about nostalgically revisiting a time and place that many in the intended audience were not alive to experience. The trailers advertised films that would not exist but helped to create the feeling that the viewer was now part of an audience that was temporally and spatially bound to the past. Following on from a culture that now allows for trailers to be seen well after the release of a feature film and through numerous sites, the inclusion of trailers in the *Grindhouse* program signaled that there was nostalgia for a type of trailer that focused on exploitation film, making reference to outdated technology and narrative. The *Grindhouse* trailers also

⁵ Portions of this chapter were first published in:

Williams, K 2009, 'Never coming to a theatre near you: Recut film trailers', *M/C Journal*, vol. 12, no. 2, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/139>

Williams, K 2013, 'Recut film trailers, nostalgia and the teen film', in K Barton & JM Lampley (eds.), *Fan Culture: Essays in Participatory Fandom in the 21st Century*, pp. 47-60, McFarland, Jefferson, NC.

played with the role of trailers as entertainment and attractions in their own right, also demonstrating nostalgia – or an evoking of collective memories – brings enjoyment through drawing upon knowledge of genre and cinematic history.

Nostalgia is a pertinent concept for considering the way recut trailers act as a network and create meaning. It acts as a driving force in the production and consumption of recuts on YouTube. Building from the last chapter's discussion of anticipation, this chapter looks at play with the evocation of time through three case studies where nostalgia can be seen as a dominant mode of affect. Nostalgia has been used to market films to audiences through a manipulation of memory; I argue in this chapter that nostalgia can be co-opted in recut trailers to critique the idea of continuity in cinema.

The case studies below can be broken into three areas: nostalgia for teen films through recut trailers, fake nostalgia for a time not experienced through the creation of 'pre-make' trailers, and immediate nostalgia in *Brokeback Mountain* parodies – that is, nostalgia mobilised for a recently screened past. The trailers that recut an older film to develop and revel in anticipation also rely heavily on a mutual sense of nostalgia in their audiences. Nostalgia, in its common usage, seemingly involves looking back. But, as I will demonstrate, nostalgia can exist for a time that has not been experienced; it can involve looking sideward, and can falsely draw upon memories or imagined memories. Nostalgia can be longing for an experience that has been, an idea of an experience, or an experience that could have been, or is yet to be.

Looking to the past: Studies of nostalgia

The theoretical work on nostalgia is varied, particularly in the area of media production. Numerous works exist which discuss, for example, the presence of nostalgia for technological media of the past through the lens of fan-like adoration, or obsessive collection of outmoded technologies such as vinyl collections (Plasketes 1992), VHS tapes (Hilderbrand 2009), or retrogaming (Suominen 2008). Often this nostalgia functions as what I refer to as faux-nostalgia⁶ – that is, a romanticisation for a period of time that an individual has not experienced – which appears to be at odds with the understanding that nostalgia is a recollection of the past that was directly experienced. Nostalgia exists beyond individual experiences and can become collective nostalgia for bygone eras or items (Boym 2002).

Defining nostalgia

Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer coined the term ‘nostalgia’ in 1688 as a scientific and medical term (Natali 2009). The literal meaning of nostalgia comes from Hofer’s combination of the Greek words *nostos* (homecoming) and *algos* (pain or ache) “to describe the pain resulting from the desire to return to one’s home” (Natali 2009: np). Yet nostalgia takes on meaning outside of the longing and inherent pain (regardless of severity) that is implied by its literal definition, and instead has come to indicate a longing evocation of the past. In this section, I will discuss definitions of nostalgia in

⁶ I acknowledge that categories such as faux-nostalgia lend themselves to creating hierarchies in which physically experiencing a time or place is valued over experiencing time and place through media. It is my intention in using this term to demonstrate the widespread importance of mediated memories that are parodied and played with in the form of recut trailers – which in turn point out the ‘falseness’ of memories.

relation to media consumption and production, and how nostalgia acts as a bridge between knowledge and media form.

Attempts have been made to shift the understanding of nostalgia from pain and longing to an aesthetic style and modality. Davis discusses the “nostalgia boom” (1979: 90) of the 1970s, seen through such TV shows as *Happy Days* and movies that romanticised past eras such as *Grease* (1978) and *American Graffiti* (1973) – each set in the 1950s. He claims that nostalgia is a “distinctive aesthetic modality” (Davis 1979) that rises in times where culture yearns for continuity following a period of change (Grainge 2000: np). Change can provoke nostalgia, be it technological or social change. Shifting the cinematic object and culture into digital spaces can be understood as a transition, and this yearning for continuity – rather than a yearning for the past – is what, I argue, leads to the creation and fostering of nostalgia as a cultural mode and mood. The search for continuity can be seen in the way that the life of a narrative or cultural style is extended. Considering this search for continuity as a cultural mode involves evoking a collective understanding of a past through cultural symbols – for example, through the use of clothing to signify a particular era. This can be seen as negotiating symbols of the past into current cultural objects and consumption.

Grainge acknowledges that the “production of nostalgia may have grown in tandem with a sense of cultural crisis”, but that it cannot be exclusively tied to “theories of loss and malaise” (2000: np). Importantly, Grainge notes that the production of nostalgia might not necessarily have to do with longing or mourning, but instead suggests that:

...modes of (media) nostalgia have developed in a culture that is neither reeling from longing nor forgetting, but that is able to transmit, store, receive, reconfigure, and invoke the past in new and specific ways. (2000: np)

Instead of discussing nostalgia purely in terms of longing or yearning, I draw on Grainge's work to understand "nostalgia as a cultural style". Davis (1979) argues that nostalgia must involve the looking back to one's own history, rather than through the consumption of texts or cultural objects. Instead, I argue throughout this chapter for nostalgia to be considered as also being created or encouraged by the engagement with, and production of, media.

Defining false memories

Nostalgia can be "longing for a home that no longer exists, or has never existed" (Boym 2001: xiii). Nostalgia, for Boym, can possess individual and collective histories so fiercely that the actual past can be forgotten. Thus, "[n]ostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (2001: xiii) – it is something that one desires to experience, by allowing an individual to be swept up in their memories of a time or place, or to adopt false memories of a time and place they haven't experienced. Boym goes on to characterise cinematic nostalgia as being two images super-imposed: one of the past and one of the future, that cannot exist as a single frame (xiii-xiv). This "condition" which, as Boym notes, was originally thought of as an illness that could be treated, and its ascending popularity, can be seen right throughout the 20th century. She argues:

The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s. Nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension; only it is no longer directed toward the future. Sometimes nostalgia is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways. The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space. (xiv)

Consequently, nostalgia does not need to involve looking back to the past from the present, nor should we draw a line between the past and the future. Instead, nostalgia can involve looking *sideways* – that is, it is possible to be nostalgic for something that is currently being experienced or is happening. Nostalgia can be felt and performed for the future, and also in relation to films that are yet to be consumed; that is, the house that a nostalgic person never lived in.

Boym argues that nostalgia goes beyond the individual and instead can be considered as a collective experience. This is also developed by Grainge (2000), who discusses how fashion and other items of the past can be collectively treated nostalgically, whether or not the individual wearing them was alive for the time in which they were originally popular. Nostalgia can thus be expected of an older item or a reproduction of antiquity. Boym argues that:

In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing

to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition.

(xv)

This idea is particularly fitting to consider in relation to the connection between anticipation and nostalgia – which seem to be at disparate temporal odds as one involves looking forward and the other looking to the past. Nostalgia can be seen as a desire for an experience other than what is currently being experienced, be it a “sideways” nostalgia, looking back to the past, or by mythologising a time and place. Nostalgia, rather than surrendering to the irreversibility of time, has more to do with a longing for a continuity of a past or present time, so long as it is not the time and place being experienced by the nostalgic individual. Indeed, as Boym notes, nostalgia forms part of our “modern idea of time”, it is a popularised mood and aesthetic form of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is not a contemporary development as nostalgia, Scanlan suggests, has been present long before the twentieth century (2005). He identifies that nostalgia can be seen in the Romantic and Victorian periods, as well as in modernist art and the later avant-garde artists.

Inside and outside: Nostalgia and knowledge

Scanlan advocates a broader definition of nostalgia that is more complex: it “has an uncanny ability to exceed any constraining definition” (2005). Furthermore, nostalgia “is always complicated – complicated in what it looks like, how it works, upon whom it works, and even who works on it”. Scanlan outlines the differences between the way that history and memory are treated, and how nostalgia is often negatively considered in relation to the two. He argues that contemporary theoretical treatment of nostalgia

saw it as either blurring the boundaries between producer and consumer or as abusing “individual and collective histories” (2005) – both of which positioned nostalgia negatively. Scanlan argues for a need to move beyond “postmodern nostalgia’s inherent conservatism” and to look at how nostalgia has permeated culture beyond merely being a melancholy yearning for something that is no longer. Radstone argues that nostalgia “constitutes both a way of knowing the world – or, better put, a way of knowing worlds – and a discourse on knowledge”, which has tended to be considered as a “conservative response to modernity’s uncertainties” (2010: 188). Radstone highlights an important understanding of nostalgia – that it is both a way of knowing worlds and a way of depicting them. While many of the works on nostalgia question *why* nostalgia is – and continues to be – pervasive, Radstone’s suggestion that nostalgia is a lens of analysis, consumption and production, comes close to addressing these questions. She argues:

But what are we to make of nostalgia’s pervasiveness as well as its capacity to unsettle? Why is it that nostalgia emerges so often as a critical *dernier mot* – and more often than not, an utterly damning one? Nostalgia constitutes a transitional phenomenon. As both cultural materiality and affect and desire, it troubles the boundary between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. As both a sociological perspective and an object of study it muddles the borders between subject and object, and in its most straightforward sense as homesickness and longing for times past, it melds time with space. (Radstone 2010: 187-188)

Nostalgia, in recut trailers and in the spaces they circulate, is an assemblage of objects that cluster as artifacts through time and space. Furthermore, nostalgia problematises

the distinction between absence and presence: nostalgia requires the proposition that something is missing, absent or latent. Radstone goes on to suggest that nostalgia “is best approached...not as an end-point or theoretical home-coming but as point of departure, opening out into those questions of knowledge and belief, temporal orientations and cultural, social and sexual politics that it condenses” (2010: 189).

While this thesis does not touch upon the sexual politics that Radstone analyses, her position that nostalgia opens out – rather than seeks to close or finalise – questions of knowledge and belief can be beneficially applied to the recut trailers. As nostalgia “muddles borders”, it leads us to consider that nostalgia is a way of playing with an understanding of how the past and the present are related, and how individual and collective notions of history are played out. It is therefore not a desire to return only to a time and space for it is perceived as *better*, but to unsettle our notions of temporality and finiteness. It traverses the boundary between the outside and inside, in the recut trailers reimagined as being inside or outside to the circulation of knowledge and memory.

In the different presentations of nostalgia throughout the case studies below, there is no straightforward yearning for a general, or indeed any particular, past. They also, importantly, question our ways of knowing – reflecting Radstone’s claim that nostalgia can be seen as a discourse on memory and time. While some of the examples – such as the teen film trailers – suggest a deliberate yearning to return to a time and place, there is more importantly a yearning to evoke a different way of knowing. This is a yearning to experience a different time and space than the one that popular content on YouTube presents – which is one that is deeply nostalgic. As Radstone notes, nostalgia is not delineated into a specific temporal and spatial

window – but the feeling can be something that is desired. Indeed, nostalgia can be *pleasurable* and reflect on desires held in audiences – it need not be considered as Hofer imagined it: a painful and enduring illness to be overcome. Recut trailers engage with this feeling of nostalgia – rather than the traditional sense of one seeking to return home. Instead, the forthcoming analysis of the recut trailers will focus on how memory is mobilised by desire and pleasure from audiences and creators, and how this evocation of nostalgia can be understood as functioning under this inside/outside framework.

Nostalgia is most often considered in terms of what has been lost, but it is also important to consider just how nostalgia itself has been produced. Nostalgia for a time and place is produced and created by acknowledging an absence – but this does not necessarily mean that it is melancholic. It can also be a celebration or reworking of our understanding of history and memory. Scanlan argues that “nostalgia maybe be a style or design or narrative that serves to comment on how memory works. Rather than an end reaction to yearning, it is understood as a technique for provoking a secondary reaction” (2005). This secondary reaction is of paramount importance to this chapter, alongside considering how the trailers create, distribute, and perform nostalgia as a mode and a mood – or, indeed, a technique. As this popularised form of entertainment on YouTube repeatedly evokes nostalgia, it is important to consider how nostalgia is figured in our cinematic mediation and the importance of nostalgia in our understanding of cinema.

Technology, fandom and nostalgia

Historically, fan cultures have been concerned with texts in an anticipatory state and, to a greater extent, with texts released in the past. In part, this is due to the amount of time that it takes for a fandom to cultivate and for fan practices to gain momentum in the wake of a release of a film, a book, a television show, or other cultural product, as well as the contribution of longevity to cultivating fandom (Pett 2013). In the looking back – and in the case of fandom, a yearning for memories of particular fan objects and the eras they evoke – fandom becomes in part synonymous with nostalgia. Nostalgia can also manifest for a technology or mode of media consumption or production.

Nathan Hunt (2011) discusses nostalgia in fan film cultures through their reiteration of popular film and film histories. Drawing upon Stringer's notion of the "memory narrative" seen in institutions surrounding film that "fondly" draw upon the past (2003: 81), Hunt looks at how popular film magazines such as *Empire* and *Total Film* "circulate these 'memory narratives' in relation to film fan culture" (2011: 97). Importantly, Hunt suggests a shift from considering film from only the filmic text to "move beyond the text itself and its direct relationship with the viewer and explore the way that nostalgia is employed in the discursive spaces that surround film consumption" (2011: 98). According to Hunt, these discursive spaces form an integral part of fan cultures as they become vehicles for fans to learn film histories and as an "exchange between fan culture and cultural texts and intertexts" (2011: 98). While throughout this thesis I have argued that these discursive spaces should be considered as more than intertexts, and instead as networked objects, Hunt's analysis

of nostalgia and the significance of the relationship between spaces and consumers is of consequence here. Hunt identifies knowledge as a “vital currency in fans’ sense of place”. In particular, nostalgia “constantly calls upon imagined histories, both cultural and institutional, evoking notions of particular historical periods of production and reception as contexts for popular film” (2011: 98). These imagined histories are concerned with both the remembered aspects of fans’ individual consumption of films, but also of the shared knowledge between fans and institutions of the production of films.

Not all admirers of a film can be considered fans or presumed to have the same attitude toward a film (Hunt 2011: 98-99). For example, some viewers of a film that engage in fan-like practices might be appreciating a film ironically – as kitsch or as ‘cult’ which suggests that such viewers do not consider the film as part of the traditional cinematic canon but rather have a knowing, if affectionate, relationship to its outsider status. Part of this cult status – which can be achieved through an ironic appreciation of a past text, such as Hunt’s example of *Top Gun* (1986), or films that have been appreciated increasingly retrospectively after their release date – is nostalgia in the appreciation and yearning for a return to a time and place.

Hunt argues for:

...nostalgia as a *way* of reading as much as it is a film language; that nostalgia is not just a product of the moment of textual reading, but a mode of interpretation that has become central to the way that film is read within popular film fandom. The primacy of the present in reading the past is visible

in the constant packaging of the history of cinema in terms of its value to the contemporary moment. As such, the memory narratives circulated in fandom are nostalgic in that they seek to fix or reiterate histories of production as essential contexts for the contemporary reading of film. (2011: 98)

The recut trailer offers us one way to see this “constant repackaging of the history of cinema”. Memory narratives can be seen to operate and circulate in the consumption of film trailers on YouTube through the evocation of past trailers and related videos via YouTube’s architecture. Increasingly, these memory narratives have become “essential contexts for the contemporary reading of film”, supplemented by YouTube’s architecture, but which have long existed through the popularity of film magazines, websites, the packaging of DVDs and other cultural objects that contribute to the popular and shared histories of film.

