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NEW WAYS OF SEEING: RECEPTION AND MANIPULATION OF FILM IN DIGITAL MEDIA

Master Thesis

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ABSTRACT

NEW WAYS OF SEEING:

RECEPTION AND MANIPULATION OF FILM IN DIGITAL MEDIA

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The viewer's access to film is what defines his or her relation to film. Access to film has never been as available as it is today, since videodisc technologies offer a novel relation to film based on digital computer. It is the computer and the digitized nature of film that re-defines the relation as manipulation. This thesis aims at providing a current account of the change in the relation of film and viewer. Following the introduction of the videodisc technology, the viewer was able to claim and practice an authority over films gained as early as the advent of pre-recorded videocasette. Fan commentaries and fanedited films are two current examples of this novel relation and exhibit significant characteristics for defining what may be the future for film and viewer.

Keywords: Digital media, relation of film and viewer, ways of seeing

ÖZET

YENİ GÖRME BİÇİMLERİ:

SAYISAL ORTAMDA FİLM ALGISI VE EYLETİM

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İzleyicinin film ile olan ilişkisi filme erişimiyle tanımlanır. Videodisk teknolojilerinin sayısal bilgisayara dayalı yeni bir ilişki sunduğu bugünlerde filme erişim daha önce olmadığı denli elverişli hale geldi. İlişkiyi eyletim olarak baştan tanımlayan şeyler bilgisayar ve filmin sayısallaşan yapısıdır. Bu tez izleyicinin filmle olan ilişkisindeki güncel değişimi sunmayı amaçlıyor. Videodisk teknolojisinin ortaya çıkışının ardından izleyici, film üzerinde kaydedilmiş video kasetin çıkışından bu yana sahip olduğu otoriteyi ortaya ve uygulamaya koydu. Hayranlar tarafından kaydedilen yorumlar ve baştan kurgulanan filmler bu yeni ilişkinin film ve izleyici için neler getirebileceğine ışık tutacak belirgin özelliklere sahip iki güncel örnek.

Anahtar sözcükler: Sayısal ortam, izleyicinin filmle olan ilişkisi, izleme biçimleri

To Kiti.

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> *Besides, what film is truly definitive? By the time you see the film it may very well be sub-titled, re-edited, shortened, even censored, and every film is viewed at the discretion of the projectionist, the cinema manager, the architect of the cinema, the comfort of your seat and the attention of your neighbor. (Greenaway 1986)*

People like to think that there are those films, which they can watch over and over again, be satisfied with their easygoing familiarity, stability, and stamina to resist change; their permanent presence in various time and space. However, in fact, each and every viewing creates its exclusive experience, and the build up of these unique experiences over time and space is what gives the feeling of synonymity to the viewer. Accordingly, one can suggest that the viewer's access to film is what defines his or her relation to film.

Film is not a definitive form because its interaction with the viewer is heavily mediated. Each different medium has its characteristics, influencing different action/behavior patterns in the viewer. Viewing a film in a prime theatre is a different experience than viewing it on an iPod screen, which is also different than seeing a VHS copy of it. Although they are representations of the same film, each format and condition provide a different perception of the film generating multiple definitions.

However, it is not simply a discussion of nostalgia. It is neither a clash between the old and the new. Evidently, film has never been a truly definitive form and our conception of a constant film is a limited one, if not a total miss. Yet the 21st Century viewer is bombarded with ever changing access routes to films; hence, finding

himself or herself constantly adjusting to a new and sublimated encounter. Access to film has never been as available as it is today in multitudes of formats, and simultaneously.

In this respect, it can be suggested that 21st Century may prove to be a turning point for the relation of film and viewer. First, unlike its predecessors, videodisc technologies have offered a novel relation to film on digital computer as digitized cinematic data; film as digits. Later, the Internet provides further access to information on, about and related to film, it's production and manipulation. Internet also becomes the primary medium of distribution. The computer, with all the connotations of the word, provides the tools to manipulate, as well as the arena to display the manipulated. Therefore, it is important to note that it is the computer and the digitized nature of film that re-defines the relation as manipulation.

This thesis aims at providing a current account of the change in the relation of film and viewer. Following the introduction of the videodisc technology, the viewer has become able to claim and practice an authority over films, which was actually gained as early as the advent of pre-recorded videocassette. This issue of authority will be presented and discussed within the context of works of fans. Fan commentaries and fan-edited films are two current examples of this novel relation and exhibit significant characteristics for defining what may be the future for film and viewer.

In order to provide a progressive narrative depicting similarities as well as differences in the relation of film and viewer the thesis will develop chronologically. The first chapter deals with the early film, its presentation, and perception; building a bridge to more current viewing experiences. The following chapter deals with

screening methods and analyzes the effects they had on the relation of film and viewer. The third chapter is devoted to the latest videodisc formats, with an emphasis on the DVD, discussing the features provided by them, and their correlation with computer technologies. The final chapter of this thesis will discuss how the digital technologies available as format and medium has facilitated the examples of fan commentary and fanedit; looking for its roots in the apparatus and habitus, alike.

Early Film and its Audience – Initiating a Relation

The film when it was introduced to masses in late 19th Century was projected by the very same device, which was used to capture the images it reproduces on a screen usually set up in a café or a similar venue of non-specific purpose. It should be noted that, even as early as this point in the history of film, the medium served multiple purposes. At the time it was primarily exhibited as a technological attraction; yet it was also a source of information and a form of dramatic entertainment. Filmed entertainment did not solely consist of moving records of already available forms of variety, but was maturing to become medium specific. More and more film makers were becoming masters of effects and juxtaposition, gradually building the semantics as well as the grammar of the filmic language.

Cinema of Attraction

Later, Tom Gunning distinguished this period, until the narativization of cinema, as the "cinema of attraction". In this context, narativization refers to the subordination of kinetic and temporal manipulations to character movement and chronological momentum of linear narrative (Hansen 1987: 180). Gunning's cinema of attraction is "a cinema that bases itself on […] its ability to *show* something," (Gunning 1989: 230) therefore; not only the filmed content but the *cinématographe* itself and even the picture palaces of the time can be identified as show pieces. In other words, the idea of cinema of attraction, an amazement obtained from moving images, was not based on the notion of the naïve spectator but instead the spectators' heightened interest in the visual content:

> The peculiar pleasure of screaming before the suddenly animated image of a locomotive indicates less an audience willing to take the image for reality than a spectator whose daily experience has lost coherence and immediacy traditionally attributed to reality (Gunning 1995: 126).

It should be remembered that by the end of 19th Century, much like today, everyday life was in constant technological transformation. Exhibition, with all connotations of the word, was the catch-phrase of the era. Looking, watching, seeing and all the actions related to the visual were promoted. With cinema, the audiences were astonished by the transformation of still images which they had by now grown a familiarity to, through the new illusion of projected motion. However, the astonishment was not caused by "taking the image for reality." The attraction came from an illusion, which is experienced but not explained, from not knowing the mechanisms that governed film. In a sense the reality of the camera was more real then the reality of life that has lost its immediacy to technology.

At the time, most of the labor that went into film was mechanical. Apart from the chemical processing of the exposed film material, effects and editing were merely cutting and pasting of footage. Even the rather more ambitious project of coloring was done by hand, frame-by-frame. Gradually the film industry had become ever more labor intensive. Following the industrialization of the production process, film increasingly became a mass produced, mass consumed form of entertainment. Despite all the manpower that went into producing the film it was a privileged minority that had access to the means and methods to shoot, process and assemble a commercially valuable, marketable film. The industry advertised only enough

technical details to keep audiences filling the seats. This lead to two important results one of which was the film industry being an oligopoly with high stakes at entering the competition. The second result, which is more relevant, is that the spectator had only limited knowledge of the production of a film. Even further into the Golden Age where cinema and all things related made news, the actual making-of was not revealed until much later. It was alternative media, primarily television that made the moving images available in abundance and increased the audiovisual literacy of the masses. John Ellis points out that because of the availability of the television, "ordinary people know how images are created; they have some idea of how images are selected, and how they can (in the common view) distort things" (1998: 130). It will be argued in later chapters that the availability of the film in a digital medium and the information the cyberspace provides add further layers to this statement.

By the turn of the century first venues for the exclusive purpose of screening films were being built. These venues were made up of large halls with fixed seating in a regular order, facing a large screen and were equipped with carbon arc projectors capable of projecting efficiently across the large space. Admittance was with a ticket, usually sold at small box offices right outside the building. This was the 'cinema' or the 'motion picture theatre'. Some of these theatres were equipped with a proper stage and were ornately decorated to deserve their commonly attributed name 'picture palaces.' While talking about Gloria-Palace of 1920's Berlin, Kracauer critiqued these "optical fairylands" for being, like hotel lobbies, "shrines to the cultivation of pleasure, their glamour aiming at edification" (1987: 92). Gunning, similarly, argued that "the opulence and design of the Berlin movie theatres served to

offset the coherence that classical narrative cinema had brought to film," (1995: 127) and emphasized the growing tendency to embed the film in a larger program. "Gone is the time when films were allowed to run one after another, each with a corresponding musical accompaniment. A glittering revue like creature has crawled out of the movies," notes Kracauer (1987: 92), since, in proportion with the splendor of the picture palace, the program was expanded to become a revue, which included music and live performance.

Cult Value of Cinema

Accordingly suitable to the glamorous stage of the picture palaces was the ever increasing enigmatic attraction of film and film industry. Partially developed and utterly disseminated by the studio and star system as a commercial marketing strategy, this mysterious and aloof aura created a devoted audience profile that at times lost the line between the persona and the person, narrative and real life. Losing one's self in the created worlds of cinema became the favorite pastime of crowds, during what is now called the Golden Age of cinema, between the two World Wars.

However, Walter Benjamin was quick to comment on this futile struggle to retrieve the aura of the stage actor which was to him an impossible task, since the aura is "tied to his presence" and "there can be no replica of it" (1992: 223). Instead he argued,

> The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of a commodity. […] So long as the movie-maker's capital

> sets the fashion, as a rule no other revolutionary merit can be accredited to today's film than the promotion of revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art (Benjamin 1992: 224).

Art, in the traditional sense, has its roots in the magical and the religious. Benjamin acknowledges the significance of ritualistic function of the art work, and writes "the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value" (1992: 217). He then dissociates film and photography from the arts for not sharing this use value: "For the first time in the world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual" (1992: 218). His cynical criticism of discussing film and photography within the traditional concepts instead of questioning "whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art?" (1992: 220) is evident in the above given quote. Not only the film industry, but authors as well, gave the film "a similar contextual significance – if not an outright sacred one, then at least a supernatural one," (1992: 221) he complained and instead of a mundane effort to converge cinema to the arts, Benjamin advocated that film's revolutionary function would be "to demonstrate the identity of the artistic and scientific uses of photography" (1992: 229).

