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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

A Cinema of (Coming) Attractions:

American Movie Trailer Rhetoric

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Film and Television

by

Lisa Devereux Kernan

2000

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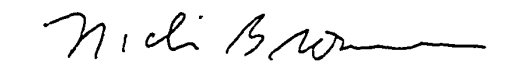
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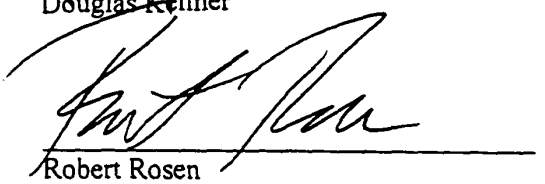
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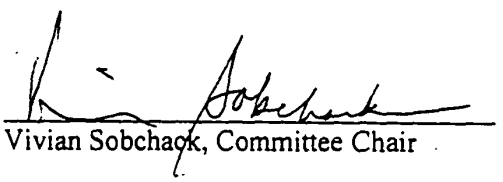
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"The imminent awakening is poised, like the wooden horse of the Greeks, in the Troy of dreams."

—Walter Benjamin

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Acknowledgments

I am immensely grateful to the many colleagues, friends and institutions who have assisted the development of my scholarship and encouraged me through the writing period. My dissertation chair, Vivian Sobchack, has been the kind of mentor and true teacher one can only hope to encounter a few times in a lifetime of learning. Vivian has a rare ability to imaginatively understand her students' diverse perspectives while challenging us to produce work that reflects a rigorous clarity of expression—she truly enjoys participating in the becoming of her students as scholars. Her brave and wide-ranging scholarship, her incisive (and funny) voice, and her integrity and dedication within the academic community are professionally and personally inspiring to me.

My dissertation committee has been a vital participant in this process. Nick Browne inspires me to dig deeper when analyzing film, and to avoid easy comparisons and formulations. By reminding me of the importance of the critical analysis of advertising as a way to disengage from its agendas (and by the example of his own work), Doug Kellner inspires me to try to write accessibly even when discussing complex theories. Bob Rosen has been an inspiration to me as a reminder of the ever-present sense of possibility in the world. Bob models a way of moving effectively within the complex and contradictory film community in a way that acknowledges its reality while sparking its potential. I am also grateful to Meg Campbell, who was on the committee for a period of time, for her encouragement and support of my work.

I thank too the other faculty members whose influence this dissertation reflects, particularly Bill Nichols, whose politically engaged approach to film theory and history

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lured me back into the academic fold, and whose seminars and writings were an initial inspiration for this project. Professors John Caldwell, Peter Wollen and the late Christine Saxton also contributed significantly to the development of my work. I am grateful to other colleagues who influenced the work and offered encouragement, especially George Custen, Jane Gaines, Vinzenz Hediger, Susan Ohmer, Vrääth Öhner, Drehli Robnik, Eric Smoodin, and Janet Staiger. Jill Casid, Sumiko Higashi, Arthur Knight, and Hank Sartin offered valuable feedback after reading portions of the work, and I am indebted in particular to Jill's comments.

My classmates in the doctoral program at UCLA have been uniformly brilliant and supportive colleagues. Especially helpful for me were the members of my original Ph.D. class: Peter Bloom, Bernard Cook, Colin Gardner, Hyun-ock Im and Lael Loewenstein; as well as the members of an informal film and television dissertation reading group, Gilberto Blasini, Jim Friedman, Bambi Haggins, and Kristen Hatch. Several other doctoral dissertators also became invaluable friends and allies (and in some cases readers) along the way: Luisela Alvaray, Vicki Callahan, Victoria Duckett, Susan Englander, Cynthia Felando, Jennifer Li, Katie Mills, Lutz Nitsche and Potter Palmer.

The work was significantly assisted by two scholarships from the Plitt Theatre Southern Employees, to whom I am very grateful. My employers at the UCLA Arts Library have gone above and beyond the call in their assistance and support during my writing period. I especially want to thank the head of the Arts Library, Gordon Theil, for his faith and advocacy, as well as Janice Koyama and Rita Scherrei. My colleagues in the library have been staunch supporters as well, and I would like to thank Lygia Bagdanovich, Lauren Buisson, Pat Cramer, Paulette Devereaux, Julie Graham, Dawn

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Henney, Judith Herschman, Dave MacGill, Kathy Marshall, Alan Michelson, Christine Royston, and Linda Warren for putting up with the dissertator in their midst. Former employers Kay Salz and Allen Nissenson were also supportive in many ways.

A big thank-you to Tanja Widmann and Dietmar Schwärzler, organizers of the conference "You Can Have It: Kinorituale" at the Wien Kunsthalle's "Projektor" lecture series at Vienna's Depot, who funded my participation in the conference, as well as Julia Ezergailis for her brilliant (simultaneous!) translations of the German language lectures. Thanks also to the present and former staffs of the UCLA Film and Television Archive for facilitating my trailer viewing and providing information, especially Zoe Burman, Dan Einstein, Jim Friedman, Charles Hopkins, Laura Kaiser, Andrea Kalas, Lou Ellen Kramer, Steven Ricci, Eddie Richmond, and Martha Yee; and to my colleagues at the Margaret Herrick Library at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, especially Michael Friend, Barbara Hall, and Linda Mehr. My friends Smitty (Robert Smith) and Olaf Kallstrom gave me insight into contemporary trailer production practices, as did trailer collector Jeff Joseph. Jeff, along with Seth Gavin, also helped by generously offering copies of trailers.

Other friends and mentors provided much-appreciated guidance and support along the way, including Michele Benzamin-Masuda, Harry Kelley, Charlotte Norris, Caitriona Reed, and Stan Rowett. My parents, Margot Starr and Michael Kernan, have been generous and loving dissertation allies. And Linda Moakes has been the one who witnessed and supported the process more than anyone—my gratitude for her goes on and on.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Cinema of (Coming) Attractions:

American Movie Trailer Rhetoric

by

Lisa Devereux Kernan

Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television

University of California, Los Angeles, 2000

Professor Vivian Sobchack, Chair

This dissertation examines the conventions and rhetoric of Hollywood movie trailers, or previews, during the sound era. It analyzes and characterizes the "genre" of trailers, and discusses their status as a precursor to or prototype for the pervasive hybridization of narrative and advertising within the heavily commercial realm of contemporary popular culture. The dissertation then asks the question, "who do they think they're talking to?" and provides case studies of trailers specifically to locate the textually-inscribed audiences the industry attempts to attract. I use rhetoric as well as textual analysis, methods I consider appropriate to these most persuasive of Hollywood's

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cinematic texts, calling particular attention to the Aristotelian figure of the enthymeme, wherein speakers' assumptions about their audience are not only incorporated within the speech but the audience itself is seen as complicit in the persuasive logic of the argument.

I identify three principal rhetorical appeals that trailers utilize: appeals to audience interest in genres, stories, and stars; and I analyze the conventional operations of each of the three appeals throughout the sound era. I provide case studies of typical trailers for each appeal in each of three eras of trailer production: the classical era (roughly from the coming of sound in 1927 to the break-up of the studio system following the Paramount Consent Decrees), the transitional era (from the beginning of the '50s to the emergence of New Hollywood promotional forms with *Jaws*), and the contemporary era (from 1975 to the present).

In separate chapters, I explore in greater depth the communicational dynamics of trailers and the identities of their implied audiences by investigating case studies of "troubled trailers," where the "cracks" in Hollywood promotional discourse showed. Generally, these trailers are either interestingly direct in their address to audiences or messages about Hollywood and promotion, or they demonstrate interesting mismatches between their assumptions about audiences' interests and the subsequent reception of the films they promote, thus displaying perhaps more visibly some of the contradictions that I found to be present within trailers as a whole. I conclude by describing the persistently contradictory appeal of trailers as unique cinematic "attractions."

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Chapter One

Introduction: A Rhetoric of Coming Attractions

Why trailers?

Trailers, or previews of coming attractions, are both praised and reviled by film scholars and regular moviegoers alike. "They give away too much of the movie." "They only show the spectacular parts." "They're better than the films." "They lie." "They're the best part of going to the movies." At the same time, they are used by both groups precisely as they're meant to be used, as free samples to aid in moviegoing decision-making. And in the contemporary market, trailers' reach is ever expanding, with their inclusion on DVDs and on the internet, where they are an increasingly popular and influential marketing tool. Yet very little scholarly attention has been paid to the *way* trailers characterize films, and thus presume audience desire, in order to sell them.[1]

Trailers, a unique form of narrative film exhibition, wherein promotional discourse and narrative pleasure are conjoined (whether happily or not), are especially important to study in an era when promotion and visual narrative are becoming increasingly difficult to disentangle in all kinds of popular media, whether music television, children's cartoons, "infotainment," or films themselves. Indeed, as Jane Gaines has remarked, "Today, the analysis of culture as commodity may have lost its explanatory potency since we are left with so few examples of uncommodified relations."[2] Neither advertising theory nor narrative theory adequately addresses what consequences this ubiquity of the promotional message might hold for contemporary definitions and understandings of visual narrative. The study of trailers, a longstanding

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popular form of promotional narrative, may shed historical light on the emergence of this particular convergence of spectator and consumer address, and the project of this study is to further this investigation.[3] An understanding of trailers' cinematic promotions of narrative--and narrativizations of promotion--has the potential to contribute to a social history of desire, especially from the perspective of the current moment in the history of the commodity relations of visual narrative.

Rhetorical analysis has been surprisingly underutilized in approaching the film industry's promotional discourses, and it is a particularly important component of my study of trailers' conflation of advertising and narrative: trailers both tell and sell a film story.[4] As the art of persuasion, rhetoric comprises both the means by which trailers sell films and an analytical method to examine the persuasive strategies and appeals to audiences within the trailers themselves. Rhetorical analysis makes possible a more precise delineation of the "spectator-in-the-trailer" that Cathy Klaprat and Mary Beth Haralovich posited fifteen years ago.[5] The various ways the rhetorical components and assumptions of audience affect are combined within trailer texts are linked to historical changes in industrial practice and, I argue, can also inform us about the film industry's changing ideas about its audience.

Generally present in popular film, the processes of filmic narration which ensure that audiences are caught up in identifying with fictional film worlds and suspending disbelief result in a familiar relationship (analyzed by countless film theorists) between audiences and the films unreeling before them. Shot-reverse-shot structures and other framing conventions ordinarily keep viewers from looking directly into the eyes of characters, and even voice-over narrations, while addressed to viewers, generally tell

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their part of the story without directly invoking them. Trailers, on the other hand, have often spoken to us directly, frequently telling us to SEE! COME! JOIN IN! THRILL TO! ..., even at times using characters or actors shown looking directly into the camera and audience: at "us." While contemporary era trailers usually display such injunctions more obliquely, direct address to the audience is still a stronger factor in trailers than it is in films themselves.

The actual identity of this "us" that trailers and other promotional discourses address—the historical, gendered, racially and class-specific spectator of American popular film—is now a prime object of film reception studies. Indeed, the recent and widespread "return to history" within the field of film studies emphasizes both ethnographic investigations of the consumption behavior of film spectators, aimed at grounding the field on a more material basis from which to make claims about the cultural contexts of film reception; and archival investigations of the extra-textual discourses (such as posters, pressbooks, and fan magazines) surrounding films themselves, in order to determine both the institutional and cultural influences that shape audiences' interpretations of films and the ideological underpinnings of Hollywood production practices. Trailers are an ideal site to combine both these impulses (investigations of spectators and extratextual discourses). Yet my main interest is in turning this focus on the actual spectator back onto the hypothetical spectator that can be seen within trailer texts themselves: an "audience study" through the looking glass of the Hollywood film industry. My project of discerning who the film industry *thinks* it is speaking *to* within trailer texts is designed to invite a more critical approach to spectatorship itself. Audiences need not do a lot of research on film reception to get a

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handle on the ideological implications of the commodity relations of film spectatorship. Trailers provide unique and specific rhetorical structures which fold visual and auditory evidence of the film production industry's assessment of its actual audience (as well as its desires for a potential audience) into a one to three-minute cinematic experience. Just as ecologists can analyze a tree to determine facts about its entire ecosystem, a rhetorical textual analysis of trailers can inform us about the cultural and historical "ecosystem" of the commodity relations of Hollywood film.

Trailers, of course, are not the only film texts that demonstrate the extent to which spectatorship is institutionalized within cinema practice as a term of the text: this is a historical condition of Hollywood film. Miriam Hansen's study of spectatorship in American silent film, *Babel and Babylon*, asks of its subject matter virtually the same question I ask of mine:

> When, how, and to what effect does the cinema conceive of the spectator as a textual term, as the hypothetical point of address of filmic discourse? And once such strategies have been codified, what happens to the viewer as a member of a plural, social audience?[6]

Hansen's study of the construction of the spectator as a term of film texts which helps to cement consumerist ideology during the era of cinema's emergence is useful because it explores relationships between the development of ideologies of spectatorship and the potential for cinematic spectatorship to constitute an alternative public sphere. Trailers and theatrical trailer spectatorship are an arena where spectators evince greater awareness

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of themselves as a collectivity, even as they are subjected to a more pointed ideological thrust by trailers' various approximations of direct address than they may be in the general experience of film spectatorship. There is a carnivalesque atmosphere to the trailer segment of the theatrical experience that belies trailers' supposedly disciplinary or instructional function.

This contradiction can be seen as a dialectic akin to the one recognized by Walter Benjamin in his meditations on the progressive potential of the commodity. Benjamin had faith in the potential of the "dialectical image" as a form of philosophical representation wherein commodities themselves, subjected to the demythifying effects of fragmentation (i.e., montage), have the potential to awaken consumers from the dream world of mass culture. While trailers' *promotional* montage (which in itself does *not* fulfill Benjamin's requirements for a critical montage that "makes visible the gap between sign and referent") assumes or constructs audience interest in generic cinematic tropes or spaces, in effect *re*mythifying them, trailers are nonetheless a provocative cinematic forum for exploring the idea of a dialectical image of commodity culture within the domain of moving image culture itself. Contradictorily, trailer montage can be seen both to foreclose such "awakenings" and perhaps at times to facilitate them.[7]

In quoting from the films they promote and giving spectators "free samples" of them, trailers can be seen to reframe their original fictional film narratives into a (window) shopper's world. Much recent film scholarship has called attention to the relationships between film spectatorship and shopping, and specifically to the "shop window" analogy.[8] Anne Friedberg writes, "'Window-shopping' implies a mode of consumer contemplation; a speculative regard to the mise-en-scène of the display

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window without the commitment to enter the store or to make a purchase. Cinema spectatorship relies on an equally distanced contemplation: a tableau, framed and inaccessible, not behind glass, but on the screen."[9] *Trailer* spectatorship increases that distance; it removes, in addition, the commitment to enter the familiar contract of "suspension of disbelief" entailed in the process of watching a complete narrative film (we aren't "buying it"), doubly distancing spectators from either a lived-world agency or an imaginary one. Contemporary audiences express awareness of the greater distance entailed in the trailer viewing experience by manifesting greater interactivity among themselves--hisses, cheers and other editorial comments frequently punctuate the exhibition of trailers or fill the silences between them.

The distance from the source text's narrative pull entailed in trailers' *quoting* from the films they promote thus enables a greater closeness to other spectators *as* consumers and critics. Susan Stewart's phenomenological study of narratives of exaggeration and nostalgia emphasizes the transformative aspect of quotation:

> In quotation we find the context of production transformed and the utterance detached from the authority of that context. ... As Bateson has explained in his studies of the message "This is play," the play message signifies a transformation of interpretive procedures, a transformation partaken of by members of the situation and which they understand as a device for entering into an abstract and metaphorical play world.[10]

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One experiences such an "abstract and metaphorical play world" in the movie theater whenever trailers are screened, whether in the form of catcalls and other derisory noises, or enthusiastic comments, exchanged more overtly among strangers than any comments made during the film itself, at least in the contemporary era (and I have found no evidence indicating this was any different earlier). The recent popularity of repertory trailer compilation screenings as nostalgic, camp, and/or ironic spectatorial experiences underscores the appeal of the sort of detachment Stewart characterizes. Whether "bought" or not, the transformed narrative coherence of this quotational "world" inhabited by spectators of trailers constitutes the diegesis of the promotional film text.

In this aspect, trailers resemble a pre-narrative system of filmmaking that evokes Tom Gunning's work on early cinema. Gunning uses Eisenstein's notion of a "montage of attractions" to characterize pre-1906 cinema as "a cinema of attractions," which he describes as "less...a way of telling stories than...a way of presenting a series of views to an audience, fascinating because of their illusory power...and exoticism;...a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator."[11] In trailers, images are selected and combined in ways that privilege attracting the spectator's attention over sustaining narrative coherence. Yet trailers also maintain a relationship to the narrative they promote, and in this relationship between promotional images of attraction and coherent cinematic narrative lie the unique characteristics that constitute the rhetoric of trailers.

As both narrative and promotional, trailers themselves can be seen as a hybrid *genre* within the canon of Hollywood film. They offer film viewers an italicized, alluring narrative space of ellipsis and enigma, where features such as characters' gestures and

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gazes, spatial relations, character and camera movement, dialogue, narration, music, and narrative structure have particular signifying characteristics, many of which will be explored in these pages. Considering trailers as a genre of film practice (and reading this dissertation as a genre study) helps us look at these particularities as more than merely a type of advertising: that is, as cinematic textual practices among others—which reminds us that the intersection of selling and telling in these little pieces of film varies perhaps only in a matter of degree from that of Hollywood films themselves.[12] It also reminds us to consider trailers' place in the cultural imaginary of Hollywood film reception: that is, as more than a mere reflection of their industrial role as a marketing practice constituting one facet of a promotional campaign. As any anecdotal canvassing of contemporary spectators will tell you, trailers are at once ads and more than ads. People who are incensed to see product advertising on the big screen rush to be in their seats in time for the trailers. During the course of my research I have repeatedly heard "I *love* trailers" in reaction to my topic, and invariably, what's meant is not just "I love being shown ads for new movies so I can decide which ones to go to," but rather an appreciation of the unique visual and narrative/promotional qualities of these short film texts.

Like many film scholars, I often find viewing films a divided experience. I can feel the detachment of retaining an awareness of the artifice of filmmaking[13] while simultaneously losing myself in the seductive qualities of projected celluloid, "going along with" the mechanisms of spectator-construction that I know from my studies are operating in most narrative feature films. I experience both these things at once, yet it doesn't make sense that I can really be detached and seduced at the same time. The two modes of viewing are inscribed in each other in that any attempt to describe the one relies

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on a knowledge of the other, yet their coexistence in my experience of movie spectatorship seems irreconcilable, impossible.

Trailer spectatorship heightens the presence of this doubleness. The contradictoriness of trailers is perhaps their salient feature, for me at once their greatest source of pleasure and the point where they most incisively display Hollywood's view of its audience(s). In fact, trailers operate as a unique sort of cinematic gyroscope in which a host of contradictions of all kinds are briefly (for two or three minutes) sustained in balance: not the least of which is the quality of nostalgia for a film we haven't even seen yet. Because they are anticipatory texts, they need no resolution. For all the weightiness of their narratorial pronouncements and the booming sound effects of their cataclysmic imagery, they are breathless, liminal, and ephemeral. They are fun because they play—or *trail*—at the edges of narrative cinematic sense. Like the brief moment in which the cloaked Klingon "bird of prey" warships in *Star Trek* must become visible (and thus vulnerable) in order to have enough power to discharge their weapons, trailers are where Hollywood displays its contradictions right at the point where its promotional message is most direct. Describing the play of rhetorical features in this zone of contradiction and potential dialectic within and among trailer texts comes as close as anything to satisfying my desire to understand some of the contradictions of my own relationship to spectatorship.

A Brief History of Trailers

The history of trailers is an as-yet-unwritten chapter in the more general history of Hollywood film publicity.[14] Beginning in 1919, a company called National Screen

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Service (NSS) made crude 35mm film ads from transferred film stills (without the studios' permission) and sold them to exhibitors to run following feature films--hence the term "trailers." The studios soon realized the potential of trailers and began supplying NSS with film footage. Early trailers are simply scenes spliced together in a "long-running newsreel format" but they quickly demonstrated increasingly sophisticated editing and graphic techniques.[15] By the early 1930s trailers had already begun to look very much the way they would continue to look until the end of the old studio system in the late 1940s. That is, as a "genre," they utilized somewhat routinized structures of address emphasizing the studio star machinery and other characteristics of studio era publicity familiar to anyone who's seen old trailers: hyperbolic titles and narrations enjoining audiences not to miss the film, visual and graphic linkages between romantic storylines and exotic settings, and identifications of cast members reminding audiences of stars' previous successes. Beginning in the 1950s, however, trailers broke away from prior formulas. Largely as a result of the studios' increased use of market research, which occurred in response to the dwindling film audience of the early television years and the audience's increasing segmentation with the emergence of a new postwar teenage market, promotional campaigns began to target specific audience segments for films. Despite targeting, however, the theatrical trailer retained its unifying function of attempting to bring as many different kinds of audiences as possible into the theater. In the 1960s, along with many other kinds of creative diversification in the film industry, new specialized trailer production companies, or "boutiques" arose, and NSS, although still in operation, no longer dominated the field. In addition, at various times many of the major

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studios produced their own trailers, although Warner Bros. was the only studio to do so throughout the early sound era.

The precursors to trailers were magic lantern slides resembling posters, each film identified with titles and images of its stars or significant elements of its iconography. These were projected between features much like today's slides of restaurant advertising and movie trivia quizzes. According to Lou Harris, head of Paramount's trailer division in the 1960s,

> The first trailer was shown in 1912 at Rye Beach, New York, which was an amusement zone like Coney Island. One of the concessions hung up a white sheet and showed the serial "The Adventures of Kathlyn." At the end of the reel Kathlyn was thrown in the lion's den. After this "trailed" a piece of film asking Does she escape the lion's pit? See next week's thrilling chapter! Hence, the word "trailer," an advertisement for an upcoming picture. They've tried calling them Previews or Prevues of Coming Attractions, but everybody in the trade calls them trailers. It's like expecting people in New York to call Sixth Ave. the Ave. of the Americas.[16]

Harris notes that trailers weren't much beyond assemblies of scenes cut from the film until the coming of sound. But by 1935 optical wipes and superimposed graphics were used, and by 1938 trailers had their own scores and material written especially for them.[17] As mentioned, most trailers in the classical era were made by National Screen

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Service (NSS), which had exclusive contracts with all the major studios for use of footage from their films from 1922 through 1928. In 1928 Warner Bros. opened their own in-house trailer operation, and MGM did the same in 1934. "National Screen reacted by relocating their trailer production to the west coast and assigning producers to the studios still under contract. That system stayed in place until 1960, when Columbia broke away, in an attempt to refashion the entire studio as a wholly self-sufficient marketing and distribution concern."[18] Setting aside subtle differences marked by studio imprimaturs or signifiers, the look and structure of NSS trailers and the MGM and Warners in-house studio-produced trailers are very comparable during the classical era. They are characterized by lots of wipes; dazzling titles that move and grow and shrink to interact with the image; frequent use of a narrator to augment title information; and the elaboration of formulaic rhetorical appeals to audience interest in stars, genres and story. During the 1950s, both NSS and studio-produced trailers exhibit comparable confusions and concerns about what to promote and how to bring flagging film audiences back into theaters.