In a similar vein, Matt Hills (2002) argues that there is a link between fandom and the role of museums, in ordering knowledge of popular texts. The recut trailer’s collection and reordering of other films and, consequently, films’ histories can be seen as a performance of this ‘museum’ of knowledge. Rather than necessarily showing a close knowledge of the production of a film, this knowledge can be seen as being familiar enough with a film to edit a same sex romantic subtext between two platonic friends, or through finding similar moments in an older film to mirror the story of a contemporary film.

Hills’ use of the term ‘museum’ is interesting to consider in relation to nostalgia and the ways in which the recut trailer circulates on YouTube. YouTube can be seen as

an archive, which can be likened to a museum in its collection, curation and production of knowledge as well as the way it privileges information and uniqueness in gathering of artifacts. There is also a process of canonisation that goes into both; the act of curation from individuals brings a sense of authority to the video, or to the exhibit. Museums appear to not necessarily be about *memory* and *nostalgia*, but *history*. Although, as Scanlan argues, those two categories need not be considered separate and, instead, both history and memory are intrinsically linked to nostalgia (Scanlan 2005).

Museums are often not about personal memories and histories but instead about creating a collective memory and experience for individuals, as well as creating an archive of past experiences through cultural artifacts (Crane 1997; Leonard 2007; Belk 1990; Staniszewski 1998; Meusburger 2011). Part of this experience is created through the curation of artifacts and their subsequent amplification, or indeed their omission. Similarly, the process of editing the film trailer and the recut trailer mimics this act of curation by nostalgically historicising the imagined histories of cinema. The act of creating a trailer involves selecting a series of shots based on a larger collection of footage. Selecting artifacts for a museum similarly involves choosing a series of objects typically in order in an historical museum to reflect a larger era or space. Film trailers, and the recut trailer in particular, mimic this selection process in order to give an impression of a larger object and also of the cinema. The recut trailer demonstrates the importance of curation in forming impressions of the institutions drawn upon in the trailer, by playing with the act of curation and the ways in which some objects are privileged over others.

Nostalgia has the capacity to interact with and augment media and related cultures. In his work, *Digital Fandom*, Paul Booth discusses how a “philosophy of playfulness” can be used to think through digitally mediated fan creations and interactions (2010). Booth characterises the philosophy of playfulness:

One key characteristic we can witness in Digital Fandom is how fans’ use of technologies brings a sense of playfulness to the work of active reading. The work that fans put into creating fan fiction, fan videos, fan wikis of other fan works can all be boiled down to the fact that they are fun to share. What these examples illustrate is an approaching trend in contemporary media to ludicize texts, or for audiences to create a philosophy of playfulness in their writing to each other. (2010: 12)

As Booth acknowledges, this is not to portray fandom as lacking in seriousness or drive. What can be taken from this idea of a philosophy of playfulness when applied to the trailers discussed in this thesis is the enjoyment and pleasure that comes from augmenting and playing with objects and their legacies. As Booth suggests, fan creations are fun to *share*; to participate in a culture that facilitates and promotes sharing and creation, is playfulness with media systems. Fandom, in a sense, is about striving for the continuity that nostalgia provides; by pulling objects from the past consistently into the present and augmenting and shifting them, fan practices seek to both disrupt and extend time, while ensuring the continuity of the object and its audience.

While fans do not create all of the trailers studied in this thesis, Booth's concept of the philosophy of playfulness is still relevant. As he notes, "fans make explicit what we all do implicitly: That is, we actively read and engage with media texts on a daily basis" (2010: 12). Yet as this thesis demonstrates, these explicit material traces previously predominantly created by fans now enjoy a broader application. Recuts are not intended to be understood as fan practices, and yet, their development can be seen as a more mainstream evolution of fandom, which may not reflect the adoration of their producers, but speak to increasing homemade media production. While fandom is not the only lens of analysis that can be employed in order to understand why these trailers are created and shared, fandom studies do provide insight into, and acknowledgement of, the ways that very active audiences have engaged with texts and formed networks that augment, play with, and disrupt the usual lifespan of a text.

As discussed in Chapter One, *Star Wars* (1977) is one of the most common original films used by fan scholars to demonstrate how fans augment and share their own imaginings of texts. In his discussion of nostalgia as a mode, Frederic Jameson argues that *Star Wars* can be considered a nostalgic film not in its specific representation of a time that has passed and been lived through by its audience, but in its evocation (for its audience in the 1970s and 1980s) of 1930-1950s television serials (1989: 116-117). He argues:

Star Wars, far from being a pointless satire of such now dead forms, satisfies a deep (might I even say repressed?) longing to experience them again: it is a complex object in which on some first level children and adolescents can take the adventures straight, while the adult public is able to gratify a deeper and

more properly nostalgic desire to return to that older period and to live its strange old aesthetic artifacts through once again. (1989: 116)

Moreover, *Star Wars* fandom is one of the most well known examples of networks created between fans to stimulate creativity and production outside of the original meaning of the text (Jenkins 1993; 2006). While it might appear coincidental that *Star Wars* is both an example of nostalgia and of fandom, the film is widely considered to have changed the ways that audiences interacted with texts. Part of the appeal of *Star Wars* was the nostalgia that Jameson (1989) identifies, and part of the fandom surrounding *Star Wars* and its enduring appeal in fan communities is based on the desire to replicate the experience of watching the older television serials, and later, to experience nostalgically the time in which the *Star Wars* films were released. Fan creations, such as those for *Star Wars*, from fan-zines to fan gatherings, leave traces and articulations of how nostalgia has operated within fandom for some time. While nostalgia is arguably part of how we interact with media, the ways that fandom has documented nostalgia group intelligence and affect.

Nostalgia has been ever present in YouTube's culture since its launch as a small site with minimal uploads. YouTube functions in several ways in relation to nostalgia. As an archival system for old footage, YouTube enables and encourages the sharing and altering of older texts, ensuring that old media is granted a new audience. The nature of swapping, sharing and improving on copies and knowledge of clips older than YouTube is encouraged through its architecture. YouTube originally launched with a focus on the individual, with the slogan "Broadcast Yourself", but its popular use

instead veered toward broadcasting an individual's interests and searching for videos in line with one's personal past, capitalising on grouped and collective nostalgia.

Through the consumption of media such as music videos, old trailers, clips from films, television show intros (and sometimes entire films and television shows named in ambiguous ways to avoid being taken down due to copyright infringements), YouTube has made performing and accessing nostalgia easier. YouTube also popularises nostalgia through its social architecture. Of course, YouTube is not the only way to access and perform nostalgia, nor has it created nostalgia and the consumption of old media texts. Such practices, as Chua (2011) argues, have been present not only throughout the history of the internet, but also through older media such as the sharing of VHS tapes (Hildebrand 2010) or other analogue media. Sharing is crucial to our consumption of media and YouTube has popularised these methods of engaging with media outside of marginalised fans or underground groups. While this has long been a practice, YouTube's architecture allows for an ease of sharing and uploading that has in part always been simultaneously a domestic *and* social technology.

Discussions surrounding YouTube's future and its future development have led to its "meaningful historical connections" being overlooked (2009: 154). As Broeren notes, the inclusion of early cinema on YouTube mirrors attempts to integrate canonical videos and omit others in the emergence on new delivery technologies. The *archival* aspect of these early clips on YouTube means that the clips are searchable, can be tagged, annotated, and, with some ease, downloaded and augmented. The presence of these early clips in a space that is not dedicated to early cinema – or even solely to

cinema more broadly – serve as a reminder of what has passed, allowing the past to be brought into a digital present. In relation to historical linearity, the presence of these clips provides both a point of difference and of similarities between newer material and the old. They also contribute to cinematic literacy on YouTube, which in turn has the potential to encourage collaborations between old and new cinema such as those discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Rizzo discusses the exhibitionist tendencies in what she terms “YouTube attractions” (2008). Part of these attractions is found in the use of technology and the shift in control of possibilities afforded by technology from producer to consumer. Rizzo claims that the YouTube attractions can also be seen in the sensationalist nature of many videos that are uploaded: either being controversial in their subject matter or involving short clips that don’t consciously have a developed or intended narrative, such as videos which show accidents, people falling over and so on. But this categorises YouTube as essentially being a repository for home videos when in fact there is often a great deal of creativity and focus on creating narrative. To understand this shift as reflecting YouTube’s changing promotional strategy from the self to community ignores the role that YouTube has played as a repository of pirated clips or episodes from television shows and movies. Rizzo claims that, while there are many narrative films on YouTube, most of these aren’t concerned with allowing the viewer to enter a diegetic world. The recut trailer is an example of this that has been a popular form on YouTube since at least 2006 (remembering that YouTube was only launched in December of 2005). While many of the most popular videos on YouTube were amateur creations, often to do with the exhibitionist tendency that Rizzo

describes, there is perhaps a link between the shifts from the cinema of attractions to the transitional cinema – of which the trailer has been a part.

Rizzo acknowledges the role of remediation between early cinema and online video on YouTube. While there is a clear connection in the various examples that Rizzo cites which demonstrate how users take early cinema footage and rework it, Rizzo identifies that there is a link between the cinema of attractions and YouTube in mode: “The practice of remediation has the effect of putting the medium itself on display and making an attraction of it” (2008). Thus, arguably, the presence and popularity of the recut trailer since YouTube’s inception makes a point for considering the recut trailer as a way to show off the wares of YouTube – that professional footage could be reworked to create a new film and that our understanding of a current film could be remediated. But those audiences could also bypass Hollywood studios’ attempts to build hype and that excitement and engagement with older texts could allow nostalgia to operate and circulate as both a mode and a mood. Consequently, nostalgia functions as a way of negotiating older media into an emerging space.

Jose van Dijck (2007) argues that objects that mediate or draw upon our memories should not be considered as static or restricting. Instead, he recognises the potential for “memory products” to “enable structured expression but also invite subversion or parody, alternative or unconventional enunciations” (2007: 7). In revisiting and reordering memories, there can be humour and play – especially in the act of demonstrating that no memory should be hierarchised, that all might be ‘false’ or true. In consuming and making sense of media, audiences create and link to their “personal cultural memory” that can be understood as “acts and products of

remembering in which individuals engage to make sense of their lives in relation to the lives of others and to their surroundings” (2007: 6). Immersion in a nostalgia-rich space such as YouTube, which enabled the easy sharing and access of past video, exhibits the interaction that van Dijck describes between individual-to-individual and individual to mass. Out of this interaction and negotiation, objects of memory can be reworked and shared in an increasingly networked and highly media-literate space.

Technological Histories: The Case of the Video

Lucas Hilderbrand’s book *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright* (2009) looks at the analog media of the videotape and how the video has been shared and used amongst networks. The focus on an analogue media – one that is often currently seen as outmoded – offers relevant points of interest which intersect with this thesis despite its seeming difference. While videotape offers a very different mode of production and consumption to the online environments I discuss, the videotape is also a “reproductive technology” (Hilderbrand 2009: 33) and one that historically was used by individuals and groups outside of its anticipated use by companies and copyright holders.

More broadly, videotape allowed home viewers to create media through the taping and recording of television, other tapes, and home video. Reproduction and copying was important, but home video also allowed for archiving of media created in the home - reproducing those tapes allowed that media to travel outside of the home and into the homes of others. While this did not happen on the same scale as YouTube,

either in terms of the speed in which the media could travel or on the scale of videos made easily available, it highlights the practices that people employed, while engaging with and augmenting media.

The developments in the technological reproduction of the moving image have meant that the static interference of a video transfer and the subsequent diminishing quality as a copy is copied does not apply evenly to digital copying. The history of video copying is present on YouTube through both video copies being digitised and uploaded to YouTube (in a tension between the analog and the digital – the appeal of the video being largely nostalgic) and through similar aesthetics achieved from browser add-ons such as those available for Firefox including Easy YouTube Downloader which, unless paid for, leave watermarks on the video. As there are also different grades of quality between both the file storage type and the quality of the original video, the quality of the video can be diminished between copy to copy. Furthermore, it is common when searching YouTube for an old clip to find that the user who has uploaded it has used their mobile phone to (badly) record the footage. Even though YouTube's architecture supports HD (high definition), the histories of degradation and a lack of quality through copying haunt the site and its culture, thus leaving material traces of nostalgia in videos uploaded to YouTube, aesthetically framing copies of memories and imbuing a video with 'pastness'.

Hilderbrand notes, along with Chua (2011), that, despite the popular narrative in which the digital age has blurred boundaries between producer and consumer, these boundaries have long been blurred. Individuals and groups, such as the feminist underground niches described by Hilderbrand, have been involved in creating and

consuming media simultaneously. Moreover, the videotape technology – importantly considered analogue rather than digital – allowed consumers to reproduce media. Perhaps rather than the digital allowing for the blurred boundaries between producer and consumer, it was instead the fact that reproduction was not considered production in the sense that it is now understood. In discussions of YouTube, putting up a video on YouTube can be – and is popularly – considered a mode of production, whereas videotaping broadcast material has not been largely described as production. In part, this is likely due to narratives of digital utopia; that ‘new’ media not only describes new technologies, but also new usages. This leads to a nostalgic view of analogue media as relating to practices that have passed as opposed to still being employed. That this nostalgic treatment of analog technologies is played with and evoked through numerous YouTube videos suggests that digital manipulation is one of the key examples of the supremacy of digital environments and digital media use over older analogue technologies.

Nostalgia is not only present in digital environments and media, but also in analogue media. The trailers discussed in this thesis, both for older and present filmic texts, have a sense of being historicised merely by placing them in the trailer form. This can also be seen in video-sharing cultures discussed by Hilderbrand. Fans are often at the forefront of media usage and consumption and as Baym (2007) and Booth (2010) argue, these practices and modes of viewing later become normalised and enter the mainstream. The proliferation of digital technology has seen these practices flourish. It has also changed the ways in which users interact with media, creating a type of template of how to consume and produce media outside of the studios and organisations that originally create the text. Because, as trailers show, it isn’t just

studios that create the meaning and interpretation of media and films, it is also the audience for which the films are created.

Hilderbrand identifies that there is a “tension” between digital and analogue technology: in terms of the two technologies co-existing, as well as the ways that the technologies are governed and used. He argues:

Bootlegs have been central to fan and film collector culture since the introduction of home video. Although it would be impossible to prove definitively, I suspect that videotape changed the very nature of media fandom and collecting. Through home video there could be a shift in collecting practices from seeking out various forms of *objects related to* the production or promotion of a film to collecting *the film itself*. (2009: 62)

This characterisation of collecting as wishing to own and both collect histories surrounding a film, as well as the film itself, helps us to understand the immediate cultural and technological histories before video-sharing sites. Some of the practices outlined in Hilderbrand’s case studies are closely related to the practices seen on video sharing sites such as YouTube and evoke the same ethical and legal discussions.

While copyright law is beyond the scope of this thesis, video sharing communities have been testing sites for the limits of copyright law and the concept of fair use (in the United States fair use being the exception to copyright being held by the owner of the material only, but allowing limited reproduction for certain purposes such as commentary or research). The analog video and the technologies of reproduction,

along with the cultures of sharing and altering that developed around them, have important legacies for the understanding of recent media histories. As a precursor to the cultural and technological developments on YouTube, video-sharing suggests that media users saw production as an important part of their consumption before the advent of the internet and its supposed revolution in online consumption/production. It also shows a long-standing sense of creating and contributing to personal and collective histories and memories.