In contradiction to Benjamin, there are more recent accounts on the ritualistic nature of cinema based on other features:

> A cinema is a special space, one to which we are permitted limited access. It is not our space, it is a controlled public space which we enter according to set rules – the payment of money, arrival at an appointed hour – and agree to

> behave according to still further established rules. […] We submit and, having submitted, we can enter into a different modality of existence, into a realm of fantasy. This process is essentially a *sacred* one (Ellis 1998: 134).[1]

Demonstrating a characteristic difference, some aspects of cinema can indeed be considered similar to the traditional work of art. Benjamin introduces two value planes for the work of art: The cult value and the exhibition value. The cult value is accumulated not through experience (e.g. seeing a painting or viewing a film), but through existence. Benjamin gives the example of the cave painting, which is produced as part of a magic ritual, not to be exhibited. In this respect the cult value of film lays not in its content, but in its material self. The projection room is a restricted area, much like the cella of the cult statue. The viewer does not have access to the film, to the projector or to any other technical device utilized in a theatre screening of a film. Regardless of Benjamin's lack of interest in the conditions of the encounter, appropriately named, film theatre environment maintain a ritualistic formation borrowed from theatre. In addition to the architectural features, certain etiquette is carried along from theatre to the film theatre. The viewer is expected to conform with a certain conduct. In this respect the viewer has no authority over the venue, and all conditions are imposed upon the viewer. For example, one of the principal necessities of a film theatre, the darkness of the hall, also limits the range of possible action while it focuses the attention to the screen and to the diegetic world.

[1] Emphasis of the writer.

It should be noted that the conditions as well as the codes are inconstant through time and geography. Whereas in early screenings at theatres, people were most likely to cheer, comment, shout, walkabout, eat, drink and chatter, such behavior has become unacceptable with the convergence of film to 'art.' Although there are some exceptions to this rule like the open air or drive-in cinemas where tolerance is higher, there are also venues in the history of film exhibition which take the conditions to the extreme. These venues conceived the offered features "as a means of sacralization of the filmic object" and essential in the "conception of a temple for the ritual celebration of cinema as an artistic practice" (Michelson 1998: 5) The Anthology Film Archive's, ambitious, Invisible Cinema is such an example:

> In the particular theatre under consideration, no form of supplementary, oral gratification was offered. Here the spectator sat solipsistically positioned by partitions erected in an interior wholly sheathed in light-absorbing fabric […] Isolated visually, the viewer could establish minimum tactile contact with her neighbor's hand, but aurally, one was well insulated, with structure and materials inhibiting conversation and effectively muffling all sounds from sources other than that of the screen. It was this isolation that was assumed to enhance one's sense of vision (Michelson 1998: 5).

Exhibition Value of Cinema

Walter Benjamin assumed that the cult value and the exhibition value are mutually exclusive and argued that with the technical reproduction, fitness of the art work for exhibition increased to an extend where "the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature." Hence the art work obtained

"entirely new functions," which, he argued, may in time overtake the artistic function. Benjamin identified photography and film as "the most serviceable exemplifications of this new function" (1992: 219). In other words, according to Benjamin, by the diminishing cult value, film and photography were left solely dependant on their exhibition value. In opposition to this idea, it can be argued that film generated its cult value through its specific exhibition, in part utilizing a Dionysian tradition in the film theatre, and in part by generating a "phony," but available, spell through publicity.

Having said that, the ritual quality of film relies on its theatre exhibition, a convergence to dramatic arts and "a richness, sensual saturation, and euphoria" (Tashiro 1991: 13) which is not available in alternative media, film relies mostly on its value as an exhibition. Benjamin gives the works of photographer Eugène Atget (1857-1927) as an example of the exhibition value of photography surpassing its cult value. In response to these "challenging" images, said Benjamin, "for the first time, captions have become obligatory" (1992: 220). Similarly film, having left its cult value at the doorstep of alternative media, obligates 'captions' in the form of special features, bonus material and most importantly commentaries, which will be dealt with in more detail in later chapters.

Film today is more "serviceable" than ever; indeed, contemporary viewing possibilities are abundant. The viewing opportunities vary in type and format, from movieplexes to shopping mall theatres, from television sets to iPod screens, from DivX downloading and online streaming in computers to videocassette and DVD, with many more formats that go in between. Yet only a limited media allows for

exhibition, i.e. a public showing. In this respect, the availability of film to masses no longer corresponds with its exhibition. Instead, the new media interacts with the viewer in interfaces, in a more particular manner. Exclusively the digital media aims at changing the viewer/spectator's position from a 'reader of text' to a participant. This change in the style of consumption on behalf of the viewer/spectator, redefines him or her as "the priest in the cella," privileged to alter the cult, in more ways then one. This change of position from being the submissive viewer of a fixed program to a creator and executer of a show is the re-defined relation of the viewer/spectator to film.

Developments in the Cinematic Apparatus

> *Cinematic apparatus: "An institutional arrangement of interlocking principles, components, and functions that create the pleasures of spectatorship associated with the viewing of a film" (Recuber 2007: 315).*

Within cinema's not so long history of just over a century, the screening method has not changed dramatically since the beginning of the 20th Century. Even though the technology advanced in many aspects, the setting of the film theatre has remained the same with minor adjustments to the ergonomics and comfort of the set up. On the other hand, the technological advancement that took place in the screening technology impacted various aspects of exhibition. For example, highly inflammable cellulose nitrate film stock was completely abandoned for safer acetate based film stock by 1955, because Kodak –the main manufacturer of film stock since the beginning– discontinued the production of cellulose nitrate film. By the end of the 20th Century almost all release prints adopted the polyester base film stock for its durability. Due to the lengthening of the film durations a more durable light source was necessary. The earliest carbon arc projectors were replaced with xenon arc projectors from 1950s until 1960s. Besides, as the venues got larger and the optic lenses got more complicated more luminance was necessary to adequately project the images to the screen. Many more advancements were made in the projection room to increase the quality of the picture as well as the conditions of the projectionist. Labor and copy saving rewinders, change over decreasing long-play reels, auto focus motors for lenses, interlocking for multiple hall projections are only some of many.

Celebrating Sound

The advancement of sound systems however should be considered separately. The sound came to film with great investment in research and a race among the production companies to develop and utilize the technology first. One could argue that recorded sound was the most felt need to turn the films more life-like considering that the black and white photography had already established a familiarity with the colorless depiction of the world. With such anticipation the introduction of sound to film was a big marked the revival of the promotion of the exhibition technology as solely a technological attraction, which at the end was not that much different from film being a technological wonder. The introduction of sound by the 1920's marked a radical change in film not only as a huge enhancement but also as one that altered the visual language and narrative style of film.

Later advancement in the sound technology is apparent in the product line of Dolby Laboratories, where the initial product was Dolby A (Dolby Analog) in 1966 followed by Dolby Stereo in 1976 ("The Company's" 2010) and Dolby SR (Dolby spectral recording) in 1986. Dolby Digital was introduced in 1992 ("Dolby and the" 2010) with *Batman Returns* (Burton, 1992). DTS (Digital Theatre Systems) followed suit with *Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993). In addition, *Clear and Present Danger* (Noyce, 1994) became the first home video to contain Dolby Digital sound when it was released in January 1995 ("Laserdisc details C" n.d.). It took two years before *Jurassic Park* was on LaserDisc with DTS ("Laserdisc details J" n.d.). All three films were promoted for theatre and home video with an emphasis on their sound engineering and the new sound systems that reproduced them.

In 1998, *The Last Broadcast* (Avalos & Weiler, 1998) opened "On the big screen, Stereo sound, No Celluloid" ("In Theaters" 1999). The film was promoted as the first feature film that was shot, edited and screened in a fully digitized way. A year later *The Last Broadcast* was presented at the 52nd Cannes Film Festival dragging its technology to the old continent. However it was *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Lucas, 1999) that generated the buzz with its over the top publicity focusing on the new digital frontier as well as the return of the age long saga. Although the advertisement campaign in the United States emphasized the digital projection, the film was released only on four digital projectors.

Digital projection technology was being seized by the big production and distribution companies as a relief from the distribution copies' sizeable cost. It was also presented as a natural result of a fully digital post-production process. However, the goal of digital projection was set only as high as "to provide the image quality of a first run motion picture on 35 mm film stock projected on opening night at a premiere theatre" (as cited in Belton 2002: 105). Therefore it can be suggested that, digital projection did not offer a novelty to the audience but rather was an advancement in the apparatus. Others like popular Roger Ebert were quoted as objecting digital projection, on the grounds "that digital cinema cannot duplicate the *experience* of 35 mm film" (as cited in Belton 2002: 114). Since then, digital projection found its way to numerous projection rooms over the globe, and despite the publicity upon its initial release, now passes mostly unnoticed by the audiences.

It can be argued that, from the beginning of the narrative motion picture history, advancements in the exhibition apparatus were quintessentially imposed by a

revolutionary advancement in film. In other words, without the proper exhibition apparatuses, the projection of the material would be lacking in at least one way as in, for example, the introduction of the recorded sound or the color film and even the widescreen formats. However, neither the digital sound nor the digital projection offer such essential benefit, but only offer an improvement in the case of the former and an aspiration in the latter. Therefore it is possible to say that they belong to the same wish list for an optimum cinema with noise free air-conditioning, comfortable chairs and stadium seating. Nevertheless, another, insidious digital technology, the videodisc, which will be discussed in a later chapter, manifests a grandiose effect on those indulged in film.

Home Theatre Experiences

The concept of home cinema is as old as cinema itself. The capability of the *cinématographe* to double as a projector allowed, given that the processing and the printing of the footage are possible, every camera owner to become the projectionist of their show. The earliest films recorded by the pioneers of the industry, no less than Lumiére brothers themselves, depicted short scenes from the everyday life like a 'baby's breakfast' (*Repas de Bébé*, Fregoli, 1895) or a 'game of cards' (*Partie de Cartes*, Lumiére, 1896) and practical jokes like a 'sprinkler sprinkled' (*L'arroseur Arrosé*, Lumiére, 1895). Alternatively, the camera was turned on a significant event (e.g. Tsar Nicola II's visit to Paris), on an exotic geography (e.g. Venice), or on a touristic location (e.g. Lourdes). Neither of these subjects is an unusual subject matter for what is now called a 'home movie.' Moreover, the 'unsophisticated' nature of the early exhibition spaces and later cinema theatres forced the 'elites' to

seduce this new flirt at the cosines of their drawing rooms.[2] Nevertheless, one should note that the volume of domestic penetration of the home theatre (camera and projector) at this time of history is by no means a match to the 8 mm and 16 mm non-professional formats where availability and affordability boosted their popularity. These newer formats necessitated a separate projector, which then became the medium to exhibit commercial films in a domestic environment. Most short parodies of the silent era, lead by the brilliant Charlie Chaplin found themselves playing in 16 mm domestic copies. The reign of 8 mm, Super 8 mm and 16 mm film reached to the 1970s until the introduction and wide acceptance of video recording and playback formats.