The gradual loss of studio-era production mechanisms during the fifties was reflected in many by now familiar compensatory gestures in the film industry, such as the proliferation of widescreen formats, new sound systems, and new paradigms of "realism," reflected in increased location shooting, shifts in performance styles and increased use of unknown faces. All of these efforts were strongly foregrounded in trailers of the time. During the fifties, the need to reinscribe faith in Hollywood films is a clear mandate for the industry and its promotional mechanisms at a time when TV captivates audiences, most of whom have moved to suburbs and away from the city center's traditional site of

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movie spectatorship; and when social events such as HUAC and the Kefauver hearings have rendered the industry insecure about its role in society. One ideological function of fifties trailers was thus to promote the cinematic institution as a whole (much as films themselves were made to do in the early days of cinema), along with new features such as widescreen formats. Studios can also be seen to more pointedly aim at specific market segments, notably the teenage audience, and the fifties marks the industry's first serious interest in market research, although it wouldn't be until the 1970s that studios figured out how to systematically use it.[19]

The era that fell between classical Hollywood's formulaic trailers and New Hollywood's formulaic blockbuster-driven trailers stands out as a transitional period when no formulas seemed to work. Thus, while echoes of studio era formulas abound in the trailers of the fifties, there is also a great degree of variety and experimentation. The trailers that, as a group, follow most closely the formulas of the studio era are those for lower-budget exploitation films such as the works of William Castle, Sam Arkoff and, later, American International Pictures. These trailers often give evidence that classical trailer formulas already had become a sort of baroque self-parody.

When austerity measures hit the studios in the 1960s, many in-house trailer departments were scrapped and independent trailer producers flourished (many from the ranks of former studio "trailer men"), and the era of "boutique" trailer production took shape. During the fifties and well into the sixties, a large percentage of trailers were still produced by NSS or studio trailer departments. But by the late sixties, "the current system began to emerge, with each studio running a more or less important in-house operation which more often than not has to compete with vendors (depending on the

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wishes of the producers)."[20] National Screen Service continued to produce trailers up to the early eighties, but its importance to the industry was increasingly relegated to its role as the primary trailer distributor.[21]

The sixties expanded the trend towards both big budget "roadshow" setpieces from the major studios and smaller scale and independent productions, with a corresponding shift in trailer hyperbole. Furthermore, the influence of foreign films on domestic product was evident in trailers' increased reference to prestige signifiers such as directors' names, film festivals and critics' quotes. With the discovery of the potential impact of smaller budget youth-oriented films like *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Graduate* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969), different "buttons" start to be pushed in trailers, with appeals to audience interest in story elements beginning to be as crucial as appeals to genre and stars. New genres are explored—and increasingly during this time trailers can be observed to contribute to the formation of genres by positing them as such, whether successfully or not. While the industry continued to have difficulty bringing audiences into the theater, the sixties thus saw more pronounced efforts to redefine Hollywood cinema. As sixties trailers illustrate, promoting the cinematic institution became even more about promoting difference and novelty (as much in order to reinvent itself as to court the counterculture) than it was about celebrating new ways to enjoy Hollywood's traditional fare.

In response to the trend toward smaller scale youth-oriented filmmaking, the early seventies became "an incredibly rich period of American film history; in many ways, the years 1969-1975 can be characterized as a period of extensive experimentation in industrial practice, film form, and content."[22] Trailers from this time exhibit confusion as

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to who their films' audiences are and how to appeal to them. As market returns for "the iconoclastic, antimyth films"[23] begin to wane in the mid-seventies and the New Hollywood blockbuster era emerges, trailers reassert tried and true appeals to the elements of genre, stardom, and more formularized story appeals designed to bring a number of different types of audiences into the theater; but the formulas that emerge in the blockbuster era are very different from earlier studio-driven ones, as will be seen.

Contemporary trailers are now big business, their production costing anywhere from $25,000 to $100,000 and up. With the increased importance of television advertising for films, market research has proliferated for film promotion and is utilized from the earliest pre-production stages of most film productions. In the contemporary market as in the early sound film market, the theatrical trailer is but a single facet of a promotional network that includes print and other media publicity outlets.[24] But, as Vinzenz Hediger notes, in the contemporary market trailers are very cost-effective, since they utilize approximately 4.5% of the advertising budget of a given film, while producing at least 20% of the film's box-office revenue.[25] Trailers and other film advertising come under the jurisdiction of the same regulatory bodies as feature films (the Production Code in the classical era, the MPAA in the contemporary era), although in the classical era, as Mary Beth Haralovich argues, ads tended to get away with more than the films did (she points to posters for Warner Bros. 1943 film *The Outlaw*), because the industry acknowledged the importance of heightened sensationalism in the selling of films.[26] Since there is usually only one theatrical trailer made per film, it is designed to draw as large an audience as possible to see the film, and thus tends to lay out all the advertising campaign's major elements (which in other media may be broken down to

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appeal to specific audiences). Thus, unlike television advertising for films (which market studies suggest currently produces 60-80% of a film's audience), the theatrical trailer is not targeted to a particular demographic group. Indeed, according to one trailer producer, the job of the trailer is not so much to appeal to a specific audience as to avoid alienating any potential audience.[27] Trailers are thus a unique site where the film production industry "talks" to its audience in the broadest possible terms, in the process displaying—through its rhetoric of address—its own notion of who that audience is.

For all the changes in trailer production practice, one of the striking things about viewing a lot of trailers over a short period of time from throughout film history is the sense one gets of continuity of trailer technique in certain respects. For example, trailers are where intertitles "went" after the arrival of talkies. The interspersal of a graphic title card with a film scene was a familiar cinematic rhythm for audiences of silent films, and one which disappeared with the sound film. This silent film convention, however, helped naturalize trailers' continuation of a graphic regime which used titles to connect and—simultaneously hype—the disjointed scenes.

In early trailers, graphics resemble silent film intertitles (or at times their precursors in Vaudeville placards), but titles soon come to dominate the visual impact of classical era trailers in familiar and oft-parodied ways. And the graphic element is still evident in many contemporary trailers, where for example words from the title are intermittently formed letter by letter or word by word in a bold or colorful typeface, intercut with or laid over scenes during the course of a trailer, with the entire film title then flashed as an element of the trailer's denouement. Or less frequently, a promotional "tag line" will be graphically presented. In each era of trailer production, graphics are an

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important aspect of rhetoric. Even more than the presence of a narrator (also significant to trailer rhetoric throughout the sound era), they serve to distance viewers from ordinary spectatorial involvement with the scenes presented and remind them of the film's status as a package. They also generally present a graphic "look" that is consistent with other features of the film's promotional campaign, reminding trailer viewers of posters or other ads they may have seen (or vice versa).

Generic features of Trailers

As suggested earlier, there are common features among trailers from all eras as well as historical transformations within the genre. Most trailers have in common a few generic features: some sort of introductory or concluding address to the audience about the film either through titles or narration, selected scenes from the film, montages of quick-cut action scenes, and identifications of significant cast members or characters. The genre of trailers also has much in common with other kinds of advertising. Addressing the way audiences derive meaning from print ads, Judith Williamson emphasizes the activity of the audience as it constantly re-creates meaning. Audiences mediate between particular ads and their "referent systems"—the body of social knowledge on which advertisers and audiences alike draw and rely—and in this process audiences co-constitute the meaning of the ads.[28]

Yet film as a product differs from most other advertised goods in that the "referent systems" that trailers use and audiences transform in the process of constructing meaning are more than a body of social knowledge. They are that, plus a body of specific cinematic conventions, a body of expectations about what films can offer narratively, and

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a set of desires. These desires are not to consume an object, but to engage in an experience, in a process of meaning-production through narrative film, a "free sample" of which the trailer constructs. If a trailer can "piggyback" the captive and willing movie audience's desire to see a given film (the one they've come to presently see) onto, first, a desire to see another film (the one being promoted), and next, to *other* desires the audience is believed to hold, the audience is probably "sold" on the promoted film. Through trailers, the "use value" of narrative (enjoying a film) is subsumed to its "exchange value" (wanting to see another film) by a process of transforming the codes of narrative fiction into the codes of promotional rhetoric. In this process, new narrative (or narrative/promotional) codes or rhetorical devices are produced. Trailers construct a narrative time-space which differs from (and creates desire for) the fictive world of the film itself. Thus, the fast pace of most trailers accentuates the film's surface of cinematic spectacle, displaying the film's shiniest wares, or most "attractive" images, positioning it as a commodity for sale. Narrative, however, does not disappear in this process. Trailers are themselves little stories constructed within the anticipatory dimension of "capitalist realism" in which carefully selected individual cinematic images, dynamically combined in highly teleological editing structures, shine with a surface gloss of exaggerated spectacularity, indeed selling us even more than a desire to go see the specific films they promote (although they sell us them too).[29]

In particular, as I will explore, trailers commonly utilize codes of voice-over narration, sound and sound overlapping, music, graphics, and most importantly, editing, or montage. A system of discontinuous continuity editing—which I call dis-continuity editing—operates through alternation, combination and abbreviation of scenes to

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construct a new, trailer logic, differing from (yet, obviously, related to) the narrative logic of the film. One shot in a two-minute trailer is called upon to stand in for a number of narrative elements, such as character subjectivity and relations, plot development and suspense. Of course, this can be true of film in general, but since in trailers each of these abbreviated stand-in images is part of an ad for an as-yet-unseen film, they become charged with excess signification. Faces, for example, bear tremendous weight as carriers of various emotional signifieds and enigmas. The Bazinian emphasis on the capacity of human facial physiognomy to reveal interior life[30] is endowed with a promotional kick: in trailers the intensity of facial expressions acts as a window not onto the world or the interior spiritual state of a human being, but onto a sort of imagined narrative plenitude of whatever film is being promoted. Images of faces also draw upon a large cultural lexicon of photographic portraiture, endowing shots such as one of Denzel Washington as Malcolm X staring at the camera from behind prison bars with extra emotional punch (in trailers, photographic cliché can work to advantage). Similarly, gestures and movements create impressions of narrative thrust, whether compatible or not with their actual narrative function in the film. Indeed, the "Kuleshov effect" gets fresh validation in the occasional repositionings of the meanings of shots from a film to better fit a trailer's narrative trajectory.[31] Thus, a shot of Meg Ryan falling on her bed in the trailer for *You've Got Mail* (1998), which in the film is a gesture of sadness and frustration after the character is stood up by her cyber-date, appears in the trailer to be a swooning gesture, thus better contributing to the film's overall generic positioning as a romantic comedy. Moreover, a trailer can imply plot developments that are false (such as Kurt Russell apparently dying in the trailer for *Unlawful Entry*, 1992); can contain conversations that

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never happen (juxtaposing two lines of dialogue unconnected in the film so that the second appears to reply to the first); or provide false narration (in which spoken lines of dialogue are abstracted from the drama and inserted as trailer voice-overs).

In these "montages of (coming) attractions," spectacular features such as explosions and car crashes are often emphasized, with a frequent result that trailers are the loudest part of moviegoing. Trailers' less cataclysmic imagery, such as the requisite star identifications and expository dialogue, are thus dynamically punctuated with an excess of affective cues which assure audiences of action films, for example, that there will indeed be action. Shots of nature and other scene-setting devices are endowed with a graphic and textural "feel" that emphasizes the travelogue aspect of locations, and the experience of seeing the full film is often equated with travel by voice-over narrators or titles enjoining spectators to "come" or "voyage to...". An intriguing and pervasive contemporary variation on this invitation is an evocation of the film's time and/or space as different from "ours" by narrations that begin "In a time when..." or "In a world where..."[32] Although Christian Metz's "Grande Syntagmatique" has not been adopted much lately as an analytic tool for identifying significant units of film, I have not found a better term for these types of texturizing sequences of generalizing scenes so common to trailers than his "bracket syntagma," a non-chronological set of scenes where "among the occurrences that it groups together, there is the same kind of relationship as that between the words in a typographical bracket. In the bracket syntagma it is frequently the case that different successive evocations are strung together through optical effects (dissolves, wipes, pan shots, and, less commonly, fades)."[33]

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Wipes, seen primarily in trailers of the classical and transitional eras, can serve different purposes, but their overall effect is to endow the trailer with a graphic surface that prohibits our ordinary cinematic relation to the screen (the suspension of disbelief required of narrative film spectatorship). Like graphic elements in magazine ads, they also keep us more aware of the promotional message than of the photographic image per se. Contemporary era trailers often utilize sound effects and title graphics for the same purpose (while they too use wipes, if less frequently). Regardless of which type of (historically specific) transitional device is used, the montage structure of trailers is their salient characteristic, and transitions other than straightforward cuts are generally utilized to participate in a trailer's "hype," calling attention to the advertising function of these short film texts. In the process, they also can function to promote genre (such as heart-shaped wipes in the classical era or the slamming sound effects which cue action-adventure in the contemporary era) and story features (such as the mirror-cracking wipe in the *Casablanca* trailer).

Trailers offer figurations of felicitous spaces so as to make audiences wish to be there or, conversely, horrific or suspenseful spaces to create audience desire to experience the "safe" fear and terror of the movies. The restriction of trailers to a few minutes of carefully selected and edited shots and scenes endows what we do see, from faces to car crashes, with a kind of pregnancy or underdeterminacy that allows audiences to create an imaginary (as-yet-unseen) film out of these fragments—we desire the film we want to see.[34] This filling-in of trailer enigmas with an idealized film thus heightens trailers' promotional value, as well as the visibility of the production industry's assumptions about what its hypothetical audience desires.

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In addition to being a genre of sorts of their own, trailers (along with other promotional discourses) have been instrumental in the formation or legitimation of Hollywood genres, steering our interests in a given film into established or emerging generic categorizations and heightening our interest in the genre as a whole, facilitating the film's positioning as a commodity. Trailer producers' rhetorical appeal to spectators' familiarity (or desire for familiarity) with a genre or genres is one of several primary rhetorical tropes that inform trailers. In their efforts to persuade viewers to see a film, trailers may also appeal to spectators' desire for story, emphasizing a film's plot and characters, or to the spectators' attraction to well-known stars (or alternatively, directors or authors as stars). Often, the rhetoric of trailers combines all three appeals—genre, story, and stars—each of which has its own conventions. (Other, extratextual appeals are occasionally invoked as well: notably reviews, awards, and box-office figures.) The rhetorical appeals in turn rely on certain affective expectations, or qualities of experience that the viewer brings to the trailer. These affective expectations are what reception theorist Wolfgang Iser calls textual "gaps," or what Williamson (cited above) calls the "transformational spaces" the text leaves open for spectators' expected emotional, physical, aesthetic or other responses.[35] In effect, the industry assumes these gaps will be filled by the spectator in habitual ways. For example, within any one of the above three categories of appeal, a trailer's rhetoric might privilege a film's heartwarming qualities, its verisimilitude, or heightened spectacle. However, the realization (or not) of affective cues dwells in the experience of the spectator, not within the rhetorical tropes of the trailer itself.

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Trailer rhetoric also reflects demographics, as quantified by market research (and/or as imagined by trailer makers). Different markets are made visible in trailers by textual evidence of "targeting," or appeals to specific genders, age groups, or other categories of subjectivity within trailers' overall mission to expand the audience. Comparisons of a film's theatrical trailer with other facets of its promotional campaign, such as pressbooks, print advertising, or TV spots, affirm the trailer's role as a sort of coalition of the campaign's various demographic strategies. The semiotic density of trailers allows for many buttons to be pushed at once, making the trailer operate as a nucleus, or "navel" of the promotional campaign.[36]

In this aspect, trailers resemble a larger cinematic unit—not only the film they promote, but the entire film bill of which they are a part (here I am thinking specifically of the classical era film bill). Eric Smoodin's study of the first-run theater film bill in the classical Hollywood era points out that the film bill functioned ideologically to (apparently) "present views of everything.... Public entertainment brought together within a single space all spaces to be seen and appreciated."[37] Smoodin argues that the film bill's visual cornucopia of different modes, genres, lengths and styles of film within the theatrical exhibition space (which, although unavailable for analysis in Smoodin's study, prominently featured previews of coming attractions), also contributed to social control by communicating acceptable cultural norms and marking the development of a "location where the materials of human existence became commodified."[38] The variety and diversity of the bill came to signify the peaceful coexistence of potentially conflicting ideas or values, and became "part of the mythology of pluralism."[39]

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Trailers themselves contribute to such a mythology, I would suggest, by their concatenation of promises to fulfill the diverse narrative and generic desires of a variety of demographic groups. "Something for everyone," as will be seen, is a primary ideological underpinning of much trailer rhetoric, begging the questions this dissertation asks: who are they calling "everyone" (and how do they know what we all want)? Throughout their history, trailers have contributed to the naturalization of a variety of social desires that will supposedly be fulfilled by going to the movies. "All the emotions of a lifetime!" proclaims the trailer for Disney's *Pollyanna* (1960)—"For years to come, you'll remember. You'll remember this girl and this motion picture." Trailers' unique temporal status as, paradoxically, nostalgic structures of feeling for a film we haven't seen yet, cues us to their status as fundamentally contradictory texts.[40] Raymond Williams's recognition of those "structures of feeling" that constitute bourgeois ideology's reification of the past, the false "conversion of experience into finished products," can be applied to trailers' rhetorical appeals, which reify not only (fictionalized) past experience but also the future—the anticipated experience of future moviegoing, and even future memories of past moviegoing.[41]

While today's feature film exhibition experience no longer contains the range of types of film texts that it did in the classical era Smoodin treats, today's trailer "supertext"—that is, the total "set" of trailers preceding a given film—offers its own meta-signifying properties, often indicating to audiences the assumptions studios and/or exhibitors have made about the demographics to which the particular film will appeal.[42] These "supertexts" are of particular critical interest when the film that follows the set of trailers in question is one that studios assume is of interest to a certain race, gender or age

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group. Research into which trailers accompany "chick flicks" or "black-themed" films, for example, might reveal studio assumptions about demographics in ways that the individual trailers alone cannot.[43]

The questions raised by textual analysis of Hollywood promotional materials so as to examine issues of the representation of audience identity are large. Isolating trailers as the single most obvious node wherein Hollywood "speaks" directly to its audience allows for a new slant on both the conception of the rhetorical "audience in the text," and the film spectator as a "construction" of the film text. I have already indicated that instead of analyzing this "audience" or construct as providing any sort of reliable evidence of who film audiences *actually* were, I will be examining trailers as historical evidence of the production industry's changing imaginary notions of audience identity. Actual audiences, of course, both respond to and contribute to this rhetorical construction, so they do have some material effect on the relationship between the film industry and themselves, an effect which in turn shapes subsequent versions of this construct as seen in later trailers. Nonetheless, the only consistently reliable material evidence of this interaction between industry and audience throughout the periods I am treating is the actual trailers.

Of course, trailers don't necessarily "work" in the ways they are intended to. In the contemporary market, we can all cite anecdotal examples of the anti-promotional capacities of trailers. The most common I tend to hear is that today's trailers give too much away--"if you see the trailer you don't need to see the film." (In the time I've been writing my dissertation this has been the most frequent response to my subject.) Thus, although this is not an audience study *per se*, it is important to acknowledge that trailers

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can be received in oppositional ways by audiences, yet as will be seen, viewing trailers oppositionally is not necessarily incompatible with trailers' promotional effect "working" on audiences.

Why Rhetoric?

As an ideological critic weaned on Godard in his Dziga Vertov era, it never quite sat well with me that, unlike other kinds of advertising, I always looked forward to trailers and happily inhabited the role of expectant movie-consumer their narratives demanded of me, even as I simultaneously watched with a critical scholar's gaze. My urge to write at length about this contradiction or ambivalence in myself is in part an urge to bring about a greater consciousness of such contradictions at a social level. Those old sacred cows of left filmmaking practice—self-reflexivity and Brechtian distanciation—no longer have political use value when even ads display their own conditions of production, and when popular culture encourages consumer behavior *by way of* ironic attitudes toward consumption.[44] There is no "outside" to ideology for actual social subjects living in our culture in this historical moment, and I resent being suckered as much as I love watching trailers. A new paradigm for resistant spectatorship is needed that takes into account the realities of cinematic representation in an era when marketing so heavily dictates what films get produced in the global film industry. By examining Hollywood trailers to investigate their implied audience(s), I hope to offer a model for conscious trailer spectatorship in which through greater awareness of the roles or positions audiences are encouraged to inhabit, these same roles or positions can be better sidestepped.

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This dissertation approaches the subject of trailers in an attempt to answer the question, "who do they think they're talking to?" The "who" of this question refers to the implied audience as a basically imaginary construct, which I seek within the texts through rhetorical analysis of trailers, in order to learn more not about who audiences *really* were, but about changing Hollywood studio *assumptions* about audiences.[45] The "they" in the question refers to the Hollywood film production industry, an imaginary cultural construct in its own right, but the "they" also refers to actual historical producers and industrial determinants of trailer practice. The "talking to" in the question refers to a combination of industrial and cultural/ideological processes—including trailer producers' readings of actual audience behaviors—that inform trailers' unique rhetorical address to this implied audience. The interaction of historical and cultural/mythological determinants implied in the "dialogue" I thus characterize is key to my method, which is neither a "reception studies" approach proper, nor an industrial history, nor a strictly formalist textual analysis.

Trailers are ripe for rhetorical analysis because they are among the film industry's most overtly persuasive texts. As mentioned, they address us fairly directly, and the fact that they propose an imaginary address for us, with which we may or may not identify, is a rhetorical issue. As I watch trailers I am even more acutely aware than I am with other film texts of that slippage in the communicational process wherein the real social subjects in this exchange are missing on both sides—where, as post-structuralist theory reminds us, neither "we" nor "they" can ever be experienced in a pre-linguistic fullness of identity where we are truly "known," but can only be made out as shifting signifiers. That is, audiences come to trailers with imaginary notions of what Hollywood is (who they think

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is talking to them), while trailer producers present images, usually developed with the help of market research, of those elements of a film they feel will capture and maximize their imaginary audience (who they think they're talking to). Trailers attempt to position spectators within the imaginary, in an illusory security of unitary identities constructed for us as audiences by the film industry (of which, in turn, we construct an imaginary identity).[46]

In fact, perhaps we can see trailers as the imaginary of movies just as movies have been characterized as the imaginary of everyday life.[47] As hyperbolic narratives which celebrate not themselves but a longer, more nuanced narrative, trailers rely on the binaries and stereotypes of the imaginary to *promote* the riches of symbolic difference.[48] Only by viewing the film in question can we to a certain degree break out of this imaginary relationship between the cinematic institution and ourselves as spectators, and enter (again, to a degree) the symbolic realm at the level of the complexities of the film narrative, as we watch cinematic stories unfold that existed in the trailer only as hyperbolic montages. This points to a potentially progressive aspect of trailer spectatorship--where the act of viewing a film after having seen its trailer enables spectators to "learn after the event" (Freud's *nachträglichkeit*) that trailers were an illusory unity; in turn reminding us to learn after the event that the unitary worlds presented by film and television images and narratives themselves are illusory. Watching the aforementioned *You've Got Mail*, for example, and experiencing Meg Ryan's fall onto the bed as a component of her character's emotional state in the film reminds us that the trailer's positioning of the gesture as a swoon was a lie; perhaps contributing consequently to our questioning the truth of the characterization as a whole (if we haven't

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already). This formulation might point as well to a regressive aspect of trailer spectatorship—where the fact that we keep seeing trailers every time we go to the movies can reinforce our imaginary identities as audiences, since these identities are ever renewed again with each trailer we see. In any event, an analysis of trailers that investigates the positions of address proposed for us in the audience by the movie industry--who it is they think they're talking to--can enhance our understanding of how these assumptions about us relate to our actual experiences as spectators and social subjects. And rhetoric offers tools for such an analysis.

Barbara Klinger, whose dissertation on the reception of the 1956 film *Written on the Wind* and its implications for a contextual theory of film meaning, emphasizes the "extrinsic context" of a film: its material, external context, including, significantly, its promotional mechanisms, over its intratextual semiotic one. In a more recent article, she treats trailers and other such "epiphenomena," as "digressive modalities of reading."[49] She argues that "we need to recognize the effect that the film industry has on viewing—how industrial practices constitute an inter-textual network which pluralizes the classic text during its circulation as a commodity."[50] Moreover, in order "to examine the role that promotional texts play in reception, existing formulations must be reconsidered and revised, to better effect the marriage of semiotic and commodity theories."[51]

Yet while trailers constitute an important "epiphenomenon" of film viewing, they are also film texts themselves. Klinger argues that the textual analysis of films necessarily entails discussion of this extratextual network of industrial practices. I find, additionally, that the commodifying features of trailers—plural film texts in their own right—are illuminated by *their* textual analysis, over and above considering their place in the larger

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network of promotional discourses. Trailers are texts *and* contexts, and need to be addressed in ways that acknowledge both their stature as specific cinematic signifying systems and their promotional persuasiveness. Rhetorical analysis holds promise as a form of textual analysis that can be compatible with both semiotic and commodity theories.