Nostalgia, faux-nostalgia and the teen film

Ten Things I Hate About Commandments: Trailer opens at the Egyptian pyramids, with the voiceover “At Pharaoh High, Ramses was the biggest player around.” Footage from The Ten Commandments is used, demonstrating how it was difficult for Moses to take a stand after high school. A battle is on for Moses to see “who will get the girl, who will rule the school, and if a zero can become a hero.” Shots of ancient Egyptian party and battle scenes are used in a montage. This is a comedy 3000 years in the making, starring Charlton Heston, Yul Brenner, Sinead O’Connor, and Samuel L. Jackson as Principal Firebush.

Teen films are popular source material for recut trailers. Popular teen films of the past few decades have at times been nostalgic – examples include the 1970s films *Grease* (1978) and *American Graffiti* (1973), set in the 1950s, and *Dazed and Confused* (1993), filmed in the 1990s and set in the 1970s. Each of these films could be categorised as being a ‘coming of age’ film which depicts the supposedly universal characteristics of teenagers – coming to terms with and finding one’s own identity and attempting to integrate into society. Some recut trailers are created to nostalgically revisit a teen

film, in the process augmenting and questioning the advertising for teen films and subsequent appeals made to teen markets. In interacting and playing with notions of nostalgia, these recuts parodically displace promotional appeals to teens, by playfully revisiting and altering the storyline of canonical teen films, or by placing a film that was not created with a teen audience in mind within these common appeals to teen consumers.



Figure 5.1: Still from *10 Things I Hate About Commandments* (2006)

Shary claims that the theatrically released teen film does not have a tradition of being made by young people and that “the assumption seemed to be that adults could portray the youth experience based on their personal memories and current observations; the only creative input young people actually had was in performing the

roles that adults had designed for them” (2002: 2). Consequently, the generic teen definitions of the jock, the brain, the delinquent, and the bimbo (Kaveney 2006) were categories not only created by teenagers in schoolyards, but reinforced by the memories of adult filmmakers in creating a characterisation of the youth experience. Early representations of teens in cinema as delinquents or carefree surfers shifted by the 1980s to play with other, more contemporary stereotypes of teenagers (Shary 2002). By the 1980s audiences were increasingly aware of the codification of the teen experience in films and it became obvious that teen audiences were a target market and could be commoditised (Shary 2002).

Nostalgic teen films are often marketed at audiences that were not alive for the time period being revisited. In films such as *Grease* and *Dazed and Confused*, the setting of the films is closer to the era of their parents’ childhoods than their own. Lesley Speed argues that there is a temporal tension at the heart of nostalgic teen films:

Teen films are fundamentally concerned with reversing age-defined privileges. The nostalgic teen film is distinctive in the genre because it augments the ostensible themes of rebellion and anti-authoritarianism with an adult perspective. Whereas most teen films emphasize an adolescent point of view, the nostalgia teen movie reveals tensions between youth and adulthood at the level of narration, which can be seen as the site of a quest to contain adolescence. (1998: 24)

While Speed notes that there are exceptions to this rule (*Dazed and Confused* being a notable example), there is an expectation in nostalgic teen films that the trials and

tribulations of teenage life are something that has been experienced before. This is highlighted by the popular use of an aged narrator, such as in the film *Stand By Me* (1986), in which the narrator looks back on their teenage experiences and explicitly considers how those events shaped their adult life. More broadly, the nostalgic treatment of their teen years also shows the problems that teens encounter as universal and a rite of passage that must be endured by all. Rather than only depicting teenagers in the film and their fights against authority, the nostalgic teen film often also presents teen experience through the retrospective wisdom of adults, who marvel at what they did as teenagers. With nostalgia being an important part of teen films, the mood and mode of nostalgia (Grainge 2000) also appears in recut trailers playing with teen films.

With this context in mind, the trailer *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments* satirises the teen film genre through the reworking of a well-known biblical story and appropriates footage from the film *The Ten Commandments* (1956), which documents the story of Moses. By using editing, voiceover, text, and music, the *Ten Commandments* is placed in the realm of a 20th century teen romantic comedy, while directly referencing 1990s teen film *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999). Although the characters in the imagined film are not youthful and instead evoke religious history, the use of voiceover and other techniques places the action within the film as belonging to the supposed universal narratives of the teen film.

The story of Moses is likened to schoolyard trivialities over popularity and image: will Moses make it from “zero to hero” and “get the girl?” Consequently, the original meaning attributed to the story of Moses is bypassed and historical representations

are brought into question. More notable is the disdain towards the constructed nature of the teen film genre and the way that teen films are marketed to appeal to their youthful audiences. Teen film recuts situate these appeals as a formula. The use of stars in place of actors who appear in the *Ten Commandments* (such as Sinead O'Connor 'playing' a bald man and Samuel L. Jackson playing Principal Firebush – the burning bush) also places the tradition of the Bible within the realm of popular culture, in the context of popular knowledge, and as a collective cultural artefact. The ages of the actors are inconsequential as the structure of the trailer and the authority of the voiceover allows them to exist in a high school comedy.

Ten Things I Hate About Commandments also plays with the definitions of a teen film.

Shary claims that the teen film genre is typically categorised by the age of the actors:

...American films about teenagers have utilized different techniques and stories to represent young people within a codified system that delineates certain subgenres and character types within the 'youth' film genre. Unlike other genres that are based on subject matter, the youth genre is based on the age of the films' characters, and thus the thematic concerns of its subgenres can be seen as more directly connected to specific notions of different youth behaviors and styles. (2002: 11)

Shary's study creates delineations between films that depict teens and *teen films*. For instance, while *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) literally depicts teenagers, it is not considered a teen film due to its content and its intended audience. This could also be due to its director, auteur Stanley Kubrick, and that *A Clockwork Orange* has enjoyed critical

reception placing it in a different category than the majority of teen films. In light of *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments*, we can see that it is not the literal representation of teenagers that signifies a teen film, but instead the use of codified language and imagery that creates a plot about teenagers. Moreover, the use of older actors and an even older storyline suggest that the codified labels placed on teens in such films are constructed and could be applied to almost anybody. This promotes a fluidity of meaning, but also derides the predictable nature of the teen film and its marketing. Bill Osgerby argues that since the 1950s – a time when teenagers were first identified as a core movie audience – teens have been succeeded by “media representations of ‘youth’” which are “characterized not by generational age but by a particular lifestyle. ‘Youth’ has become simply a mode of consumption” (1998: 331-332). This is precisely what is being amplified and, to an extent, satirised in *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments*. Rather than the specific age of the characters or the actors, it is the representation of lifestyle that *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments* leads the audience to question.

Occupying a more complicated depiction of temporality, the recut trailer *Back to the Future – Trailer Recut* takes the time traveling of the film *Back to the Future* (1985) and plays the nostalgic references to excess, acting as a parody of the teen genre. Marty McFly is depicted as a teenager who brings elements of the future back to the 1950s – an underlying part of the original film. But rather than clothes and speech dating the time traveller, it is the trailer takes on the codification of the past; the footage is edited in black and white, with nods to the B-Grade science fiction trailers of the 1950s through the direct appeals to audiences. The temporality of the original film (shot in the 1980s with footage depicting both the 1980s and the 1950s using 1980s

technology) is displaced by making the film appear as though it was made in the 1950s with a depiction of the future instead of depicting the past.



Figure 5.2: Still from *Back to the Future – Recut* (2009)

The trailer constantly asserts that a “teenager from the future” will come to the 1950s and bring music from the 1980s as a futuristic omen for what is to come. Rather than the past appearing as a novelty – as it did in the original feature – this trailer places the futuristic teenager as the historical curiosity. This trailer demonstrates the role of aesthetics in evoking nostalgia, the altering of clean footage to make it appear as though it was created with antiquated technology, and the literacy that trailer and film viewers have about science fiction films of the 1950s. The trailer also reflects on the ways in which the teenager appears as an outsider and someone to be approached

with caution as they attempt to place new ideas and tastes on older people with more conservative sensibilities. The message is that teenagers *always* appear to be from the future.

Speed argues:

The nostalgic teen film reveals a tension between semantic excess and syntactic containment, mapped across the themes of generational difference and historical distance. Here, the syntactic dimension is designed to contain and dominate the semantic details of the narrative. Perceiving adolescence from a distance, the nostalgic text is less concerned with historical detail than with *attaching significance to the past*. Here, youths' concerns tend to be restricted to the semantic and contained within a syntax that privileges nostalgia and fetishizes historical distance. The rites-of-passage film is inclined to disavow the immediacy and, at times, the vulgarity of youth culture. (1998: 26; my emphasis)

Nostalgia thus functions as a way of placing what seems new – teen culture – in a long-running narrative that is inter-generational. While nostalgia may seem, in the typical teen film, as a longing for the past – as nostalgia is typically defined – these recut trailers show that this can also function as a way of revisiting and reordering the past and, in the process, reordering and revisiting the present. The privileging of historical distance that is apparent in many teen films is augmented and challenged through the recut trailers by either provoking the ways that teens are depicted in films or by reworking the past to appear as new and debasing the canonical way with which we treat history – as seen in *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments*.

Ten Things I Hate About Commandments parodies the techniques used in trailers to appeal to teen audiences. By taking what could be one of the furthest points in history – well before teenagers were considered a different category of age – and placing it in the advertising mode of what should appeal to young audiences, the trailer signals that there is a fetishisation and commodification of youth. *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments* uses Sinead O'Connor and Samuel L. Jackson as appeals to a youth audience (arguably, Sinead O'Connor would not appeal to a youth audience hinting at how film studios often get this appeal wrong). Samuel L. Jackson appears as a biblical character reciting lines from *Pulp Fiction* (1994), playing on the use of biblical passages in *Pulp Fiction*. Samuel L. Jackson thus becomes a character in and of himself, who traverses time and space to appear as the same character throughout different historical eras and genres: he is at once a snake-wielding FBI agent, a Bible-quoting gangster and a talking bush in a Bible story. This goes beyond being merely intertextual – Samuel L. Jackson as a character reflects the way that actors have the potential to become a character themselves, in which their entire body of work appears as a continuation of a character. *Ten Things I Hate About Commandments* hints to a timelessness to media consumption and textuality – a theme that is present in many of the trailers in this thesis.

Jameson (1989: 117) identifies that nostalgia seems to creep up on films set in the present – as films have depicted an ever-present past and eternal decades and eras that are easily definable by the presence of cars and clothes, such as the case with *Chinatown* (1974). The teen trailers demonstrate this ever-present past and nostalgic looking back to the past. As teen films are designed to appeal to a teen audience who will later mature and look back fondly on teen films, but not consume teen films

created for future generations, teen films act as an aesthetic time capsule for the era someone grows up in. But there is a grander narrative to the presence of nostalgia in teen films – one that moves beyond merely revisiting the world of a particular generation's youth. Nostalgia plays a role in the construction of many teen films that look back to the experiences of generations before them and placing that future within the present. Rather than attempting to present an accurate picture of the past, nostalgic teen films seek to create the feeling of past-ness.

Altering the past is a common intention behind recut teen film trailers. Rather than merely recutting an older film in order to readjust it into an anticipatory mode, as discussed in the previous chapter, nostalgic recut trailers seek to revisit and alter the history of a film. One such example is *Ferris Club*, which shows edited footage from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) to reveal an alternate storyline: Ferris Bueller is a figment of his long-suffering friend Cameron's imagination. This, of course, references the film *Fight Club* (1999), where it is revealed that one of the two major characters is a creation of the other's imagination. *Ferris Club* as of February 2012 received over 600,000 hits on YouTube and has been discussed on numerous blogs and sites as a clever reworking of what was potentially always in the film. The comments applaud the creator of the trailer for finding instances in the film that suggest the presence of this plot. Importantly, the trailer not only acts as a way of looking back and nostalgically revisiting *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (which has become a quintessential teen film) but also resituates the act of viewing the film originally.

By taking the form of a trailer, rather than a short clip suggesting the presence of this plot, *Ferris Club* also advertises and seeks to persuade the audience. It appeals to the

literacy of consumers who have seen *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (and to a lesser extent *Fight Club*) and allows for a communal act of consumption, but also of production in creating a new memory for *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. It creates nostalgic longing for a new text – that of *Ferris Club* – while also nostalgically longing for the focus of this storyline in the original film. Rather than nostalgia being figured as only a way of looking back and longing for a past, *Ferris Club* suggests that there is also a longing for the teen film to be altered by the literacy and knowledge of its audience – who can revisit their past and alter it based on their consumption of texts.

Chua (2011) discusses the role of nostalgia and memory in his paper on the poetics of YouTube. He argues that “YouTube is now a site where the cinephiliac gaze” or the “cinephiliac moment” is “extended, prolonged and made available to a mass audience” (2011: np); in turn, an intense gaze which once belonged to the province of the film fanatic is now popularised through spaces such as YouTube. Chua refers to recut trailers as “pseudo-trailers” and claims that they don’t draw from “everyday life, but from the film and television histories that have been lived through”, drawing upon fleeting moments used “in the flow of a television broadcast or in the progress of a film” (2011: np). Objects on YouTube such as the recut trailer magnify moments in a video or part of cinematic culture that may have previously been fleeting, instead leaving material traces of the event of cinephilia or nostalgia. *Ferris Club* appeals not only the cinephiliac, but also the practice of the cinephilic gaze – one that searches for different ways to view or augment a film. Just like the *Brokeback Mountain* trailers, discussed later in this chapter, *Ferris Club* draws upon fleeting moments in the original feature film from which to create something new, and playfully revisits the past and the way that it depicts and comes to signify and codify an era of teen consumption.

Pre-makes: Nostalgia for a collective past

“Premakes” Forrest Gump (1994): The trailer opens with the Universal Studios logo from circa 1940s. The footage is black and white, and we are introduced to Forrest Gump (1994) (played by James Stewart). Footage from To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), Mr Smith Goes to Washington (1939), It’s a Wonderful Life (1946) and many others of the same era, are recut to mimic the storyline of Forrest Gump, a boy who grows up to run across the United States and go to war, and fall in love with his childhood friend, Jenny. The success of the trailer can particularly be seen in the casting choices made for Forrest Gump from earlier films, such as James Stewart replacing Tom Hanks and Marlon Brando replacing Gary Sinise.

In his paper on the digital poetics of YouTube, Chau discusses how YouTube has a culture and aesthetic beyond merely being a depository for older material, while in part being directed by the presence of older material (2011). Chau identifies how mash up material disseminated via YouTube is just as likely to include material from classic films as it is from television. Older cinema, older advertisements, and television shows have been uploaded and shared since YouTube’s inception, ensuring forgotten moments and films a lifespan beyond a video store.

As Hilderbrand (2007) identifies, users have come to treat YouTube as an archive and a go-to space to access older clips and to be able to share them. This sharing need not only occur through personal collections or smaller networks formed over similar interests; as YouTube involves ‘searching’ for a video rather than being sent it as older video networks relied upon, a YouTube user is able to track down specific videos without needing to create a community or network around them. Hilderbrand labels YouTube a “portal of cultural memory” (2007: 54) where nostalgia is

everywhere and memories are every bit collective as they are individual. The combination of old and new material on YouTube reflects the cultural impulse to draw connections between past and present material, and reflects the potential for connections to be made between older and newer texts. The different types of videos and source material available on YouTube has led to a rich network and is, in part, reason behind the success and proliferation of the recut trailer. Through the traces of networks between texts, actors, creators, and subject matter, YouTube presents the user with a plethora of footage in a complex context of related materials rather than delineated by the era in which it was created.

YouTube user, *whoiseyevan*, has uploaded ‘pre-makes’ to his YouTube channel since August 2009. His pre-makes involve recutting and editing footage from films from pre-1970 to mimic the storyline of a more contemporary film (see Figure 5.3). These trailers are remarkable for three reasons: firstly, they involve an impressive literacy of films from the past in finding clips to mimic characters, narrative, and mood; secondly through the use of voiceover and editing, *whoiseyevan* also captures the tone of trailers from the past; and finally, the end product is entirely effective, hinting at a pleasure in the trailer, pleasure in subverting our knowledge of the past, and our nostalgia for a past we did not experience.