Film to Video Transfer

> *"A more accurate expression would be 'translation' with its implicit admission of a different set of governing codes" (Tashiro 1991: 8).*

Video introduced an alternate medium to record and reproduce moving images. Even though the aspiration is similar to film, the basic principals and technology of the tape are different. This difference shows especially when a product of one medium is transferred into the other. Although mostly this transfer is from film to video, it works both ways, and in both cases end up with a loss of character of the original. In his canonical and informative article "Videophilia: What Happens When You Wait for it on Video?" –suitably picked for *Film Quarterly: Forty Years - A selection*, in

[2] For a more detailed account of this, see Sheila Chalke, "Early Home Cinema" in *Convergence* (2007)13: 223-230. doi: 10.1177/1354856507079174

1999– Charles Shiro Tashiro explains the technical short comings that lead to incompatibility. However, it is not sufficient to consider this transfer on the basis of technology. Video has not only interpreted the product but broaden the possibilities of viewing it in space and time.

The earliest video technology capable of recording images onto tape dates as early as mid 1950s; yet, these were complicated and expensive professional set ups. Between 1950s and 1970s, most major consumer electronics companies were in search of a video format and corresponding technology that might be suitable for the home market. Philips became the earliest to penetrate the living-rooms and attributing the name Videocassette Recorder (VCR) to the device. However, VCR's real success came a few years later with the introduction of JVC's Video Home System (VHS) format. VHS was acclaimed as cheaper (better price value) and easier to use than its rival formats; hence, outlived them by the mid-80s. During this period major film production studios seized the videocassette (in the widely accepted VHS and Betamax [SONY] formats) as an alternative medium for post-theatre distribution of film*s*. This opened a new marketing slot between the theatrical release and television release for a region.

> The emergence of the pre-recorded videocassette and its proliferation, at costs barely above the admission-price of a cinema ticket may have shortened the period in which the cinema film is an 'event,' but it has, of course, given films a substantial secondary market, in which its event character can and does reverberate as pre-publicity (Elsaesser 1998: 212).

Unlike a theatrical or television release, home video release of a film allowed it to be accessible to the audience for an unlimited time span. In time, with the establishment of video rental stores, an ever accumulating collection of films (including some of those produced much earlier) has become available for consumption in the home. This trend marked the beginning of a tradition of 'staying in for the movies' in addition to the older tradition of 'going out to the movies.' People were able to own a copy of a film, which then they were able to repeatedly enjoy at different times and conditions. Uma Dinsmore-Tuli is quoted in Barbara Kilinger's book *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and the Home* stating that "The domestication of the cinematic text through repeat video viewing may facilitate a level of engagement with, love for, and knowledge about movies that exceeds or extends that which it is possible to achieve during cinematic screenings" (2006: 136). In other words, viewers were eligible to 'more text' in a single film. Due to the unique conditions of screening (the conditions of the film theatre, film copy, environment, company and individual's psychological state etc.) only a limited perception of a film is possible in each viewing. The text (film) is fluent and the reader (viewer) is disadvantaged. However, on video the domesticated cinematic text is submissive. Through its submission and the viewer's hegemony, film is recreated in time. Unable to sustain a clear freeze frame, video loses out on the most prominent of these recreations. Yet, the availability of re-viewing, fast-forwarding, rewinding, speeding and slowing the film altered the perception of film forever, enabling a viewer to navigate through a film.

Videocassettes not only made films accessible over time but also made them accessible over geography. Similar to books, people began to build and carry around their film libraries. Films and their duplicates in videocassette were more easily transported across borders than any other format previously available, hence allowing a traffic that allowed films to reach distances far beyond the interest of any distributor. Cheap, durable, portable, and abundant, videocassettes became a hit amongst film exhibition mediums until the introduction of digital formats.

Disc Technologies

Upon its release in the mid-80s, the first optical disc storage medium to be commercially distributed, the LaserDisc (LD) could not create heavy competition for videocassette and became an obscure format. Home theatre market was saturated with VCRs and videocassettes; hence, was at the time reluctant to reinvest in a novel technology, despite its obvious improvement in image and sound quality. However, LD players had limited but devoted users until in 2009, Pioneer –the main manufacturer– announced "the end of LD player products" ("Pioneer Announces" 2009). LD was a progressive technology and its price range both for the player and the disc were above the market, in comparison to VCR and videocassette.

It would not be wrong to say that LD was the first to provide the spectator with supplementary features. The extra materials were promoted as a justification for the price of the product. Before the LD, the only supplementary material available would be 'coming soon on video' trailers that were intended for marketing. Whereas, LDs offered digital audio, advanced multi channel sound mastering, secondary audio channels, commentary by the filmmakers, and other possible supplemental material

about the film in question. This was of course possible with the large data span of LD technology. There was literally enough space on the disc to include secondary programs for added value. Later, this continued with the DVDs and has become general practice.

Before the DVD video technology took over the home entertainment market, the Video Compact Disc (VCD) technology came up. VCD is basically a data CD loaded with video information. Its capacity is limited, making it a film-only medium with a mediocre visual quality, which is closer to videocassette than other digital formats. Like some LDs that necessitate flipping-sides, most films take up two VCDs forcing the viewer to change discs at mid-exhibition; hence "encouraging a literal, physical interaction with the medium" (Tashiro 1991: 11). This performance not only disrupts the film but also demands a physical contribution from the viewer. The viewer then, is not just the viewer but the projectionist. Through this action, theoretically, the viewer is empowered.

Despite all the aforementioned disadvantages, at considerably affordable prices VCD became a widely accepted format, especially in the developing countries. VCD was also the first video format compatible with personal computers. A VCD essentially did not require a specific player but was available through basic multimedia programs, which were capable of retracting video data from the VCD, rendering the data available.

Digital Fanfare and Computerizing the Relation

Home Video: A Digital Take

> *"As home video allows us to meet the film text halfway, it does to film what film makers have done to the world for years: turns it into an object of control" (Tashiro 1991: 16).*

In a *Washington Times* article dating June 2003, an undisclosed, overexcited reporter declared, "It is Unreel: DVD rentals overtake videocassettes." In less than ten years following its release to the US market, DVD (Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc) became a widely recognized and available format for home entertainment. Withstanding the introduction of Blu-ray Disc (BD), because BD players are compatible with DVD, it is not backing down from the post of the leading home theatre format available to date. DVD Video's most distinctive property is its interface and subsidiary 'features.' A pre-recorded DVD Video containing only the film is a rare find.

There are various opinions as to the function of additional material. The interactively negotiated set up options remain as an exception, since they are obviously designed and integrated to enhance (by optimizing the available hardware) the individualization of the home viewing of films. About the functions of additional material, some argue that "at their best, these supplements stand as lively contributions to film history, and offer the next best thing to a formal education" (Frazer 1999). Others diminish them to solely promotional: According to John Caldwell, the DVD "serves as a 'host body' for the studio/network's mutating

content, and various forms of industrial reflexivity […] serve as the fuel that drives the endless mutation of this content across proprietary host bodies within the conglomerated world." Not unlike the early film screenings, here again the technology itself became a showpiece serving the "viral marketing scheme" (Caldwell 2005: 95).

Finding Nemo's (Stanton, 2003) 2-Disc Collector's Edition provides an ample list of features from the box pamphlet. There are features to support both arguments; making-of-documentary and the visual commentaries supply technical and analytical information on the animation technology and how it was utilized in the particular film. On the other hand, studio tour possibly has a more subtle agenda of developing brand loyalty. With the additional attractions like the games, children's stories and nature documentaries ancillary markets are introduced.

Table 1. Finding Nemo 2-Disc Collector's Edition Exclusive DVD Bonus Features

Disc 1
- Main Menu
  - Introduction
  - Play Movie *(Wide Screen Viewing Presentation)*
  - Bonus Features
    - Documentary: Making Nemo *(featuring footage on the creation of the film)*
    - Visual Commentary *including deleted scenes and recording sessions*
    - Design Galleries
      - Characters
      - Environments
      - Color Scripts
    - Art Review *(narrated by the artists themselves)*
  - Scene selection
  - Set Up
    - THX Optimizer
    - Subtitles
  - Virtual Aquariums
- Easter Eggs

Disc 2
- Trailers *(Coming soon to theatres, Coming soon to DVD and Video)*
- Main Menu
  - Introduction
  - Play Movie *(Full Frame Viewing Presentation)*
  - Bonus Features
    - Exploring the Reef *(with Jean-Michel Cousteau)*
    - Knick Knack *with Commentary*
    - Mr. Ray's Encyclopedia
    - Fisharades Game
    - Storytime
    - Behind the Scenes
      - Studio Tour
      - Character Interviews
      - Publicity
        - Teaser Trailer
        - Trailer 1, 2 & 3
        - Fishy Fact: Bruce, Crush, Nigel
        - Print Gallery *(Posters, Billboards, Lobby Cards and Bus Shelters)*
    - Virtual Aquariums
  - Scene Selection
  - Sneak Peaks *(Pixar's The Incredibles)*
  - Set Up
    - THX Optimizer
    - Subtitles
  - Exploring the Reef

As can be seen in the exemplary list above, the 'extra material' takes up a variety of forms and formats. Considering that a film includes as little as five percent or less of the original footage shot, the rest provides an abundant long-term potential for promoters to exploit in subsequent distributions. The end product of these leftover material ranges from a simple collection of outtakes, to a making-of-documentary or a behind-the-scenes program (Ide, MacCarn, Shepard and Weisse: 2002). However, in the case of *Finding Nemo*, which is an animated feature, most of the leftover materials mentioned are non-existent. In recognizing that, the directors explain in the "Introduction" how there was a documentary crew present at all times during the making of the film. Introductions, visual commentaries, the making-of-documentary, and the interviews are all purposefully designed and executed. On the second disc, emphasis is given to the promotion of the Pixar Studio. A tour specifically targeting children is produced and reinforced with a show-and-tell of an earlier Pixar Production, *Knick Knack* (Lasseter, 1986). The two introductions, that give brief editorial notes into the contents of each individual discs, acknowledge the complete box as a total experience, where the film –available twice in two different viewing presentations– become only an element of a bigger whole. The DVD box set becomes a derivative of the 1920s' picture palace, where film once again becomes 'one of the acts' in a revue.

Tom Gunning's account of Kracauer's Berlin Gloria-Palace, has a strong resemblance to contemporary DVD experience:

> The spectacular design of the theatre itself (…) interacted with the growing tendency to embed the film in a larger program, a revue which includes music

and live performance. The film was only one element in an experience that Kracauer describes as a 'total artwork of effects' which 'assaults every one of the senses using every possible means (Gunning 1995: 127).