Rhetoric, never popular in film studies,[52] has additionally had a bad rap among those cultural theorists inclined toward politically engaged writing, some of whom have seen it as a signifier of the postmodernist tendency towards cultural relativism. Even for Terry Eagleton, one of rhetoric's recent champions, a characteristic of "a post-structuralist or postmodernist perspective [is] to see all discourse as traced through by the play of power and desire, and thus to view all language as ineradicably...a rhetorical performance within which questions of truth or cognition are strictly subordinate. If this is so, then all language is 'ideological,' and the category of ideology, expanded to breaking-point.... collapses."[53] For Mas Ud Zavarzadeh, a leading voice in contemporary political film theory, "[r]hetoric in postmodern film theory is understood not as the 'outside' of film and writing, but in fact, as the logic of 'textuality,' which is the film itself, and textuality, as the movement of 'difference,' is a resistance to the idea of the political that argues for global transformative practices."[54]

My understanding of rhetoric derives from a different view of the relationship between rhetoric and the political. For me, rhetoric constitutes neither a lumping together of ideology and all language, nor a signifier of textuality's dominance. Rather, along with Bill Nichols, who sees rhetoric as "a vehicle of socialization, a mediation between self and other," I contend that it can be a powerful *signifier* of ideology.[55] While rhetoric does

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bracket decisions about the ultimate truth of an argument in its concern with the pragmatics of persuasion, the fact that it calls attention to questions and positions of address encourages me to consider its use in film analysis to further the goals of ideological criticism. I am one of those who still believe in the potential for ideological film criticism to contribute to political transformation through the development of conscious critical spectatorship.[56] Specifically, I am hypothesizing that a rhetorical analysis of trailers, in conjunction with an understanding of their historical moment and attention to how they display some of its historical contradictions, can facilitate a critical *contemporary* trailer spectatorship whereby we can read in trailers some of the contradictions of our own age (perhaps more quickly and accessibly than we can in films themselves).

As attendance at a panel at the 1998 Society for Cinema Studies conference attested, there is renewed interest in rhetoric in film studies. Contradicting Zavardazeh's comment above, Bill Nichols's presentation at that panel called attention to rhetoric's capacity to move people, whether to reinforce dominant social practice *or* to transform it:

> Rhetoric, like wisdom and ideology, dream-work and desire, has roots in the unconscious. It, too, works performatively to enforce or evade the censorship of disciplinary norms and customary practice. Rhetoric must move us. Its *actio* is to dispose us toward attitudes or actions of our own. Such actions, like changes of attitude, carry transformative power. In fact, rhetoric possesses the power to render the self, or subject of its address,

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contingent... Rhetoric provides a means of embodying relationality and the contingency it entails.[57]

The thrust of Nichols's argument was to assert cinematic rhetoric's value "as a vehicle through which we experience and affirm connection to various forms of community," while taking into account that often—and I would argue certainly in the case of promotional discourses—this "community" is an imaginary, ideological or mythical one.[58] As Barbara Klinger notes, "the success of commodification relies on a personalization or privatization of what are originally public discourses; the further a text can be extended into the social and individual realm by promotional discourses, the better its commercial destiny."[59] Rhetoric is the means by which movie trailers appeal to spectators' assumed desires and interests, displaying industrial assumptions about our lives and our identities as individuals within (imaginary, ideological, or mythical) communities. By calling attention to trailer rhetoric as an institutional expression of the social relations of their time, I hope to theorize one of the ways such imaginary communities are articulated or constituted in the public sphere.

Aristotle characterized the process by which assumptions about an audience become structured into a rhetorical argument in his description of the *enthymeme*, a component of what he termed "epideictic rhetoric" (wherein rhetorical arguments are constructed for the purpose of praise or blame).[60] The enthymeme is usually thought of as an abbreviated syllogism. In the enthymeme, one of the terms of the syllogism is missing, and becomes an implicit assumption within the logic of the remaining terms. Where a formal syllogism would state, "All graduates of Harvard are well educated. Elaine is a

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Harvard graduate. Therefore she must be well educated," its enthymeme counterpart would be, "Elaine must be well educated since she graduated from Harvard," leaving the statement "All graduates of Harvard must be well educated" as an implied commonplace assumed to be shared by listeners. Enthymemes are usually seen as unproblematic shortcuts for stating a conclusion which has already been made by syllogistic reasoning. But according to Lloyd Bitzer, Aristotle considered the enthymeme the "substance of rhetorical persuasion." As Bitzer argues, this is because

> enthymemes occur only when speaker and audience jointly produce them. Because they are jointly produced, enthymemes intimately unite speaker and audience and provide the strongest possible proofs. The aim of rhetorical discourse is persuasion; since rhetorical arguments, or enthymemes, are formed out of premises supplied by the audience, they have the virtue of being self-persuasive. Owing to the skill of the speaker, *the audience itself helps construct the proofs by which it is persuaded.*[61]

Maxine Hairston also emphasizes the value of the enthymeme as a dialogical process between speaker and audience, and refers to it as an embodiment of

> situational and pragmatic thinking... Basing an argument on an enthymeme necessarily involves drawing the audience's attitudes, beliefs, and experience into the structure of the argument. Those attitudes, beliefs, and experience form the groundwork for the argument; the very fact that

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> the rhetor does not need to articulate them establishes a bond of intimacy and trust between speaker and listener....So an enthymeme really represents a *process*, a dynamic activity--the listener or reader contributes to his [sic] own persuasion....[yet] it cannot be developed out of context or by formula. The person arguing cannot set up the argument before knowing the audience because it holds the key to the appropriate strategy"[62]

The recognition of enthymemes in trailers thus allows for a characterization of a literal "audience in the text," flagging, or in effect problematizing, the seemingly invisible assumptions trailer producers make about audiences. Treating trailers as rhetorical enthymemes helps keep the focus of this dissertation on the audience as filtered through the texts of trailers themselves. The film industry attempts to know its audience both through increasingly sophisticated market research and through tried and true "seat-of-the-pants" techniques,[63] and trailers display the nature and extent of this knowledge enthymemically. That is, trailers utilize enthymemes, or deliberately incomplete syllogisms, which rely on *im*plicit assumptions that the audience is enjoined to "fill in," thus becoming *com*plicit with the advertising argument to the degree that they do so.

These rhetorical structures are generally spelled out in trailer titles or voice-over narration, and their logic is backed up by selections of particular images in the promotion of a given film, through a "dis-continuity editing" which makes connections between scenes, demonstrating the enthymeme's assumptions about directions or emphases the audience may want to see in the film, and through further titles and narration which posit

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what the audience will want to see as well as other ideas and assumptions about the social world. For example, the trailer for *The Greatest* (Columbia, 1977) opens with a narrator announcing it as "a story you only *think* you know." The missing term and knowledge assumed in this enthymeme is that audiences are acquainted with the public persona of Muhammed Ali, a knowledge which the trailer then proceeds to assert is inferior to the film's view, beginning with the unusual feature that the film presents "a powerful drama of a remarkable life, starring the man who lived it." The story's presumed emotional truth is thus promoted by juxtaposing it to audiences' assumed partial view (and assumed desire to see Ali as more than just a boxer). By analyzing specific rhetorical appeals such as this, along with their interactions within trailers, we can discuss various parameters of this implied movie audience or ideal consumer at particular historical moments.

The principal rhetorical appeals by which Hollywood attempts to reach audiences through trailers have been identified by Janet Staiger in one of the very few scholarly articles to interrogate the history of film advertising. While she treats advertising discourse as a whole, her rhetorical categories have been borne out in my research on trailers. Early film advertising, according to Staiger, followed a conscious choice to eschew "brand name" or studio-identified advertising for promotion of individual "product features," of which she identifies genre, stars, plots, spectacle, and realism as primary; in the belief that each film presents a separate promotional challenge.[64] Three of the features she names—genre, stories, and stars—constitute the three principal rhetorical appeals I have identified as central to trailers. The other two, spectacle and realism, are affective cues that trailers often enlist in the service of these three rhetorical appeals. This is an important distinction: while all of Staiger's "product features" are indeed elements

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that are promoted to audiences, only the former three are wholly *textual* elements, hence accessible as a basis for true rhetorical analysis. Appeals to audience interest in a film's realistic or spectacular features rely on questions of degree and magnitude that depend largely on the subjective experience of the spectator, and are not necessarily objectively determinable in themselves. But genres, stories and stars are undeniable textual features of films that trailers promote. It is rare that any of these primary rhetorical appeals is found in isolation, since virtually all Hollywood films can be said to have stories, stars, and some relationship to existing genres. Thus, most successful trailers usually tend to invoke an interaction of the three.

Enthymemes and rhetorical appeals operate in trailers on several levels, which deserve further explanation. At this point I am prompted to cite a question raised by a reader of this dissertation: "can an image be an enthymeme?" In other words, if an image is either present or not, how can it structure an argument or contain a missing term?[65] This question can best be addressed in relation to trailers by invoking the similarity between enthymemic structures and Eisenstein's concept of intellectual montage. By definition, according to Eisenstein, montage incorporates the associative capacities of the film spectator as a component of its process of signifying through visual conflict.[66] The final of his five types of montage (following or building on metric, rhythmic, tonal, and overtonal montage) is that of intellectual montage, or "conflict-juxtaposition of accompanying intellectual affects."[67] The term has come to be used to distinguish within cinematic texts "editorial relationships of a particular kind whose aesthetic (based on discontinuity) and rhetorical aim (to awaken cognitive processes and ideological awareness) is quite opposite from those of 'classical' Hollywood montage (based on

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continuity editing and psychological motivations.)"[68] This categorization, while usually pointing to film texts with overtly political or at least non-fictional aims, holds true for trailers as well, which elicit from spectators on some level an intellectual awareness of the films they promote, each time attempting to construct a persuasive argument that we should see the film. Essentially, *any* montage creates assumptions about audience associations. But when a montage structure is created for the purpose of persuasion, these associations can be categorized as enthymemes, and fall within the domain of rhetoric.[69]

Trailers operate enthymemically on several levels. At the broadest level, trailers implicate audiences within their persuasive regimes just as other forms of advertising do. As Judith Williamson characterizes this process, we (ad audiences) are drawn "into the transformational space between the units of the ad. Its meaning only exists in this space; the field of transaction; and it is here that we operate—*we are this space*."[70] The missing term of the large scale enthymeme of the category of trailers as a whole (defined as brief promotional film texts that usually display images from specific feature films while asserting their excellence) could be expressed as "You're going to want to see these films!"

Next, within the category of trailers, there are enthymemes which are structured to promote each of the three principal rhetorical appeals (genre, story, stardom). These enthymemes will be detailed in the following chapters which describe the conventions of each of the three appeals. Briefly, they operate as follows. Trailers' appeals to audience interest in genres assert that, regardless of the specific genre, genre films are at once "more of what you know and love," and "all new and different." The missing term in this enthymeme of genre could be expressed as: "You want familiarity *and* novelty." Trailers'

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appeals to audience interest in stories assert that, regardless of the type of story, film stories present at once universal elements or features, knowable by reference to the audiences' (assumed) experiences, and yet have highly specific narrative elements that are particular only to the film being promoted (and of which the trailer may reveal only hints). The missing term here could be expressed as: "Film stories offer experiences and knowledge you want to have (even if only in the safety of the movie theater)." Trailers' appeals to audience interest in stars assert that, regardless of the individual star(s) being promoted, stars are at once *like* audiences, possessing familiar and identifiable characteristics, and *unlike* them, in their celestial distance and dazzling unattainability. The missing term here could be expressed as: "You can be these stars *or* have them, but only at the movies."

Finally, enthymemes operate at the level of individual trailers as discrete montage structures combining enframed image, sound, and editing. Like the example cited above from the Muhammed Ali film, these elaborate and expand on the more general appeals to audience interests in genres, stories or stars, utilizing specificities of the film being promoted to persuade audiences to see the film. In doing so, they display assumptions about movie audiences. These various assumptions can provide a vantage-point—perhaps more incisively than the films themselves—from which to read some of the ideologies promoted by the Hollywood film production industry beyond the appeal of individual films, such as specific notions of Americanism, individualism, sexuality, race, class, historical change, or other issues. The following chapters identify the rhetorical operations of each of the three principal appeals within trailers where one is clearly dominant, in the process exploring the typical interactions among them.

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Although the ways the interactions among the three appeals play out are specific to the individual trailers, a general relationship does exist among them. The three appeals are not symmetrical in the logical hierarchy of their respective positions in the rhetorical signifying system of trailers: the rhetoric of genre is of a higher logical type (and thus a lower level of organization) than that of story, which is of a higher logical type (and lower level of organization) than that of stardom.[71] In other words, within the system of Hollywood film production, on some level each narrative story belongs to (or invents, resists, or is in some way emplaced within the parameters of) a genre. And each star—each individual iteration of the star system in a Hollywood film—belongs to a narrative story. Thus the rhetorical appeals to each of these aspects of films in trailers are likewise imbricated within one another. This is not to ascribe any sort of hierarchical importance to any of the three categories, but when looked at as elements of trailer rhetoric, the *logical* relationships between these three parameters are more complementary than symmetrical. So the analysis of star appeals builds on the conventions of story appeals, which builds on those of genre appeals. By tracing each rhetorical appeal across the sound film era, I also hope to point to shifts in Hollywood's conception of its audience over time.

Attractions and Coming: Trailers and Temporality

The model proposed by Tom Gunning of the "cinema of attractions," which he uses to distinguish spectacle-driven early cinema texts from those which exemplify the emergence of cinematic narrative, has become a popular concept to apply more widely to non-narrative moments or modes within Hollywood cinema of any era. Gunning himself

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points to the contemporary persistence of the cinema of attractions "in the interaction between spectacle and narrative so frequently observed in Hollywood genres,"[72] and indeed Charles Musser has pointed to trailers as texts which foreground cinematic attractions in the process of promoting various features of a film without giving the story away.[73] Regardless of the specific rhetorical appeals they exemplify, trailers themselves are cinematic attractions *par excellence*, and like other sorts of attractions, they possess a unique temporality that sets them apart from narrative cinema.

Elaborating on his formulation, Gunning characterized the temporality of attractions as fundamentally different from that of narrative: "In effect, attractions have one basic temporality, that of the alternation of presence/absence which is embodied in the act of display. In this intense form of present tense the attraction is displayed with the immediacy of a 'Here it is! Look at it.'"[74] He goes on to note that attractions are often augmented by an "announcing gesture," such as the sweep of the hand or bow of the magician designed to call the audience's attention to a transformation about to take place, and that such announcements,

> beyond enframing (and therefore calling attention to) the act of display, ... also perform ... the important temporal role of announcing the event to come, focusing not only the attention but the anticipation of the audience. The temporality of the attraction itself, then, is limited to the pure present tense of its appearance, but the announcing gesture creates a temporal frame of expectation and even suspense.[75]

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Trailers, I would argue, are attractions that combine and/or alternate these two temporal modes, offering an intensified present tense into which is woven the anticipatory dimension of the "announcing gesture." Trailers are a specific, persuasive kind of attraction: while they continually invoke a heightened presence through their display of spectacular images, essentially the announcement (of a not-yet-seen film) *is* the event. Thus, audiences experience these texts as operating within a temporal zone comprised of *both* the two temporalities Gunning characterizes: a present that is thoroughly imbricated in an anticipated future.

Trailers are both like and unlike the pre-cinematic attractions to which Gunning compares early cinema. But their overall ideological function to promote the experience of cinematic spectacle, naturalizing cinema as spectacle and creating expectations for it, has obvious echoes in pre-cinematic attractions (and their "announcing gestures"). The notion of spectacle, or "the show" as experience or attractions rather than narrative content, precedes film, in such forms of entertainment as vaudeville and the circus, which exemplify different ways of combining attractions with an anticipatory promotional address to audiences.

The following discussion attempts to place trailers' various forms of audience address throughout the sound era in the historical context of vaudeville and circus modes of selling spectacle or attractions, in order to emphasize a continuity between trailers and some of their antecedents. While I do not attempt to offer an archaeology of trailers, these comparisons perhaps enable me to better describe those continuities of audience address in trailers that persist across time: how they reconfigure the films they represent into

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anticipatory promotional texts. I would suggest that there is a "vaudeville mode" and a "circus mode" of audience address in trailers, and while the individual models become less distinguishable within trailer promotional practices, they can be seen to utilize these strategies. In trailers, the vaudeville mode appears to be the source of the representation of a given film as having "something for everyone," participating in the rhetoric of generalization and inclusiveness, and thus incorporating a given film's attractions within the broader context of promoting the film narrative as a whole. The circus mode more directly encourages or invites audience participation (like the circus barker) and emerges from a rhetoric of hyperbole (like the circus poster), often singling out the film's attractions as the phenomenon or event that will draw audiences to the theater.[76]

Early cinema borrowed much from the tradition of vaudeville, including, as Miriam Hansen has pointed out, differentiation between genres.[77] Just as early film genres emerged from vaudeville roots, their promotion in trailers often relied on a vaudeville model to sell cinematic spectacle. Early sound trailers, including those for *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and *The Drunkard* (1935), often contain literal vaudeville echoes, such as stars standing in front of stage curtains and directly addressing audiences, introductory titles that set up subsequent film scenes like vaudeville placards (and like silent cinema intertitles), or smorgasbord samplings of the variety of the film's features. And just as trailer graphics can be seen as outgrowths or holdovers from silent era intertitles, trailers' salesmanship of the varieties of cinematic experience still echoes with a vaudeville model of audience address.

Trailers that exemplify the vaudeville mode of promoting spectacle tend to address the audience as if talking to them in front of a stage curtain (which some trailers

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literalize), an approach resembling less hype than the straightforward address of a lecture hall setting, or at times even of an informal conversation. They present the film as a variety show, announcing a range of different kinds of pleasures the film will offer, implying that whatever "you" want, the film will provide it, in the process acknowledging audiences and acknowledging that audiences have a choice and have preferences. This invoking of audience desire as a feature of film promotion is more direct in the vaudeville model than the circus model's hyperbolic assumptions that spectacle is universally appealing.

The front-of-the-curtain motif is seen in the ten minute trailer for *The Drunkard* (1935), which introduces all the film's stars in direct address to an implied theater audience in front of a stage curtain, even announcing that the actors will come in person to the theater where the film is playing. This trailer sets a precedent for the onstage lecture to or chat with the implied audience as a vehicle for demonstrating the variety of the film's appeals. Its stars make announcements to us in a long montage of direct address in medium shots in which they characterize their own roles in the film: "You'll applaud the hero and hiss the villain!" "And you'll laugh until your sides hurt!" "It will tear at your heart strings." "And it'll knock you cockeyed, ha ha" (spoken by cross-eyed star Ben Turpin).

This mode also incorporates comedic interaction with the implied audience, as in the trailer for *A Day at the Races* (1937), which opens with a somber man in front of a curtain whose announcement is interrupted by a pie thrown at him from the offscreen vicinity of the audience. Similarly, an Abbott and Costello vehicle *In Society* (1944) presents six "little tough guys" directly addressing the camera: "Hiya folks. Well folks,

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we had a lotta fun making this picture and we think you're gonna get a kick out of it too (all facing camera, hands in back pockets). Now should we let 'em have it?" They throw things at the camera, and the image goes out of focus. By directly invoking movie audiences and "interacting" with them, these trailers implicitly acknowledge that there is a choice these audiences may make whether to engage with the film being promoted or not. This strategy can also be seen more subtly in other trailers. For example, the mother's narration in the trailer for *Sing You Sinners* (1938) begins as a direct address to the audience as she sits knitting ("I'm the mother"), then switches to voice-over as we view scenes from the film and she chattily informs us that "To really know this Beede family, you should see us in action in Paramount's new picture, *Sing You Sinners*." This trailer in effect presents an amalgam of star and character addressing us now directly, as if onstage, now in voice-over from the edge of the film's diegesis, as if alongside the film's action, and mildly reminds us that seeing the film is the best way to get to know her family. This lecture/chat mode evokes the vaudeville or revue stage wherein a variety show takes place, offering cinematic spectacle as a cornucopia of generic and narrative features as well as attractions.

Other trailers highlight variety specifically in their address to audiences, often implicitly or overtly distinguishing or inviting audience preferences among a litany of proffered spectacles, along with narrative and genre elements.[78] A narrator tells us, "The whole world loves Tom Jones—the world of excitement, the world of spectacle, the world of laughter, the world of adventure, the world of romance" (*Tom Jones*, 1963[79]). Or titles announce: "*Duel in the Sun* –the picture of a thousand memorable MOMENTS...moments of romance...moments of adventure...moments of

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comedy...moments of tenderness...moments of heartbreak...moments never to be forgotten!" (*Duel in the Sun*, 1946). Once verbally introduced, each "moment" is illustrated with a clip from the film. This "something for everyone" rhetoric is posited within the generalized framework of an individual genre. The "world" the Tom Jones trailer constructs is a comedic one. The "moments" that make up *Duel in the Sun* are all shown to be Western moments. By quantifying or encapsulating aspects of the films' generic appeals in this way, these trailers construct genre at the same time as they construct genre-transcending commodity-units of spectacle (or attractions), aiming to land as broad an audience as possible to see a genre film by emphasizing the range of different aspects that might appeal to audiences within the specific genre.

Similarly, other trailers specifically offer the audience a range of reasons to choose the film, assuring them that no matter who they are, the movie's "variety show" is for them. "Pick your entertainer/ They're all stars/ Pick your girl—they're all winners/ Pick your tune—they're all hits/ Put your money on a sure thing," titles for *Take a Chance* (1933) announce.[80] Or narrators declare, "Here is adventure as you like it, romance as you dream of it... in a motion picture of vigor and bigness" (*Kit Carson*, 1940), and "Everything you want in this sparkling entertainment cocktail!" (*Stand Up and Sing*, aka *Mickey the Kid*, 1939).

Such solicitous invocations of film audiences' interests in spectacle as variety persist beyond the classical era, such as in the titles in the trailer for *South Pacific* (1958): "For those who have not yet seen it. For those who wish to see it again and again. The enchantment... the spectacle... the emotion... Vivid Drama... Romance...;" and the narration for the *Captain Newman* (1963) trailer: "What do you want in a motion-picture?

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Do you want a distinguished cast? [the cast is listed] Do you want a brilliant story? Do you want a rousing comedy? A deep emotional experience?" Again, after each element in the series is listed, a correspondingly illustrative clip from the film is shown. Moving towards the contemporary era, trailers can still be seen to utilize directly addressed reminders to audiences that films provide a variety of satisfactions, such as the narration in the trailer for the romantic comedy *Claudine* (1974) "If you've ever laughed, you'll dig *Claudine*. If you've ever cried, you'll dig *Claudine*. If you've ever had dreams, you'll dig *Claudine*. If you've ever had troubles, you'll dig *Claudine*. If you got soul, you'll dig *Claudine*. If you're young, old, rich, poor, black, white or green, you'll dig *Claudine*." Here the strategy of inclusiveness (and repetition) is at its most obvious, aided by the rhetoric of stardom—a film with an African-American yet clearly "crossover" cast (James Earl Jones and Diahann Carroll, post- *The Great White Hope* and *Julia*) is promoted via its trailer's insistence that the film's not just "for black folks."

Thus, the vaudeville mode of trailer address emphasizes the role of attractions along with narrative and generic elements, all considered as equally desirable aspects of commodified spectacle. In the contemporary era, this mode persists particularly within trailers for films that rely more on human interaction than dazzling visual effects. Like the *Claudine* trailer but generally without the extent of that trailer's narratorial blatancy, a range of star types, story situations, and/or genre signifiers is often offered up in order to appeal to the broadest possible audience by emphasizing the film's variety. Moreover, by privileging accumulations of such images or examples removed from their narrative context, these trailers posit them as attractions too: in the realm of trailers, anything that can be promoted as stirring any sort of emotion in spectators tends to be on some level

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reconfigured as an attraction. Again, trailers promote these attractions within their own particular, anticipatory yet present, mode of temporality. As the aforementioned trailer for *Pollyanna* (1960) asserts, "All the emotions of a lifetime! Years from now, you'll remember... this girl and this motion picture."