Perhaps more so than the other trailer examples that I have discussed in this thesis, this user’s acts of editing are drawn upon, celebrated, and discussed. *Whoiseyevan* has also uploaded numerous clips showing a frame by frame edit between the original film and the footage that he used from older films, annotating the video with the reasoning behind his choices for actors and landscapes as well as pointing out edits he

has made to the background of shots. For example, his trailer for Disney animated film *Up!* (2009) - titled here *Up 1965* – uses footage from *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) starring Spencer Tracy. In his annotated video, *whoiseyevan* demonstrates attention to detail in his trailer creation, drawing attention to the nods to other animated films that he has made, as well as to presence of paraphilia from *Up!* edited into the background of shots, arguably a nod to a similar practice in Disney films of including a shot of a character from another (either upcoming or past) Disney film. Pre-makes also allow a more contemporary film to instantly appear as timeless, both in the literal depiction of the newer narrative in an older setting, but also in demonstrating the links between particular actors in relation to how they were perceived by fans and the types of roles they would have been cast in. This works in two directions: by recasting Forrest Gump as James Stewart, the popularity and ubiquity of James Stewart is emphasized, and in the process, Tom Hanks is linked to James Stewart's previous roles and films.

These pre-makes may be nostalgic in the traditional sense for some viewers who watched the source films at their time of release, yet they also direct nostalgia to older cinema more generally. By editing footage from numerous sources, the nostalgia isn't directed at one film or time, but of 'past cinema' generally. The trailers evoke both memories of a more contemporary film that the audience must have seen in order to understand the apt choices made in the editing process, as well as the tone and aesthetic style of a cinema that has been experienced through watching and through a literacy of the past. As Janover (2000) identifies, nostalgia can often be considered as a mythologising of a past – in turn, an idealised version of the past. The presence of nostalgia in politics and ideology, for example the longing for the simpler time of the

1950s, is one such use of nostalgia for a time that differs from an individual experiences, and instead becomes the myth of the 1950s through aesthetics and tropes of the simpler times where doors could be left open, and there was an absence of crime. The pre-makes, while not perhaps consciously, evoke this popular usage of nostalgia. As a film is not a representation of an individual's past, it instead depicts a time and mood. As Janover argues, nostalgia can be seen as a “play on memory” (2000). These pre-makes are a play with nostalgic memory – the term ‘pre-make’ alone signals this by making the claim that there existed an earlier version of a contemporary movie in the past that has been unearthed by the maker of the trailer, meaning this earlier film can be nostalgically looked upon and brought into contemporary life.



Figure 5.3: Still from *Ghostbusters Pre-Make* (2009)

Brokeback Mountains and Nostalgia

Brokeback to the Future: Set in a small country town, two men who often wear cowboy hats, Doc and Marty McFly, have a secret love: "It was an experiment in time...but the one variable they forgot was love." Marty comes from the future through a time machine, and he and Doc share heated sexual tension. The Doc holds up clamps to Marty who grins and raises his eyebrows. Their relationship becomes deeper, despite warnings that Marty could get into a lot of trouble with Doc. Another threat to their relationship is in the form of Clara, who interrupts their liaisons. Marty seems to have some embarrassment about introducing Doc to women, referring to him as his uncle, his Doc. The trailer ends with two quotes from Marty and Doc who share their tumultuous relationship. Marty says to a woman, "Have you ever been in a situation where you knew you had to act in a certain way, but when you got there you didn't know if you could go through with it?" Doc remarks, "I have to live my life according to what I think is right."

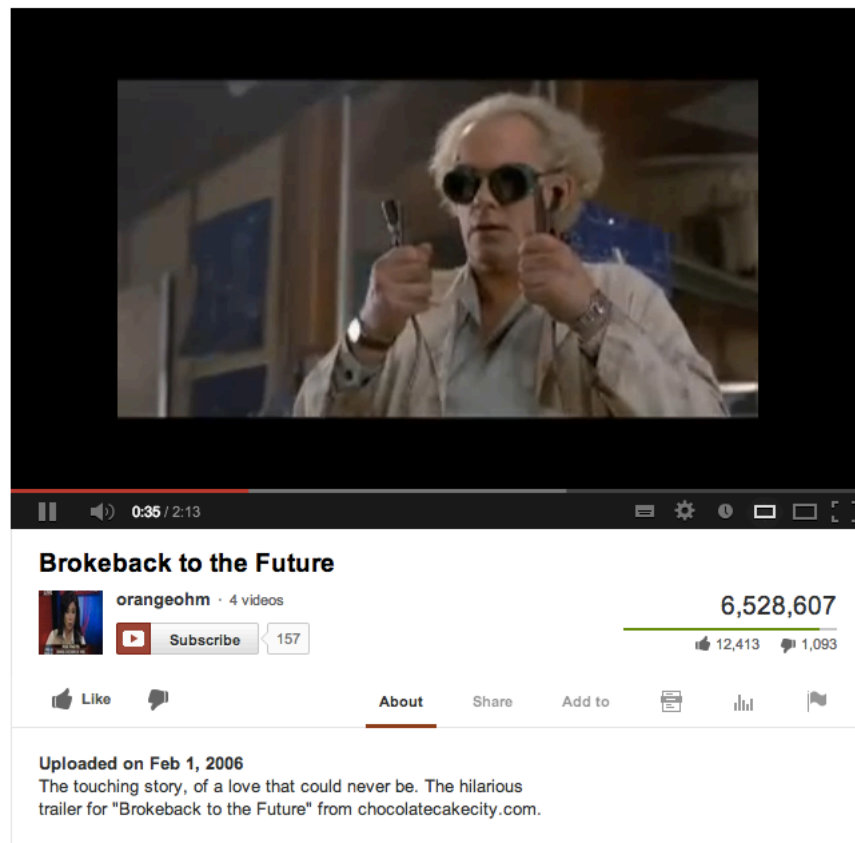


Figure 5.4: Still from *Brokeback to the Future* (2006)

One of the most well-known examples of recut trailers is the *Brokeback Mountain* trailer series. Following the release of *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), recut trailers began emerging which utilised stylistic and narrative devices from the *Brokeback Mountain* world and applied these elements to other storylines, often to create a same sex relationship between two heterosexual male leads (for example Spock and Captain Kirk, Doc and Marty McFly) (Williams 2009). The majority of these videos were uploaded in 2006, however, trailers continue to surface. *Brokeback* was one of the first examples of a subset of recut trailers existing as a meme: elements of the original trailer such as the soundtrack and use of text were replicated over and over, spreading the structure of *Brokeback Mountain* to numerous other films or television shows. YouTube's architecture, particularly in relation to tagging and the related videos function, encouraged the increase of the *Brokeback* trailers. The *Brokeback Mountain* trailers became part of a network surrounding other user creations, but also the source texts that were recut, as well as the original trailer for *Brokeback Mountain*. For users who were not literate in the world of *Brokeback* or the other source text that was being recut, users could nostalgically enter the narrative and stylistic worlds of the other films by viewing originals alongside the new creations.

Nostalgia and desire for other times can be seen in these creations in several ways. The trailers that were made long after the film's release hint at both a desire to see another film recut into the style of *Brokeback Mountain* nostalgically, but also to revisit the world of *Brokeback Mountain* after it had been released. These trailers subvert the role of studio-created hype by using only the narrative and stylistic elements of the original trailer and applying them to another film which they had likely already consumed and knew fairly intimately (as demonstrated by knowing where to recut a

lingering look to mimic *Brokeback* director Ang Lee's long shots), and by suggesting that nostalgia can be applied to a new film. The *Brokeback* trailers become playfully competitive, and invite other users to create a trailer, which chooses a more obscure or seemingly unexpected source film to recut into the *Brokeback* world. The sweeping and emotional musical score, by Gustavo Santaolalla, made the *Brokeback* trailers instantly identifiable – as it was unique to *Brokeback* and the theatrically released trailer.

Trailers have not merely been consumed in anticipation for a feature film, but also as a way to frame retrospectively the consumption of a feature as a special feature on DVD, or as a way to nostalgically revisit the world of a film that has already been consumed. Trailers, then, need not only create modes of anticipation, but can be imbued with a nostalgic longing for a past film, indicated by using a type of aesthetic, a soundtrack, or as a time capsule for an era that has passed – evident in each of the *Brokeback* parodies that allow audiences to revisit an older film through the form of the new recut trailer. There is an almost universal use of language of anticipation in the *Brokeback* trailers; by the use of the MPAA rating screen, and the use of language that suggests the new filmic creation is “coming soon”. The *Brokeback* trailers, comparatively, subvert the temporality of the trailer, and also nod to the numerous ways in which trailers are now consumed long after the release of the feature film. By using these techniques, which help move any collection of footage from films into the recognisable format of a trailer, they also demonstrate how the use of these terms and images move old texts into a networked future while still performing a nostalgic attempt to revisit the past and augment it.

However, as seen in *Brokeback to the Future*, nostalgia is not only generated for the source text but for a discrete hypothetical future film as well. As a desire line, this path is non-linear, instead following a playful network of paths that constantly connect and intersect. While the end product of a *Brokeback* trailer, such as *Star Trek Brokeback*, evokes *Brokeback Mountain*, it also evokes *Star Trek* (see Figure 5.6), allowing for constant intersection between the two texts and the forging of a new path between them - creating a hybrid film that cannot exist, but can be advertised. The promotional text appears to be stripped of its base function – to promote – and that is partially where the playfulness of these trailers sits. The trailers exist as a nostalgic exercise – one that is not necessarily looking back, but as Boym (2002) suggests, also can temporally look sideways.

There are several techniques which are used uniformly across all of the trailers in order to convey this new plot: the original score used in the *Brokeback Mountain* trailers begins each recut trailer; the use of typically white text on a black background based on the trailer's original text; and the pace of shots altered to focus on lingering looks, or to splice scenes together in order to imply sexual contact. Consequently, there is a consciousness of the effects used in the original trailer to sell a particular narrative to the audience as something an audience would want to view. The narrative is constructed as being universal, as almost any story with two men as the leads and their friendship can be altered to show an underlying homoerotic story, and the form of the trailer allows these storylines to be promoted and shared. These recut trailers demonstrate insider knowledge of the source texts, and a desire to make this knowledge communal – in the process sharing reworking of memory in a networked space.



Figure 5.5: Still from *Dumb and Dumber Brokeback* (2007)

While creators of *Brokeback* trailers demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the source text they are recutting, this cannot necessarily be attributed as fan practices. The communal and collective nature of the recuts demonstrates interplay between mass and individual desire and knowledge; there is a sense of building upon or contributing to existing *Brokeback* recuts. There is an enthusiasm to conflate a feature film into *Brokeback Mountain*'s general narrative. This eagerness to see a film that is beyond its promotional life within modes of promotion reflects a performance of nostalgia.

Nostalgia need not take the form of looking back with pleasure but may instead offer a disregard for the feature film. Gray defines the anti-fan as “he or she who actively and vocally hates or dislikes a given text, personality, or genre” (2005: 840). This is closer to what we see in the *Brokeback* trailers – in particular, the distance from the entirety of the text. It is not the intention of the recut trailer creator to present the text overall but to manipulate sections of it to displace commonly held understandings of the original text. There can be fandom involved here and the audience can demonstrate closeness to the entirety of the text, but that knowledge is not needed in order to understand and appreciate the recut trailer. Similarly, fandom for *Brokeback Mountain* isn’t present here either. As *Brokeback* had only just been released at the time that many of these trailers were created and distributed, there was likely a disconnect between the entire feature and what audiences understood of it via the trailer or other media they consumed that discussed it. There is an undeniable closeness to the film exhibited in these trailers.

The *Brokeback* trailers can be likened to a well-documented history of the creation of slash fiction in fan communities (Hellekson and Busse 2006; Lothian, Busse and Reid 2007; Jenkins 1993; Jenkins 2006; Tosenberger 2008), yet the role of fandom is an important qualifier in determining the meaning created by slash fiction as opposed to *Brokeback* trailers. They can be likened to other pop culture instances of reading the friendship of two men as queer. The increasing (though problematic) use of the term ‘bromance’ to denote a close friendship with implied romantic undertones speaks to this recurrent trope in popular culture – particularly in television and film (see Marcus 2014; Huffington Post 2014). Queer readings of texts demonstrate that meaning is co-created by audiences and that a creator of a text cannot dictate its final meaning.

It is worth noting that queer readings do not account for all of the *Brokeback* trailers, and descriptions included by the creators speak to a range of intentions. As Berit Åström (2010) notes of *Supernatural* male pregnancy slash fiction, “slash writing is a highly subversive and resisting activity” and “yet fan fic texts are very diverse and it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw any general conclusions from them”. When adding the lack of fandom in recuts to this mix, conclusions become more difficult to draw out. What is clear from the *Brokeback* trailers is that their creators exhibit a broad range of relationships to *Brokeback Mountain*. Some trailers draw attention to the role of the trailer as parody (for some users same sex relationships are thought of as parodic), while other adopt a queer reading, exposing latent same sex storylines as an act of rereading and resistance. Others simply play with the fluidity of meaning, drawing attention to and teasing out ambiguity, leaving the audience to reorder their memories of seemingly straight – and often heavily masculinised – characters and films.

While there is considerable – though growing – lack of scholarly interest in recut trailers, there has been a comparatively large response to the *Brokeback Mountain* trailers. The majority of academic work discussing these issues finds those that are homophobic generally to be created by non-fans (of either *Brokeback Mountain* or the other source text/s that are being recut), whereas fan texts were to be considered as either queering a text or playing with notions of homophobia and hate. Considering the reason for the *Brokeback Mountain* parodies – which were discussed across blogs, academic work and newspaper articles – Creekmur (2007) proposes:

Perhaps because it's such a relentlessly humourless film, the release of *Brokeback Mountain* immediately generated a rapidly escalating number of jokes and parodies...Whatever grim resonance "brokeback" once evoked was diffused by snicker-inducing mutilations such as "bareback mountin." Video mashups ("Brokeback to the Future," "The Empire Breaks Back") have literally undercut the film's sombre trailer...(Creekmur 2007: 105)

The implication is that the recut trailers were created *because* the official trailer was humourless and demanded a reflective and pensive reading from its audience. The displacement of the genre in the recut trailers is meant to be humorous but it is also a reflection on the emotional manipulation present in films more broadly. While an emotionally manipulative trailer might be well justified when dealing with contentious subject matter in America, the displacement of these techniques to make it *funny* suggests that there is a cynical awareness among users who acknowledge a wider Hollywood narrative: the selling of something tragic through the use of easily recognisable tropes. The *Brokeback Mountain* trailer also presented the story as an epic love narrative, a genre that is easily mimicked and easily anticipated by audiences through exposure to the typical tropes that are used to show a romantic film. Longing looks, the implication of a hidden love through social awkwardness, and so forth, are moments easily found in many feature films and can be even more easily induced with editing techniques to manipulate a story and thus the feelings of the audience. In applying the editing techniques of a recent release (*Brokeback*) to those of an older release (the subject film being recut), the creators play with temporality and nostalgia in non-linear ways to shift meaning.