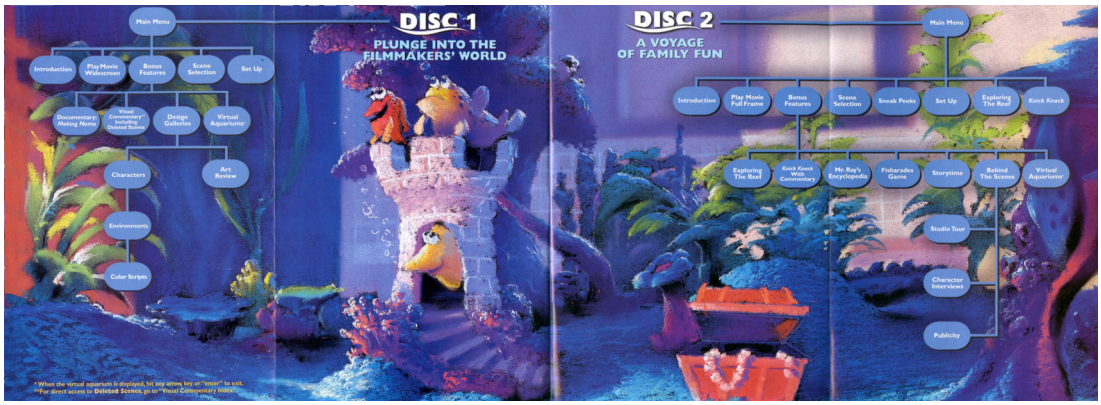

Figure 1. Inlay spread of Finding Nemo 2-Disc Collector's Edition Exclusive DVD

The spectacular structure and design of the palace doubles with an emphasis given to the picture and sound quality presented on the videodisc not dismissing the actual design of the case, box and pamphlet. In other words, the videodisc environment in which the film is presented like the picture palace, is exaggerated. A further stretching of the analogy may easily include home theatre hardware and the entire set up. Each special feature with a different aim, emphasis and form (ranging from soundtracks and still images to interactive games) make up a list much appropriate for a program flyer of a revue. Finally the long anticipated "live performance" is currently available through Blu-ray's BDLive feature. On the other hand, it would not be a mistake to deem, the all too highlighted World Wide Web (WWW) links inviting the spectator to join the community online, as an earlier attempt to include the 'immediately interactive' feature to videodiscs.

Unlike the revue, however, there is no linear progression in the DVD video experience. The spectator is able to navigate through different options, forced neither to complete nor follow them in any order. This of course includes the film itself. As Bruce the Shark comments on the scene selection menu "Oh! They've chopped the movie up into tasty little bites!" (Finding Nemo 2-Disc Collector's Edition 2003) the film loses its entirety to chapters. Albeit passable, the presence of chapters and supplementary material, opens the concept of 'finished film' up to discussion. Charles Shiro Tashiro writes: "Videodisc chapters are not cinematic composition, they are videodisc imposition" (Tashiro: 11). With the imposed partiality of the film, the viewer is encouraged to consider the film more like a book. With a book, the reader is capable of indulging in any part of the text. Even if the narrative is linear, with a beginning on the first page and a finale in the last; each page, sentence, word and letter is constantly available. Furthermore, the reader is capable of reading a sample many times over, under various circumstances or skipping a certain passage, re-writing the text in doing so. Availability of the dissected film, together with the extras (outtakes, cut segments, bloopers, alternative endings and the like), in a medium that combine all these elements in a convenient interface, seduce the viewer into juxtaposing, which interferes with the internalization of the film as a constant given. This complicated form of a readerly text in cinema, disrupts the film's aura and reduces it down to material, in particular to raw material. As a result, the viewer is supplied with assorted materials which enable him or her to device a personal 'collage of assemblages.' A medium lacking in sensual saturation and scale induced euphoria "gives access to the excess that creates ecstasy through the capacity to repeat, slow, freeze, and contemplate" (Tashiro 1991: 13).

The chapter or scene divisions of a film on a DVD warrant further discussion. The chapter list is considered to be a list of cues to navigate within a film's flux. This list is available through the chapter or scene selection option via the menu or in a printed form on an insleeve of the discbox. On the menu, chapters are usually identified with visual tags, pictures or clips that refer to the content of the chapter. At times these tags include captions. The printed version on the other hand mostly have the tag lines or captions only with rare occasions of printed stills. The abundance of various examples indicate that there is not a certain method of dividing a film or identifying a chapter. For example, there are 30 chapters in *Die Hard*'s (McTiernan, 1988) Region 1 DVD edition of 1998 (duration approximately 131 minutes) as opposed to 79 chapters of *Star Wars*' (Lucas, 1977) All Regions DVD edition of 2000 (Star Wars Trilogy – The Definitive Collection) with a duration of approximately 121 minutes.

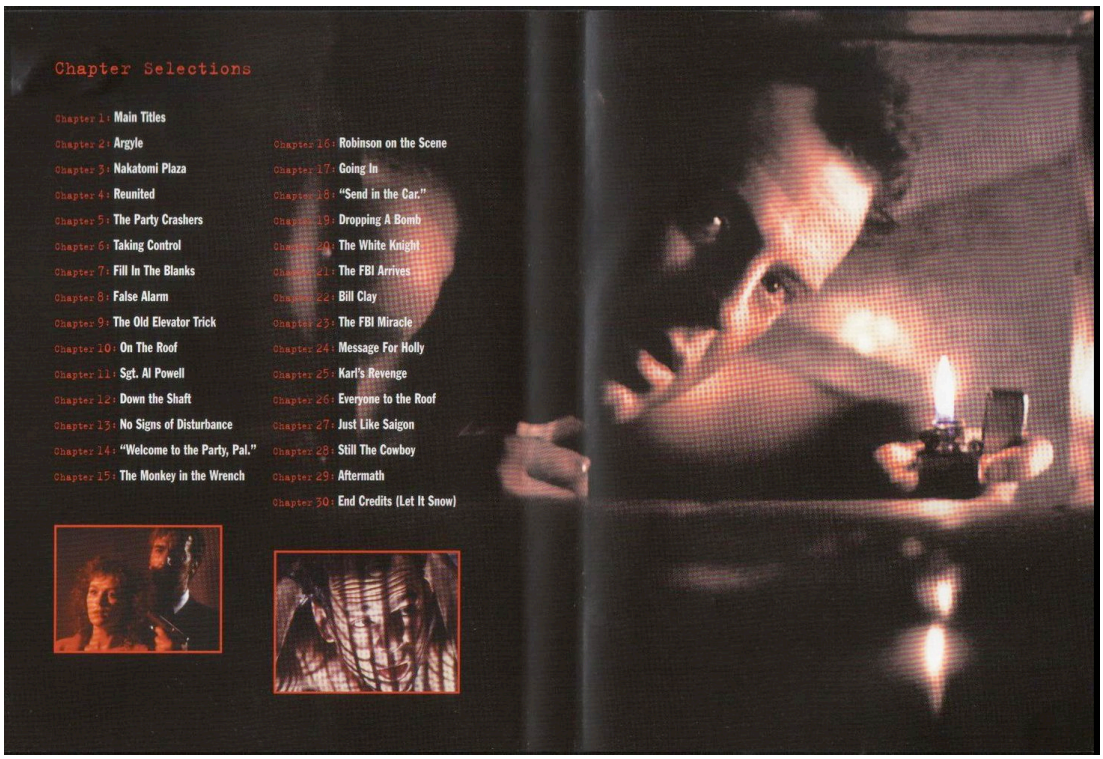

Figure 2. Inlay spread of Die Hard 1998 DVD with chapter selections list.

The captions' style and content are also very different. In *Die Hard* the captions are short and password-like. They are not informative and give as little of the story away as possible. In a way, they make sense to someone familiar with the film, but remain otherwise mysterious to a new viewer. Chapter 7 is called "Fill in the blanks" and refers to the scene where the most visual killing of the whole film takes place. The caption refers to one of the character's similitude: By giving us the code to the safe, you will 'fill in the blanks.' It is not possible for someone who has not watched the film to make this connection and refer to this scene using the caption on the chapter list. The chapter list of Star Wars is more informative. In a sense the list gives a detailed plotline of the film. The captions 4 to 14 read:

4. R2-D2 receives the plans

5. Princess Leia's capture

6. R2-D2 and C-3PO escape from the Empire

7. Darth Vader confronts Princess Leia

8. Lost in the desert

9. R2-D2 is all alone

10. The Jawas capture R2-D2

11. Stormtroopers search the desert

12. The Jawas sell their wares

13. Luke meets C-3PO and R2-D2

14. R2-D2's secret message

This chapter list provides ample information in comparison to the *Die Hard*'s passwords and completely slips the film out for a first time viewer. However, with this kind of specificity, both in definition and in dividing the film into smaller parts, any viewer is capable of assembling these scenes into a desired order, creating alternative narratives. The textual familiarity gained through repeat viewing and guided with a chapter list "inspires the viewer to travel through the text selectively via the remote control, performing surgical strikes to locate favorite bits" (Klinger 2006: 139). For example creating a story based solely on R2-D2's journey through the film, simply by only watching the scenes involving the bluebonnet. Hence, the videodisc, not only create close readers from the viewers but also enables them to re-create the film.

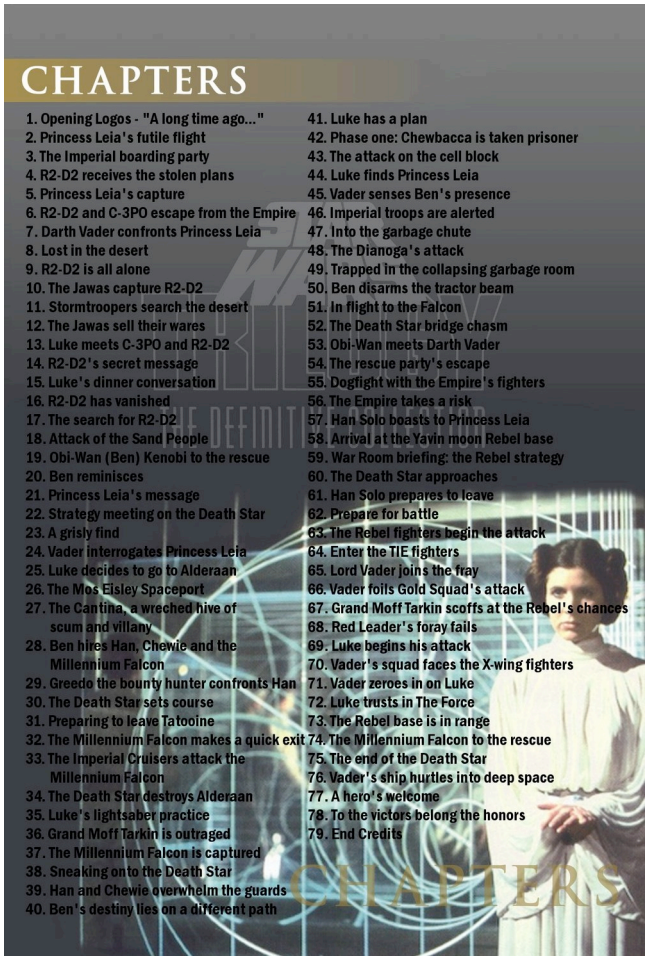

Figure 3. The chapters list page from the booklet of Star Wars Trilogy – The Definitive Collection DVD box set.