Another pre-cinematic mode of spectacle is the circus, and as Jane Gaines has argued, early cinema publicity borrowed much from P.T. Barnum's brand of showmanship and the rhetoric of the circus, which she characterizes as a hyperbolic discourse.[81] The hyperbolic discourse of trailers also demonstrates echoes of the circus mode. While the model of promoting film spectacle as variety relies more on generalization than hyperbole, its front-of-the-curtain posture vis-à-vis audiences perhaps an origin for the promotional strategy of selling spectacle by emphasizing inclusiveness of appeal rather than targeting genres, stars or particular stories for segmented audiences, the circus mode relies more on hyperbole than generalization. Its more commanding injunctions to audiences to participate in the experience of film spectacle rely on strategies drawn from a long American tradition of blatant exaggeration made famous by P. T. Barnum. Gaines compares early film publicists' exploitation stunts to Barnum's "promotional antics," characterizing their use of a rhetoric of excess in a manner that holds true for trailers as well.

> By definition, hyperbole is always more than the literal meaning. The pleasure afforded by hyperbolic representation is actually in this going beyond the literal or going "overboard," yet the hyperbolic mode is

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> straightforward and unmistakable. Knowing this, motion-picture showmen following Barnum have conceived of their craft as the attempt to construct the perfectly hewn blatant message. Exploitation discourse, then, is a kind of tribute to and aggrandizement of the belief that words and their meanings are perfectly coincidental. Nothing is hidden or implied. No extra work is necessary to construe the meaning. ...American culture, to a certain degree, equates hyperbole with value... In a culture that depends upon notions of "bigger" and "better" to evaluate all aspects of life, verbal exaggeration itself may be seen as a measure of worth. Puffery must be proportionate to the excellence of the product.[82]

The hyperbolic pole of the circus mode of trailer rhetoric in the promotion of spectacle differs from the pole of generalization exemplified by the vaudeville mode in its manner of audience address. Where the vaudeville mode chatted with or lectured to an implied audience who was assumed to desire a range of choices among a variety of spectacular features, evoking individual genres, stars and stories as vehicles for expressing the full and generalized variety of consumer choice, the circus mode exhorts an undifferentiated audience that the spectacles it offers, regardless of their particularities, will provide unqualified pleasure and undisputed excitement to all. This mode more blatantly emphasizes the promotion of cinematic attractions in Gunning's sense, over the vaudeville mode's broader conception of spectacle.

While the hyperbolic discourse of the circus mode in the classical and transitional era puts less emphasis on a "variety show" than on unified and universally appealing

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attractions, it does evoke a range of possible relationships between the attractions and the spectator beyond that of a seated audience facing a curtained stage at a distance—as does the circus itself. Posters heralding a coming circus as well as shouting barkers invite audiences to see! hear! and feel! the circus's many features. The sideshow barker invites the audience to step right up to experience sideshow attractions. The circus comes to the audience when it comes to town, the circus parade's arrival as much a part of the show as the circus itself. The circus mode of trailer rhetoric also invites audiences to "see" (or hear, or feel) features of the promoted film and to "step right up" or join in the fun. It also alerts audiences that the film spectacle—or, particularly in the contemporary era, event—will in some way come to them.

The "see/hear/feel" imperative hyperbolically touts the sensory appeal of the film's spectacular elements, often including an announcement of special technical features enabling this appeal. The THX and other sound system trailers which often precede coming attractions trailers in contemporary theaters are a good example of the persistence of the hyperbolic "hear!" rhetoric into the contemporary era, while earlier examples of "hear!" are most frequently found in trailers for musicals, which list and sample the songs from the film which audiences are assumed to desire to hear in full.[83] In the "see!" vein, a narrator in the trailer for *The Gang's All Here* (1943) barks, "Hundreds of Busby Berkeley beauties. All filmed in red, hot and blue Technicolor. The greatest and grandest musical comedy of the 20th century, from 20th Century Fox, the studio that makes all the best musicals... A wondrous profusion of stars... gaiety... songs... girls! Hollywood's all-time, all-high spectacular treat." Typical of many classical era musical trailers, this one covers all the bases in declaring this musical to be the apotheosis of

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musicals, promoting at once the film, its format, its studio, and Hollywood itself. Other "see!" trailers for musicals or comedies hyperbolically evoke visual pleasure, such as the title announcing that *Look for the Silver Lining* (1949) is "Shimmering with spectacle," or the one touting "Paramount's glittering Technicolor cavalcade of America's restless age!" (*Incendiary Blonde*, 1945). Musical trailers of the classical era often literalize this glitter and shimmer with sparkling or shimmering letters and graphic borders surrounding trailer imagery. The *Silk Stockings* (1957) trailer announces the film as "the big look in entertainment by the world's top talents," which is "Excitingly presented in Cinemascope and Metrocolor."

The "see!" motif is also called upon in trailers for adventure films or thrillers, to emphasize visual oddity or unusual sights—like the circus's presentation of wild animals, foreigners or "freaks." A narrator tells us, "A jungle revolts in all its fury to challenge man's greed! You'll see man-eating ants...insect hordes, savage alligators...Dark fear drives a helpless woman into the arms of a man she hates," and titles elaborate, "Emotions are stripped bare/ in an adventure beyond compare!" (*Appointment in Honduras*, 1953) Here the "see!" motif contributes to the promotion of an adventure film by evoking its story premises of "dark fear," enabling the generic visual atmosphere to sell audiences on a barely described story. The "see!" motif of promoting the adventure genre can also resemble a travelogue, as in the trailer for *The Lion* (1962), which tells us about "Africa, where you will see animals... a vast strange land..." reminding us also that it is "a film that was made for people—small, big, fat, thin..." (The circus mode's "come one, come all" rhetoric here converges with the vaudeville mode's promise of "something for everyone.")

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The most direct evocation of the circus among the trailers in this sample is in the trailer for the George Pal production, *The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao* (1964). The film, about a Chinese man with supernatural powers who brings his circus to the old west, evokes multiple genres, and the trailer uses the circus motif to promote the generic tangle as a cornucopia of visual delights. Randall's line "Yesiree—that's show biz!" tames and sums up a quirky special effects feast that might otherwise confuse audiences, and the narration literalizes the linkage of trailer hyperbole with the circus barker's litany. "Here, truly, is entertainment for ALL ages [Dr. Lao is 7,322 years old]... [here] is the mysterious beauty of the far east... and the roaring action of the far west... the thrill spectacle of the city that never was... the most fabulous fish story in history!..." The "see!" motif here explicitly joins the precinematic and cinematic forms of spectacle by linking the appeal of the circus with the appeal of special effects (and the promotion of their creator Pal). Another use of "see!" is to promote a film version of a work of literature which formerly could "not be seen," as the narration for *The Valley of the Dolls* trailer (1967) emphasizes: "Now—the motion picture that shows what the...all-time best-seller put into words... The nation's most startling and hotly discussed bestseller now on the screen with every shock and sensation intact."

The "Feel!" motif abounds in horror and adventure trailers in which various kinds of attractions are promoted as sensory assault, as in titles from *Devil Bat's Daughter* trailer (1946): "The fantastic reality of living fear!/ Horror more maddening than nightmares!" Or narration in the *My World Dies Screaming* trailer from the 1950s: "Uses subliminal thrills and chills for the first time—for your enjoyment—here is the scene as audiences will see it, here it is as your brain will see it. Now you will feel greater

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tension... than any human being has ever experienced at a movie," Titles in the *Hands of a Stranger* trailer (1962) announce, "You'll bear their imprint forever," and most succinctly, "Some movies you watch, some you feel. You'll feel *Mansion of the Doomed*" (1977).

The Screaming Skull's (1950s) titles combine "see" and "hear" messages to emphasize sensory assault as a generic feature of the horror film: "Listen! If you can imagine the furor of love then maybe you'll hear. These walls hear. These windows answer! *The Screaming Skull* is a motion picture magnificent in its horror. SEE the re-visualization of a woman scorned. See the vengeful violence of the undead!" This trailer for a Samuel Z. Arkoff/AIP film also provides a textual reminder of exploitation gimmicks (pioneered by William Castle in the '50s) utilized to ensure audiences get the message that horror films will assault them (such as ambulances parked outside theaters or vomit bags issued as audiences purchase tickets) in its presentation of a "Certificate of Assurance" on the screen: "This certificate assures burial services, without cost, to anyone who dies of fright while seeing The Screaming Skull."

Adventure trailers invoke a different kind of sensory assault, such as narration telling us that "Sergio Leone... brings [cast members] together, to blow you apart. Together, they'll blow you apart," in the trailer for the spaghetti western *Duck, You Sucker* (1972), or that there will be "Thrills to lift you from your comfortable seats, as 007 mixes business with pleasure. Excitement with pleasure. Suspense with pleasure. And danger" (*Goldfinger*, 1964). The physical effects of spectacle and attractions on audiences are assumed across genres to be desired as part of the moviegoing experience,

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and as these two trailers emphasize, one of the ways trailers persuade them to experience spectacle is to rhetorically erase the boundary between the screen and the audience.

This boundary is also erased via the circus mode's "join in" or "step right up" motif, which lures audiences to see the film by inviting them inside the screen, to participate in the film's discourse in some way. Titles proclaim, "Everybody, Sing! It's really something to sing about!" (*Yankee Doodle Dandy*, 1942), or a narrator announces, "Getting there is ALL the fun. Take her along. Take EVERYBODY along! Every seat is first class, and we've got enough seats for everybody. THIS is the way to travel! It is a wonderful world—if you'll take the time to go around it," (*Around the World in 80 Days*, 1956) in a trailer that constructs an equivalence between the audience's seatedness in the theater and travelling (first class). More recently, *Arthur's* (1981) zany trailer lures audiences to identify with its comic character by asking, "Don't You Wish You Were Arthur?;" or audiences are ordered by a narrator, in a refrain that uses repetition as an overdetermined reminder that this is a sequel, to "Return! to a galaxy, far, far away....Return! To heroic adventure!... Return, to the ultimate confrontation... Return for the climactic chapter of the Star Wars Saga.... *Return of the Jedi*!" (1983) Related to the "join in" motif is the "everybody's talking" motif, which piques audience interest by assuming that interest is already there, as exemplified by titles and narration in the *Peyton Place* (1957) trailer: "At last it's on the screen! *Peyton Place*. The motion picture everyone's waiting to see! The town everyone's talking about... It's all here...for everyone to see!" Here the book's readers become the film's assumed audience.

Trailers also tell audiences that the film they promote will come to them, just as the circus comes to town, both in graphic or narrated tags announcing (some variation of)

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"coming soon to this theater" and by metaphorically demonstrating that the film will enter audiences' physical or psychic environment in some way. Two adventure films of the Viking sub-genre illustrate this in titles proclaiming dramatically, "Across the Centuries/ Across the Seas/ Across the screen come The Vikings... in horizon-spanning Technirama and magnificent Technicolor, (*The Vikings*, 1958) and "Here it is!... Here they come!... Here they are!...Seldom has the screen seen such an avalanche of excitement" (*The Long Ships*, 1964). Similarly, Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) serves up dramatic visual clips interspersed with titles, "From the depths of the Never-Ending Ocean. From that fathomless World of Infinite Mystery and Unearthly Beauty, which Man has yet to Discover/ Comes the MIGHTIEST motion picture of them all!...," bringing close to audiences what the film's title places at a hyperbolic distance. The James Bond cycle trailers often expand on the film title's semiotic message, in the case of *For Your Eyes Only* (1981) collapsing the distance between the audience and the character: "Explosive. Exclusive. For your amazement. This Bond is for you.... This Bond is For your Eyes only!... No one comes close to 007, when 007 comes close to you."

The circus mode thus overwhelmingly promotes spectacle by emphasizing attractions as cinematic events that transcend narrative, that indeed, come to, or *at* you. Drehli Robnik has treated this phenomenon at length with regard to the contemporary "event film," calling attention to the extent to which the anticipation of films as events pervades not only trailers but film content itself, such that by the latter half of the 1990s, a sort of generalized cinematic imminence is deeply felt and overdetermined. The "event" is both the film and the expectation of the film: "advent and event become

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indistinguishable."[84] Robnik cites such examples as the numbers of '90s films that incorporate scenes of expectation or anticipation within their narratives (*Dante's Peak*, *Volcano*, *Armageddon*, *Deep Impact*, *Independence Day*) and the prevalence of weather and war narratives evoking global destruction surrounding the promotion of "blockbuster" films, from the general notion of a "media blitz" to specific visual motifs like the hurricane or tornado.[85] As Robnik notes, today the role of trailers is ever broader, as they proliferate in new types of exhibition spaces in the consumer market (on DVDs, in malls, on the internet), and they are increasingly necessary to the assimilation, regeneration and replication of the film event. The pure cinema event, he argues, is thus *never* present, but always coming—the attraction of the contemporary event film is "an attraction of coming."[86]

I would argue that trailers, which I agree (and have asserted) represent a highly influential contemporary textual mode that emblematizes a more broadly pervasive promotional tenor within many components of popular culture, should not be conflated with the event film phenomenon as a whole. They still retain their particular function of withholding the fullness of the cinema event to a greater degree than films themselves, even as they still display a unique sense of heightened presence by way of their proffered litanies of spectacles. If we play with the sexual overtones of Robnik's "attraction of coming" formulation in relation specifically to trailers, the attraction, I would argue, is one of "not coming—yet."

These examples of some of the typical ways trailers have historically promoted film spectacle following the pre-cinematic models of vaudeville and the circus do not exhaust the characterization of trailers' promotions of their attraction and spectacle, but

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observing the persistence of pre-cinematic rhetorical forms throughout the history of sound trailers helps ground an analysis of a variety of types of trailers in a recognition of some of the common lineage of the terms of their audience address.

A Note on Period and Sample

The periodization of Hollywood movie marketing is inseparable from the familiar landmarks of the broader history of American film. The well-defined period of the classical Hollywood cinema—an industry-based classification of the time between the invention of sound and the post-World War II anti-trust legislation, a time when the "big five and little three" major studios dominated production (along with distribution and exhibition) to a degree never matched in American film history—also produced "classical" trailers. Although I have viewed trailers from throughout their history, I am forgoing close analysis of silent trailers, since the first trailers to demonstrate a coherent and consistent rhetoric emerge largely in the early sound era.

While the classical era is generally considered to have ended with the Paramount divestiture decrees of 1948, Hollywood continued to turn out films and trailers whose aesthetics and economies were more or less reflective of the studio era mode of production up to the end of the 1940s (and even, in many ways, into the '50s, as will be seen). Another industrial factor affecting changes in film promotion going into the transitional era was the emergence of television which, while ultimately enabling an economically auspicious reconfiguration of the studio system, caused a crisis at the box office and sent Hollywood producers in search of new means of ensuring the biggest possible audiences for feature films. Both Hollywood filmmaking as a whole and movie

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marketing underwent an "identity crisis" during these years that in many ways paralleled broader problems facing American cultural identity/ies. The post-classical pre-New Hollywood era of trailer production falls roughly into two periods: the 1950s, and the era from 1960 to the early '70s. This distinction does not coincide with precise industrial benchmarks, but rather reflects the fact that the fifties and sixties are important intervals in the American cultural imaginary. The break between those two periods does fall in about 1960, with the end of the blacklist and the beginning of "Camelot."

The year 1975 is significant as the year Hollywood moved into the contemporary blockbuster economy, as a result of the success of new levels of saturation booking and advertising for the opening weeks of release of the film *Jaws* (which were in turn influenced by *Billy Jack*'s pioneering of "four-walling," or saturation distribution, in 1973).[87] Thomas Schatz has argued for consideration of the release of *Jaws* as a marker for the beginning of the New Hollywood era.

> If any single film marked the arrival of the New Hollywood, it was *Jaws*, the Spielberg-directed thriller that recalibrated the profit potential of the Hollywood hit, and redefined its status as a marketable commodity and cultural phenomenon as well. The film brought an emphatic end to Hollywood's five-year recession, while ushering in an era of high-cost, high-tech, high-speed thrillers. *Jaws*' release also happened to coincide with developments both inside and outside the movie industry in the mid-1970s which, while having little or nothing to do with that particular film, were equally important to the emergent New Hollywood.[88]

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Those developments, according to Schatz, are the rise of mall movie exhibition and of a post-Baby Boom mall-wandering and repeat-viewing audience; the waning of the "Hollywood renaissance" of the art cinema movement; the growth of the "star director" phenomenon and increased influence of the Hollywood talent agency; and three major changes in the relationship between cinema and television: greater emphasis on television advertising for motion pictures, the emergence of pay cable channels, and the home video revolution.[89] In conjunction with these changes in exhibition practices, a number of financial changes begun in the sixties were being felt in the industry, characterized by Timothy Corrigan as "an age of inflation and conglomeration" which enabled many of the new production structures Schatz details, and as a result of which, audience address changed as well. Corrigan writes:

> The studios transformed the fundamental nature of the film product by forcing massive alterations in the relation of a film to an audience, since to return ... massive investments meant appealing to and aiming at not just the largest possible audience (the more modest strategy of classical films or the alternative art-house audiences of early auteur film culture) but *all* audiences. No longer is investment capital directed at differentiating one audience, however dominant, from another. Instead, those investments must aim to "undifferentiate" the character and desires of different audiences, usually by emphasizing the importance of that investment as a universal value in and of itself—for example, the presence and use of

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> computer animation or of an expensive star or director. With blockbusters, what begins as an attempt to target the teenage audience quickly becomes an attempt to absorb as many other groups as possible within that mass; it becomes the only methodology that makes sense to a conglomerate's bottom line.[90]

This era's trailers, from the mid-seventies to the present day, demonstrate a consolidation of strategies developed during the formation of the blockbuster era. These trailers have the job of selling a greater generic variety of film texts than was present in either of the two earlier incarnations of Hollywood filmmaking, and they also demonstrate a consolidation of new marketing formulas to reflect new corporate bottom lines, resulting in a contemporary body of trailers that is at once highly formulaic and predictable—at times almost neo-classical—and visually dynamic and arresting. The following discussions break down trailer practice along the lines of this periodization, examining those from the classical era (approximately 1927 to 1950), the transitional era (1950 to 1975) and the contemporary era (1975 to the present).[91]

Over seven hundred trailers were viewed for this project. I used the collection of trailers at the UCLA Film and Television Archive, and viewed as many as possible until the viewing began to feel significantly redundant. Although there are other trailer collections, it is nearly impossible (and unnecessary) to see all the trailers that exist. UCLA's collection was comprehensive enough (and typical enough of the range of Hollywood trailers extant) that I decided not to pursue other trailer collections and

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considered it as an arbitrarily delimited corpus. I did supplement it with viewing of contemporary trailers and collected a variety of these on video.

In order to select a sample from which to draw case studies that would be fruitfully illustrative of my argument about their implied audiences, I first rated the main corpus of viewed trailers (see Appendix 1) in two ways. I selected out trailers that clearly and interestingly demonstrated the inscription of assumptions about the film's audience and its desires in one way or another; and I selected a group of trailers that were representative: whether of their era's trailers in general, of one of the three key rhetorical appeals (genre, story, and stardom), or of their interaction. My goal was to include in these smaller groups enough trailers that the entire corpus of viewed trailers was fairly represented—both by calling attention to the prevalence of interesting forms of audience address in trailers, and without omitting any major typical trailer characteristics (although many anomalous ones inevitably got left out). The smaller group of about eighty trailers were re-viewed and rough shot analyses were performed.[92]

When it came to selecting my case studies, however, I found that I was at least as interested in the more anomalous and exceptional trailers of the smaller sample as I was in the more typically representative ones. After viewing numerous trailers that were frankly repetitive in their typicality, the exceptions seemed more and more to be the most interesting proof of "the rule." By their more blatant displays of Hollywood's difficulties in reaching audiences or characterizing films, or by unusually elaborate glimpses of industrial practice behind the scenes, for example, they seemed to express contradictory attitudes about audiences, films, and the film industry which are present in less highly visible forms in many of the typical trailers as well. I present the most interesting of these

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"troubled trailers" as my case studies, in separate chapters following the case studies that serve as typical examples for each rhetorical appeal in each era, by way of advancing my hypothesis that these trailers effectively display some of the core contradictions of promotional practice in ways that vary from typical ones only in a matter of degree, and that while they may be anomalous, they are tellingly so.[93] Like the excessive qualities of the genre of 1950s melodrama that were said (by Thomas Elsaesser and others) to more vividly (and at times subversively) figure the era's ruptures in the American social fabric than did other, more mainstream genres of the time,[94] the contradictions visible in "troubled trailers" help elucidate that communicational mismatch between "sender" and "receiver" that is often characteristic of the cinematic promotional regime of Hollywood as a whole.

Theatrical trailers, central components of the film promotional campaign, make assumptions about their audiences. Displaying the variety of these assumptions through rhetorical analysis of trailers throughout the history of Hollywood film adds to our understanding of the way narrative film is promoted, and thus enhances the use value of our contemporary trailer spectatorship. Once we are in the movie theater with our popcorn and our heightened spectatorial readiness, we often allow ourselves to be tucked into the rhetoric of "previews of coming attractions" and their appealing mini-narratives in ways that haven't yet been analyzed either by media scholarship or the literature on advertising. Increasing our knowledge of "who they think they're talking to" allows us to resist such packaged assumptions about our desires. Rhetorically mapping Hollywood studios' ideas of how they broadly conceived of their audience enables us to more effectively sidestep, refuse, or reconstruct these assigned spectatorial positions, while

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potentially allowing trailers themselves to contribute to the awakening of audiences to their own role in the commodity relations of Hollywood film.

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[1] Few journal articles treat movie trailers specifically. Among them the most significant are probably the following: Mary Beth Haralovich and C. R. Klaprat, "*Marked Woman* and *Jezebel* : The Spectator-in-the-Trailer," *Enclitic* 5-6.1-2 (1981-82): 66-74; Paolo Lughi, "When Saying Is Getting Somebody to Do Something: Manipulation and Speech Acts in the Verbal Language of the Trailer," *Semiotic Inquiry/Recherches Semiotiques* Vol. 4, Nos. 3-4 (Sept.-Dec. 1984): 356-71; S. T. Eastman, et. al, "Influences of Previews on Movie Viewers' Expectations," *Current Research in Film* 1 (1985): 51-57; Anat Zanger, "Next on Your Screen: The Double Identity of the Trailer," *Semiotica*, Vol. 120, Nos. 1-2 (1998): 207-30; and Andy Medhurst, "The Big Tease." *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 8, No. 7 (July 1998): 24-26. These range from semiotic approaches (Haralovich and Klaprat, Lughi, Zanger) to communication studies-oriented audience analyses (Eastman) to popular commentaries (Medhurst). Current research by Vinzenz Hediger and Drehli Robnik will be addressed below. I should also point to a film, *The Politics of Perception* by Kirk Tougas (1973, 33 minutes) which presents a trailer for a Hollywood film, then denaturalizes it by displaying a print of the print, followed by a print of that print and so forth until the images disintegrate. Thanks to Philippe-Alain Michaud for telling me about this film.

[2] Gaines, Jane M., "Fabricating the Female Body," in Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog, eds., *Fabrications*, New York: Routledge, 1990, 15.

[3] Film studies has many models for considering those who watch films: in semiotics they're called spectators; in commodity theories they're called consumers; in reception studies they're called the audience. I draw on all three models and use all three words.

[4] The explorations into semiotics that have taken place in film studies in the past 20 years appear to have obviated or subsumed Aristotelian rhetoric (indeed semiotic analysis is often referred to as rhetorical criticism). For example, Roland Barthes's *S/Z* offered a model for reading texts based on five codes of signification which bear resemblances to the rhetorical tropes I will discuss (although they serve to illuminate the texts more than the audience in the texts), and semiotic models and vocabulary contribute to these textual analyses as well as rhetoric proper. But I find Aristotelian rhetoric specifically fruitful in treating trailers because of its focus on persuasion.