The *Brokeback* parodies rely on a distinction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ that exists in evocations of nostalgia (Radstone 2010); those who are on the ‘inside’ are able to appreciate the trailers partly through their acknowledgement that others will be outside. Horwatt claims that:

Clearly some of these works express homophobic attitudes, while others remix queer texts in playful and humorous ways. *Brokeback Mountain* mash-ups are many and multifarious, some seek to restructure the film as heterosexual (like *Mount Brokeback*, which presents an Evangelical Christian awakening shared by two men), while others simply employ a queer reading of a film (like *Top Gun: Brokeback Squadron*, or the mashup of the sequel film *2 Fast 2 Furious* [2003] called *2 Gay Bi-Curious*). Ultimately the fun of these works is in their queering of familiar stories – satirizing the way films are marketed and sold to audiences and the absurd caricatures of masculinity that lend themselves so well to a queering of the text. (2010: 85)

Horwatt identifies key arguments surrounding the politics and cultural importance of these recut trailers. Firstly, as I have argued, the fun of these works is in playing with the ways the trailer sells a film to an audience as well as in encouraging nostalgic reworking of texts. Secondly, the fun in particular with the *Brokeback* trailers relies on knowledge of why this is displacement of existing memories: whether it be a play on institutionalised masculinity, of men in the air force, or the perceived lack of masculinity in other male characters recoded to question what creates a homosexual subtext, such as in *Brokeback Dumb and Dumber* (Figure 5.5). As Horwatt argues, the humour in many of these trailers is in the name only; the juxtaposition of two films or

source texts creates humour and this is “likely derived from the titles conceived by music mash-up artists who compounded the titles from source materials amalgamated together” (2010: 85). But it also speaks to a distinctly Hollywood tradition: that of the high concept feature film (Wyatt 1994); the film that is acutely aware of genre, appeal of stars, and the play with narrative that comes from that. The *Brokeback* trailers rely on this level of literacy amongst filmic consumers - there is commentary and play with the ways in which a title can both anticipate and displace the hype intended in high concept films.

As nostalgic texts, the *Brokeback* trailers question the speed at which nostalgia can operate. Rather than typical notions of nostalgia portraying the longing for a time that is far away from the present, the trailers show nostalgia can occur for the present or for an immediate past. Gray argues that

...because trailers, previews, and ads introduce us to a text and its many proposed and supposed meanings, the promotional material that we consume sets up, begins and *frames* many of the interactions we have with texts. More than merely point us to the text at hand, these promos will have already begun the process of creating textual meaning, serving as the first outpost of interpretation. (2010: 48)

Importantly, Gray outlines here how framing may occur before the consumption of the promotional text – for example, by hearing the name of the film alone or by the presence of the star. While the facts of a film that are supposed to appeal to an audience are introduced during the trailer, the information that leads to familiarity

with the text and anticipating the content of the film is often introduced prior to the release of the promotional text. The feature film's textuality does not have finite boundaries and the audience is also responsible for making meaning and framing the film from their own knowledge and familiarity with the filmic text (Burgin 2004). Therefore, before the release of the trailer, there can be an understanding of what a film is about – and this can begin the process of comprehending a text that can be longed for in the future but, more importantly in the case of the *Brokeback* trailers, an immediate past that can also be longed for.



Figure 5.6: Still from *Broke Trek* (2007)

Building on the notion of an audience subverting or altering the intended meaning of a feature film or promotional text, the idea of queering a text provides an alternate understanding of the subversion of dominant meanings. Halberstam (2007) discusses

the concept of “Pixarvolt” in films made by Pixar, an animation studio that makes children’s films (though the study focuses on a particular type of animation, rather than those specifically coming from Pixar studios). Pixarvolt films are categorised by their technique but also by how they “use the individual character only as a gateway to intricate stories of collective action, anti-capitalist critique, group bonding and alternative imaginings of community, space, embodiment and responsibility” (2007: np). The Pixarvolt films allow, according to Halberstam, the imagining of progressive storylines that would not normally be allowed in children’s films – particularly live action films – but can be told using animals and animation. This idea is relevant to the idea of recut trailers and to the idea that texts can be queered. The function of these *Brokeback* trailers might not be to laugh at the idea of a same sex attracted subtext in a storyline but instead to allow the playing out of storylines that would not normally be ‘allowed’, or at least popularised, in mainstream movies. The recut trailer could be seen, following this framework, to be queering the original film and the methods by which it would be promoted.

As aforementioned, the idea that users create the storylines and images that they want to see has long been present in fan studies, particularly through the use of slash fiction or any type of fan fiction (Jenkins 1992, 2006; Williamson 1999; Hills 2002). This has also been well established as a creative act, and one that often subverts expectations put on audiences – for example, women have been found to be the lead writers of male slash fiction (Jenkins, Jenkins and Green 1998). This idea of subverting texts is also present in anti-fan cultures – as has been explored in this discussion of the *Brokeback* trailers. While the creator of the recut trailer might be intimately familiar with the source text they are recutting to exist in the world of *Brokeback*, they are not

necessarily performing the function of a fan or participating in a community. To utilise terminology from fan studies for non-fan practices – such as referring to these trailer creators as a community – ignores crucial elements of these trailers, their creators, and the way they create and manipulate media. The creator of these texts forms only one part of how meaning is created and shared. The life of the trailer beyond the author's intention and the act that the trailer creators are performing against the Hollywood studios' intention, form an intriguing web of context and interpretation. The presence of similar intentions in both fan and non-fan practices in the consumption and production of these trailers suggests that the trailers need to be considered beyond the lens of fan studies.

Nostalgia and fan practices are not two clearly demarcated categories. Nostalgia can be present in fandom but it is not necessary for fandom to occur. Fandom can also be considered in relation to anticipation – as we saw with the *Twilight* trailers in Chapter Four. But the intersection between nostalgia and fandom – or even non-fandom or anti-fandom – is an interesting area for future study. Nostalgic recut trailers parody and subvert longing for *continuity* by disrupting our notions of a past worth remembering, and what constitutes a present film. This continuity is formed by a continuation of a past text into the future, to be augmented and played with – as is present in many fan practices as a transitional phenomenon. Looking at texts nostalgically is partially about seeking to revisit the time and feeling that a text gave its viewers but also to shift the temporality of that text into something in the future. While nostalgia is seemingly about the past, it is also an act that occurs in the *present* – and, like the popularity of vintage clothing in fashion and the reworking of past fashion or sampling of older music into new songs, the present tense of nostalgia needs

to be addressed. There is a difference between nostalgically longing for something and being a fan – but the level of dedication and admiration seen in some nostalgic acts can constitute fandom.

Conclusion

Nostalgia follows the consumer of a film well beyond the theatre they leave. As I have argued throughout this chapter, nostalgia does not need to be considered in relation to a distant object in time or space. Instead, nostalgia can exist in the present moment, longing for an experience – or the pleasure of an experience – that has been had, or could be had, or could be imagined and suggested. The consumption of film in the space of the theatre has been nostalgically debated with longing and dread for the future throughout many contemporary examples of film journalism and commentary (see for example Sontag 1996). Whether or not these are specific longings for a particular film consumed in a certain space or time, these retrospective longings can be pleasurable and yet ‘false’ imagined histories.

By drawing upon the imagined histories and “memory narratives” (Stringer 2003: 81; Hunt 2011) of a collective cinema, the nostalgic recut trailers reflect on the importance of nostalgia in our understanding of filmic consumption as it is negotiated into new online spaces and modes of production, consumption, spectatorship and dissemination. Nostalgia does not merely involve looking back to the past, but instead demonstrates pleasure can be had by evoking and engaging with the past. Nostalgia consequently subverts attempts at continuity – for instance, by applying a universal

teen experience to non-teen films in an absurd way – demonstrating that the past and our memory of it can be reworked, reordered and recut. As such, the recut trailers demonstrate the role that nostalgia plays in our engagement with objects and networks of mediation.

In the following chapter, I analyse case studies from the two temporal axes of anticipation and nostalgia to consider how the trailers can be considered networks rather than texts. I look at how a focus on temporality and spatiality, rather than textuality, allows for a broader understanding of user-generated objects. Building upon the claims made in this chapter, I test the relevance of fan studies for understanding the popularity of objects such as the recut trailer, which are not necessarily created by fans, but are a performance and understanding of the trailer as a genre; a genre that involves both a looking back and forward and that exists in a multitude of temporal and spatial sites.

Chapter Six

The Trailer as Networked Object: The Circulation of Recut Trailers

In 2012, a US woman announced that she intended to sue the creator of the trailer for *Drive* (2011), the distribution studio, and the cinema that screened it. The reasons she provided were two fold: the trailer was misleading and did not accurately depict the violence in the film leaving her unprepared, and she argued that there was anti-Semitism present in the film. She claimed that despite there being lots of action in the trailer, there was “very little driving in the motion picture” (Child 2011). This story was met with incredulosity online; it is, after all, expected that trailers will be misleading, and amplify and omit parts of the film in order to appeal to as broad an audience as possible. In 2013, a New Zealand man demanded a refund for *Jack Reacher* (2012) after an explosion seen in the trailer was not included in the final cut of the film. As trailers are often created before the final edit of the film has been completed in order to create as much hype as possible, there are often discrepancies between the film depicted in the trailer and the actual film itself. The New Zealand man also made a complaint to the official advertising body detailing the discrepancies between the trailer and the feature – the board found that as he had been issued a refund, there was no further course of action. Likewise, the lawsuit against the makers of *Drive* was later dismissed in court (Zaniewski 2012).

These two incidents demonstrated what audiences have known for some time – that trailers are misleading, that they are intended to sell a film, but also to encourage a future movie-going audience. As Lisa Kernan (2004) describes in the introduction to

her book on film trailers, trailers elicit heated responses: some audiences detest their misrepresentation of the product they sell, while others enjoy trailers as a form. Regardless of an individual's opinion on film trailers, they are a crucial mechanism of the dissemination and propagation of the film industry. More than simply a catalogue, they are an entry point into the narrative and aesthetic world of a film, and remain as material traces of the event of cinema-going, and traces of the interaction between audience and industry. Film trailers can also create memories of a film that has not yet been consumed, as seen in the above examples these memories are revisited and augmented when an audience member watches the feature film.

Following from the previous chapters on anticipation and nostalgia, this chapter looks at how the recut trailer circulates as a networked object. I situate the recut trailer in relation to the Hollywood film industry, paying specific attention to both the marketing of films, and the industry attempts to enforce copyright restrictions on bootlegging. It is not my intention to attempt to supply a complete history of copyright protection and all legal frameworks that impact upon the recut trailer. Instead, I'm interested in how recuts act as objects in the space of copyright, wherein their creators negotiate attempts by YouTube to impose copyright restrictions, and attempts made by the film industry to penalise and discourage copying. Recuts co-opt these attempts made by both the industry and YouTube, presenting a veneer of authenticity, in turn playfully subverting the very notion of the authentic digital object by adopting the tropes of the official trailer in the form of an amateur creation.

Recuts co-opt and parody the tools of marketing, as well as drawing open the logic of the contract the theatrical trailer offers: that it will show an audience upcoming film

and yet be misleading. While recut trailers co-opt these marketing techniques and strategies, they also advertise something that cannot be consumed in full – something that cannot be obtained. Rather than creating an advertisement for a future object, recut trailers create a material trace of a past event. Trailers as networked objects serve as a hub for a series of connections in the production, consumption and dissemination of recuts. The previous chapters have analysed these textual, temporal and historical connections; this chapter looks at the institutional connections and practices that are imbued in the trailer as object. In discussing the trailer as a networked object, I draw upon the role of memory, residue, and traces in the dissemination of recut trailers in the networked space of YouTube. I consider the screen as networked, the residues of industry and practice in the production and consumption of recuts, and how screen memory and technological residue help shape and propel recut trailers.

Previous literature has positioned the film trailer as a text; Kernan (2004) argues for this to be considered as a text in its own right and yet the prevailing discourse surrounding film trailers situates them as the inferior object to the feature film. I argue that trailers have become delineated from the space of the cinema and the feature film, and that the recut trailer serves as a vehicle through which to understand how cinema has been negotiated into online spaces. I depart from the previous literature on film trailers and recuts to consider recut trailers as networked objects, of which their textual components form only a part. The focus on textuality, intertextuality and paratextuality has translated across to fan studies and the consideration of digital video, but does not pay attention to the temporal and spatial specificities of how recuts are disseminated and circulated. While recuts do contain intertextual and

paratextual links, these are just some of many connections housed in the networked object of the recut trailer; that the recut is a material embodiment of the connections that audiences have always made, textual, spatial and otherwise. The networked space of YouTube as the site of dissemination and consumption allows these traces to be made more apparent, tangible and material. Moreover, I argue that recuts cannot be divorced from their technological residues, which reflect a link to past practices of recutting, as well as the evolution of the trailer as a site for technological experimentation with the release of new screening spaces. Film trailers have always been sites of experimentation and negotiation, and the recut takes this past and strips the trailer of its ability to advertise a feature film to be consumed.

The production and circulation of networked objects

Ori Schwarz refers to the production and circulation of content online as belonging to the province of “new hunter-gathers” (2012). Adopting Walter Ong’s (1982) definition of the object and event, he argues that artifacts such as online videos or novels are objects, born out of events. According to Ong, an act of speech is an event as it “does not leave any physical residue, existing only when going out of existence” (Schwarz 2012: 78). Objects by comparison “can be moved or stored” (Ong 1982: 79), allowing for them to be traced, transmitted and revisited.

Schwarz argues that “interaction becomes production” (2012: 79) through the creation of objects as traces of what might otherwise be an event (the examples he lists involve violent crime and telling a joke among friends). Use of technologies such as writing or making a video creates objects that allow us to trace interaction, as it

becomes an object. In short, objects make events material. Schwarz is interested in how those objects are then transmitted and distributed, leading to the “productivisation of everyday life” – wherein objects born out of social interaction create value, and thus can be capitalised on in monetary exchanges in a networked society (2012: 79). Practices such as linking to a funny video online or embedding an article on a social networking site not only show technological traces of literacy and knowledge-sharing between individuals, but must be considered in relation to the organisations and corporations that benefit from the sharing of objects. In the case of recut trailers, these organisations could be seen as follows: YouTube as a for-profit corporation that gains money from advertising and its parent company Google; the social networking sites such as Facebook which facilitate the spread of sharing and thus entice more page views enabling peoples’ cultural practices; and the film studios who own the content that is being used, and own the rights to films that are being shared. Where talking about a funny video with a friend may have once been an event in that it left no traces, online interaction creates objects out of these interactions, and these objects in turn can be commoditised and valued.

Recut trailers present an interesting case study in this matrix of economic flows.

While YouTube brings in revenue from page views on videos through advertising, film studios arguably do not enjoy revenue from recuts, either in their production, consumption or dissemination. Recuts can be considered as a playful celebration and evocation of cinematic culture, and thus do work by contributing to a film-going culture, where literacy is valued by users and is traceable. At a simpler level, individuals who upload videos that become popular can draw revenue from page views if they opt in to advertising (though their videos will likely be subject to it in

some form, regardless of their consent). As Schwarz identifies, through seeing interaction as *production*, we can see how “firms extract profit from the ‘unintentional work’ of customers, that is, the productive dimension of their leisure activities (consumption, social interaction or communication)” (2012: 79).

The broader implication of Schwarz’s work demands that everyday encounters or events that now leave traceable objects in everyday social interaction, mean that our leisure activities become products for the financial gain of others. This is not from a top-down approach (for instance, a film studio transparently creating a competition for the best recut trailer) but by creating products through what he terms “productivization from below” (2012: 80).

I wish to read this productivization of social interactions as a rationalization process, which entails a shift in people’s attentiveness to their everyday...I place this shift in modes of attentiveness (or being-in-the-world) in the broader context of the evolution of late-modern subjectivity. Like the rationalization of mate selection in online dating sites studied by Illouz (2007), here too technological infrastructure has created new markets (for data-objects), transforming behaviours and experience alike. (2012: 80)

This process can be clearly seen in geo-location services such as FourSquare or Yelp, which allow a mobile user to ‘check-in’ to a business such as a restaurant and take a photo of their food to share across social networks (Humphreys and Liao 2013), or to write a review. This provides a series of objects that can be traced from an event that might otherwise be untraceable. The ability to create and share such objects has

arguably changed the attentiveness that people bring to everyday events and encounters. But what is the implication of this for objects such as recut trailers, which seek to withdraw the end product for what is typically an advertisement? Does this creation of an object draw on an event (for instance, a friend watching a film trailer for *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) who might turn to their friend in the audience and evoke other films that might fit the narrative or be queered), which might not have otherwise been traceable? And, moreover, who benefits from recut trailers?