The Menu as Interface

The videodisc menu is a graphical user interface (GUI). GUI is computer terminology, and it refers to:

> A display format that allows the user to select commands, call up files, start programs, and do other routine tasks by using a device called a mouse to point to pictorial symbols (icons) or lists of menu choices on the screen. A GUI's windows, pull-down menus, dialog boxes, and other controlling mechanisms could be used in new programs and applications in a

> standardized way, so that common tasks were always performed in the same manner (Encyclopædia Britannica 2010).

Although not all videodiscs are compatible with personal computers (PCs) because of differences in format or hardware, they still rely on computer programming to function. In a very broad and general description, videodiscs are products of computer technology. Among all videodisc formats DVD is the one that makes most use of this connection as a result of multiple conditions. DVDs are compatible with writer-players on PCs; a DVD film would play on any computer equipped with a DVD player. DVDs have enough data space for the programming data necessary to execute the menus as well as the extra materials. On the other hand, VCDs are compatible with PCs but lack the data span; LaserDiscs and Blu-Ray discs have enough space but operate with different sets of hardware. This inevitable connection between videodiscs and computers manifest best in the menu. Unless using an instant-play DVD, the viewer has to use the menu at least to start the film; most of the time also maneuvering around for sound and audio options. The interesting aspect here is the relative ease of the viewer to utilize this menu. The GUI that enables a user friendly environment for DVD is not much older than 1984, the year of the Macintosh –first widely accepted PC computer with a GUI. The ease with which a viewer strolls around a GUI menu is possible only because the viewer is already acquainted with the technology in the form of a PC and hence, the viewer has a tendency to connect the experiences of the computer with the experiences of the DVD. When Barbara Klinger goes out to examine repeat viewing in relation to a specific group of viewers, it is not surprising to see that the group in question is

"contemporary college-age youth in their late teens and early twenties" (2006: 137). This age definition corresponds with the most fluent users of the Internet by age ("Internet access by age group" 2010). The "digital natives"[3] are also video natives and their converging of the two medium is only natural.

> Studying this generation's home-viewing habits provides a crystalline example of film reception by an audience who has never known a time when movies weren't available in small boxes or couldn't be manipulated by VCR and, now, DVD remotes to suit personal needs and desires. Their repeat viewings thus allow insight into the quotidian appropriation of cinema in a space where film viewing is part of a home entertainment universe as well as daily rhythms and activities (Klinger 2006: 137).

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[3] The Digital Natives Project is an interdisciplinary academic collaboration of the Research Center for Information Law at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland and the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. "Digital natives share a common global culture that is defined not by age, strictly, but by certain attributes and experiences in part defined by their experience growing up immersed in digital technology, and the impact of this upon how they interact with information technologies, information itself, one another, and other people and institutions. Those who were not 'born digital' can be just as connected, if not more so, than their younger counterparts. And not everyone born since, say, 1982, happens to be a digital native." Information retrieved June 17, 2010, from http://www.digitalnative.org/#about

Relieving age from being an issue in the discussion and generalizing this condition to intensive videodisc consumers and WWW frequents the premise still applies. This is best observable in the large numbers of examples that use computer technology to manipulate or develop upon available film material and webcasting the resulting product. Among such examples are re-editing of films also known as ‘fanedits’ and ‘extended editions,’ as well as ‘fan commentaries’ which will be the main discussion of the next chapter.

The Viewer Takes Charge

The Commentary

Commentaries have become endemic features to videodiscs from an early stage. Predominantly these commentaries are soundtracks of a significant figure related to the film; a leading actor or actress, director, producer or writer. At times, and especially if the film is not a current production but an established feature from the film history, the commentators can be film historians or scholars. There are multiple purposes a commentary serves. It can give additional information about the film's production process, detailing the story's development, casting, location scouting, set designing and/or dressing, wardrobe, hair and makeup et cetera. It can provide trivial information and behind-the-scenes anecdotes. It can depict special effects and the technology that produced them. Commentaries done by historians and scholars usually include cinematographic information, clues to deciphering the visual language and an abundance of historical data relevant to the film and those who are involved with it. In an overly inclusive definition, a commentary is one or more people talking about a film, recorded and offered as an audio track option on a videodisc. In what is now considered to be the first commentary (on a Criterion Collection LaserDisc of *King Kong* [Cooper, 1933] released in 1992), film restorer Ronald Haver introduced the technology by saying,

> Hello ladies and gentlemen, I'm Ronald Haver, and I'm here to do something which we feel is rather unique. I'm going to take you on a lecture tour of *King Kong* as you watch the film. The LaserDisc technology offers us this

> opportunity and we feel it's rather unique –the ability to switch back and forth between the soundtrack and this lecture track ("King Kong" 2005).

What purpose a commentary serves is more important than what it is and, what it may include. Since there is no definitive answer provided for this question, it may be useful to deduce an answer through the expectations of videodisc consumers. Ratethatcommentary.com is a site exclusively filing and reviewing videodisc commentaries. The site has 1075 registered users who are encouraged to add on to the commentary database and post reviews. It is reported that the site has 6969 commentary tracks, 3133 reviews about 4070 DVDs currently listed on the database ("Useless Statistics" 2010). Trusting their judgment for the sake of the argument, below is a sample of comments taken from the reviews of films which are listed in the best and worst commentary track listings.

> As you would expect from these two film historians, a lot of factoids about Welles and the film itself are given. They also offer excellent analysis of what we're watching and the film's themes. […] This is a solid, informative track that enhances the viewing experience of the movie. (Best Commentary Track List #1: *Mr. Arkadin* [Commentary 1: Film scholars Jonathan Rosenbaum and James Naremore] Reviewed by The Cubist on April 21st, 2006)

The Cubist's review praises the amount of factoids presented by the historians and the fact that the tract is "informative." One of the purposes can be identified as providing information. The information is connected here with an enhancement of the viewing experience.

> Altman hypnotized me with this commentary. Although he wanders sometimes, and gripes a bit, he is very entertaining. Best part is when he talks about how he put 8 swear words in the film to get an R so 14 year old boys wouldn't see the film. (Best Commentary Track List #2: *Gosford Park* [Commentary 1: Director/producer Robert Altman, producer David Levy and production designer Stephen Altman] Reviewed by reidca on April 20th, 2008)

What reidca has to commend about the commentator is that he is entertaining. The other often mentioned aspect of a successful commentary is its entertainment quality. The cunning plan to secure certified R is both funny and insightful.

> The commentary by scriptwriter Julian Fellowes, who apparently stems from an upper class family in Britain, is very very interesting. He gives loads of background information on how such a house was run and explains, how convincingly accurate the movie is in the details. (Best Commentary Track List #2: *Gosford Park* [Commentary 2: Writer/associate producer Julian Fellowes] Reviewed by Fry on January 11th, 2005)

Once again informativeness is emphasized. However, at this particular example the information is not about the film itself but about its subject matter, thus giving proof of the accuracy of the film. Here, the commentary functions as a booster of a unique quality of the film, which might have been passed unnoticed by the viewer due to a lack of information on the subject matter. Here the reviewer mimics the commentary by first providing the reason why the commentator is credible. On the other hand,

> Every participant on this track repeats what happens on screen, and sometimes makes a stupid joke. Avoid. (Worst Commentary Track List #1: *Good Luck Chuck* [Commentary 1: Actor Dane Cook, director Mark Helfrich, producer Mike Karz and writer Josh Stolberg] Reviewed by yellowcat on August 13th, 2008)

Repeating what the viewer already knows is deemed undesirable. The commentary is expected to provide the unseen and the 'not heard.' Furthermore the entertainment is valued qualitatively.

> When he does talk it's as much as you would get off the DVD case. One may say that there isn't much to talk about in this film because there is a lot of dialogue, but information on casting, locations and various behind the scenes action would have been interesting. (Worst Commentary Track List #11: *A Few Good Men* [Commentary 1: Director Rob Reiner] Reviewed by benpaul on May 25th, 2008)

> With this type of cast he should have been bubbling over with production notes and background material. A huge disappointment. (Worst Commentary Track List #11: *A Few Good Men* [Commentary 1: Director Rob Reiner] Reviewed by YELLOWBIRD on June 20th, 2008)

benpaul criticizes the essence of the information provided and continues to give a list of expected issues. The expectations of YELLOWBIRD are similar, with a reason rooted in the affluent cast. Trivial information proves to be the most demanded and

much appreciated in a commentary as it falls in both categories, informative and entertaining.

Consequently, the commentary is expected to deliver information. The information should either serve to "enhance the viewing experience" or prove to be insightful. The commentators are expected to be entertaining. They should provide sufficient interesting, trivial and funny stories to encourage listening. Indeed, it adds to the value if the commentator is well-spoken or the group dynamic is high. In this respect, some commentators are highly praised and sought after.[4] The personality of the commentator is worth further meditating on, in the search for a purpose to commentaries. Initially, the above given list of possible people to become commentators is legitimate. They have authority to talk about the films since they either take part in their realization or have been studying them and hence execute a scholarly right to comment. The former group abides an auratic charm, a star persona. The listeners –since listening forestall viewing at this stage– share a conversation with a significant personality who disclose tricks of the trade. They also disclose personal information, perhaps as little as their favorite scene or favorite flavor of ice-cream. Yet, this bit of information, most likely approved by a publicist earlier, builds the bonds between the viewer and the star. Rather in more technical terms, develops and sustains the brand loyalty in the customer. Similarly, the scholar

[4] For example, maxedout writes: "John Waters is one of the funniest and the most interesting people to listen to. No matter what he is discussing." Retrieved July 9th, 2010, from ratethatcommentary.com: http://www.ratethatcommentary.com/detail.php/306

exploits an authority present long before film existed. In the case of the scholar, the listener is charmed less by the person, but more by the amount of information possibly transmittable through this consultation. In either case, commentaries encourage alternative understandings of the film, based on theory or trivia:

> The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones (Benjamin, 1992, 220).

Be that as it may, there is a totally different kind of commentary available, leaving the assumptions concerning authority unfounded. Fan commentaries are abundant and available through the WWW.