[5] Haralovich, Mary Beth, and C. R. Klaprat. "*Marked Woman* and *Jezebel* : The Spectator-in-the-Trailer." *Enclitic* 5-6.1-2 (1981-82), pp. 66-74.

[6] Hansen, Miriam, Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, 2.

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[7] Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989, p. 68. Benjamin's formulation of the notion of the dialectical commodity remained incomplete in his lifetime. Buck-Morss's description is the most extensive elaboration of the idea *per se*, but Vivian Sobchack explores the recent televisual phenomenon of the New Year's Eve montage as a dialectical image in a forthcoming article: Vivian Sobchack, "'Happy New Year/Auld Lang Syne': On Televisual Montage and Historical Consciousness," unpublished manuscript, 1999, 24-30 (forthcoming in James Friedman, ed., *Reality ^{2}*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press).

[8] See, for example, Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, cited in Buck-Morss, above; Charles Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1978), pp. 1-22; Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987; Jeanne Allen, "The Film Viewer as Consumer," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Fall 1980), pp. 481-499; and Miriam Hansen's study cited above.

[9] Friedberg, 67-68.

[10] Stewart, Susan, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 20.

[11] Gunning, Tom, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle* 8, Nos. 3-4 (1986), reprinted in Thomas Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI, 1990, 57.

[12] This is not only a contemporary phenomenon: there is a substantial body of writing on Hollywood cinema's role in the promotion of specific values and/or trappings of capitalism during the classical era. See in particular Hansen's study cited above; Charles Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1978), pp. 1-22; Gaines, op. cit., Mary Beth Haralovich, "Advertising Heterosexuality," *Screen* Vol. 23, No. 2 (July/August 1982), pp. 50-60; and Susan Ohmer, "Female Spectatorship and Women's Magazines: Hollywood, *Good Housekeeping*, and World War II," *Velvet Light Trap* 25 (Spring 1990), pp. 53-68.

[13] This awareness encompasses such qualities as detailed by Peter Wollen in his influential article on Godard which outlined the "seven cardinal virtues" of counter-cinema that became the premiere critical commandments of structuralist-era film studies. ("Godard and Counter Cinema: Vent d'Est," in Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods*, Vol. 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pp. 501-507).

[14] Factual details in this brief trailer history are drawn primarily from the Cerone article cited below, but various articles in *Variety*, *Motion Picture Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*,

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and other trades in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences clipping file, as well as Swiss scholar Vinzenz Hediger's important research, particularly his chronology of National Screen Service (see Appendix 2) also informed my understanding of this history. The history of trailers per se is really another dissertation, and will be well covered by Vinzenz Hediger's forthcoming book based on his dissertation: *Verführung zum Film. Der amerikanische Kinotrailer, 1912-1998.* Forthcoming, 2001.

[15] Cerone, Daniel, "The Great Movie Come-On," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1989.

[16] Thomas, Kevin, "Movie Trailers Have Long Run," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 25, 1966, 10.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Personal communication with Vinzenz Hediger, currently writing a historical dissertation on trailers, Nov. 11, 1998.

[19] Wyatt, Justin, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, 156.

[20] Personal communication with Hediger.

[21] Lees, David and Stan Berkowitz, "The True Story Behind Those 'Coming Attractions' (You'll Laugh! You'll Cry!)," *Los Angeles Magazine*, January 1979, 96.

[22] Wyatt, 72.

[23] The phrase is Gerald Mast's from *A Short History of the Movies*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1981, 430, quoted in Wyatt, 73.

[24] Contemporary trailer campaigns usually start with a "teaser," produced early in the film's production, which is shorter and contains less footage than the trailer. The main theatrical trailer, of which there may occasionally be more than one version, is usually ninety seconds to three minutes long. The case studies I treat here are all theatrical trailers, but my research as a whole encompasses selected teasers. (I do not treat television spots, a different facet of the film promotional campaign.)

[25] Hediger, Vinzenz, "The Narrative Turn in Film Advertising: On the Physiognomy of Contemporary Trailers," presented at "You Can Have It: Kinorituale," Vienna, Austria, November 1999.

[26] Haralovich, Mary Beth, "Motion Picture Advertising: Industrial and Social Forces and Effects, 1930-1948," dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984, 226-7.

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[27] Interview with "Smitty" (Robert Smith), trailer producer and vice-president of Frankfurt Balkind, 1994.

[28] Transferring the meaning of one sign to another (from a person, situation, thing or feeling to a commodity), Williamson argues, ads work through us--we complete their meaning by making the connections the ad doesn't make explicit ("I can be like Lindsey Wagner if I buy this car she's showing me"), yet the ads enable this connection-making through their form. We are drawn "into the transformational space between the units of the ad. Its meaning only exists in this space; the field of transaction; and it is here that we operate--*we are this space*" ..."the signified exists in the transformational space and we, as subjects, are constituted in it too...this is placing *us* in the space of the signified." This is in part a more nuanced way of stating the widely recognized fact that in advertising, the audience is the ultimate commodity. But, in addition, the audience's meaning-making capacities are a part of the text of the ad. Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, New York: Marion Boyars, 1978, 44-45.

[29] Advertising scholar Michael Schudson's view of advertising as "capitalist realism" helps illuminate the visual commonalities of the genre of trailers. Capitalist realism "glorifies the pleasures and freedoms of consumer choice in defense of the virtues of private life and material ambitions." The aesthetic modes that capitalist realism can encompass (not just the aesthetic of realism per se) include surrealism, comedy or farce, which are all "set out of time and out of space...they present simplified social scenes that show the world 'as it should be,' they picture people as representatives of larger social categories, and they seek an accommodation with whatever is new or newly marketable." "The surface is 'overaccented.'" Michael Schudson, *Advertising: The Uneasy Persuasion*, New York: Basic Books, 1984, 232.

[30] Peter Wollen characterizes this aspect of Bazin's work thus: "Bazin emphasized the importance of physiognomy, upon which—as in the films of Dreyer—the interior spiritual life was etched and printed." Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969, 132.

[31] Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov's experiments with editing in the 1910s included juxtaposing shots of a variety of subjects with a single reaction shot of actor Ivan Mozhukhin, with the result that the identical facial expression appeared to signify different emotions depending on what sort of image it followed. Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia*, New York: Harper Collins, 1994, 768.

[32] I have stopped counting contemporary trailers that use this trope, which has been satirized by comics and indeed by trailers themselves—often the first to satirize their own conventions.

[33] Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema.*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974, 126.

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[34] This process is interesting to think about in relation to suture theory. Trailers enable an odd sort of "hyper-suture" in which the "absent one" does not represent an ideal spectator position, but a film we haven't yet seen, for which we can construct an imaginary full length plot (or *fabula*) cued by the trailer's images of attraction.

[35] Iser argues, with regard to reading, "The reader must be made to feel for himself the new meaning of the novel. To do this he must actively participate in bringing out the meaning and this participation is an essential precondition for communication between the author and the reader. Rhetoric, then, may be a guiding influence to help the reader produce the meaning of the text, but his participation is something that goes far beyond the scope of this influence." Specifically, in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: "Is the conflict to be resolved? If so, how, and why? The answers are not given us. They are the gaps in the text. They give the reader the motivation and the opportunity to bring the two poles meaningfully together for himself." Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, 30, 34.

[36] Freud's concept of the "navel" of a dream, "the spot where it reaches down into the unknown," is suggestive both of the trailer's centrifugal concatenation of an unseen film's most provocative imagery, and the way it promotes audiences' desires for an ideal film. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, James Strachey, ed. and trans. New York: Basic Books, 1965, 564. (I am grateful to Colin Gardner for pointing out this similarity.)

[37] Smoodin, Eric, *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 45.

[38] Smoodin, 60.

[39] Ibid.

[40] I am endebted to Vinzenz Hediger's discussion of the anticipatory dimension of trailers in relation to their source films as a "futurum exactum," which he posits in psychoanalytic terms as a compensation for lack (of knowledge of the future). Vinzenz Hediger, *Trailer: Demnächst in diesem Theater; Zur Mediengeschichte eines amerikanischen Filmwerbemittels*, MA thesis, Zurich, 1995. I am also indebted to Lutz Nitsche for his précis of the thesis and for calling my attention to this concept. Hediger's integration of historic and psychoanalytic resources in defining the cultural status of trailers as nostalgic objects has great value. The lens of my own microscope, however, while drawing on many psychoanalytic concepts, privileges social-historical formulations such as Raymond Williams's over psychoanalytic ones, in search of an accessible primer for critical spectatorship and a social history of trailers' implied audiences.

[41] Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977, 128-29

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[42] I borrow the term from Nick Browne's characterization of the flow of TV watching that includes programs but also ads, station identification and public service announcements, in his article "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1984): 174-82, reprinted in Horace Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*. 4th ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

[43] The broader implications of contemporary trailer supertexts will not be addressed here but deserve further treatment.

[44] As Noel Burch, Dana Polan and others have pointed out, contemporary advertising "would make a Godard green with envy" (Noel Burch, "Narrative/Diegesis--Thresholds, Limits," *Screen* 23, July/August 1982, 32. See also Dana Polan, "A Brechtian Cinema? Towards a Politics of Self-Reflexive Film," in Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods*, Vol. 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and ironic, formalist or abstract distance no longer offers automatic protection from its manipulations. In fact, ironic positionings are often integral to the development of consumer identities for "Generation X" audiences, as articulated in an article by a "gen-X" scholar with a knack for titles (Bill Salzmann, "Reality Bites, so Buy a Big Gulp," *Bad Subjects* No. 19, March 1995).

[45] An empirical "who," or a determination of actual trailer audience reception practices, would moreover be inaccessible for the eras I am treating.

[46] Jacques Lacan's elaboration of the acquisition of language as a progression from a pre-linguistic real through the Imaginary of the "mirror stage," to the Symbolic realm wherein differences beyond the simple opposition "I/not I" can be discerned, is a model that many film theorists have found fruitful to extend to discussions of the film spectator's apprehension of cinematic language(s). Although this is not a Freudian or Lacanian study per se, I use the term "imaginary" in its Lacanian sense. See Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, translation and commentary by Anthony Wilden, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

[47] Cook, Pam, *The Cinema Book*, London: British Film Institute, 1985, 241.

[48] Anthony Wilden's reading of the respective realms of the Symbolic and Imaginary orders of signification is useful here: "The Symbolic is the domain of similarity and difference; the Imaginary that of opposition and identity. The Symbolic is the category of displaced reciprocity and mediated relationships; the Imaginary that of mirror-relationships, specialization in symmetry or pseudo-symmetry, duality, complementarity, and short circuits. ... The Symbolic function is collective and the domain of the Law; the Imaginary creates the illusion of subjective autonomy....The separation of the organism from the environment is Imaginary; the ecosystem is Symbolic... The being of the

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Imaginary is either/or; the being of the Symbolic is both-and." *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1972, 264-5 (in most recent scholarship the terms are no longer capitalized).

[49] Klinger, Barbara, "Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture," in James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, eds., *Modernity and Mass Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, 119. Klinger's dissertation was published as: *Melodrama and Meaning : History, Culture, and the Films of Douglas Sirk*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1994.

[50] Klinger 1991, 125.

[51] Klinger 1991, 120.

[52] Rhetoric has never had much presence in film studies, largely because it was associated early on with communication studies as a social science, while film studies has institutionally aligned itself with the humanities. Moreover, rhetorical studies have tended to develop within communication studies along non-hermeneutic lines generally viewed by film scholars as having limited value for critical analysis.

[53] Eagleton, Terry, *Ideology: An Introduction,* London: Verso, 1991, 201.

[54] Zavarzadeh, Mas Ud, *Seeing Films Politically,* Albany: SUNY Press, 1991, 54.

[55] Nichols, Bill, *Ideology and the Image*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, 178.

[56] Trailers, of course, are a prime site for a *less* conscious sort of critical spectatorship by virtue of their conventional function, wherein audiences are encouraged to turn their critical eye on a trailer solely for the purpose of a thumbs-up or thumbs-down (i.e. will they spend money on the film it promotes?). Popular critical spectatorship thus tends to be reduced to a *consumer* critical spectatorship by the trailer exhibition experience.

[57] Nichols, Bill, "Film and the Uses of Rhetoric," draft of paper presented at Society for Cinema Studies, San Diego, 1998, pp. 6,9.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Klinger, 132.

[60] Aristotle's other categories of rhetoric are deliberative (dealing with counsel or advice) and judicial (dealing with prosecution and defense). Lane Cooper, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle: An Expanded Translation with Supplementary Examples for Students of Composition and Public Speaking*, New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1932, 17.

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[61] Bitzer, Lloyd F., "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 45, 1959 (December): 408; emphasis in original.

[62] Hairston, Maxine C., "Bringing Aristotle's Enthymeme into the Composition Classroom," in Moss, Jean Dietz, ed., *Rhetoric and Praxis: The Contribution of Classical Rhetoric to Practical Reasoning*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1986: 63, 65, emphasis in original.

[63] As one contemporary trailer producer put it, "Market research can be helpful if you use it simply as a tool. But if you rely too heavily on it, it can kill you. It's a mistake to think this is a science. Making trailers is part magic, part voodoo, part experience." Frank Thompson, "Drawing a Crowd: 100 Years of Movie Marketing," *The 25th Annual Key Art Awards Exhibition Catalog*, Los Angeles: *Hollywood Reporter*, 1996, 24.

[64] Staiger, Janet, "Announcing Wares, Winning Patrons, Voicing Ideals: Thinking about the History and Theory of Film Advertising." *Cinema Journal* Vol. 29, No. 3 (Spring 1990), p. 6.

[65] Bill Nichols provides a number of answers to this question for documentary film in his detailed analysis of the various ways documentaries construct rhetorical arguments, in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

[66] Eisenstein, Sergei, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949, 57.

[67] Eisenstein, 82.

[68] Sobchack, 1999, 30.

[69] The associative structures of fictional films would fall within that of poetics.

[70] Williamson, 44.

[71] Bertrand Russell's theory of logical types, an important component of communication theory, states that "there is a discontinuity between a class and its members," such that "[t]he class cannot be a member of itself, because the term used for the class is of a different level of abstraction or logical type from the terms used for the members of the class." As described by Anthony Wilden within the framework of an analysis of communication theory, in his *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange*, London: Tavistock, 1972, 117.

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[72] Gunning, Tom, "The Whole Town's Gawking: Early Cinema and the Visual Experience of Modernity," *Yale Journal of Criticism*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1994, 191.

[73] Musser, Charles, "Rethinking Early Cinema: Cinema of Attractions and Narrativity," *Yale Journal of Criticism*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1994, 227.

[74] Gunning, Tom, "'Now You See It, Now You Don't': The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions," *Velvet Light Trap*, No. 32, Fall 1993, 6.

[75] Gunning, 1993, 7.

[76] Interestingly, I found evidence that at least one "trailer man" actually emerged from the circus. According to Vinzenz Hediger, Frank Whitbeck, head of the trailer department at MGM from 1934 through 1957, started his career as a circus barker for Barnum and Bailey in the late 1890s, and used his vocal talents for MGM trailers and featurettes up until the 1950s. Moreover, his approach, far from being seen as a throwback, was considered innovative in cinematic promotional terms: Hediger notes that David O. Selznick said of him in 1943, "Whitbeck has always been years ahead of the rest of the business in his conception and production of trailers." This would tend both to back up my argument about trailers' circus roots and speak to a continuity of circus-influenced discourse in trailers well into the classical era. (Personal communication with Vinzenz Hediger.)

[77] "While many... films, especially before 1903, were modeled on familiar acts and vernacular iconography, the transposition of these into a new medium emphasized distinctions between genres... Fictional genres were derived largely from vaudeville acts, such as comic skits and sight gags, dances, erotic scenes, highlights from popular plays and operas, and melodramatic episodes; they were also reenactments of historical events and tall tales of the Wild West, tableaux from Passion Plays, and trick films in the tradition of the magic shows." Hansen, 1991, 31.

[78] Rick Altman's thesis that classical era promotional discourses tended to promote multiple genres bears mentioning here. As will be discussed, trailers tend to take a more inclusive view of promoting genres than do the posters in Altman's example. See his *Film/Genre*, London: British Film Institute, 1999.

[79] While the study is restricted to Hollywood films, there is an occasional brief mention of trailers for British-made films if, as in this instance, the films were significantly enough incorporated into the Hollywood market that their trailers were indistinguishable from American ones.

[80] My use of the slash (/) in quoting trailer titles signifies the break between units of signification—whether connected by a crawl, cut, fade, or added fade-in, the set of words between the slashes is presented to audiences as a unit, followed by the next unit.

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[81] Gaines, Jane M., "From Elephants to Lux Soap: The Programming and 'Flow' of Early Motion Picture Exploitation," *Velvet Light Trap* 25 (Spring 1990), 35.

[82] Gaines, 35-36, emphasis in original.

[83] Trailers' presentation of a variety of songs in musicals, presented here as an example of the circus mode, has much in common with the vaudeville mode's "variety show" motif, indicating the impossibility of fully separating the circus and vaudeville influences in trailers. While it is useful to distinguish the democratic impulse to promote "something for everyone" from the hyperbolic impulse to promote "everything for everyone," it should be noted that hyperbole and generalization are not mutually exclusive and that in most trailers the modes tend to work together.

[84] Robnik, Drehli, "I Can Hardly Wait: Preview and Anticipation in the Multi-Media Film Experience," presented at "You Can Have It: Kinorituale," Vienna, Austria, November 1999.

[85] Robnik here quotes Thomas Elsaesser's comments about the contemporary blockbuster film's "carefully orchestrated marketing campaign [which] involves a build-up and an intensification, followed by a media-blitz whose nearest analogy is the weather. It is much like a hurricane gathering force in mid-Atlantic, as it were, showing first signs of turbulence in toy shops or on MTV, before moving inland..." Thomas Elsaesser, "Digital Cinema: Delivery, Event, Time," in Elsaesser and Kay Hoffmann, eds., *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel, or Cable?*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998, 214

[86] Robnik, 1999. My apologies to Robnik for any misrepresentations of his paper: I am citing my notes which were taken on the basis of a simultaneous translation of his lecture presented in German at the conference. Many thanks to Julia Ezergailis for the translation.

[87] Wyatt, 110.

[88] Schatz, Thomas, "The New Hollywood," in Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins, eds., *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, New York: Routledge, 1993, 17.

[89] Schatz, 19-22.

[90] Corrigan, Timothy, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood," in Jon Lewis, ed., *The New American Cinema*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, 47.

[91] Clearly, however, the shifts and "eras" I identify are hermeneutic constructs, useful primarily as pointers to articulate some differences amidst the continuities of promotional

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history, and as such, they can be seen as somewhat arbitrary. Some would argue that "New Hollywood" began with the "Hollywood Renaissance" of the late '60s, for example. See Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

[92] This sampling strategy is influenced by George Custen's use of the "purposive sample" in his *Bio/Pics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), where a necessarily smaller corpus of more readily available films was selected out of a larger group, with the goal of reproducing the range of the larger group's relevant characteristics. In my case the coded parameters were: whether the trailer was representative or paradigmatic; whether it was exemplary of rhetorical appeals to audience interest in genre, story, stardom or a combination; the genre, year and studio of origin (and budget level) of the trailer. The smaller sample of eighty or so is proportionally similar to the larger sample of the UCLA collection in these features, although there are so many gray areas in some of these categories the process of maintaining proportional similarity during selection was more intuitive than systematic.

[93] The selection of these "troubled trailers" was still determined by a concern for presenting a variety of types of trailers, for representing the temporal range of each era, and for providing examples of each of the conventions within the various rhetorical appeals.

[94] Elsaesser, Thomas, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," *Monogram* 4, 1975: 1-15, reprinted in Christine Gledhill, ed., *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, London: British Film Institute, 1987. See also other articles in that volume.

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Chapter Two

The Rhetoric of Genre

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the conventions of trailers with regard to the rhetoric of genre (one of the three principal appeals to audiences I have identified as key to trailer rhetoric). I follow up the general discussion of these conventions with examples of typical trailers from each of the three eras of Hollywood sound film (classical, transitional, and contemporary) to illustrate the conventional operations of the rhetoric of genre. The following chapter treats the rhetoric of genre in specific case studies from the sample that stood out, not so much in their typicality as in the degree to which, through the rhetoric of genre, they either inscribed textual indicators of just whom trailer producers thought their audience was across the three historical eras studied, or were troubling instances of apparent difficulties or mismatches in promoting trailers on the basis of genre. Both the typical case studies and the specialized ones, or "troubled trailers," were chosen because they were in some way exemplary of the rhetoric of genre (although many in the latter group are more anomalous than they are typical), as well as to provide examples both from a range of genres and from the same genre across different eras. The decision to focus on textual (rhetorical) analysis of a range of trailers from the sound era in order to assess Hollywood's conception of its audience springs from a belief that trailers themselves can provide important evidence of some of the ways audiences are persuaded to put films into established genre categories, conceive of new genres, or rethink what constitutes a given genre.[1] Since trailers are the fulcrum of film promotional campaigns, their study can give a unique perspective on the broader

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"ecosystem" of a film's relationship to the economic and sociocultural environments of its production and reception.

Genres have long been called on to differentiate art works within a framework of similarities, and have proven to be an effective means for the film industry to encapsulate and promote the particular type of experience a given film will provide. One of the principal goals of Hollywood film promotion, as emphasized by Rick Altman, Janet Staiger and others, is product differentiation.[2] Thus, promoting films on the basis of a rhetoric of genre would appear to contradict this goal—in its emphasis, literally, on the generic. It is this apparent contradiction that not only informs but also animates appeals to audience interest in genre in Hollywood trailers.

In those trailers where the rhetoric of genre is dominant, product differentiation is mediated by a comforting familiarity in representations of those elements of a film that producers are assuming the audience will want to see. Unlike the rhetoric of story, which sells the film on the basis of presentations of particular story elements and assumptions about what audiences consider a good story, or the rhetoric of stardom, which sells the film on the basis of assumptions about audiences' interest in seeing established or potential stars in situations or circumstances which the trailer introduces, the rhetoric of genre sells the film on the basis of assumptions that audiences want stories and stars to fit into familiar generic worlds. In these trailers, story premises are not as fully laid out, and stars, while promoted, are not so much offered up for audience identification as they are identified with their genres.

The promotional appeal of genre as a whole rests heavily on familiarity, on the lure and comfort of the known. Generic worlds are instances of a particular kind of

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cinematic place where we want to go again and again, whether by re-viewing favorite genre films or by revisiting such a place via a new film of the same genre. The decision to attend or to rent a film is frequently heavily weighted by the kind of (known) generic place we desire to inhabit or revisit, and it is this oneiric and/or ritual aspect of moviegoing that the rhetoric of genre exploits.[3] At the same time, the promotional category of genre is a key method by which films are efficiently packaged as commodities. As Steve Neale characterizes, the function of genres is to

> institutionalize a set of expectations which [the industry] will be able, within the limits of its economic and ideological practices, to fulfill. ...Genres... provide a means of regulating memory and expectation, a means of containing the possibilities of reading. Overall, they offer the industry a means of controlling demand, and the institution a means of containing coherently the effects that its products produce.[4]

Recognizing this process of ideological containment or boundary-policing is key to the discernment of Hollywood's implied audiences through trailers' rhetoric of genre. Like all systems of communication, rhetoric, and particularly rhetoric's figure of the enthymeme (where assumptions about the listener or audience are structured into an argument), relies on the setting and recognition of boundaries between self and other, or in this case producer and audience (the trailer producers' knowledge—or assumptions—of where the audience's shared understandings of a given topic are likely to start and stop). Protecting the industry's investments in its control of these boundaries is the

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domain of ideology. Trailers highlight such boundary-policing through their formal properties. As perhaps the most montage-driven signifying system in the regime of popular cinema, their "dis-continuity editing" comprising a sort of "meta-montage," the rhetoric of trailers trades heavily in boundaries, edges, and the spaces between where meaning happens (or is assumed to happen). Looking in particular at how generic boundaries are policed, whether by containment or expansion, gives us an idea of the parameters of trailers' assumptions about audiences.