Residues, media memory and authenticity

In the introduction to an edited collection titled *Residual Media* (2007), Charles Acland outlines the ways that approaching traces of ‘old’ media can influence our understanding of ‘new’ media (itself an inherently troubled term – all media, as Acland notes, is at one point new). Speaking of ‘vintage’ objects such as vinyl records and clothes, he argues

Things operate in circuits of value, which themselves can be spatially located and temporally varying. Dear treasures in one part of town may be garbage, and laughable, in another. Indeed, Pierre Bourdieu noted that there is perhaps no more telling indication of cultural capital than the ability to bestow value where there had previously been presumed to be none. (2007: xv)

The spatial and temporal dynamics of objects in the contexts in which they circulate and move seek to “convert modes of appreciation and expertise into an organization of taste and value” (2007: xv). Many of the recut trailers that I have introduced in this

thesis operate under this mode of organisation and revaluing. By reworking footage from an older film that might have been lost to contemporary audiences due to being outdated and no longer in primary circulation, nostalgic recuts misplace and reattribute value. Value can be understood as having a benefit or enjoyable quality to somebody – that is of course as relative and polysemic as meaning. Value in recuts may take the guise of nostalgic value: trailer that recuts children’s film *Space Jam* (1996), for instance, into a drama, requires knowledge that *Space Jam* is temporally bound to the 1990s, and also an understanding of how its value can be shifted and reordered.

Nostalgia functions in recut trailers in relation to this notion of “circuits of value”. As Acland suggests, all consumers of objects “confront the sheer abundance of artifacts that make up the visible layers of modern life” (2007: xv). Spaces such as YouTube – while seemingly focused on collecting the debris and layers of audiovisual artifacts – allow for these forgotten or nostalgic artifacts to be easily retrieved and shared. When Marc Auge wrote that “history is on our heels, following us like our shadows, like death” (1992; in Acland 2007: xv), his notion of supermodernity and the speeding up of history through the abundance of past objects seems to pre-empt uses of YouTube. YouTube, as a repository of nostalgic audiovisual objects, allows for a performance of nostalgia that serves not only to evoke past artifacts but also to take joy in the social playing out of memory. This can be seen in numerous comments on YouTube clips of television themes from previous decades or music clips. Attributing ‘history’ and ‘memory’ to a YouTube video demonstrates a desire to share commonality and universality of memory: ‘I too remember this, and yes, it does make me feel old’.

The relationship to memory occupied by recut trailers is a non-linear one. Although recut trailers typically rely on memory of the film being recut or the current film being evoked such as in the *Brokeback Mountain* examples, recut trailers also demand memory of latent narratives. That is, memory of something that was not apparent when first watching a film. While most recut trailers advertise a film or a version of a film that will not exist, they are also deeply embedded in the performance and play with memory, and the emergence of latent narratives in recut trailers demonstrates an eagerness to evoke and rework memory while watching a video. For instance in the *Brokeback* examples in Chapter Five, the queer reading of existing films uncovers latent storylines and calls recollections of source films into questions while extending the narrative world of *Brokeback Mountain*. This occurs while reveling in the anticipatory mode created by a trailer, and nostalgically looking back to memories already held.

For Jason Sperb (2009), cinephiliac reaction to movies involves both recalling memories of movies and of cinematic experiences while also simultaneously expecting what is to come. He uses the example of *Final Destination 3* (2006), the third in a series of popular horror films, which centres on the premise that a group of teenagers have narrowly escaped death and therefore will be killed by death itself. As Sperb suggests, the storyline which runs through each of the *Final Destination* films builds a level of expectation for viewers who know that not only will the film feature the deaths of each main character, but that no matter how a character tries to escape death, they will be killed in a completely unexpected way. *Final Destination* revels in this play with the anticipatory model: its success relies on audiences looking forward to what is coming, and the nature of each implausible death leaves the audience searching for clues and prompts as to how a character might die in this scene. *Final Destination* also

subverts the audiences' anticipation by leaving false clues: for instance, a character may be put in a precarious situation on a plane or at a mechanics, only to later be killed while doing something mundane, like going to the hairdressers.

Final Destination is a clear example of how anticipation works in the act of watching a film, and how anticipation functions in the cinema-going process. This anticipation has a broader application, not only obviously within the horror genre (horror has built an entire audience culture about being able to anticipate a death), but also within cinematic culture. Recut trailers rely on this logic that exists within cinematic production and consumption by both subverting expectations and anticipation, and allowing the title of a recut trailer to begin anticipation within viewers: seeing *Alex DeLarge's Day Off* in a sidebar on YouTube instantly creates anticipation in a viewer that is familiar with both *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1985). Recuts that mix together two films in such a way require their audience to anticipate how the combination of films would operate, while also requiring that they evoke their memories of each. The recut trailer plays with anticipation *and* with nostalgia, forcefully ejecting films from their narrative history and making the familiar unfamiliar. Within a networked object, the past serves as a connection that is textual, but also temporal. The architecture of YouTube, which magnifies these connections and makes them material and speedily accessible, enforces and strengthens the networked aspects of the trailer.

Of course, reliance on memory is not specific to recut trailers, or indeed, cinema. As narrative began its stranglehold on cinema, audiences have not only been expected to

remember and draw upon their memories during media consumption, but they have also expected it of media. Booth, discussing television and temporality, writes that the

audience must recognize and keep in mind minor details from episodes across time...Such database-like narratives rely on an active audience being able to create connections between elements, so the presence of networks (both temporal and character driven) is crucial. (2012: 198)

Booth goes on to list examples of how television shows have encouraged, or had their very success rely on, this networked evocation of memory through a fluid understanding of temporality. Audiences are expected to remember details in the television serialised format, which is not the same for most feature films that stand – outside of a trilogy or sequel – stand alone. Even though films may not be serialised, audiences still draw upon their networked literacy in understanding genre and star power.

Expanding this cultural and textual knowledge as a network, allows us to consider this knowledge within a broader set of cultural practices that speak directly to our increasingly networked methods of communication. Booth refers to this as “a networked mentality of knowledge within our culture” (2012: 200). For Booth,

transgenic media inherently rely on networkization: for example, YouTube video parodies rely inherently on a network sensibility of intertextual connections. Gurney mentions the mash up as characteristic of this sensibility, where video from a number of texts can be juxtaposed to have a deeper

meaning. The connections between elements create a larger textual meaning than the individual elements can offer. (2012: 200)

But rather than these networked connections existing only in ‘new media’ objects such as the mash up video, they draw upon practices that have existed for some time, and are present in experimentations with various forms of media. For instance, the exact networked sensibility of connections can be seen in early mash-up video *Apocalypse Pooh* (1987) which recuts footage from children’s’ cartoon *Winnie the Pooh* to adhere to the narrative world of war film *Apocalypse Now* (1979). This film was created using video-to-video recording, which involved painstakingly recording and re-recording across multiple VCRs. Videos such as *Apocalypse Pooh*, and later recut trailers, serve as material traces and objects of an event that takes place in our consumption of media: the likening of one film or show to another, or the evocation of an actors’ body of work. The *Titanic* sequels that position the unrelated work of actors Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet (such as *Revolutionary Road*) as existing within the narrative world of *Titanic* demonstrate this evocation and reworking. Spaces such as YouTube allow for these objects to be traced to their sources, to the myriad of connections made by producers and consumers in everyday media practice, and for these practices to circulate as networked objects rather than events. These connections are not merely intertextual in the minds of those who recognise the displacement of the source texts, but the connections form as visible, material networks that allow people to be drawn into the network of literacy.

Embedding, tagging and recutting memory

This thesis has sought to provide two convergent histories: that of the film trailer though the multiple spaces it has been projected and screened, and that of the practice of recutting throughout American cinema. The recut trailer is emblematic and an evolution of both while also currently reflecting on cinema's negotiation into networked spaces. The recut trailer, then, is a network of traces that point to an alternate narrative of film history. This version of film history is littered by various incarnations of authorship: the cinematic text is altered by those projecting it, short films are recut in early cinema, directors cuts are released that reject the studio authorial stamp, and objects such as the recut trailer co-opt Hollywood systems of marketing designed to sell a film to an audience.

I have discussed the recut trailer in relation to two modes: anticipation and nostalgia. While nostalgia very obviously evokes the role of memory in the production and consumption of recuts, so too does anticipation play with the role that memory enjoys. Both nostalgia and anticipation have a troubled relationship to memory that is non-linear, and indeed, is *networked*. Anticipation, while seemingly looking forward to the future, also relies on having a broad knowledge and memory of cinematic tropes, narratives, genres, and of stars. This extends Kernan's (2004) model of rhetorical appeals made in film trailers through looking at how an audience engages with their cinematic knowledge, rather than analysing the appeals made in the trailer to the audience. Nostalgia, while seemingly being concerned with evoking memories of other films consumed and being nostalgic for them also involves being nostalgic for something that has not yet been experienced. Nostalgia, like anticipation, becomes an

affective mode; one that may not be true in the sense of being nostalgic for a time and place that was directly experienced, but one that is true to memories and the traces of prior consumption that an audience member can draw upon.

This argument does not take into account the spatial and temporal specificities of networked spaces such as YouTube. While I have argued that the recut trailer is not a “clean break” (Elsaesser 2008) from older cinematic and media history, it is currently hosted and encouraged by the specific architecture and resulting use of YouTube. It is currently a popular form due in part to YouTube; influenced by early restrictions on the size of video, by the availability of source footage, by the way that tagging and sharing facilitates a call-to-arms for other producers as well as tracing between videos. The architecture of YouTube also plays into existing and emergent online cultures of parody, play and co-option. YouTube has long been a space for *memory*. Rather than being purely archival, it has been a space that encourages and performs participation and interaction. While participation and interaction are not new to media forms and were not created with the advent of online video, spaces such as YouTube make these interactions public and participation traceable. The participation is embedded to the video and frames, interacts with and influences the video itself.

Recut trailers need to be considered beyond the textual information in the video file itself, and considered in relation to their entire object. Titles, tags and didactic information contribute understanding and anticipation of the recut trailer. Equally, comments on YouTube videos add to this sense-making practice – they not only add to the sense-making practice that allows viewers to place a recut within a larger video corpus, but the comments adapt and reflect the practice of creating videos. The

related video function of YouTube's architecture allows a constant reminder of traces and connections to be made visible, and indeed, material for the viewer. Finally, YouTube's architecture can create a multitude of entry points to a recut trailer: through searching for a film that has been recut, through wayfinding from other recut trailers (thus searching or aggregating videos by format), or through related videos in a particular genre such as 'humour' or 'popular' (Burgess and Green 2009). The related video function, in particular, has helped to cultivate and promote "non-narrative seriality to the viewing experience" (Hilderbrand 2009: 227). These conditions should be considered in tandem with the wayfinding, production and consumption that goes on outside the space of YouTube – in the mind of the creator and the viewer (here complicated and contingent to one another) who seek new connections between cinematic texts, and draw upon their personal memories and histories to make them communal, and to engage in anticipatory and nostalgic modes.

Considering YouTube's relation to memory and nostalgia within the broader application of both in online culture allows us to reflect upon cultural elements of the recut trailer in the space in which they are consumed. As Will Straw argues, the presence of historical objects on the internet (for example, an older video placed online) does not simply create memory or imbue nostalgia. Using the example of the website longlostperfumes.com - a site that allows users to buy perfumes that are no longer sold in retail outlets – Straw argues that we are encouraged "to explore the Internet's relationship to a cultural past that reinvigorates and invests with value" (2007: 3). As he notes, this has typically been considered in relation to remediation: that the new encloses and incorporates the old, rather than giving it specific *value*. Using the example of the perfume website, Straw acknowledges that the internet has

allowed for niche markets to be identified and isolated, “reconstitut[ing] viable markets from market fragments” (2007: 3).

The internet thus provides a space for what were previously niche ideas or objects to gain traction and be easily available. If this were to be considered only in relation to market value, the cultural elements at play would be collapsed and ignored.

At the same time, the Internet, like other media with virtually unlimited storage capacity, provides the terrain on which sentimental attachment, vernacular knowledge, and a multitude of other relationships to the material culture of the past are magnified and given coherence. (2007: 3)

Spaces such as YouTube, with their seemingly unlimited storage capacity not only become a depository for older video, but magnify our relationship to the past through making it accessible, but more importantly by placing it in a system of knowledge. Straw goes on to claim that the internet creates spaces that “magnify the significance of such phenomena, making even the most trivial objects the focus of a popular but highly ordered knowledge” (2007: 4). This highly ordered knowledge is at play on YouTube, both through its architecture that encourages an ordering in the literal sense, but also through the amplification of links to a televisual and cinematic past.

In relation to the longlostperfume.com site, Straw suggests that the internet becomes “a container for old fragrances in the sense that, within it, these fragrances are given solidity as a category of artifacts, made to persist and interact with other cultural phenomena” (2007: 4). Applying this premise to YouTube and the object of the

video, the artifact of the video from the past is made to “persist and interact” with newer objects. YouTube’s presentation of “pastness” can be seen in the cultural understanding that videos from any time in the past can be uploaded and exist in the same space, made equally accessible regardless of their age and origin. However, these videos are ordered and articulated within their broader history outside of YouTube. They’re often annotated by the year of origin, or through the uploader of the video providing a narrative of how they found the video, through comments from users articulating when they first saw it or how rewatching has altered their memory of a video. This year of origin annotation is played with in the pre-makes discussed in Chapter Five, which forcefully makes two different eras persist with one another in through the vehicle of the recut trailer.

The recut trailer represents more of a temporal disjuncture than bringing an old video into a new setting. The recut trailers that take footage from a previously released film and recut it (as can be seen in the majority of examples) take a film that is imbued with ‘pastness’ and place it into newness, by relying on a nostalgic memory of the source footage, and a willingness to engage in the anticipatory mode. The anticipatory mode makes clear the newness of the video, while an audience member may be nostalgically evoking and reordering their memory of a film. Clay argues that this conflation of old and new suggests “the dialectical ‘novel as the every-same’ that Walter Benjamin invokes to lay bare the myth of progress” (2008: 37). That is, that while online spaces such as YouTube may appear new, their evocation of pastness contradicts any claim to progress or novelty.

Straw's concept of "clusters of cultural knowledge" (2007: 4) can be applied to the recut trailer. If we accept that the recut trailer is a container for cultural knowledge, the way that trailers are clustered by YouTube's architecture helps to encourage others to add to that cluster. Cultural knowledge plays a role not only in evoking popular film history, but also through understanding and recognising the form of the recut trailer (for many audiences, a form specific to YouTube) and seeking clusters of similar objects. For instance, the *Social Network* parodies require an audience to hold cultural knowledge both of the *Social Network* film as well as the technical and social specificities of the websites that are being parodied in examples such as the *Twitter Movie* and *YouTube: The Movie*.

As Straw notes, there is a working assumption that the "Internet has merely discovered" an artifact (2007: 4). By comparison YouTube reflects networks of consumption and sharing that have existed *beyond* its own history. For Straw, the internet "has become a repository for wide varieties of knowledge that have predated it: the rhetorics of old fandoms, folksy family genealogies, film buff checklists, and so on" (2008: 4). What the internet enables beside providing space to host and share these objects is that it also "pulls old objects into the limelight of cultural recognition and understanding" (2008: 4). This is precisely what the recut trailer in part aims to do: to pull older objects and source material into the recognisable and ordered form of the film trailer, while also subverting and challenging our memories of older texts. They are given recognition and understanding in the new form of the trailer, and given recognition through their reworking and evocation from their accepted place in history. They are reordered temporally, formally, and narratively.