The Fan Commentary

> *— I want Alan Rickman to give me insults before I die? [laughter] I want him to come in on my deathbed ... and just Hans Gruber me, you know?*
>
> *— Did you just coin a new term? Gruber me?*
>
> *(AfterShock Commentaries,* Die Hard *at 00:34:21)*

Walter Benjamin stated that, "any man today can lay claim to being filmed," and continued to elaborate this with the analogy of writers. He argued that by the end of 19th Century the distinction between the author and the public was lost. According to Benjamin the character of this distinction became "merely functional" and "at any moment the reader [was] ready to turn into a writer" (1992: 225). Benjamin furthered

his discussion by saying that such a take over is evident in Soviet Cinema where the actors are not actors but "people who portray themselves" (1992: 226). In reflection of this argument Miriam Hansen says, "To be sure, this phrase [any man today can lay claim to being filmed] also concerns changes in the relations of reception, in particular, the democratization of expertise which upsets the traditional hierarchy, between author and reader/viewer" (1987: 185). Not unlike Benjamin's example of daily press offering space to readers, the cyberspace provided for people who were willing to share their 'expertise.' In this respect fan commentaries upset the hierarchy by taking over the microphone from the author –in this case the official commentators discussed above– and delivering it to the viewer. Possibly, one of the easiest ways to publicly respond to a film, commentary podcasts, webcast and audio files are available through specialized commentary portals, personal websites or blogs. A simple search on Google for "fan commentaries" brings about 744,000 results in less than half a second. Since commentaries are basically sound recordings, they can be produced with a minor computer set up, provided it can play videodiscs and record sound. A typical fan commentary includes two or more commentators. Commentaries with a single commentator are rare. More than four people in a recording is also rare, since it gets harder to identify the speaker and hence follow the discussion. Their content, quality and level of information are highly varied. Zarban.com provides a catalogue of commentaries available on the WWW.

As a basis for discussion below is a list of notes from the first 30 minutes of different commentaries on *Die Hard* available through zarban.com.

Renegade Commentaries. Renegade Commentaries hosted in renegadecommentaries.co.uk is a UK based group describing their site as "Independent DVD Commentary Tracks – Offending people since 2002." Their commentary on *Die Hard* begins with an introduction of the people in the recording. By giving verbal cues to the visuals of the film [The plane lands. Alan Rickman's name on the screen.] there is a chance of synchronizing the images to the sound recording. The initial topic is the director and the director of photography's later careers followed by a personal anecdote of an office party going wrong. Later in some off-topic chain of thought, the discussion becomes about if Steven Segal can be considered as a star or not. The talk often ends up in a comparison or a critique of *Live Free or Die Hard* (Wiseman, 2007). The recording is actually funny but not very informative. The level of information shared is available through a random search in the WWW.

Afterschock. The fan commentary recorded by aftershock, a sub-division of Solar Schock Pictures (solarscockpictures.com), starts with an introduction of the participants. There are four commentators on and two participants off the microphone. Following a cue to synchronize the video and audio, and a comment that they "won't stick to the images too closely anyway," the first commentator declares his frustration with planes following a heavy traveling month. This is followed by another personal anecdote on how the first time he watched *Die Hard* in the theatre, he was separated to be divorced under similar circumstances with the lead character John McClane. Rating of the film and the language used in the commentary is mentioned. One remarks, since this is an already R rated film, the

commentators can swear through the commentary. Emphasis being on the entertaining value in this commentary, 1980's style and imagery is ridiculed. A joke involving a local politician's resemblance to an actor is criticized, since "No one outside Utah got that one!" Most remarks about the film are giveaways for the scenes to come: "This man will be dead in a moment. […] She will be naked soon enough." Mostly, the film provides reference points for drifting ideas. A statue kindles the idea of a certain way of killing someone, reminding a similar killing in a CSI series, starting a brief discussion on which CSI series is superior then followed by a comment on the beautiful female cast, and a fascination in real red heads.

Andrew Cole (tysto.com). Third commentary comes from a single commentator, Andrew Cole of tysto.com. He begins by acknowledging the abundance of fan commentaries on *Die Hard* and introducing his unique intentions to identify the film as "the greatest action movie ever" by looking into its almost perfect plotline and pointing out the flaws. He then says that even though this film is rated R, his commentary will be PG and he will supply some cover-up for the swearing in the original through a strategic positioning of cue points. The cue points mentioned are lines of dialogue read by the commentator himself lip-synced to the video. Less entertaining and more informative, this commentary presents a personal analysis of the film in reference to other films prior to it, and those followed it. The commentator's line of thought is difficult to track and he himself often falls into silence trying to contemplate. At other times of silence, his eating and drinking is clearly audible which he later identifies as pizza. He at times side tracks to comment about other films that resemble a feature available in *Die Hard* [computer geek

character in *National Treasure 2* (Turteltaub, 2007)]. He has problems recalling names of actors or the book the film is based on and then remarks that "these are insignificant anyway."

Down in Front. Downinfront.net advertises itself with the tagline: "Commentary, discussion, dissection. Screw the soundtrack. We are professionals, but not in this." Their professions, however, touch base with the industry at one level or the other. The four plus members of the group are employed in post-production, writing and/or acting. They often mention their professions during the recording, although implicitly, by giving examples from their own careers. Also being from Los Angeles, the location of the film, they are comfortable with providing insider information about the location and possible production advantages [Fox building, Century City]. They are actually supplying information that is not available through Internet Movie Database (IMDb). Yet they openly refer to IMDb at times when a question is raised, mostly concerning things other than the immediate film. Even though side tracking also occur with this larger group, a member of the group functions as a chair to the discussion leading them back into the main topic. Also, at times where the discussion weakens, he asks questions to less contributive members stimulating both continuation and contribution. The commentators act as leaders for the viewer, providing clues of what to pay attention or to follow in the scenes to come, and then give information on or create a discussion around them. They point out certain special effects explaining the basic logic behind them. There is also an energetic guessing game into the technical aspects of the film with some educated

guesses and relevant comparisons to date. At different points commentator brings up another fan comment and mostly either criticizes a comment or corrects a fact.

Speakeasy. Like most of the aforementioned commentaries, Speakeasy recording emphasizes the seasonal quality of the film, this time using *Let it Snow* by Dean Martin as an opening song. The team is made up of two recorders, one of whom does not recall the film and the other is supposed to lead the conversation. However it sounds genuine, this setup at times feels like a subtle method to give additional information. Constant smoking and drinking is hinted with the background sounds of lighters and bottles. The soundtrack of the film is also barely audible in the background, possibly intentionally, to function as a synchronizing agent. The level of information is limited and the humor level is low.

The intention and the ability of commentators are variable. There are those ambitious analysts like Andrew Cole and comedians like renegadecommentaries or afterschock. Entertainment and information are once again prominent. However in fan commentaries, the recorder lacks the direct connection to the material. In all five fan commentaries, the information provided corresponds to the information available from IMDb *Die Hard* trivia and goof pages with the possible exception of downinfront's additional 'local flavor.' Furthermore, most of the information available in the IMDb pages are coming from the original *Die Hard* DVD commentaries, anyway. The original DVD has an audio commentary by director John McTiernan and production designer Jackson DeGovia, and a scene specific commentary by visual effects producer Richard Edlund, as well as a subtitle

commentary including not only interviews with key figures of production and cast[5] but also excerpts from articles, information on the props and an analysis by a film journalist/historian Eric Lichtenfield. Considering the abundance of information in the original commentary, it is interesting why the fan commentaries are not enriched with more information.

Following the thread laid concerning the commentaries, the fan commentary fails in providing original information. The information provided is gathered from sources publicly available. They are not in a position to provide film specific insight, however, some are equipped with sector related insider information obtained elsewhere. Fan commentaries have the potential to enhance the viewing experience, because a constitutive analysis of the film would be able to provide the necessary input. Fan commentaries have a higher potential to be entertaining then anything else. Yet their entertainment value does not lie with their interaction with the film. The jokes are usually only triggered by an aspect of the film, but are otherwise uncommitted to the visual. If these were not identified as 'fan commentaries' by their producers they would possibly pass as entertaining webcasts, audio equivalents of video game shows like *X-play* or *Attack of the Show!*

[5] The commentary text include interviews with Screenwriter Steven E. DeSouza, Special Effects Coordinator Al Di Sarro, Sound Editor Stephen Hunter Flick, Producer Lawrence Gordon, Composer Michael Kamen, Editor John F. Link, Stunt Coordinator Charlie Picerni and Actor Alan Rickman.

It can be argued that the original commentary track for a film is invested in the cult value. The commentator has a privileged position; he or she is entitled to say 'There is something I know, that you don't!' The curious spectator who invests more time to a DVD than a mainstream viewer is interested in this detail that only the commentator can supply. Whereas, the fan commentary is more inclined to the exhibition value of a film. Their premise is 'There is something we all can see and share!' Here, the spectator is less interested with the information and more interested in the personal opinion of the commentator, which at times come as a reinforcement of one's own ideas.

The Fanedit: Director on the Cutting Room Floor

The first film of the Star Wars' prequel trilogy, *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (*Phantom Menace*) was released in 1999, sixteen years after the last of the initial trilogy. The long anticipated film was welcomed with mixed reactions, which amongst them one brought out a new disposition: the fanedit. At an unknown time, a viewer who disliked the film, but who saw potential in the available material re-edited the film, and copies of this re-edit started circulating (Kraus 2001). The new version was called *Star Wars: Episode I.II – The Phantom Edit* (*Phantom Edit*). By 2001, enough rumor was accumulated to attract the media attention. Articles cited zap2it.com as the main source of information regarding the version ("Mystery of Star Wars" 2001) and also for coining the term "fanedit" (Kraus 2001). According to the editor of the list, 'All Time Most Famous True Fanedits' at fanedit.org, *Phantom Edit* is not the film which started fanediting, but it is the film which started the worldwide discussion about them (n.d.). With this initiation, fanedited versions of

films, which were then already circulated among friend groups, started to be exceedingly shared on the WWW.