Even as the lure of familiarity in the rhetoric of genre in trailers can be seen as a strategy of ideological containment, it strikes a chord with real audience desires for certain kinds of generic "spatial" containment—the feeling of being "in the mood" for film noir, a romantic comedy, or for '50s science fiction, for example. Trailers do things to generic space. While the "meta-montage" structure of most trailers makes their temporality arguably more important to their signification than their spatiality because they do not generally provide spatial continuity, trailers still enable a reading of the forces at work in the Hollywood culture system in relation to social space.

The conceptual generic "spaces" that movie audiences crave and that the industry attempts to configure or contain, are at once *products* of a social imaginary and material industrial *products*, and we can conceive of trailers as a "production" of space which encompasses both of these aspects of the word.[5] By analyzing the ways that trailers' discontinuous representations of generic space rhetorically display industry assumptions about audiences' desires for these spaces, we can think these "representations of space" dialectically, neither reducing them to an "effect" of capitalist marketing tactics nor treating them as an unproblematic fulfillment of real audience desires. In turn, analysis of

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the promotion of generic space can begin to illuminate other features of actual social space in each of the three eras of trailer production.

Genre has become an increasingly problematic and nuanced category of film analysis in recent years, as critical discourse has begun to make a stronger attempt to take into account both reception practices and the studio production discourse in the process of genre formation. As Rick Altman and Steve Neale (among others) point out, genre is a multiply and historically determined category, and often what critics define as one genre, the studios might define as another.[6] Altman, moreover, has also argued that movie posters demonstrate that classical era films were often promoted by invoking multiple genres. Altman offers the example of two generic promotional hooks frequently utilized for classical adventure films besides that of the adventure genre itself: these are "romance" and "travel." Characterizing a poster for *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), Altman argues,

> Hollywood has no interest, as this poster clearly suggests, in explicitly identifying a film with a single genre. On the contrary, the industry's publicity purposes are much better served by implying that a film offers "Everything the Screen can give you." Typically, this means offering something for the men ("EACH DAY a Rendezvous with Peril!"), something for the women ("EACH NIGHT a Meeting with Romance!"), and an added something for that tertium quid audience that prefers travel to adventure or romance ("the mighty tapestry of the FOG-SHROUDED ANDES").[7]

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In trailers, however, this multiplicity tends to play out more as an inclusiveness *within* genres. Once we look at trailers, elements that might appear as divisive or segmented appeals to different markets in print promotions can contribute to a perception that studios are offering audiences a more inclusive construction of individual genres by virtue of the trailer's inevitably more "holistic" presentation of these same diverse filmic elements within a single cinematic text—one which apes and reproduces (small portions of) the film itself.

The trailer for *Only Angels Have Wings*, for example (which I include here for the purpose of comparing the trailer's evocation of genre to the poster's, although its primary appeals are to audience interest in *stardom*), repeats the poster's "each day" and "each night" lines in its titles, and appeases the tourist faction in its introduction, where a narrator states, "This is Barranca, a South American banana port where men live by their daring, and women by their charm." Overall, the trailer functions within the rhetoric of stardom, folding all three of the generic elements the poster calls to our attention into a text that also promotes the film's studio ("that gave you *You Can't Take it With You*") and its director ("created by the wizardry of a master picture-maker"), but keeps returning to images, scenes and titles promoting stars Cary Grant and Jean Arthur, as well as the "return to the screen" of Richard Barthelmess. The film's genre, while not the principal focus of the trailer's rhetoric, does read in this trailer as "adventure film," while the titles (which in the poster, Altman felt, appeared to fragment generic coherence) here function as enthymemic assumptions that audiences want romance and exotic locations to be incorporated into the adventure genre. As will be seen, this incorporation of diverse genre

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elements within one overall generic appeal is typical of trailers' rhetoric of genre (and not just of genre's subordination to stardom, as in this trailer) in the classical era.

The lure of familiarity which the rhetoric of genre invokes is enhanced by this "holistic" inclusiveness, which in trailers even more effectively than posters, tells audiences that the film will be "Everything the Screen can give you." However, if familiarity were the only lure necessary there would only have to be one movie. Trailers offer several strategies to differentiate films *within* the rhetoric of genre, and the interaction between newness and sameness in these trailers' appeals to audiences is key to the identification of conventions developed over time to keep audiences coming back for more genre films. More often than not, however, strategies to invoke novelty (which can be as simple as showing an image of an alien creature, or as complex as a single image-sound moment which promotes the assumed desirability of a film's star, story *and* genre all at once by using juxtapositions of titles, clips and voice-over) are recuperated by enthymemes of familiarity so as to naturalize newness as unproblematic, as containable within the same generic space, as a cozy fit, yet exciting and different.[8] Enthymemes of generic familiarity would be exemplified by such appeals as: "From the studio that brought you [another film within the same genre]," where the missing term is "You saw and loved *that* film, and this will be the same." Within the rhetoric of genre, interactions between novelty and familiarity often play out in trailers as representations of space that at once sell us the film as a commodity and evoke the historically-determined pleasures of generic spaces. The time-space of Hollywood genre films is represented as a familiar land we can go to again and again for the price of a ticket, yet it's different every time.

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Conventions of the Rhetoric of Genre

While the case studies address ways in which the rhetoric of genre might differ and evolve from one era to another, this section explores trailer conventions within the rhetoric of genre to call attention to some of the similarities in promotional rhetoric from a variety of genres across time. Regardless of the economic and historical underpinnings of individual trailers, each relies on a range of conventions to maximize its appeals to audience interest in novelty within a framework of generic familiarity.

The most obvious way that trailers invoke specific genres is through *iconography*. Most trailers show live-action clips from the film, so it is hard to avoid presenting genre iconography in any trailer, but those with strong genre appeals to audiences will often underline familiar generic iconography by presenting it in hyperbolic fashion, such as opening a Western trailer with dynamically intercut shots from a horseback chase scene over picturesque Western terrain, or by allowing an iconographically significant but narratively insignificant scene, such as an extreme long shot of a group of people—for example a chorus line dancing on stage in a musical—to play under the trailer's titles. This is a frequent trailer trope used to create visual generalizations and place locations generically.

Hyperbole and *generalization* work together in genre appeals to differentiate each film within an overall fabric of familiarity. Their interaction is also evident in trailer graphics. Titles may announce the film as "the most spectacular singing-dancing entertainment ever produced" (*Brigadoon*, 1954), or tell us that "It has the burning brand of greatness on it!" (*The Big Country*, 1958), often in letters that themselves evoke generalized generic associations, such sparkling title lettering for classical musical

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trailers; wavy, jagged or soft-focus lettering for horror film trailers; or big square early printing press fonts that connote "Wanted" posters for Western trailers. Graphic genre generalization in classical and transitional era trailers also takes the form of generically cued drawings accompanying titles, such as musical instruments or musical notes, lassos or cacti, skeletons or gravestones, flowers and birds or other "feminine" motifs (for romantic comedy or melodrama trailers).

The monumentality of western iconography is often flagged by trailer narration and titles which use assumed interest in the genre of westerns to also sell story or star elements in hyperbolic terms. For example, the trailer for *Shane* (1953), the "greatest western ever filmed," tells us its "monumental background is matched by moving human drama," excerpting key moments from the film overlaid by a narration which emphasizes its "human story" and "deadly conflict," without fully characterizing its narrative premise. The dominant images in the trailer are extreme long shots of the landscape surrounding the family's homestead, but the vastness of the western landscape is tempered by the use of the word "human" (twice) to scale it down to familiar terms.

The counterbalancing of western monumentality with human scale was evident in more than one trailer's hyperbole: the *Renegades* (1946) trailer overlays narration emphasizing that "Big, human, exciting, is...the story of a red-headed, red-blooded girl" onto a horseback riding scene, and sums up the appeal for audiences of the film's world as "a heart-stopping era of adventure and romance!" It could be argued that the word "human" in western trailers is shorthand for "something for the women," and its function of balancing bigness with intimacy relates to gendered targeting. However, other less apparently gendered tropes are also brought into service to cut western monumentality

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down to size, such as realism: a frequent refrain of classical and transitional era western trailers is a promise that viewers will see "the west as it really was" (*Canyon Passage*, 1946, *Two Rode Together*, 1961), which has the effect of tempering the hyperbolic discourse with an assumption that audiences don't just want the "movie" west, they want the *real* (read: more down-to-earth) west.

Monumentality is a strong iconographic selling point within the rhetoric of genre for epics as well as westerns. Classical epic trailers like the one for the 1934 version of *Cleopatra* usually open with generalized extreme long shots of spectacular epic sets peopled with hundreds of extras, under titles dripping with hyperbole: "Cleopatra...the story of a love greater than the civilization it destroyed...that a greater civilization might be born! The glory that was Egypt! The grandeur that was Rome!" Such hyperbolic generalizations are usually followed or preceded by a few action scenes emphasizing spectacle in motion (in *Cleopatra*, the chariot race scene, a procession of soldiers bearing Cleopatra's sedan chair), which are then followed by the trailer's central narrative section, a sequence of short dialogue scenes which provide samplings of dramatic and romantic conflict. However, in trailers operating within the rhetoric of genre, these scenes rarely encapsulate the story in a rational way, but more often tend to privilege romantic clinches (lovers kissing and embracing), romantic dialogue and arguments or other indications of dramatic conflict out of narrative context. As in western trailers, narration or titles at this point often counterbalance (the novelty of) epic monumentality with interludes that provide reminders of (the familiarity of) the film's human scale ("yet...more than a superlative spectacle/ A stirring human love story/ written in words of fire!") Also frequent in these "human" portions of the trailer is a character and/or cast identification

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(ID) section which encapsulates each of the major characters' roles in the story. These trailers usually revert after the central portion to a spectacular closing montage with titles literally enumerating the images underneath ("Spectacle that challenges the imagination!/ SEE 8,000 players in astonishing scenes/SEE ballet of the leopard girls!/ Thousands of chariots... horses... warriors... astounding battle... fire-throwing catapults... war galleys...").

Another pervasive trailer convention often marshaled for the rhetoric of genre is *repetition*. Frequent repetition within narration, titles, and visual motifs connotes both sameness (again and again) and newness (unprecedented abundance). Repetition also generates rhythm, and rhythm is an important structural feature of trailers' sensory appeal. Rhyming, alliteration, visual doubling, references to "double," "twice," "again," and other refrains of return and repetition pepper genre appeals in trailers even when they're not for sequels or cycle films (which of course capitalize on repetition in numerous ways).[9] Repetition is at the heart of the concept of genre in mass culture, a point emphasized by Fredric Jameson, who remarks that "The atomized or serial 'public' of mass culture wants to see the same thing over and over again, hence the urgency of the generic structure and the generic signal."[10] The fact that repetition functions within trailers' rhetoric of genre in such overdetermined ways redoubles and reinforces a conception of audiences as craving repetition and familiarity in genre films. Strong figures of repetition also remind audiences of their own attachment to this kind of repetitive and ritualized spectatorship. Jameson says of pop music,

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> The passionate attachment one can form to this or that pop single, the rich personal investment of all kinds of private associations and existential symbolism which is the feature of such attachment, are fully as much a function of our own familiarity as of the work itself: the pop single, by means of repetition, insensibly becomes part of the existential fabric of our own lives, so that what we listen to is ourselves, our own previous auditions.[11]

In the experience of trailer spectatorship a somewhat similar phenomenon occurs—when we watch a trailer for a genre film what we see is our own cinematic memories and associations of the genre, which are mapped onto the specific details of the individual film being promoted. Ritualized and overdetermined repetition enhances this phenomenon, encouraging us to incorporate the new elements with our favorite genre viewing experiences, whatever they may be.

Within trailer rhetoric, repetition generally functions to reinforce existing genres. This is most obviously demonstrated in trailers for sequels, films that belong to cycles, and double-bill trailers (an infrequent type of trailer utilized primarily in the transitional era when there was still such a thing as a sure-bet double-bill). The double-bill trailer, of which I found only five from the 1950s onward, is generally structured as a trailer for one film, with a small mention of the second feature at the end. This serves to remind audiences that both films belong together, and that there is a larger category to which they both belong. The trailers for *The Screaming Skull* (1958) and its second feature *The Terror from the Year 5000*, as well as the trailer for *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb*

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(1964) with its second feature *The Gorgon*, are examples. Another approach is to deliver briefer scenes from each of the two films, cementing their similarity for audiences, as in the double-bill trailer for *Ivanhoe* and *Knights of the Round Table* (both 1952).

There are also rerelease double bill trailers, where two films from a cycle are promoted together, as in the trailer for a double-bill of *Dr. No* (1962) and *From Russia With Love* (1963), which invites audiences in its narration to "Test your Bondsmanship by identifying..." characters from past Bond films, presenting a montage of various villains, and asking "well, how are you doing?" Then the trailer gives us a split screen montage of action scenes from the two films, announcing "Double the danger! Double the thrill! Double the women! Double the excitement!" This trailer's direct quizzing of the audience is less a challenge than a reminder that Bond lore is worth knowing, a tacit acknowledgment that audiences are already grabbed by this cycle. The summary verbal and visual emphasis on doubling then hyperbolically asserts that audiences will get a lot more of the same. Another rerelease trailer, for *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *Magnum Force* (1973), also emphasizes duplication and the familiarity of the new film in a cycle but stresses sequentiality (and newness) in addition to simultaneity--"First there was Dirty Harry...Then he came back...in Magnum Force: a killer with a badge on a rampage of law and order. A cop with a .44 Magnum and just dirty enough to use it." The novelty of *Magnum Force* is given equal weight with the durability of the "Dirty Harry" franchise by following the "first/then" structure with a simultaneous cueing of both titles in the final sentence.[12]

Similarly, trailers for sequels remind audiences of the familiarity and novelty of the sequel through tropes of repetition. Trailers for *Four Wives* (1939) and *Four Mothers*

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(1941), both sequels to *Four Daughters* (1938), are typical of classical era sequel trailers. They use narration and titles to provide literal direct-addressed reminders to the audience: as we see a four-shot of the women with their names superimposed below their images, titles ask, "Remember these girls? Now they're 'Four Wives,'" and a narrator amplifies, "one of the few perfect entertainments the screen has ever offered;" and after an array of clips from the film, superimposed titles inform us that the film is as "poignant as a haunting melody, swelled to thrilling new intensity" (as we see an orchestra and its conductor), providing "all the joy and heartbreak of life itself" (as we see a couple peering at a baby in its hospital crib). Representations of the life cycle of women enables this classical trailer cycle to cement the rhetoric of familiarity/novelty by equating the film's rewards with the movement of the generations and with the rewards of "life itself," and even as the cycle is associated with melodrama by the musical imagery and verbal equation, reminders of its comic appeal abound in the clips as well, making it the "perfect" family entertainment (something for everyone).

The trailer for the second sequel, *Four Mothers*, opens with a medium shot of a gum-chewing male worker on a billboard scaffold, who addresses the audience asking, "Remember this?" as he points out a billboard for *Four Daughters*, then points to another: "Say, and this was a dandy too," (*Four Wives*) "and wait'll you see this one--best of 'em all." He turns to the side, and a title flips up: "They're all coming back again," followed by a four-shot of the women with their names superimposed below, which pulls back to include parents, husbands, and children in buggies. Titles follow, along with clips that tend to illustrate the titles ("All their intimate problems...All the dreams and desires that make them so human with singin' and swingin'. Remember how they delighted you

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in 'Four Daughters.' Now Go to See 'Four Mothers'"), and that present samples of the types of (new) family situations the film will treat (a love scene, "Dad, we're breaking up," etc.)

The generalizations of the titles are amplified by clips that present textural, rather than expository, glimpses of the film. We aren't lured to see the film by intriguing story premises so much as by the universality of a family situation (familiarity)--along with changes that accompany each new era in the women's life cycles (novelty). The family situation is neatly packaged by the trailer's promotion-within-a-promotion framing of the billboards. And in this pre-targeting trailer,[13] the personified audience member assigned to lure us is a working class male, his gum-chewing persona an apparent anathema to the refinement of the women's melodrama. While these films' genre is clearly signified and promoted (the family comedy/melodrama), it is increasingly emphasized that this genre is for everyone. (It is interesting that the male billboarder appears in the trailer for *Four Mothers*, the title for which contains less implied male participation in the story than do those for *Four Daughters* or *Four Wives*.)

Trailers for sequels (and sequels themselves) become even more common in the contemporary era, and their use of repetition continues to draw audiences in with a promise of familiarity and novelty. The trailer for *Staying Alive*, the 1983 sequel to *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) emphasizes novelty by not mentioning the film's status as sequel for most of the trailer. Difference is emphasized by Travolta's wardrobe, a different love interest, and indications of a show-within-a-show structure that differs from the original film, but familiarity is reasserted by the narrator's final word: "It's five years later--but the fever still burns." Narration connecting the original story to the sequel

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opens the trailer for *Futureworld* (the 1976 sequel to the 1973 film *Westworld*): "Now...the problems have been corrected. The technology has been perfected." In the *Smokey and the Bandit II* trailer (1980) the sheriff (Jackie Gleason) addresses the audience in a folksy introduction interspersed with clips from the film, "I'm sure you all recall... I got news, the bandit is back. Ain't no way he's gonna make a fool out of me... This time he's takin' on too much!" A trailer for *Rocky II* (1979) shows the final scene of the first film, announcing, "The movie that captured the heart...continues." These trailers create metonymic linkages between the new and the tried and true through narration and/or through visual reminders, whether clips or identifiable characters from the original film.

Like the *Four Wives* and *Four Mothers* trailers, these contemporary sequel trailers demonstrate a rhetorical assumption that the trailers' audience has seen the original films. But unlike the classical trailers, only one of these examples clearly posits the film's universal appeal, the one for the sequel to the blockbuster *Rocky* (the trailer for which is discussed elsewhere as an example of the "something for everyone" strategy as seen in contemporary era trailers). The others appear to be tacitly acknowledging their films' segmented appeal by addressing those assumed to know the films' generic and narrative situations ("the fever still burns," "the problems have been corrected," "the bandit is back"), asserting simply that the new film will offer more and better for those who want it.

The prevalence of sequels in genre films of the late '70s and '80s enables even a trailer sequel: the trailer for *Friday the 13th Part 2* (1981) is a sequel to the trailer for *Friday the 13th* (1980). The first film's trailer establishes a graphic motif of counting

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days, with screen-filling titles that list numbers, 1, 2, 3, on to 12, each followed by a clip from the film, the clips building in suspense to the final title, "Friday, the 13th," followed by an announcement, "You may only see it once, but that will be enough." The sequel's trailer announces, "On a June night in 1980, Friday the 13th..." followed by a clip from the original film, then, "Why should Friday the 13th, 1981 be any different? The body count continues. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23." The clips following each number decrease in length as the numbers ascend, then the trailer's tag line announces "The day you count on for terror is not over." The idea of repetition and the notion of sequel are overdetermined in this trailer series in a clever way that links repetition with terror (and thus with genre appeals)--and manages to create anticipation for the next film out of dread of the next murder. Even the remark about seeing it only once comes across as a challenge to see it more than once. (The film ultimately spawned six sequels.)

The *Friday the 13th* trailers hyperbolically illustrate the way in which sequels reinforce audience viewing of genre films by linking the repetition of production with the repetition of reception (repeat viewing). The rhetorical logic of sequel and cycle trailers entails a textual demonstration of the producers' knowledge that audiences liked the original film by asserting in the sequel trailer their desire to make another one like it, which in turn creates an assumption that audiences will want to come see the latest episode or version since they are assumed to have liked the first one. However, this logic can only succeed if novelty is asserted along with the original film's proven likeability. The rhetoric of sequel and cycle trailers dovetails with the rhetoric of genre in part because sequels tend to be genre films, but also because genre, as previously mentioned, is the packaging of a circumscribed generic world, as opposed to story elements or stars

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in situations. Sequels and cycles thus duplicate the precise generic worlds of their predecessors more consistently than they do their story elements or stars—thus, trailers that assert the rhetoric of genre reinforce existing genres almost as if genres were sequels on a grander scale.

"Generic sequels" are posited in trailers that capitalize on generic "sameness" by explicitly reminding audiences of similar successful films within the same genre that have preceded the film being promoted, a strategy common to trailers throughout the sound era. This includes the frequent classical era trope of "From the studio which gave you..." as in *The Last Outpost* (1935) trailer's title proclaiming "Produced by the studio which gave you 'The Lives of a Bengal Lancer'" (also 1935), another empire-building war drama, or the trailer for the musical *Coney Island* (1943), with titles up front proclaiming one by one, "20th Century Fox/ Then/ "Alexander's Ragtime Band"/ Now/ It is/ "Coney Island." The narrator then adds, "five years ago, Alexander's Ragtime Band set the musical standard," and goes on to assert that *Coney Island* is destined to become an even greater hit. Ragtime music plays over the titles. The *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) trailer announces that the film is "in the spirit of An American in Paris" (another Gene Kelly musical, 1951).

Numerous examples from later years continue this trope, such as trailers *for The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo* ("'20,000 Leagues Under the Sea' was only the beginning..."), *The Seven-Ups* (1973) and *The Sorcerer* (1977), and some refer more obliquely to their predecessors, such as the tag line in the trailer for *After The Fox* (1966), "You caught the pussycat, now chase the fox," a reference to 1965's *What's New Pussycat*, another Peter Sellers comedy. *Lord Jim*'s trailer (1965) plays on the appeal of

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Lawrence of Arabia (1962, also starring Peter O'Toole) without even mentioning it, by drawing out generic similarities to the earlier film, such as emphasizing its status as biography, using clips to illustrate its international canvas and the character's interaction with nature, and with a narration reminiscent of the earlier film's premises: "There are many nameless men who prefer to live alone. None was more respected or more damned than Lord Jim...Caught between two worlds..." Trailers can refer even more obliquely to earlier films and thus assert genre by using the earlier films' music, such as a martial arts/blaxploitation trailer for *Queen Boxer* (1970s) using the *Shaft* (1971) score, or the *Sliver* (1993) trailer's use of the *Basic Instinct* (1992) score.[14] In the cases of *After the Fox*, *Lord Jim*, and *Basic Instinct*, stars are being asserted as the commonality with the prior film in addition to genre, but in all three examples I would suggest that the stars are brought into service to cement the genre appeal rather than promoted for their own sake.

Repetition is related to another convention common to the rhetoric of genre, *the equation*. Through narration or titles and at times visual linking, trailers often assert an equation between the film and its generic subject matter, or between the spectator's (assumed) experience and the characters' experiences.[15] Puns might link characters' desires or actions to assumptions about our desires to view the film, such as the reference to "Dangerous curves ahead for...[cast members]" followed by the tag line "It's the entertainment 'pick-up' of the year!" in the trailer for *They Drive By Night* (1940). In this case both the reference to "dangerous curves," which at once equates driving with sex and sex with danger, and the one to an "entertainment 'pick-up'" which equates hitchhiking with sex and both with spectatorship, assume spectators' interest in the

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perilous sexuality of film noir. Trailers utilize such equations to allow audiences to link particular generic features with their anticipated spectatorial experience.

Trailers for biopics typically utilize the trope of the equation to quickly encapsulate in narration or titles the film subject's claim to fame (the life is equated with the work), as in "His life was his music, his music was his life" (*Leadbelly*, 1976), or "The lady who sang the blues and lived them" (*Lady Sings the Blues*, 1972). Both of these trailers link this equation with a statement about the subject's legendary status ("a tall mountain of a man" in the first case and "hers is the story of a child becoming a woman; a lady becoming a legend," in the second); and accompany their narrations with scenes sequenced to mark the subject's transformation from troubled to triumphal, thus providing both specific details that differentiate the individual film and strong markers of familiarity that enumerate typical biopic features.