These arguments have a direct impact on our understanding of cinema in the networked online space. The deep ties to past, present and future cinematic objects promotes non-linear wayfinding: an encouragement to consume across temporal lines and across multiple networked spaces. Straw argues:

More broadly, the passage of audiovisual materials across virtually all media over the last two decades may be seen to create multiple vectors of pathfinding across the cinematic field. In the analysis of media technologies, the challenge here is that of developing an account of such pathfinding that operates between two extremes, between, on the one hand, recognition of the specific promotional role played by distinct texts in relationships to each other, and, on the other the banal acknowledgment that films become intelligible within a broadly dispersed intertextual field. At an intermediary level, we may explore the variety of ways in which cultural knowledges are absorbed within particular texts, embedded within media forms and transported across sites of consumption. (2007: 7)

The integration of audiovisual material across multiple screens and spaces has created “multiple vectors”. Rather than merely considering this as the adoption of cinematic texts into different spaces, this has also encouraged multiple entry and exit points into the cinematic “field”. The recut trailer forms one of these vectors, which demonstrates absorbed knowledges, which are both embedded physically across multiple sites as well as the embedding of cinematic memory and culture. The recut trailer is one way that the cinematic field is “transported across sites of consumption”, as well as demonstrating a play with the way that cinema has travelled, and the way

that multiple vectors of the cinematic field have allowed cinema to travel across multiple media sites, but have also been extended into new technological sites by use and practice.

New media, networked screens and materiality

The term 'new media' has come to denote anything related to contemporary computing and the internet. New media exists temporally in a state of suspension – eagerly waiting to be applied to any new form of communication, or new form of software or hardware that enables mediation. Of course, it was not anticipated that the term would be used in this way. Numerous scholars have productively employed the term (see for example Manovich 2001; Acland 2007); at times as a provocation to existing understandings of media and the existing focus on broadcast media created under a traditional model of media – that one broadcasts to many. While new media for some, such as Manovich, embodied a series of shifts such as from viewer to user, new media has itself shifted to being applied in excess.

As Acland suggests, an appropriate understanding of new media can be positioned as follows:

This ideology of transformation and immateriality – that is, a language of capital's easy (re)production process – offers one explanation for the central place of "new media" in our social and critical context. For "new media" designates not only a motor and vehicle of historical change, but also a place at which we experience, in a direct fashion, the rapid obsolescing and

remaking of things and skills, where typing becomes data entry, Windows ME becomes Windows XP, and movie outtakes, posters, and scripts become DVD extras. (2007: xviii)

Thus new media, when correctly employed, has both a spatial and temporal application; it refers to the rapid-fire replication and improvement of present things and to the space where that occurs. Media here designates a *place* where this replication and removal is experienced. As suggested by Acland in the above passage, this “newness” is a misnomer – a co-opting of an existing product or practice to be sold as something “new”.

In 2007 Time Magazine (Grossman 2007) announced that their person of the year was “You”- evoking, as Hilderbrand notes (2009), the burgeoning popularity of video-sharing site, YouTube. Hilderbrand’s study of video-bootlegging pre-dating YouTube is just one example practices and use of media technologies that are often deemed ‘new’ enjoy a longer history. As Acland suggests, studies of new media have tended to assume there is a drastic “rupture” from the past and history in instances of new media – as though a site such as YouTube both revolutionised and created video-sharing (2007: xix). Hilderbrand’s study demonstrates that video-sharing has been aided in part by technological development, but it is not merely the technology that creates these sharing networks, but a long history of how people have interacted with and used media. Consequently, as much as design helps shape the history of media, so too does its use, adoption and augmentation.

But while some approaches may provide us with narratives and biographies of objects and media that demonstrate the presence of a longer historical context, these studies are counterbalanced by numerous new media “manifestos”, that position new media as creating “mobility, miniaturization, decentralization, media self-referentiality, blurred relations between copy and original, shifting boundaries between producer and consumer, and even the storage and transport of ideas apart from the singular human form” (Acland 2007: xvii-xix). Instead, spaces such as YouTube and objects such as the recut trailer draw upon and play with the historical forms and media that influence their use and architecture today.

Indeed, recut trailers can serve as a metaphor for this tension between old and new media. With their articulations of both anticipation and nostalgia; of old and new, of a playful evocation of the past, and a feverish looking forward to a future that will not materialise – recut trailers play with media temporality and newness. A recut trailer such as *Shining* recut as a family comedy allow us to see *The Shining* (1980) in a new light, while simultaneously requiring the audience to draw upon their memories for the existing feature in order to find it funny and recognise the displacement within the latent narrative. Similarly, *Shining* also required audiences to access their memories of how family comedies are sold to audiences through soundtracks and voiceover, and also suspend their disbelief in order to enter the realm of anticipation – a familiar feeling for anyone who has responded well to a trailer.

Recut trailers occupy a complicated place in this temporal spectrum. They are most typically uploaded to YouTube while also co-opting an older media form – that of the film trailer – and deliberately make reference to older films. They often use source

footage from older films to either build anticipation for an upcoming feature, or a version of a film that will not exist, or they can nostalgically evoke past films and past cinematic cultures. There is a friction in the recut trailer between old and new, between past and future, which draws directly upon the use of temporality in theatrically released feature film trailers, as well as the way in which memory and evocation is an integral part of our interaction and understanding of film cultures. Recut trailers make clear in a formal structural sense how audiences have always interacted with films: they are expected to have knowledge of genre, be able to identify and evoke an actor or director's body of work, to understand convention and technique, as well as anticipating the content of a film based on information given in a review or trailer through their general cinematic knowledge.

Web cinema, convergence, aesthetics and circulation

Manovich argues that while the use of computer-generated images has increased in cinema, the "use of computers is always carefully hidden" (2001: 309). This has been in part to preserve the "traditional cinematic language" and, with it, the aesthetics of cinema. When the recut trailer is considered, intersections between the use of computers, the marks left by technological alterations and cinematic language becomes blurred. All recut trailers on YouTube make obvious the use of computers in editing and retouching technology. In the cases of recuts that include super-imposed images such as *Titanic 2: Jack's Back* to place a *Titanic the Musical* hat on Leonard DiCaprio, for instance, the role of computers in creating trailers and editing footage to amplify or omit becomes obvious. Recut trailers, in turn, make the use of computers as part of cinematic language and aesthetics obvious.

Recut trailers owe their emergence in part to the development of Web films, which were typically satirical short films (Klinger 2006: 194-195). Clay argues that web films “invite us to consider a new technological apparatus of cinematic time and space” (2008: 37). He writes:

Web cinema originates with short films on digital video distributed via telecommunication networks for display on the screens of computers and mobile devices. It is just one of many identifiable moving image practices that are facilitated by these technologies. The short videos that circulate as films in this context are reminiscent of the first steps of the infant ‘living photographs’ of early cinema. With hindsight of cinema’s maturity of a theatrical screen, we might expect the short Web film to be only a temporary divagation from the mainstream of feature film feature as Web cinema...[develop] into an increasing sophisticated entertainment form. (2008: 37-38)

Indeed, since Clay’s essay, web cinema has developed into a multitude of forms; of which recut trailers are a part – particularly those that include originally shot footage. Web cinema can include GIFs, which, like the recut trailer, share links to early cinema (Punt 2000). The reminiscence between emergent cinematic objects online such as the GIF and the recut trailer and early cinema experiments are no accident. These objects linger after the *event* of experimentation.

Clay argues that the internet is “not just a viewing space of aesthetic experience, but is also the source of material objects that can be saved and archived” (2008: 41). Like DVDs and VHS, the internet also allows for the experience of cinema to be material

– films can be downloaded; clips can be stored and shared. Torrented downloads aside, a great deal of online video is not experienced by archiving and storing in the true material sense: a user might watch a YouTube video online and not store or archive any information or file. Nevertheless their hardware and social profile on YouTube will do this for them – in YouTube’s case, the video will be remembered, and lead to recommendations being populated upon their next visit to YouTube, alongside predictive text in the search bar showing the user what they have previously watched. In this sense, YouTube materially *traces* the fleeting viewing patterns of a user, placing each video they watch as part of their network, helping to augment and encourage their future viewing habits. The role of YouTube in this network is an integral one, as it not only aggregates video but also helps to direct users to view future feature videos. Although networks do not have a forcing function, YouTube has increasingly built in a variety of methods to track viewers’ use of YouTube and to suggest future views, and help direct use of YouTube as a space.

Attractions or Distractions

As discussed in Chapter Three, Tom Gunning referred to early cinema as a “cinema of attractions” (1986); early cinema typically contained short non-narrative films that demonstrated the very first moving-images. They typically involved filmmakers showing the possibilities of film – resulting in many slapstick shorts as well as moving images of trains or people doing day-to-day activities. Teresa Rizzo adopted Gunning’s terminology to describe early video on YouTube (2007), arguing that many YouTube clips showed non-narrative short films, often slapstick in nature such as shots of people falling over or skateboarding accidents. These videos, like the shorts

that Gunning describes, were about exploring the capabilities of the medium, and were limited by the technical impositions placed on users by YouTube – namely length of video and the suggestion that YouTube users should broadcast themselves. Burgess and Green (2009) discuss a number of the most popular videos available at the time of their study, namely videos uploaded by users miming along to songs, or vlogging from their bedrooms. These could also be considered as a cinema of attractions, placing the importance of the self and self-representation as demonstrations of the capability of the medium. Each of these types of videos described by Burgess and Green (2009) and Rizzo (2007) remain popular on YouTube today. This could be for a number of reasons, but with the rise of web cams being integrated into handheld devices and computers, it has become easier to record day-to-day encounters and even the act of using technology such as computers.

Narrative short films have been present from the emergence of online video, and trailers specifically have formed an important part of this development of narrative online video. They are not only compatible with file size restrictions, but have culturally aligned with what Hilderbrand titles “the culture of the clip” (2007) which has evolved with the emergence of online video, and YouTube specifically. Clay adopts Benjamin’s and Manovich’s notion of ‘distraction’ to refer to web cinema as being part of the “cinema of distractions” which constitutes “a utopian non-work plentitude of ‘digi-textuality’ and ‘click-fetishism’” (2008: 38). Wasson develops the notion of the “cinema of attractions” to online video, suggesting that web cinema should instead be labeled a “cinema of suggestion” which “calls attention to its materiality and its status as bound to a tightly integrated network” (2007: 89). She argues that the specifics of online films – namely, that they are small and flat, and

“exercise a kind of cat-and-mouse game with the new user-spectator” – demand that they be considered as an extension of the cinema of attractions.

The cinema of suggestion, due to the screen on which it is projected and the context in which it is viewed, demand the viewer physically sit forward and stare closely at the video. This has changed since the time of the article Wasson was writing, as larger screens are now relatively inexpensive and the capacity for higher quality video has increased. As a great deal of video is watching on mobile devices, paying close attention to a video is not eliminated. The significance of the size of the screen in cinema culture is relevant in online video, Wasson suggests, because the current use of screens is “increasingly integral to emerging modes of cinematic practice” (2007: 90). Indeed, it is both “the size of the screen” and the “metaphor of *the network*” which allows us to understand “both the little and the big of film culture” (2007: 90).

The little and the big of film culture can be seen at play in the recut trailer, and the theatrically released trailer more broadly. The trailer can be seen as the little of screen culture, imbued with the big: not only of the larger object of the feature film, but also in its role as a networked object that serves as a node between a series of institutional, aesthetic, and material practices and modes of affect. The recut trailer adopts the principles of the trailer as network and makes its role as a network more obvious by playing with the links made between films, practices, and the markets and institutional structures that lead to the trailer’s creation and circulation. By self-circulating recut trailers in a networked environment, the YouTube user sends one networked object out amongst many others – amongst other videos that evoke a series of practices, aesthetics and links.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the numerous factors that inform the circulation and popularity of the recut trailer on YouTube. In considering the circulation of recut trailers, I have focused on the role of memory in digital culture. Building upon the discussion of nostalgia in Chapter Six, I have argued that endeavouring to trace residues helps us to consider how users engage and interact with media, and how media disseminates objects. While the previous chapters have looked at the residue of historical practice in recuts, or the textual residues in specific examples of trailers, this chapter has considered technological residue. This has been achieved through tracing the ways that the film industry and production are drawn upon and subverted in recuts, and how screen memory and traces of technology in the dissemination of recuts helps shape their meaning and account for their popularity. Moreover, the specific networked nature of YouTube as a space must be taken into consideration when discussing the recut trailer. The culture that has emerged from that space – encouraged by its architecture – combines a fixation on the past with the ever-evolving present, encouraging mediated knowledge and memories to grow, be reworked or augmented. YouTube fosters and promotes connections in networked objects, making the traces easily accessible, and therefore increasingly tangible and material.

This chapter also outlined how recut trailers should be considered as networked objects that remain traces of an event (Schwarz 2012). By discussing the ways that memory is ordered, evoked and manipulated in online spaces, I have argued that the recut trailer is a series of networked traces and residues. They encompass connections

to films, the space in which they are circulated as well as practices of consumption and production that are involved in the circulation of media. Arguing for the trailer to be considered as a networked object, this chapter has addressed the numerous aspects of networks that allow for memory, knowledge and practices to be made sense of, and to be circulated. A networked object is material, housing connections to seemingly disparate practices, institutions, texts and technology. Through these connections, objects such as the recut trailer reflect how media is negotiated through both use and design. Networked objects serve as material traces of how users negotiate cinema and digital culture, and the spaces through which they encounter both.

In considering recuts as networked objects I have departed from previous literature on film trailers and recut trailers more specifically, which have primarily focused on defining these objects as texts. Considering trailers as textual was important in Kernan's work where she laid the groundwork for trailers to be considered in an academic context, as serious texts worthy of study. Conversely, considering trailers as merely textual does not take into consideration how or why trailers have persisted as sites for technological experimentation and negotiation. Johnston explores the history of experimentation through trailers in his work on the evolution of film trailers as a way to sell technology. The recut trailer does not sell anything, and instead co-opts and subverts these previous attempts by the industry to sell cinematic technology, the space of the cinema, and the feature film itself. Recuts are emblematic of this shift from the cinema and the feature, and while they draw upon a longer history outside of recent times particularly in relation to their practice of recutting, they are digital objects that circulate in a networked, digital space. Textuality – and intertextuality – forms a part of the meaning of recuts. Recut trailers make material these textual

events, where an audience member draws a link between the work of an actor in a previous film and the one they are watching now. They also make material links to the film industry's marketing techniques, technological residue, practices of recutting and exhibition, and the temporal events of anticipation and nostalgia. YouTube, as a space, accelerates these connections, and encourages others to forge their own which may deviate from the material concoction created by others. To reduce these conditions to being textual is to ignore the distinctly networked elements of trailers and recuts, and the way they are created, circulated and consumed.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

I began this project interested in understanding the various ways that recut trailers were understood in scholarly work. Not only did they go by a variety of names, but they also appeared to exist in a transitory space between multiple fields of research. Like the theatrical film trailer before it, recuts existed on the margins of scholarly work – used as an example in discussions of participatory culture or amateur productions on YouTube. However, it struck me that recuts were worthy of their own analysis; particularly, as they served as traces for how audiences have negotiated cinema into the space of YouTube. Recut trailers were interesting to me for a number of reasons: they were funny, knowledgeable plays with the tools of cinematic marketing, but they also functioned as constant reworkings of cinematic memory, upending and subverting long-held memories of films. In a recut world, any film contains a latent storyline or warrants a sequel. Recut trailers reminded me of imaginative moments in cinema-going: picturing a sequel to *Speed* (1994) where the out-of-control bus continues driving on a tour around the world, visualising the feel-good comedy *The First Wives Club* (1996) as a macabre horror film, or wanting a version of a film to exist without a particular character or subplot. Recut trailers make these events material, while also structuring them within the ‘rules’ of Hollywood – the temporal and spatial bounds we place on films, at once both anticipatory and nostalgic.