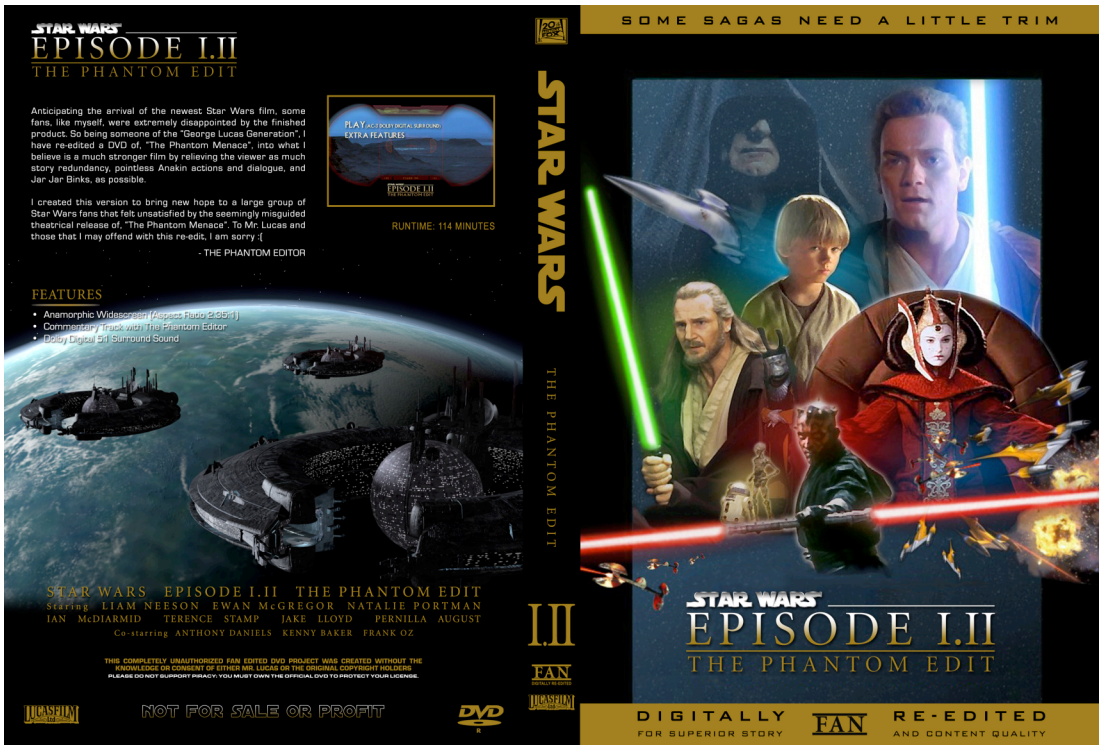

Figure 4. *Star Wars: Episode I.II – The Phantom Edit* DVD cover designed by another fan, shared online.

Fanedit websites define what a fanedit is in various nuances. Originaltrilogy.com defines it as "a fan-made alternative version of an existing film, created by the insertion, deletion or re-ordering of scenes within the movie" ("What is" n.d.). Fanedit.org distinguishes between different approaches; a 'true fanedit' is "an alteration of a movie, TV show or film that is significantly different to the original version," where an 'extended edition' adds to the original film, and a 'special edition' relies on secondary sources for additional material. These editions are "significant alterations of the overall image quality or present a significantly different audio track, while the overall movie stays intact" ("Frequently asked" n.d.).

In general, a fanedit is a version of a commercial film, modified by a viewer in order to create a new interpretation. There are multiple websites specialized on fanedits as well as websites specialized in fan literature on films such as Star Trek or Lord of the Rings, that harbor information and links to the fanedits of these and related films. These sites share certain similar features. Along with his or her edit, a faneditor supplies a statement that contain the intensions behind the alternate edit and sometimes editing details. There is usually a summary of the new version and a cutlist mostly in script format. Since these websites also function as a community forum, they harbor reviews and essays discussing the fanedits. Another common feature is the disclaimers in various formats. Two 'golden rules' are mentioned in various occasions: 1) You may only obtain a fan edit if you own the official retail release and 2) Fanedits are strictly non-profit ("What is" n.d.; "Wolf Dancer" n.d.). Copyright violation is a constant discussion topic. Although many faneditors see this as a non-violation within the conditions of fair use[6], since there is no profit involved, sites like fanedit.org cautiously note; "We here at FanEdit.org respect the company's copyrights, and don't want to infringe on any company's rights" ("Wolf Dancer" n.d.).

Although *Phantom Edit* led the way to the fanedits, multiple edits of films have been available commercially for a long time. A film's multiple alternate edits are released

[6] Fair use is a doctrine in the United States copyright law that allows limited use of copyrighted material without requiring permission from the rights holders, such as for commentary, criticism, news reporting, research, teaching or scholarship. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_use)

by production companies to be shown at different occasions, like an in-flight film ("BA Cuts Bronson" 2007) or a television release with changes in the duration and the content of sexuality, violence etc. Moreover, there are theatrical re-releases of films like *Alien: The Director's Cut* (Scott, 1979), *Blade Runner: The Director's Cut* and later *Blade Runner: The Final Cut* (Scott, 1982), *The Exorcist: The Version You Haven't Seen Yet* (Friedkin, 1973), *Amadeus: The Director's Cut* (Forman, 1984) modified by the film's director. Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* (1990) was released in two alternative versions following the initial theatrical release (duration 181 minutes), the extended version (duration 224 minutes) and a director's cut (duration 236 minutes). Likewise Star Wars' original trilogy was re-released in 1997 with a set of changes ranging between analog to digital effects, backdrops and some modification of the story. Later in many other DVD releases further changes appeared. More recently the news of George Lucas' plans to re-master Star Wars in 3D version have been circulating ("Lucas: It's Time" 2010).

Who shot first? – Fan manipulation at its prime. Amongst many alterations to the original *Star Wars* there was the scene were Han Solo shoots the bounty hunter Greedo. In the 1977 theatrical version, Han Solo shoots Greedo who is pointing a gun at him, under the table, in mid conversation. In the 1997 theatrical Special Edition release Greedo shoots first and misses as Han Solo returns his fire and kills Greedo. Although this may appear to be a minor change, at the time it was received with much repercussion. Devoted fans of the film claimed that the alteration changed the presentation of Han Solo. One such grievance states: "This scene established Han as an ice-cool space pirate; as someone who walked a fine line

between good and evil (thereby making the evolution of his character all the more interesting)" ("Star Wars: The Changes" n.d.). The uprising gained more presence following the 2004 release of Special Edition DVD, where in the scene Greedo and Han Solo fired almost simultaneously and Han Solo's additional body movement to dodge the bullet was generated by a computer. In response to this further change (or lack there of) hanshootsfirst.org was established and published a petition. Here "the crime" was described as, "Mr. Lucas changed the scene where Greedo shoots first. Millions of fans cried out in terror. […] Thousands more expressed their rage and signed the petition asking Mr. Lucas to change it back" ("The Crime" 2004). Below are a selection of the comments of those who signed the petition.

> Frankly my dear, "I THINK WE SHOULD GET MARRIED!" THE END *gut punch* – Sean Gilbertson

To begin with, petitioner Gilbertson expresses his feelings with a comparison. He re-imagines the final scene of *Gone With the Wind* (Fleming, 1939) with a twist in the memorable quote: "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." As by simply re-writing this single quote would upset the finale and the main plot of *Gone With the Wind,* by changing a single shootout the director re-writes the character of Han Solo; a minor alteration to the film creates a major affect.

> PLEASE release the originals on DVD! We know you like the special edition better, but we don't! – Crystal Bandel

A fan demands the release of the original version on DVD format for availability. Other than an early VHS version, no unaltered version of *Star Wars* was available at

the time of these comments (2004-2006). Here an open declaration of demand is heavily based on an opinion. The viewer clearly demands a film "the way he or she likes it" disregarding the preference of the director. Yet it should be considered that by producing alternatives, the director also enables choice.

> To morally sanitize a beloved classic is a thousand times more despicable than colorization. What's next –the death star gets off a shot that ricochets off Yavin 3 before Luke destroys it? Feh. Any pirates out there who can undo this travesty? Let's teach George a lesson and pass it around the net for free. –Junior Chengo

Finally, a commentator demands a redux and not from the director but instead from someone else with the ability to manipulate the film and distribute the result online. In doing so Junior Chengo defines a stand and a method; both of which are utilized by faneditors.

Ultimately it can be argued that George Lucas, the flagship of digital advancement in cinema, has lead the way to the manipulation of his films with his enthusiasm to constantly adjust the films for an ever changing target audience, reassembling the contents for various editions and always hinting a further modification. Thus, pronouncing the Star Wars' corpus as a permanent work-in-progress and open to the tinkering of others.

Production, distribution and appreciation cycle of fanedited films. A fan-edit involves a copy of the film to begin with. This copy may be in one of the various formats available as long as it is transferable to digital editing environment, namely,

a PC. Although analog edits of an analog copy of the original is possible in theory, the technical foundation necessary for such an undertaking makes the option inefficient. A digital copy, on the other hand, is accessible, transferable and convertible with relatively minor distress. Furthermore, it allows the easy distribution of the finished product through digital means; be it webcasting, online upload/downloading, sharing peer-to-peer or via torrent along with burning and distributing DVDs. All these methods are relatively inexpensive and effective in reaching an audience.

The supplemental literature and the organization of the intermediary media suggests that reaching and reasoning with an audience has a significance to the faneditor. Despite the fact that fanedits are also available singularly floating the Internet, it is through the word of mouth provided in the collective websites and forums that they are brought to public attention. Most of the literature available for an edit is supplied by the faneditors themselves. In other words the fanedits do not speak for themselves but are instead accompanied with statements in written or audio commentary form. The intention section details the reasons why a faneditor takes up that specific film and the editing details are a list of cuts and inserts with their justification. Analyzing these statements should lead to identifying the different positions the viewer/faneditor takes against the film in question. There are many different reasons to take on the challenge of re-editing and dislike is only one of them.

From the list of "The Latest Greatest Works of Fanedit Art" at fanedit.org a true fanedit of *Dances With Wolves* by CBB is called *Wolf Dancer*. Intention section reads,

> To tell *Dances With Wolves* in a new, faster paced, plot condensed version that gets rid of exaggerations, focuses on John Dunbar and his journey from being a soldier to joining a Sioux tribe, and to let the audience experience the turn for themselves without the voice-overs that take away any thinking of their own ("Wolf Dancer" n.d.).

By reading the intention section in reverse, it can be concluded that the faneditor finds the film to be slow, digressive and exaggerated. He or she also discredits the voice-overs, claiming they prevent the viewer from experiencing the turn of the leading character for themselves. This is an example where, in the editing details, the faneditor refers to the original as a "wonderful movie" but complains he or she can hardly watch it "because it is just too long." As the faneditor takes on the challenge of "condensing" the film, he or she decides to remove "the weird parts that always bugged [him or her] a bit." A very strong statement follows these minor complaints: "I realized that these voice-overs are a bit annoying, especially because they happen all the time and leave the audience no option to feel or see anything the way they want to." The main argument behind the fanedits seems to be that the film deprives the viewer of the pleasure to see things the way *they* want to and impose upon them the director's vision on the subject. The sentence is followed by: "So I decided to get rid of them." Not unlike fast forwarding through the scenes one does not like when watching them on DVD, the faneditor satisfies the urge by getting rid of 'parts of a film' as he or she pleases. The fractionality of the film and the habitude developed through repeated home viewing merges into an act of interference. Repeated viewing of a film diminishes the value attributed to the narrative chronology and familiarizes

the text, thereby altering the priorities of the viewer (Klinger 2006). Klinger argues, "This alteration in priorities enables returning viewers to convert films into personal narratives" (2006: 187). The faneditor interferes with the film and reconstitutes it in the way he or she believes fits his or her needs best. This variation is then presented to the other viewers via Internet to obtain reaction. The amount and the quality of the positive reaction reinforces the faneditor's action as well as his or her pleasure in respect to the effort he or she invested in the production. Feed-back plays an important role in the cycle of the fanedit. The not-so-legal sharing and downloading of the fanedits are only possible through hubs that supply the information how and where to reach these films. Unless a fanedit gets recognition through reviews and ratings, and word of mouth through the forums its availability diminishes.