A frequently invoked equation is the linking of aspects of the film's subject matter with its production process. Vivian Sobchack has explored this aspect of film promotion in her phenomenological study of Hollywood historical epics, where she discusses epic pressbooks and other publicity as functioning to layer onto the film a sense of temporal magnitude and thus a "construction of general historical eventfulness" by way of the other kinds of magnitudes involved in film production—Herculean efforts by countless workers, giant sets, and so forth. [16] She cites pressbook rhetoric for *How the West Was Won*, which juxtaposes on one page the statement "Thousands of creative men and women and skilled technicians combined their talents to make this motion picture a reality," and a shot from the film of people setting out for the West with a caption reading, "They came by the thousands from everywhere, for to them the West was the

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promise of the future."[17] Sobchack points out that these strategies rendered history, or "historical eventfulness," a packageable spectator/consumer experience.

Trailers promoting historical epics through the rhetoric of genre back up her findings, and while other types of trailers also may make reference to the film's production processes, these trailers (including epic-hyphenates like *How the West Was Won*, an epic-western) are unique in the frequency of their utilization of this particular equation, the magnitude of the film's subject matter with litanies of production magnitudes. The "8,000 players" referred to in the *Cleopatra* (1934) trailer expands to the statement in the narration of the *Spartacus* (1960) trailer that "Nothing was spared to make Spartacus the superb achievement it is. Neither time nor money nor talent. For in Spartacus you will see the finest cast ever assembled, relive history's most exciting and inspiring drama." The trailer for *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962) visually juxtaposes scenes from the film--"a fantastic series of historical events"--fading into one another, with behind-the-scenes footage evoking the super-human efforts required to bring such events to the screen, including "the first ship built especially for a motion picture!" Such promotional strategies imply that the production industry assumes audiences demand evidence of the epic scope of films in this genre to a greater degree than most other genres, perhaps in order to differentiate them from fiction or from some kind of boring cinematic history lesson. In any event, while reinforcing Sobchack's argument about historical epics, these trailers' equations of the two kinds of magnitudes serve the rhetoric of genre by reminding audiences of both the familiarity of epic scale and the (hyperbolic) differences this particular film will offer within that rubric.

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Beyond merely invoking genres, trailers also contribute to genre definition. Much has been made in recent work on genre of the hybridity of contemporary genres in the pervasive postmodern media climate of pastiche and recombination of earlier popular narratives and myths. Trailers are a historical precedent for generic recombination and quotation, even as they illustrate the industry's attempts to force unusual or anomalous films into familiar generic molds. Both the reinforcement and the hybridization of familiar generic categories are found within this sample of trailer texts, and both aspects provide evidence of the rhetorical audience Hollywood has historically envisioned for its films. In addition to repetition, which allows genres to be reinforced in close continuity with audience expectations based on prior experiences of them, trailers reinforce genres by bringing in "new blood" while comparing it with earlier generic models. The reconfiguring of established genres to accommodate new kinds of filmmaking usually takes the form of associating new elements with a genre, fitting odd films or smaller market films such as "art films" into established genres, or even positing a new subgenre to consolidate audience familiarity with something new.

The *Rounders* (1965) trailer, for example, asserts newness for the western, in narration that tells us, "Nowadays it's the gals who make the west wild. Today in the new west, you dance the twist...It's the new west all right." Clips show Glenn Ford and Henry Fonda, horses and women, wrapping up with "...as the new west marches on." Similar updatings occur in musical trailers, such as those for *Athena* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (both 1954), the former announced in a title as "the MGM musical with young ideas," superimposed over an extratextual shot of young people getting into theater seats, and the latter announced as "the exciting new look in musicals."

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Other trailers evoke authorship, not for its own sake but to enhance genre appeal, such as the intriguing marriage of Jules Verne and Walt Disney in the narration for the *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) trailer: "the motion picture screen explodes with unprecedented power, as the two masters of imagination, Jules Verne and Walt Disney, join to bring you a shattering new experience in entertainment." This trailer assumes audience knowledge of the authorial name and story (if not of the novel) while emphasizing "Hollywood's leading Academy Award Winner" as having transformed it into "The Mightiest Motion-picture of them all!" Its narration appears almost to erase time and distance by allowing Verne and Disney to "join" to produce a film, exemplifying the way in which trailers package (novel) authorship as a feature of cinematic experience--in this case in the service of packaging the fantasy genre. The increasingly assumed audience awareness of *film* authorship during the transitional era grew exponentially in the blockbuster '70s, and is also at times utilized to promote genres, such as the *Dressed to Kill* (1980) trailer's citation of "Brian DePalma, the master of the macabre, who shocked audiences everywhere with..."

The much-cited emergence of nostalgia and quotation in films of the 1980s brings with it to promotional discourses a new aspect of the familiarity/novelty symbiosis. Novel elements of old genres are directly promoted in trailers such as those for *Pennies From Heaven* (1981) and *One From the Heart* (1982), the latter opening with citations of Coppola's credits and calling the film "a new kind of old-fashioned romance." The trailer for *The Big Chill* (1983) offers "the new stars of the '80s in a comedy for all times." The trailer for *Body Heat* (1981) evokes classical film noir visual motifs but uses close-ups, graphics (the letters of the title sear sizzlingly into a black field one at a time), and wind

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chime sounds, along with short silent action clips, to endow noir conventions with a new (neo) full-color, sensory mystique.

Another way trailers reinforce genre is to promote anomalous or one-of-a-kind films under familiar generic rubrics. Feature documentaries, always a problematic genre within the Hollywood filmmaking canon since they tend to be thought of as "educational" and boring, are sometimes promoted as adventures in order to bring them more closely into the entertainment "fold." The newsreel compilation *50 Years Before Your Eyes* (1950), for example, is able to offer audiences "the whole exciting panorama of the last 50 years." Animal documentaries have been promoted as adventure stories in the vein of *King Kong* (1933), as early as *The White Gorilla* (1945), which tells us in titles interspersed with animal clips (in keeping with the circus mode), "It's weird, it's fantastic, it's exciting! ...It's packed with thrills, adventure, romance... Bigger than a three-ring circus!" It also offers teasing hints of dramatic conflict such as a woman fainting, followed by shots of the gorilla and narration: "the unconscious form of a girl puzzles the white gorilla..." Later, Walt Disney brings this genre to children with the "True-Life Feature" series, as exemplified by *White Wilderness* (1958) which uses titles and narration formats familiar from fiction film trailers.

One anomalous film raises its own cult status to a genre so as to draw audiences to extend its release. *Billy Jack* (1971), in a unique post-release campaign, was promoted with a footageless trailer which displays a title announcing that "Billy Jack didn't win an Academy Award, but... people all over America have paid more than $30,000,000..." and that the film played longer in "hundreds of cities" than any film but *The Sound of Music*. The trailer calls it a cult film, "part of the language...you have to see it to understand,"[18]

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and compares it in that regard to *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Last Picture Show*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and *The French Connection*—a bizarre string of genre-bending associations. An earlier trailer for the film had emphasized the character's use of martial arts in the service of Native American struggle and synopsized the story, but it's clear by the time of the second trailer that the film's greatest selling point is the response of its audience. As discussed elsewhere, the release pattern for this film set the stage for the emergence of New Hollywood. Obviously, the cult status of films is rarely a major hook in trailer campaigns unless for rereleases, but the production of this second *Billy Jack* trailer illustrates Hollywood's strategy of incorporating audience response into promotion by anointing the cult film as a genre when a film's prior promotional campaign misses the mark.

A type of anomalous film that became institutionalized as such within the Hollywood film market after the demise of the studio system was the "art film." These films are occasionally promoted within the rhetorical terms of established genres, but more prevalent is the emergence of new generic conventions in the attempt to promote the art film as a genre. For one thing, artistry itself becomes a selling point for such films, as exemplified by the frequent citation of critics and references to the film's director as an artist, such that certain ways of flagging the director mark the film as an art film and thus as belonging to a genre. The *Casanova* (1976) trailer, for example, welcomes us "to the dream world of Federico Fellini," and notes that this is his first English language film, "an erotic portrait of a rake... a honey-tongued liar...seen through the incandescent vision of Fellini." The trailer for *Girlfriends* (1978) cites "the glittering world of Cannes" as the spawning ground for "one movie... as new and as fresh and different from all the rest as

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its director, Claudia Weill." Such comments cue audiences that while (as works of art) these films are of course different and unique (and thus, studios may assume, potentially puzzling to some audiences), they still fall into a familiar "new" generic category ("ohhh, it's an *art* film"). The trailer for *The Pawnbroker* (1965) exemplifies some of the formal art film trailer conventions seen in the sample, including increased use of typewriter-style graphics in citing reviews of the film, use of non-diegetically motivated jazz for the trailer soundtrack, short clips that sample the film's emotional climate rather than provide exposition, and use of stills or semi-abstract framings such as the shot of the pawnbroker window with its barred gate over which the title is superimposed.

Occasionally, the trailer sample yielded examples that labeled a new cycle within a genre, or at least helped a cycle to become familiar to audiences, backing up Rick Altman's argument that studios employed promotional discourses in the service of their project to "initiate film cycles that [would] provide successful, easily exploitable models associated with a single studio."[19] A cycle, of course, is a group of films within a genre that possess strong plot and/or star continuities, such as the Dead End Kids films or the Star Wars films. In the more commodity-oriented contemporary market these are coming to be called "franchises." This is the case with the trailer for the Warner Bros. film *The Black Legion* (1936), which names this early Bogart film as a "headliner" drama in a title reading, "The dramatic truth behind the headlines that shocked the nation--from the producers of G-Men, Bullets for Ballots..." This categorization frames the film's premise--"a story of a man, a woman, and a mob!"--within the comfortably familiar terms of the gangster film for audiences who (studios assume) may need help contextualizing the film's somewhat anomalous treatment of the Ku Klux Klan in a feature film. Another

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Warners film in the sample, *Alcatraz Island* (1937), more explicitly names the "headline drama" cycle that *The Black Legion* trailer had introduced the previous year.

Trailers have also demonstrated a self-awareness of their status as a genre and, from the 1950s onward, examples can be found which illustrate a *self-referentiality* generally thought to be prevalent only in later postmodern popular media texts. This self-awareness of trailers as a genre is illustrated by numerous examples that parody classical trailer rhetoric, such as the self-conscious tabloid-style block titles in the trailer for Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956), which start as pseudo-news headlines: "Daring hold-up nets $2 million!/ Police baffled by fantastic crime!/ Masked bandit escapes with race track loot!/ Suspense!/ Terror!/ Violence!/ Will grip you as no other picture since Scarface and Little Caesar!" The trailer for *What's Up Doc* (1972) uses narration to satirize the "See" mode: "See Barbra Streisand! See Ryan O'Neal! See Ryan O'Neal see Barbara Streisand! See the CIA! See the sea! See everyone get busted! See What's Up Doc and see what's up!" Other trailers that overtly satirize classical trailer form include those for *Fritz the Cat* (1972), *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *Goin' Coconuts* (1978), *The Wanderers* (1978), and *Tag: The Assassination Game* (1982).

More recently, trailers also demonstrate awareness of their own generic status by presenting self-contained "mini-movies" (such as the dialogue-free montage trailers for *Cliffhanger*, 1993, *Desperado*, 1995, or *Eyes Wide Shut*, 1999) or using extra footage and telling their own "story" to promote their source films (such as the *Godzilla* [1997] teaser where a tour of the natural history museum is interrupted by Godzilla's foot crashing through the ceiling). These latter cases are examples of a recent trend in trailer production, where increased interest in promotional discourses, reflected in popular and

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trade press articles, awards such as the Hollywood Reporter Key Art Awards, and the generally increased "buzz" factor of contemporary Hollywood, combine to encourage a newly self-aware artistry in trailermaking, along with a greater competitiveness among the various ad agencies that produce trailers. As promotional budgets have become a higher percentage of a film's total budget, and as technology has enabled cost-effective electronic editing, studios have responded to the higher stakes by at times hiring competing ad agencies to produce more than one trailer campaign for a film, increasing the mandate to dazzle and attract.

Through hyperbole and generalization, repetition, equations or other comparisons, and self-referentiality, the rhetoric of genre utilizes assumptions about audience desires for familiarity to enhance their desires for something new. These examples of trailer conventions demonstrate that, allowing for some historical variation, this balancing act took place throughout the three periods of the sound era in Hollywood. Indeed paradoxically, the similarities of the promotional message in trailers of different eras are almost as striking as their differences.

Typical Trailers: the Rhetoric of Genre

The following examples of typical trailers offer a brief look at how the rhetoric of genre operates in the three eras of Hollywood sound film production: classical, transitional and contemporary. From the classical era's certitude that trailers addressed a mythical "everyone" who was assumed to desire to inhabit familiar generic spaces, to the transitional era's questioning of its audience and attempts to reinvent traditional genres, to the contemporary era's reinscription of an "everyone" about whom new rhetorical

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assumptions are made and for whom new generic boundaries are drawn, the examples attempt to draw a picture of how both audiences and genres are typically configured. Since the transitional era is characterized by systematic atypicality, particularly in the latter period (mid-sixties to 1975), in this instance I selected an example that demonstrates some of the ways trailers from the earlier transitional period begin to diverge from or reconfigure classical models. These trailers all promote genre films through an overall enthymemic structure (utilizing the conventions of hyperbole, generalization, repetition, equations, comparisons, and self-referentiality) that reminds audiences "you want familiarity *and* novelty." The specific enthymemes within the individual trailers give some indications of who trailermakers typically thought they were "talking to" in each era, and in the process each "produces" the film's generic space in the context of demonstrating various broader assumptions about the social space of the time.

Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942) is both a musical and a biopic (of showman George M. Cohan) from Warner Bros., and its trailer illustrates the way classical trailers promoted multiple genres (or what Rick Altman would call "hyphenates") smoothly within an overall single generic rubric—in this case, the musical. The trailer utilizes numerous clips that offer signifiers of the show musical, opening with behind-the-scenes banter such as people yelling "curtain going up," and "places please, stand by," as chorus girls dash about and people go to their seats, followed by a shot of a closed curtain superimposed with titles reading: "Up with the curtain and on with the show of the century!" Strikingly shimmery with sparkle effects typical of musical trailers of the era,

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this hyperbolic title (creates an equation between George M. Cohan's show and the film being promoted. We see James Cagney (as Cohan) singing the title song, interspersed with title graphics (using unrelenting flag iconography) and curtain wipes to different angles on the song.

The film's songs are introduced with a title invoking trailers' typical nostalgia for the future: "The world will always remember..." (in this case layered with real memories of Cohan's songs). Then, also typically, we see a clip of a singer or singers performing the title phrase from each song, with the song titles superimposed. These are connected by vertical wipes. After the film's co-stars are identified, the trailer moves predictably to brief clips from dialogue scenes. We glimpse a few narrative elements, such as behind-the-scenes family problems, and then the trailer finale begins as a woman in uniform sings "Over There," addressing the screen. Cohan/Cagney addresses the (profilmic and movie) audience, yelling, "Everybody sing!" We see a high shot of crowds singing the song at an Army YMCA, superimposed with a title: "It's really something to sing about!" Over soldiers marching, a title delivers the trailer's ultimate (and typical) message, offering both hyperbole and generalization: "Every great entertainment thrill of the past 50 years/ rolled into one unforgettable motion picture."

Typical of wartime (and musical) trailers of the period, this trailer invokes collective activity by assuming that the audience en masse (represented filmically by the trailer's parading soldiers and watching civilians) will link the military scenes of the protagonist, George M. Cohan, singing "Over There" as he goes off to the first World War, to the audience's current wartime status. The trailer indeed directly exhorts the audience to sing along. The enthymeme (the missing term of which could be expressed as

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something like "we're all in the same boat") serves to redouble the promotional impact of the trailer—we've all got to do our patriotic duty to win this war; and it's patriotic to go see this musical. Moreover, the fact that this trailer too, as a biopic of a showman integral to vaudeville's history, self-referentially evokes cinema's precursor as a signifier of "show biz" via both scenes and stage curtain iconography (mingled with the flags), extends the central enthymeme further: it's patriotic to go see *any* show, i.e. any movie.

Thomas Schatz has written about Hollywood war films made during World War II, in which "war themes" were prevalent in genres other than the war film proper, and in the musical in particular.[20] He asserts a wartime conversion of the classical Hollywood paradigm briefly away from the dominance of an "individual goal-oriented protagonist and the formation of the couple. During the war... these two qualities had to be radically adjusted: the individual yielded to the will and the activity of the collective... ."[21] Collectivity has a brief historical moment alongside the larger ideological pull of individualism in the cinematic discourse's representation of social agency, which is reflected in this era's trailers' typical assumptions about audiences.

Yet this collective audience, in addition to being physically represented by the trailer's parade-watchers, is also distilled into the individual heroic figure of the generic biopic hero, Cagney/Cohan, who the trailer offers as a synechdoche of a universal American via both narration ("He took the heartbeat of a nation, and set it to music") and dialogue excerpts ("Because he's the whole darn country squeezed into one pair of pants"). The trailer's invocation of the audience as a collective participates in the rhetoric of genre by assuming audience desire for the familiar, interwoven with signifiers of individual-centered patriotism and an assertion of product differentiation (via the rhetoric

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of stardom) in the novelty of watching James Cagney, previously associated with the gangster film, dance.

George Custen's study of the "biopic" genre discusses at length the ways in which this particular genre contains and polices the boundaries of social agency, and many of his ideas about biopics apply to this biopic/musical trailer. Films such as *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, he argues, "assured us that we had not lost our communities, and that the redefinition of the self from producer to consumer still left room for a greatness that had individual contours...[they] convince[d] moviegoers that the self was constructed in relation to great figures fit to lead us in times of peril."[22] The trailer's patriotic address emphatically equates the "great man" and the community (that can, through film spectatorship, at once follow him and *be* him). It uses iconography, music (the sing-along) and the force of James Cagney's presence to reinforce the universality of appeal of musicals, biopics, and the grand old flag, all at once. The representation of social space that defines and sums up this trailer is a martial thrust of patriotism, producing the individual as part of a larger, coherent social good. Patriotism, the trailer asserts through this equation, is entertaining, and entertainment is patriotic. In mobilizing the audience this way, the trailer makes clear Hollywood's wartime faith in the patriotism of its undifferentiated American audience, here figured as implicitly white and middle class, since "everyone" is squeezed into Cohan's/Cagney's pants.

The trailer for *North To Alaska* (1960), a Fox film about loggers and romance on the Alaskan frontier starring John Wayne, is typical of trailers for genre films in the earlier part of the transitional era when generic certainties were being questioned along

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with other former Hollywood verities, but their traditions were still very much alive. The trailer, while using the word "adventure" more than any other generic labels, also demonstrates that the film is at least in part a comedy. Primarily, however, it relies on western genre elements—tilting the compass, however, to the north. This sort of slight realignment of the tried-and-true is typical of genre trailers of the late '50s and early '60s, regardless of the specific genre.

The trailer opens with comical fisticuffs, followed by an extreme long shot of a generalized mountainous wilderness scene over which is gradually superimposed a graphic of a meandering thin red line tracing the borders of Alaska. This graphic overlay maps more than the state: it tells audiences up front that the film is conquering a new and different generic frontier as well.[23] We hear the title song, with various lyrics about fortune-hunting and adventuring sung in an Elvis vein (a title later tells us it is "sung by Johnny Horton"), and yellow titles appear over a series of establishing clips: "Only the screen's most colorful stars!" (over a horse and rider walking in the wilderness) "Are BIG enough to bring you..." (John Wayne is seen in a western town talking) "the rampaging... riotous!..." (we see John Wayne in a mining wagon which loses its brakes and careens down a hillside on rails) "romantic adventure of..." (John Wayne jumps out of the wagon, and we see him kissing a woman in a brothel) "20th Century Fox's ROARING EPIC" (we see a long shot of the town setting) "At the top of the world!..." The film's title appears with a Fox copyright bug, over a long shot of boats at a dock; then a prominent title announcing that the film is "A CinemaScope picture, color by DeLuxe," is seen over a view of the mountains (the title foregrounds the film's widescreen color format, and was a typical feature of fifties trailers). Obviously, the

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rhetoric of stardom is working here in tandem with that of genre (while also reinforcing genre appeals since John Wayne is strongly associated with westerns), and together the two rhetorical appeals serve to remind audiences of the many layers of the film's hyperbolic "big-" ness, while the titles proceed to enumerate other generic conventions, such as repetition (in the shots of men punching each other and the alliterative titles) and generalization (the shots of the wilderness and references to "adventure" and "epic").

The scene fades to a close-up of John Wayne logging, and a very enthusiastic narrator begins, "Starring John Wayne as Big Sam, one of the giants who tamed the north..." We see an extreme long shot of several loggers straddling and shimmying up tall pines, followed by a closer shot of Wayne in a bedroom with his head on the lap of a woman, who bends over to kiss him. "... the way you tame a woman!" In light of the subsequent "taming" equation, the phallic quality of the tree shot appears to be a deliberate element of the film's promotion (or at least a playful in-joke). Typical dialogue scenes ensue, interspersed with identificatory announcements. Stewart Granger, Ernie Kovacs, Fabian and Capucine are all introduced with short scenes which expand on the narrator's characterizations (such as: "Fabian as Billy, young in years but big in ideas..." as we see Fabian kicked into a corner). Fabian is then seen singing a diegetic song, the sound of which is overlapped onto a clip of Capucine in a bathtub as a big dog jumps in and she is introduced by the narrator: "... and the international beauty, Capucine, as Michelle, who matched wits with them all." Interestingly, the trailer's emphasis on the taming of the north, a tried-and-true western frontier ideology, is (within comedic terms) explicitly equated with the "taming" of a woman who is ultimately represented as *not* having been tamed. Many transitional equations don't seem to fit quite as neatly as

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classical ones—and particularly in relation to representations of women or sex, during this era when films were promoted as dealing with more "adult" themes yet traditional gender roles were still in force.

A brief dialogue scene with Capucine is shown, and the narrator returns. His descriptions, both hyperbolic and generalizing, are accompanied by illustrative generalized shots: "Join the adventurers!" (a long shot of the port with a barge arriving), "The gold craze!" (a woman is carried across a muddy street), "The con men!" (John Wayne socks Ernie Kovacs in a public bath), "The dance hall queens!" (we see can-can dancers on stage and an audience watching), "and the boldest, brazenest buckaroos who ever panned for treasure!" (we see men squabbling next to a geyser of water in a mine), "Always spoiling for a fight, or fighting for the spoils" (John Wayne leaps into a bedroom apparently catching Capucine with another man), "In all the 50 states/ No fun-filled adventure like it!" (we see a longer clip of big brawl in the muddy streets). The frontier becomes an overdetermined element of the trailer's promotion of novelty within a rubric of generic familiarity: for 1960 audiences, "all the 50 states" was a novel phrase, and reminded them that they lived in a country which was still busy annexing land. So the "boldest, brazenest buckaroos" in a sense, are us—and the audience is not only asked to "join" these buckaroos but is told (with the "50 states" phrase) it already has. While of course the specifics of this equation are not common *per se*, equations that bring audiences into the act, as it were, are typical of transitional era trailers.

The trailer asks (still undifferentiated) audiences to "join" a generic space of adventure which iconographically resembles a western space (and is peopled by a major western star) yet is just a bit more "rampaging, riotous and roaring;" commensurate, it is

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assumed, with both the bigness of Alaska and the "new frontier" of the social space of 1960. On the cusp of another "new frontier," this trailer promotes its film by giving audiences a big dose of generic familiarity (albeit without even mentioning the word western) into which is plugged hints at novelty or differences that appear to foretell possibilities for new kinds of social relations, such as women that hold their own, the glint of prosperity, an absence of guns, and a comic tone. But ultimately, since these novel elements are, for the most part, simply transplanted signifiers of another familiar cycle within the western (the mining film) the trailer is even more traditional than it seems.