The enjoyment in watching recut trailers rests partially in being appreciative of somebody's imagination in uncovering those latent storylines or switching the genre of an existing feature. At times the title of a recut can almost bring out incredulosity: how could the ultra-violent *300* possibly be made child-friendly? In this moment before consuming the recut, anticipation and nostalgia combine in the viewer's mind; memories are recalled and we anticipate the content of the reworked film. Any consumer who is familiar with trailers will recognise the appeals made in the recut – also recognising the terminology used, the amplification of narrative, and the reliance on star appeal even if the actor in question is not very appealing at all.

Bearing these ideas in mind, I found that the exciting and unique elements of recuts that I identified were disconnected from how they were being written about. This was no more apparent than in the positioning of recuts as fan objects, or as purely digital objects: while they were shared and consumed online, their existence was not entirely indebted to the space of YouTube. Recuts have been considered as digital objects that have emerged specifically from online culture (Ortega 2014), as paratexts (Gray 2010), and as typical of digital video more broadly (Horwath 2010). Going by several names, recut trailers have been difficult to position in relation to media practices and objects; they appear as a subset of fan practices, as intertextual parodies, or as memes. This study has sought to intervene in these characterisations, by paying specific attention to the historical, technological, temporal, social, textual and spatial residues in recuts in order to argue that they are *networked objects*. The recut trailer is an object out of the event of cinema-going and subsequent engagement (Ong 1982; Schwarz 2002), serving as a material trace of the connections audiences make between films, their anticipation, and their drawing upon nostalgia.

To explore these connections, I set out to create a biography of the object (Lash and Lury 2007). This biography explored the dynamics between industry and audiences, the role of temporality and audience desire, and how space is impacted upon – and impacts – the recut. As the first doctoral dissertation on recut trailers, this thesis has created a lexicon for recuts, in the process focusing on the temporality and spatiality of the trailers, while arguing against considering recuts as purely digital objects divorced from a longer media history. While considering recuts within a taxonomy of digital video or broader textual practices is helpful, I have argued that these approaches do not account for analysing how recuts are produced, disseminated and consumed.

It is important to consider the function of theatrically released trailers, as it has not been given sufficient attention in studies to date. The study of trailers is a relatively new area – film trailers have been marginalised throughout film studies as a lesser text to the feature film (Staiger 1990). And yet film advertisements have been a central way to gain film-going audiences, and, as the work of Kernan (2004) and Johnston (2009) demonstrate, a way of selling cinema as a technology, as well as the specific feature films they depict. Film trailers have represented the broader industrial world of cinema to audiences, and through appeals to stars, genre, and narrative, have helped to connect individual films to a cinema as a practice and film as an object. In Chapter One I outlined the techniques used in film trailers that have been co-opted by recut trailer creators. These techniques have evolved throughout the history of the trailer to be recognisable to audiences today – such as direct communication to the audience, the placing of an upcoming film in an anticipatory mode, and connections to industry. Recut trailers co-opt methods of selling individual films and cinema and

deny the advertisement of a final product to be consumed. They explore and subvert these appeals, instead leaving traces of desire – for a version of a film that will not exist, a sequel that cannot be, or an entirely new film that will never be made. Recut trailers are enjoyable for this exact reason; they advocate misreading of past films, and create an intangible future where something is always ‘coming soon’.

A central element of my approach has been to use the recut trailer as a provocation through which to interrogate existing analysis of digital objects. This is not intended to reject textual studies, but to use these emerging, hybrid, literate and highly networked objects as a means to build upon previous approaches. A recut trailer is not a novel or a film; it functions differently, it moves through space differently, and it is consumed differently. To apply a highly literary mode of analysis would deny the very basic foundations of the recut as object. Classic formal textual approaches seem inadequate when dealing with the dynamic fluidity of such media objects.

Instead of focusing on textuality, I have charted the recut trailer through a focus on residues and traces (Acland 2007). Acland’s edited collection on ‘residual media’ has been central to the design of my argument and approach to temporality and technology. These traces have taken the form of material practice, textual connections, temporality and the residues of space. As such, this thesis has considered the recut trailer in relation to the residues of technological media history, two temporal modes, and finally, situated the recut trailer as an embodiment of residues in the form of a networked object.

This study of recut trailers has taken into consideration a pre-digital history including early exhibition practices and recutting. These technological and historical narratives demonstrate that the trailer has long been a site of technological experimentation – a way of negotiating new screens and new media. Film trailers – originating from studios or otherwise – have tested the limitations and possibilities of a new medium, new screening space, and the limits of that screen. While the popularity of recut trailers is in no doubt aided and encouraged by the networked space of YouTube, this longer history also informs the presence of recut trailers. From the very beginning of cinema, films have been recut, mashed together, reordered and changed (Koszarski 1990). The practice of recutting has become a way to negotiate the emergence of new media beyond recent digital history. While this has not been a consistent trope throughout cinema's history, its timing offers an alternate narrative to be read parallel to the emergence of recut trailers. Items such as recut trailers remain as material practices of this negotiation and experimentation, and YouTube's vast size and accelerated speed has resulted in many artifacts with enduring legacies that have come into being as forms in their own right after their initial period of experimentation.

By shifting from a focus on textuality in recut trailers, this study instead presents a model of analysis based on the temporal modes of anticipation and nostalgia – which can compliment, interact and overlap. Anticipation is key to both digital culture and film culture specifically; defined as both looking forward to the release or consumption of something like a film or a video as well as anticipating its contents, cultures of anticipation spread wide. I discussed anticipation in relation to the concept of the desire line, which are paths created by use in public areas that deviate from the

official paths (Tiessen 2007). Desire lines reflect how individual and collective desire feed into one another; once one path is created, it encourages other users of that space to take it. Similarly, recut trailers created in the lead up to the release of a feature film embody this interplay between the individual and the mass. In the instance of recut trailers created prior to the release of the *Twilight* movies that were a combination of footage from press spots, unrelated films, advertisements and television shows, individual fans created material traces of their desires. This in turn created a mass swell of similar trailers, and fans utilised YouTube's architecture to facilitate competitions and engage with one another about each creation. These trailers demonstrated that users desired to see a future film in the form of a trailer – that this was an event to be desired and anticipated. Desire lines can also be related to the types of “user-led innovation” that Burgess and Green (2009: 61) describe in YouTube's use, leading to YouTube users “forming a network of creative practice”.

Originally shot trailers that parodied *The Social Network* grouped around the release of the film, mimicking trailers and teasers released by studios. These trailers also demonstrated a broader narrative at play in the media – industrial media outlets were aware of recuts and almost anticipating the next move of YouTube users in creating a video. Journalists spoke of the speed with which videos were being created and uploaded, hinting also at the predictability of it all. As a desire line, this path demonstrated gathering of anticipation prior to the release of the feature and then tapered off.

Journalists increasingly bemoan nostalgia as a product of too much social-networking, awful youth music, and inauthenticity (see for example Browne 2009; Wampole

2012). Nostalgia, and surrounding discussions of it, tells us just as much about the future as it does the past. Nostalgia has been an integral part of YouTube's emergence; its early days were full of past television shows, television show themes, and other cultural debris. Nostalgia imbues these 'forgotten' artifacts with renewed meaning and value (Straw 2007). Recut trailers that engage with nostalgia cleverly subvert and rearrange memories of a film. Prequels, for instance, create fake versions of a film made within the last few years using footage from films made decades before it. The sense of 'pastness' in these trailers may be categorised as 'faux-nostalgia' – nostalgia for a time that wasn't experienced by the majority of its audience, and yet, still carries with it, a sense of intimacy and literacy of the past. This is not intended to convey that memories for a time not experienced should be valued less, but rather to draw attention to the specific role of the collective in mediated memory-making in networked spaces.

Reading nostalgia as a mood and a mode (Grainge 2000), recut trailers embody the sense of a heightened or accelerated nostalgia present in media reports. Nostalgic trailers for *Brokeback Mountain* drew upon older films such as *Back the Future* to rework them to fit aesthetically and narratively into the world of *Brokeback Mountain*: namely by unearthing the latent storyline between two male friends in another film to be read as romantic, and adopting the use of text and the soundtrack of *Brokeback*. These recuts were uploaded following the release of the official trailer and continue to be uploaded. These trailers also demonstrate a joy in having cinematic memory challenged, highlighting the ongoing intersections between new media product and old, between the memory of the individual and their engagement with mass media product, between future events and nostalgia for those that have passed.

Nostalgic teen film trailers confront popular discourse around digital nostalgia head-on. By adopting popular narratives about teens and playing them out to excess, teen film recuts use play and parody to intervene in debate. In co-opting the tools of marketing to teens and about teens, these trailers demonstrate how recognisable these generic tropes are, and their association with nostalgia for a simpler time and involves the audience member being nostalgic for a time they've never experienced. For instance *Grease* was released in 1970s but depicted the 1950s – a time its intended teenage audience may not have experienced. These trailers thus point to the non-linearity of memory, which is formed from fragments of culture and from media. Rather than the primary mode of enjoyment being looking forward, nostalgic trailers demonstrate the desire to discover an older film revitalised in the space of film trailer, while also demonstrating a desire to pull open and rework mediated memories.

I have drawn together the historical, technological, temporal, spatial, sociocultural and textual elements of the recut trailer, arguing that they should be considered as networked objects – a hub that draws together the residues of these elements, practices and narratives. They are material traces of cinematic and media desire, occupying a troubled temporality between the anticipatory mode, and the nostalgic reworking of memory. They are objects born out of the events that audiences take part in; drawing connections between films, identifying common tropes in marketing attempts, parodying and playing with an object. The space of YouTube and the accelerated nature of its content allow these networks to be easily traceable, and to enact and encourage further participation.

The presence of recut objects in pivotal moments of the emergence of new media point to considering this practice as a negotiation; can recutting can be understood as an aesthetics of experimentation? If the film trailer is an early cross media adopter (Johnston 2008) and site of experimentation – a way to negotiating cinema into new spaces – the combination of recutting as a practice and trailers as an object situates the recut trailer as a way to test out ideas, but also to shake up the relationship between audiences and Hollywood studios. Recut trailer creators co-opt and appropriate the tools of Hollywood marketing – their initial success may have been due to the humour of identifying these unspoken rules of film advertising. Indeed, their enduring popularity can counter claims that digital culture is short-lived and transient, that audiences are being subjected to advertising more than ever before and yet somehow remaining uncritical. This thesis has demonstrated that the interaction between users, space and architecture encourages these negotiations between the past and the future of media, of which the recut trailer is emblematic.

As outlined in Chapters One and Two, there have been limited academic studies of the film trailer, and it took until the 2000s for a ‘field’ to emerge, predominantly through the work of Kernan (2004) and Johnston (2009). I have both built and departed from their work in numerous ways, such as by using this history to consider the recut trailer through a focus on screens, space and technology. Kernan’s pioneering work argued for trailers to be considered as an object worthy of study, which she approached from a rhetorical and textual perspective. Johnston’s work drew out the importance of technology in the emergence of theatrically released trailers – as a text that both sells the feature film it depicts, as well as the technology that delivers it. I add to this literature by arguing for the recut trailer to be considered

as an object worthy of analysis – rather than being included in discussions of trailers generally – and that the networked specificities of YouTube, as well as the series of connections housed by the recut, mean that it should be considered as a networked object. This feeds back into the literature available on the trailer, bringing a distinct networked emphasis, which departs from focus on the text.

The two temporal modes that came out of my archive – anticipation and nostalgia – have not been considered in previous academic studies as a way to understand the production, consumption and dissemination of media. While Sperb (2007) discusses similar modes, he approaches these concepts from the perspective of cinephilia. I have argued that anticipation and nostalgia are dual modes through which to understand recut trailers, but their application could be broadened. As networked objects such as recuts play and upend time and temporality, temporality should be considered when analysing or understanding such objects.

I have argued that anticipation should be considered as separate to ‘hype’ (Gray 2008) which I argue comes from industry in an attempt to build anticipation.

Anticipation, by comparison, comes from consumers and is imbued within objects – it is a temporal mode deployed in objects, and present in the circulation and consumption of those objects. While Kernan (2004) refers to the anticipatory nature of theatrically released film trailers, anticipation has not been developed as one axis of a model through which to understand an object. Nostalgia has been considered in relation to the popular usage of YouTube, particularly as it was an emergent space (see Chua 2011). This study has sought to position nostalgia as a dominant temporal

mode in the creation, consumption and dissemination of media and interaction with popular culture, which is encouraged and accelerated by digital spaces.

Finally, this study discussed early precedents of recutting (Koszarski 1990; Musser 1983) in relation to recut trailers. While the work of Tom Gunning (1990) and the cinema of attractions has been discussed at length by other scholars in helping to account for the role of experimentation in online spaces (Ortega 2013; Wasson 2007), this thesis has presented segments of early cinema history to be read in parallel to the emergence of recut trailers, concluding that these apparently digital objects should be read alongside prior practices and objects to better characterise the role of negotiation in emergent media forms.

Several areas from my dissertation emerge as future areas for research. This thesis has analysed the recut to reconsider digital objects and film trailers. Conversely, this study has not focused on the computational layers of these networked objects, instead looking to temporality, social uses of technology, spatiality, textuality and history. Looking to how the related video function on YouTube impacts on the fostering of existing media networks would enable a new computational perspective on these networked objects. Similarly, this thesis has not focused on the role of performance in the creation and circulation of recuts. The focus in fan studies on how a fan relates to their object of fandom would be worthy of exploration in relation to recut trailers through ethnographic research and a greater focus on the interactions between actors on YouTube and the cultures they evoke.

I have also argued that objects such as the recut trailer need to be considered outside of the province of fan studies, without focusing solely on communities and textuality. While an extensive ethnographic study of recut creators would enhance understanding of these objects and their popularity, this study has instead turned the traces and residues left by and embodied by recut trailers. This leaves a central question emerging from this thesis, how do we account for audiences who create highly detailed and literate objects outside of the dichotomy of fandom/anti-fandom? How should users who demonstrate intimate knowledge of films and other media share and contribute to this collective culture, be characterised? What happens if those users cannot be understood, or resist being labeled, as a community? I seek to incorporate these perspectives in future work.

This thesis began by recounting the origin of one of the most popular recut trailers, *Shining*. While it was first hosted outside of YouTube, it was promptly uploaded and consumed well beyond its original network. Since that point, thousands of recut trailers have been uploaded and watched, acting as a call-to-arms for other creators to outdo the others. I have presented a series of narratives and modes of analysis to account for the enduring popularity of the recut trailer, as an example of how users of media negotiate its shift into new spaces. Recut trailers demonstrate that users co-opt tools and carve out their own spaces alongside the paved or official path. Far from being a digital-only phenomenon, these trailers drawn upon media histories that demonstrate the role of the trailer as a site for experimentation and recutting as a practice of ongoing negotiation. As Roland Barthes describes moving from poster to poster upon leaving the movie theatre and entering urban space, audiences outside of

the movie theatre move from object to object, from utterance to utterance,
negotiating the cinematic experience into the online social space.

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Death Proof 2007, motion picture, Dimension Films, United States. Produced by Quentin Tarantino, Robert Rodriguez, Elizabeth Avellan & Erica Steinberg; directed by Quentin Tarantino.

Drive 2011, motion picture, FilmDistrict, United States. Produced by Michel Litvak, John Palermo, Marc Platt, Gigi Pritzker & Adam Siegel; directed by Nicolas Winding Refn.

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