The challenge that digital modification of films pose is not limited to the issue of narrative. A different take on fanediting is exemplified in Sacha Burrow's blog Dune SE. *Dune* (Lynch, 1984) has been a controversial film ever since its first release due to disagreements between the studio and film*'s* director David Lynch. Fanedit.org harbors multiple Dune fanedits most of which are claiming to undo the damage caused by the production company's interventions to the artistic vision of the editor ("All Dune" n.d.). Sacha Burrows on the other hand undertakes a different challenge beyond the form of a fanedit. He is set out to reproduce the original film by updating the special effects. In this respect a researcher comments on MIT's Convergence Culture Consortium weblog that "While the fans who produce fanedits might be seen as operating in the role of director, Burrow here instead becomes a special effects editor: he avoids changing the film but changes our visual perception of the film,"

(Leavitt, 2010). Indeed the intentions and motivation of Sacha Burrows for his yet to be finished project of Dune Special Edition is different then that of any faneditor. Burrows explains in the introduction of the blog that he started out with a single mission "to build a 'proper' ornithopter" in around 2009. "However, with the advent of the 'fanedit' the scope of the project has expanded with the goal of updating the effects in all those places in the movie where I feel things could be significantly 'improved'" (Burrow 2009). Even though *Dune* is not essentially a digitally created film it is available to Burrow in a digital format, as digital information. With this transition altering the image becomes perceivable since digital information is easily and rapidly manipulated by a computer. "It is simply a matter of substituting new digits for old," (Mitchell 1992: 6). All in all Burrow's attempt and Leavitt's claim to changing the look of the film and not the film itself is futile. Once a film is digitized, the smallest unit of film is no longer the shot or the frame; it is the pixel. By changing pixels one changes the film.

Analysis of related discussion. There is not any genuine accounts for intention and editing details on the *Phantom Edit*. The only written comment from the faneditor is seen in the opening crawl of the film, where in the original the background information is delivered. It writes:

> Anticipating the arrival of the newest Star Wars film, some fans, like myself, were extremely disappointed by the finished product. […] I have re-edited a DVD of 'The Phantom Menace,' into what I believe is a much stronger film

> by relieving the viewer of as much story redundancy, pointless Anakin actions, and Jar Jar Binks, as possible (Nichols n.d.).[7]

It would be wrong to read more than there is into the intentions declared above. Yet the reactions to *Phantom Edit* supply many possible reasons for a fanedit, only to elaborate on the possibilities and shortcomings, notwithstanding the ethical issues. Theforce.net is one of the most comprehensive Star Wars' community sites on the net, celebrating the 12th year of their forum: The Jedi Council ("Jedi Council" 2010). The site first mentioned *Phantom Edit* in its "Episode 1 | Navigation" section under news ("Episode I.1" 2001) and followed the story closely with updates. Another section of the site, "Rebel Rouser," devoted to providing "a place for fans to have their essays and theories about the Star Wars Universe recorded" ("Rebel Rouser" 2010) filled with *Phantom Edit* related reviews and essays soon after.

Published on June 2001, following the initial news is "The Phantom Edit Review." It begins: "If I was ever going to edit *The Phantom Menace*, these guys are on the right track. Legality aside, the concept of removing what you don't like from a film is appealing. You simply edit it out" (Griffin 2001). This early fan review seems to have no problem with the concept of re-cutting a film to better suit one's taste, which is indicative of the accustomed nature of the viewer. The actual cutting of the film

[7]It should be noted that there seems to be more than one version of *Phantom Edit* available for download. There are reviews mentioning that the crawl writes of editing a VHS. However, since there is no indicator of version in the films, the available copy will be used.

does not come as a big shock since the viewer has been editing the film with the remote control for a long time. As yet there is no discussion on who's intellectual property is being manipulated: "I was expecting more, but I suppose you do have to consider that this person was editing someone else's film" (Griffin 2001). Later accounts of this and other fanedits have a tendency to call fanediting an art and the resulting version an independent art work (For example "The Latest Greatest Works of Fanediting Art" from fanedit.org or "Digital Fanedits: The Art and Science of Change" from digital-fanedits.com.).

The rest of the compilation of essays is not as welcoming of this new form of expression as its review. The three respective essays are called "The Phantom Edit – Artistic Rape", "The Phantom Edit – Disrespecting Art" and "The Phantom Edit – An Edit Too Far". Chris Knight, essayist of "Artistic Rape", ridicules the position the faneditor takes, "Funny: I always thought the idea of art was to convey the thoughts of the artist, not what other people want the thoughts of the artist to be," and continues to clear out his point by giving examples from other films which could be possibly fanedited. Among his list are *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Forman, 1975) and *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993) which he identifies as a "perfectly crafted film." Knight argues that these films would not be accommodated for fanediting purposes and then pops the question "So why is it that some films are anointed sacrosanct, while others are open for intellectual desecration?" Even though Knight does not directly answer this question certain common characteristics can be made among the films that attract the faneditor.

The list of fanedited films on fanedit.org include films from almost all genres with science fiction (i.e. Star Wars, Star Trek and Matrix series), action-adventure (i. e. Die Hard, Terminator and Bourne series), fantastic and graphic novel adaptations (i.e. Batman, Superman, X-Men, Lord of the Rings films) and horror films (i.e. *28 Days Later* (Boyle, 2002) and sequel, Halloween series, Nightmare on Elm Street series) leading the list. Another prominent group, if films should ever be grouped as such, is the 'long films'. This group includes films like *Titanic* (Cameron, 1997), *Dances With Wolves*, *Braveheart* (Gibson, 1995), *A.I.* (Spielberg, 2001). The intention or the editing details sections of these films mention a "faster pace." The faneditors claim to update the pacing of these films to better suit the current image relations of the viewer. The other prominent group is the 'controversial films'. These are films that made the headlines due to misgivings from parties that were involved in the making of the film. These misgivings may sometimes include the fans. In these films the faneditor mostly takes sides with one of the parties. Loyalty becomes an issue with these fanedits. A fanedit for *A.I.* claims to be loyal to Stanley Kubrick's vision over Spielberg's; an editor wishes that his version of *Dune* better fits Lynch's creative desires. For literature adaptations, remaining true to the book becomes an issue. Lord of the Rings fanedits are the ones that this claim appears most often.

Coming back to the question of sacrosance in films, it can be argued that films that have a life beyond the screen have a better chance to attract the attention of a faneditor. Remediation, the translation, refashioning and reforming of other media (Bolter and Grusin as cited in Manovich 2001) presents the film as manipulable.

More precisely, and rooting much into the first fanedit *Phantom Edit*, the viewer claims more authority over a certain film, if he or she had contact with it or its versions in various media at various times. For Star Wars this is the case in many aspects. First of all there is a significant time gap between the initial trilogy, referred to as the 'original trilogy' and the prequel trilogy. About this, the essayist Sean Gates writer of "Disrespecting Art" says:

> We have grown up since 1977, and we have spent the years since 1983 imagining what else could happen in Star Wars. We had our own visions, our own dreams, and they've had a lot of years to steep in our creative minds. It's become too personal, and too easy to dissect because we feel as though it belongs to us, as if it is ours to create, when in reality it is simply ours to take or leave as we choose.

The time spent repeat watching Star Wars' original trilogy, memorizing quotes and specializing on every different species in this make believe universe is old fashioned fan behavior. With the availability of digital information, not only the narrative and its elements but the film itself can be dissected, analyzed criticized and refashioned. This is what brings about the authority of the faneditor. Much bigger and well established than any other possible examples Star Wars universe is remediation at its best. All characters, locations, codes and conducts, props and equipment as well as the technology and the team of realizators behind the making of the films are provided to the viewer/audience/consumer via multiple media simultaneously and interchangeably. What is more, it is only natural to imitate the genius that is behind all this self-created monster universe/merchandise. Klinger writes,

> This coverage assigns supreme mastery to filmmakers (hard to miss in the joking reference to George Lucas as God) and the pleasures they provide by producing movies that continually yield new insights and knowledge. […] When media industries portray filmmakers as all-knowing and all-seeing manipulators of such detail, they define the viewer in a complementary fashion. As a savvy decoder of a text's mysteries, the viewer becomes something of an authority— an intrepid explorer who has discovered a terra incognita and mapped every path." (2006: 161)

With this authority the viewer satisfies the urge to re-shape the film into his or her own.

Conclusion

Film has not been around for thousands of years and did not serve a vital role in the rise of the civilization. Yet it has become a significant part of daily life today. It has become “an ambient part of our environment” (Gunning cited in Phillips 2006). Through its eleven decades film has changed immensely. This constant change was not limited to function or content, nor language or expression; not even limited to technology whether it be production technology or viewing technology. The advent of film has been a symbiosis with all above listed factors, and more, acting mutually.

The viewer also changed. The viewer changed independent of their relation to film and they are also constructed by their relation to film. The advent of digital computer technologies created new media and various new languages that are compatible with and applicable to film viewing experiences. This constituted the tool kit of the viewer. Distribution policies of production companies on top of the contribution of digitized production procedures, supplied the material. In this combination the viewer became the ultimate unofficial agent in their relation to film, with up most authority to comment on and manipulate film.

The fan commentaries and fanedited films are in their very early beginnings. Primarily because they are still circulating in a relatively small and specific hub. Their impact is currently insignificant and their visibility is limited. But their potential is inevitable. Each fan commentary embraces the potential to turn a film into a particular expression of a personal experience. In other words, each commentary can become a performance, turning film into a variation of its primal form, redefined by the viewer/performer.

Fanedited films now are no more than editing demonstrations intended to correct flaws and adjust malignancies or update faded technologies. In them they have the potential to become independent visual projects created by a new generation of critic-turned-film-makers meditating on the meaning of image and the language of cinema.

With all this potential lurking in the near future, this concluded work has a modest record of these new emerging forms. It is limited in its access to the primary sources or a systematic account of narrative strategies displayed in either form. However, it takes a step forward by suggesting possible vantage points and pointing to similar occasions in the history of film in an attempt to prove these forms' worth for further research.

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