A prevalent genre in the contemporary era is the romantic comedy, and *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997) is exemplary both of trailers for this genre and of the contemporary comedy trailer in general, demonstrating some of the ways the rhetoric of genre displays assumptions about contemporary audiences. Like many contemporary trailers, it utilizes almost equally the rhetorics of stardom and story in addition to that of genre, but perhaps more central than its appeals either to audience interest in a Julia Roberts vehicle or in "a story about finding the love of your life and deciding what to do about it" (as the narration puts it) are the trailer's appeals to audiences' assumed desires for a funny yet heartwarming romantic comedy experience. The trailer's numerous shots and scenes set up the film as a romantic comedy that not only offers romantic resolution and comedic dialogue, but songs (including intra-diegetic performances), as well as slapstick action worthy of Lucille Ball (who is nostalgically invoked in a line of dialogue). The film thus echoes and updates classical era comedy trailers' inclusive

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notion of genre. It too promotes the film's novelty within a rubric of its generic familiarity, emphasizing the interaction between the two smoothly with elements such as its sampling of the film's soundtrack, which contains updated covers of familiar pop tunes. While its address to the audience is not heavily hyperbolic, the trailer's use of equations between wedding guests and the audience, the repetition of slapstick and musical elements and the graphic and narratorial generalizations of the film's high concept demonstrate a number of typical ways that the conventions of the rhetoric of genre are mobilized in the contemporary era.

The trailer utilizes smoothly edited mini-"grids": a scene from the film is split up into two or three segments and crosscut with other shots. It contains a large number of very short shots which fall into four somewhat delineated segments (introduction, exposition, development, and denouement), communicating the film's narrative premise economically but fairly thoroughly while (almost) sustaining the surprise of the ending. I can guess that this is one of those trailers after which audiences tend to say "well, now I don't have to see the film," (also known in the industry as "kitchen sink trailers"), but the film's success tends to bear out the usual industry rebuttal to this argument, that research shows that "the more story you tell somebody, the more they seem to understand what the movie is about. The more they think they grasp about what the movie is, the better your test results will be."[24]

A male narrator's voice opens the trailer, backed up by the opening keyboard riff of a rock and roll song: "Michael and Julianne have been best friends for years... But they were never more than that... Until he popped the question... To someone else." Typical of contemporary era narration, this attenuated sentence states the film's high

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concept succinctly and intra-diegetically, as if the narrator were introducing us to his friends, and the trailer assumes we'll think of the characters as our friends too—that we'll want to go to the wedding (the equation is later spelled out when we are "invited"). Several shots of Julia Roberts on the phone or talking to someone unseen (she does this throughout the trailer, implicitly placing the audience in the position of listener/friend), a shot of an answering machine, and three lines of dialogue run briskly alongside the narrator's voice, and this introductory segment culminates with a male telephonic voice announcing, as the music stops, "I called because I met someone... we're getting married." Julia Roberts, holding the phone, attempts to sit on her bed but falls off the edge (the first of four pratfalls) as the music returns and the trailer launches into a sustained action segment in which the narrator recedes and clips from dialogue scenes advance the trailer's exposition.

In a series of short clips backed up by two rock songs, this segment presents the meeting of Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz (the best friend's betrothed), and announces Roberts's plan to wreck the wedding and Diaz's plan to get Roberts to like her. There is then a horizontal wipe (the only wipe) to the trailer's first title as a third song begins, the singer's voice as she sings the first words of the song "I know" (from Dusty Springfield's "Wishin' and Hopin'") echoing an outburst in the dialogue. During a third, development segment, alliterative titles are interspersed with clips: "This summer you're invited to witness/ A realization/ A revelation/ And a romance...." Plot developments are sampled, leading to the confrontation between Roberts and Diaz.

The final segment is initiated with the return of the narrator, who delivers another take on the film's high concept, "Tri-Star Pictures presents... A story about finding the

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love of your life... and deciding... what to do about it." Clips move from the restaurant full of wedding guests clapping and singing the same Burt Bacharach song that had been on the soundtrack earlier, to Roberts's gay male friend (Rupert Everett) asking her, "Do you really love him? Or is this just about winning?" (at which point we basically know what Roberts is going to "do about it"). The trailer's denouement opens with an extreme long shot of Mulroney chasing Diaz (after she witnesses him and Roberts kiss) and calling her name. We watch the chase from over the heads of four women in hats, one of whom says "...lovely together." The trailer cuts to a title card as the narrator announces the film's title. We then see that Roberts is chasing Mulroney and calling his name. A reverse angle shows the four women in hats watching the chase. One says "That's our maid of honor. (beat) She's from New York." As the other women respond "Ohhhhh," the main title card appears, followed by a final title, "R.S.V.P. this summer."

Since the trailer positions the audience as implicit guests, invited not to a wedding but "to witness/ A realization/ A revelation/ And a romance," the actual wedding guests, seen in various apparent pre-wedding social settings, are an important profilmic audience. Although neither of the "three Rs" we're invited to witness includes "doing the right thing," like the profilmic audience, our role is essentially constructed as a disciplinary one: we are charged with wondering (and spending money to find out) whether Roberts will do the right thing—the film's central enigma. The moral weight of this charge is soft-pedaled by the comedic treatment of the onscreen witnesses, as are the conservative implications of the film's representation of the ideological function of the social ritual of the wedding (and of the guests/spectators as witnesses) in the maintenance of the moral standards of society. Reflecting the contemporary resurgence of marriage among young

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professionals, this element of the trailer too seems to be representative of typical concerns of the contemporary romantic comedy. The trailer's final line of dialogue ("She's from New York") belongs to the pro-filmic audience, and its geographic commentary addresses the social space of the '90s while appeasing the global audience: both the provincialism of the women in their hats and country accents and the *I Love Lucy* –esque wacky competitiveness (not for jobs but for a man) of the contemporary urban woman are all grist for a globally and generically inclusive comedy that, as this trailer demonstrates, ultimately equates the right fit with fitting in. This ideological boundary-policing is typical of contemporary trailers—paradoxically, the sophistication of these mini-montages of rapid-fire imagery rife with intertextuality and nostalgic echoes of film history is at the same time addressed to an imagined social and cultural world that is assumed to be smaller and more hermetic than ever.

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[1] Of course, to accurately assess the historical influence trailers have had on the formation of genre during the period I am investigating would entail a thorough study of (largely unavailable) industry archives as well as a close analysis of trailer reception from the 1930s to the present, a task beyond the scope of this study.

[2] See, for example, Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*, London: British Film Institute, 1999; Janet Staiger, "Announcing Wares, Winning Patrons, Voicing Ideals: Thinking about the History and Theory of Film Advertising," *Cinema Journal* Vol. 29, No. 3 (Spring 1990), pp. 3-31; Mark Stuart Miller, "Promoting Movies in the Late 1930s: Pressbooks at Warner Bros.," Dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 1994; Mary Beth Haralovich, "Motion Picture Advertising: Industrial and Social Forces and Effects, 1930-1948," Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984.

[3] Video rental stores reinforce the prominence of genre and stardom as selection parameters in spectatorial decision-making, often disguising the familiarity aspect of genre by fragmenting categories as much as possible, offering the consumer a seemingly vast range of selections and emphasizing the centrality of the consumer's role as selector (disguising also the limitations of choices). See Robert Eberwein, "Ideology and Video Rental Stores," presented at Society for Cinema Studies, 1992.

[4] Neale, Stephen, *Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1980, 54-55.

[5] The interaction between audiences' experiential knowledge of generic cinematic space and the industry's impulses to police the boundaries of cinematic meaning in trailers can be illuminated by reference to Henri Lefebvre's concept of "representations of space." Lefebvre's monumental reconceptualization of spatiality in human imagination and experience, *The Production of Space*, addresses the quest for an anti-metaphoric "science of space," which attempts to express the relationship between space, social organization and modes of production. He argues that each mode of production "offers up its own peculiar space, as it were, as an 'object' for analysis and overall theoretical explication." (31) Within Lefebvre's schema, cinema would be considered a "representation of space," or social space as "conceived" (as opposed to space as "perceived" or space as "lived," both categories of experience rather than represented experience) (40). Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

[6] Neale cites an article by Charles Musser showing that *The Great Train Robbery*, which critics have come to canonize as the first Western, was perceived within the industry at the time as pertaining to the crime genre. Charles Musser, "The Travel Genre in 1903-04: Moving Toward Fictional Narratives," *Iris*, Vol. 2 No. 1 (1984), 56-57, cited in Steve Neale, "Questions of Genre," *Screen* Vol. 31 No. 1 (1990), 55.

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[7] Altman, Rick, "Reusable Packaging: Generic Products and the Recycling Process," in Nick Browne, ed., *Refiguring American Film Genres: Theory and History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 9.

[8] Overall, it becomes apparent on examination of many trailers that it is generally not the rhetoric of genre that is called upon to sell cinematic innovation per se, but much more frequently innovation is tied to either rhetorics of stardom, story, or to the affective dimension rather than the rhetorical one (such as wowing audiences with bigger, better explosions or machines, sexier bodies, or other spectacles).

[9] Vivian Sobchack calls attention to the function of repetition as a promotional strategy specifically within the historical epic film in her essay, "'Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* No. 29, Winter 1990.

[10] Jameson, Fredric, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1979, 137.

[11] Ibid, 138.

[12] The *Magnum Force* trailer is clearly simultaneous with that film's release, but while I was unable to determine a date for the Bond trailer it appears to date from a time subsequent to both films' initial releases.

[13] As discussed in the introduction, market research and audience targeting did not begin until the 1950s.

[14] Since trailers are produced before the film's music is completed, they often use music from the soundtracks of other films.

[15] This convention is also utilized within the rhetoric of story.

[16] Sobchack, Vivian, "'Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* No. 29, Winter 1990, 28.

[17] Ibid., 30.

[18] This is an interesting disclaimer, infrequently invoked in trailers, which paradoxically admits the inadequacy of trailers to represent a film.

[19] Altman, Rick, *Film/Genre*, London: British Film Institute, 1999, 60.

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[20] Schatz, Thomas, "World War II and the Hollywood 'War Film,'" in Nick Browne, ed., *Refiguring American Film Genres: Theory and History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 111.

[21] Schatz, 108-9, citing Dana Polan's *Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative and the American Cinema, 1940-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[22] Custen, George F., *Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992, 212.

[23] Alaska had only achieved statehood in 1959, just prior to the film's release.

[24] Chris Arnold, managing partner of Cimarron, Bacon, O'Brien, quoted in Tiiu Lukk, *Movie Marketing: Opening the Picture and Giving it Legs*, Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1997, 223.

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Chapter Three

Talking to Audiences Through The Rhetoric of Genre: Troubled Trailers

I have argued that the principal project of the rhetoric of genre in Hollywood trailers is to promote films by addressing audiences through a successful folding of the requirements of product differentiation into appeals to audience familiarity with generic subject matter. In the process of producing this synthesis, trailers offer images of the audience and of the historical world that give clues as to who it is the industry "thinks they're talking to." In each era, trailers offer specific enthymemes, or incorporations of rhetorical assumptions about audiences' desires (here, for genre films) into their arguments, often appearing to regulate, whether by containing or expanding, generic boundaries.

In the classical Hollywood era (1929-1950), the inclusiveness of each of Hollywood's (at that time) more circumscribed set of genres is emphasized, asserting the universal appeal of all of Hollywood's product; and the rhetoric of genre is dominated by the primacy of familiarity and convention. In the transitional era (1950-1975), new concerns and industrial anxieties come to be reflected in enthymemes that suggest attempts to both expand the boundaries of existing genres and posit new ones, giving evidence of the industry's admission for the first time that different types of films tend to draw different types of audiences. By the sixties and early seventies the rhetoric of genre is dominated by the primacy of difference and innovation. In the New Hollywood era (1975 to the present),[1] trailer conventions have been developed that demonstrate a reworking of Hollywood's assumptions about its audience—once again trailers tend to assume that most films (particularly blockbusters) can bring in universal, mass audiences

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(and even those films that are acknowledged to appeal to specialized audiences are often promoted with the same apparent assumption in mind). In these trailers the rhetoric of genre often acknowledges difference and innovation by nostalgically recuperating it within "new" trailer formulas, many self-consciously echoing those of the classical era.

As I viewed my sample body of trailers, I continually asked the question—"who do they think they're talking to?" Often the most interesting "answers" I got, or the trailers that most intrigued me with regard to audience address, were the atypical ones. Trailers that *don't* seem to know who they're talking to, or what the film is really about, or that talk interestingly about issues other than the film, arguably seem to demonstrate, sometimes even better than typical trailers, the reality of film promotion—which as the marketing executive cited earlier said, is "part magic, part voodoo, part experience." And while the typicality of trailer rhetoric is an important topic of this dissertation, I am even more interested in paying "attention to the man behind the curtain," or investigating problematic or "troubled" trailers for evidence they give of ruptures or breakdowns in the apparently smooth operations of film promotional discourses. Thus this chapter, along with the other two "Troubled Trailers" chapters dealing with the two remaining rhetorical appeals, treats case studies of trailers that stand out as interesting addresses to audiences, calling attention both to their typicality and their atypicality, in hopes of gleaning more about the communicational process of trailers by examining not only their ordinary rhetorical operations (which are dealt with in separate chapters), but their exceptional ones as well.

The trailer case studies I have selected of audience address through the rhetoric of genre in each era are all in some way characterized by the overall enthymeme of genre

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appeals, which assumes "you want familiarity *and* novelty," These trailers, while again not necessarily typical, present promotional issues from each era across a range of genres in order to call attention to the rhetoric of genre as a whole (and also indicate the variety of the sample). My examples are also selected so as to compare single genres in different eras, such as science fiction, the Western, and the musical comedy. In assessing these trailers, I have drawn from a number of other sources in order to adequately address the multiple determinations of trailers' meanings—from the cultural/imaginary to the historical and industrial.

The Classical Era: the "Mythic Universal American"

Since genre films were dominant in the classical era, a majority of films were promoted through the rhetoric of genre, even if their trailers also utilized those of story and stardom. Genre appeals, the lure of familiar generic worlds or elements coupled with the lure of the new, were addressed during this era to an audience that was assumed to include everyone. Motion picture attendance reached its all-time high during this period, and studios apparently did not yet need strategies to bring different kinds of audiences into the theater. The following analyses attempt to illustrate just who this "everyone" might be, according to trailer-makers.

The trailer for the Marx Brothers' comedy *A Day at the Races* (MGM, 1937) is representative of the way comedies were promoted in the classical era, and since this trailer promotes both a genre (comedy) and a cycle (Marx Brothers movies), its appeals to audience interest in genre are overdetermined. The trailer is also an example of how

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the vaudeville mode is invoked to sell genres through inclusiveness. At the same time, the trailer can be viewed as a "troubled" one by virtue of its unusually vivid inclusion of implied audience anarchy and its figuration of a significantly multi-racial and cross-class profilmic audience. As such it is a more freewheelingly fun trailer than many in the classical era, while still exemplifying many of the era's typical features.

The vaudeville mode's chat motif, frequently seen in classical trailers, incorporates comedic interaction with an implied audience. This trailer opens with a man in front of a curtain announcing, "Ladies and Gentlemen, may I request your absolute silence. I have a message of great importance for everyone in the audience—remember, absolute silence," this followed by a pie thrown at him from the offscreen vicinity of the audience, followed by two more pies, then by a rapid barrage of clips of scenes from the film. The trailer thus follows a common classical era trailer structure, opening with a bracket syntagma (Metz's term for a sequence of non-chronologically edited shots that give examples of an overall theme or idea) to characterize the film, then identifying the film's title and cast members, followed by slightly longer dialogue scenes, and winding up with rousing visual summaries of the film's generic and cyclical appeal using titles and musical/comedic scenes.

The trailer's first and principal enthymeme is the pie throw, which assumes the audience's interest in taking the pompous man in front of the curtain down a peg. The missing term in this trailer syllogism (in which a man speaks formally to an implied audience, signifying "You are here to be educated;" followed by the throwing of a pie at him by someone in the implied audience, signifying "We are not!") is the assumption that such a formal address is inappropriate to a movie audience and deserves to be ridiculed.

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The enthymeme thus asserts, "This is comedy." The fact that the pie originates from the direction of the implied audience sets up the subsequent visual barrage of slapstick as a cornucopia of delights not only desired by the audience, but as imaginatively instigated by them. The first shot in this barrage is of Chico at the piano: immediately all the keys fly off the piano; next is a shot of Chico walking his Tutti Frutti cart under a horse's belly, which cuts to one of Harpo being kicked and flying against a wall to look back at the horse. There is then a circular wipe to a shot of the horse running through a chaotic doctor's office, and so forth. A series of other slapstick scenes follows, strung together by a varied assortment of wipes, culminating with a punchline as Groucho takes the horse's temperature and remarks "either he's dead or my watch has stopped."

Then the trailer's cast identification segment begins with a cut to the film title, followed by visual identifications of the Marx Brothers (closeups with their names in title overlays), accompanied by antic music. This segment promotes the film on the basis of an appeal to audience interest in its cycle within the comedy genre. Titles continue to introduce the film with quick cuts and varied wipes: a long-shot of the racetrack is papered over with a title, "in the spectacular successor to 'A Night at the Opera,' 'A Day at the Races.'" Other cast members are then identified via quick-cut visuals and titles: "with Allan Jones singing love songs to Maureen O'Sullivan," after which the trailer slows to longer musical and dialogue scenes (including a 12 second shot of Harpo playing the harp and an 18 second shot of Chico playing the piano), still linked by varied wipes. These are interspersed with slapstick dance scenes along with a sampling of Groucho's one-liners, and are followed by another punchline—Groucho telling his dance partner, "If I hold you any closer I'll be in back of you!"

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There is a double diamond wipe to an extreme long shot of the main characters and couples in the foreground after the assumed titular race, with Harpo on the winning horse and a crowd of people all walking with them as everyone sings from a familiar African-American spiritual. This "generalization" shot is characteristically overlaid with typically alliterative summary titles that flop onto the screen from left to right: "Gags & Girls!/ Romance & Rhythm!/ Stars & Songs!" After a "Marx Brothers" title, each brother is picked out from the crowd by the camera, starting with Groucho, who croons to Margaret Dumont, and a culminating extreme long shot of the happy crowd is accompanied by the song's crescendo. The trailer then cuts to the same medium shot of the man from the trailer's beginning, wiping pie out of his eye with his mouth agape.

In addition to the vaudeville mode's use here as a framing device to insert the audience's assumed desire for irreverence into the trailer text, the foregrounding of Harpo's harp and Chico's piano via long solos is a vaudeville echo, in its assumption that audiences will want to pause to sample their musical talents in the middle of the slapstick trailer (as well as during the film itself). The trailer thus posits an inclusive notion of comedy, which it does by also assuming audiences want a little romance as well as music (even the "high culture" connotation that Harpo's solo provides) in their comedies, as the shots of romantic couples in the final crowd scene (and several romantic dialogue exchanges during the course of the trailer) attest. Groucho's singing is the emotional center of this finale, so the trailer's summation of the film's comedy elements contains signifiers of romantic resolution as well, positing the appeal of (this) comedy as a utopia in which people and racehorses all dance together in the end.

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Bringing together the slapstick, musical, romance and comedy elements of this trailer's "variety show" notion of comedy is its emphasis on *all* these elements as a spectacle we can (and should) consume—and that the package it comes in is that of comedy. This generic emphasis is visually inscribed repeatedly by a variety of different wipes connecting the short scenes: an x wipe, a spiral wipe, a version of the curtain-dropping wipe, vertical stripe wipes, a circular wipe with spikes on it, a plain horizontal wipe, and the double diamond wipe. They remind us not to expect narrative causality from the trailer's editing (and possibly even from the film as an anarchic comedy), serving the function of highlighting these scenes instead as quotations from the film that signify "this is fun." The wipes remind us by their variety of the many different types of pleasures the film will give us within the genre of comedy; almost in effect literally wrapping each little scene in paper and ribbon as a consumable for our consideration. Anarchy, the Marx Brothers' stock in trade, is in a sense recuperated by this rhetoric which corrals it into the familiar domain of the comedy genre.

Yet the zany fun of having so many types of wipes is also related to the trailer's main enthymeme of inscribing the audience in the trailer on the side of the pie-throwers—our implied assault on the assumed seriousness can be seen as extended throughout the trailer by these highly foregrounded wipes, which continually rub and bother the film (in our stead). Thus, the comic utopia, literalized by the final happy mass gathering singing about "all God's children," thus includes us, and the "us" it includes is a democratic, populist one.

As scholars have shown, classical Hollywood's cinematic address to the audience in films themselves tended to pay significant attention to questions of individuality and

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collectivism. Thomas Cripps points out that early in the New Deal '30s, more collectivized heroism was emphasized, and although by the time of *A Day at the Races* there was a "shift from collective to individual heroism" that accompanied American economic recovery after the Depression, as well as a concurrent taming of the Marx Brothers' subversive comedic gifts in the wake of the arrival of the production code,[2] this trailer emphatically and atypically figures the profilmic audience as a populist (multi-class, interracial) collective. A series of shots (with a culminating high angle featuring overlay titles) of a mass grouping that includes the Marx Brothers, jockeys, horse handlers and race spectators (screen substitutes for the movie audience) and in which can be seen a significant scattering of Black faces, serves as a crescendo for the trailer's appeal to its audience as the "mythic universal American."[3] It constructs a utopian exterior social space of happy coexistence and unbridled self-expression—which the trailer moreover has constructed as the product of a *generic* space, that of comedy. The superimposed titles then brand this scene with the legitimacy of finality, endowing its massive (and mass) quality with significance beyond the scene's assumed presence in the actual film's happy ending.

As a representation of the social space of the late Depression, this trailer's summary scene figures the Marx Brothers as harbingers of redemption within the chaos of cross-class hardship (winning big at the racetrack being, moreover, a cross-class fantasy). The trailer's novel enthymemic inclusion of mass audience irreverence in the service of laughs, i.e. of comedy, can perhaps be thought of as a compensatory gesture which assumes that all strata of the audience, if not the production-code-hobbled films themselves, would rather still be throwing pies at the cultural status quo—and that

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consumption of comedy films is *the* way to do it. By invoking audiences directly in order to characterize them and their desires to experience generic spaces, this trailer reveals aspects of the industry's characterizations of the audience's relationship to the historical world which are visible—in less lively forms—in others of this era as well.

Even when there is no such singling out of audiences, however, classical era trailers generally "think they're talking to" a mythologized universal audience that usually implicitly encompasses the range of human types seen on the screen, while excluding others. A "troubled trailer" for *Duel in the Sun* (1946) offers an example of how pre-fifties trailers attempted to promote a film that recent scholars have considered generically hybrid or problematic to this "universal" audience within the rhetoric of genre.[4] Viewing the trailer, one would not contest the film as a Western. Here, however, the "mythic universal American" is constructed as neither anarchic nor patriotic; the primary address is to the audience as consumers of genre films (the only significant profilmic spectators in the trailer are Western bar customers watching a dancer).

As is often the case, this trailer opens with the enthymeme that the rest of the trailer will serve to back up, in this case a series of visual images combined with narration, which together form a generic appeal. A shot of the Selznick Studios logo (a shingle with the "Tara" building that served as studio headquarters in the background) is first seen, accompanied by an epic trombone fanfare. Then a narrator announces, "The studio that made *Gone With the Wind*, brings you...," after which there is a cut to a graphic of the sun with jagged brown lettering inside it which zooms slowly into the foreground until "Duel in the Sun!" can be read. Visually, the graphic (on the heels of a

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picture of Tara) echoes the famous *Gone With the Wind* title silhouette of Scarlett O'Hara on the hill at Tara with the sun behind her (which was also a key image in the *GWTW* trailer). The image/sound combination rhetorically asserts that *Duel in the Sun* is similar (but not identical) to *Gone with the Wind*, and that the earlier film was popular and memorable. The missing term of this enthymeme could be expressed as "You will like this one even better!" The assumption that audiences want a movie like *Gone With the Wind* guides the rest of the trailer.

The next shot is a generalizing high angle shot of a party with lots of people dancing, and the narrator continues, "...a spectacular, adventurous love story [i.e., like *Gone With the Wind*] of the Old West." The party shot also echoes *GWTW* iconography, and the narration states the trailer's genre rhetoric clearly: this film is not *just* a Western, but an epic spectacle and a love story (an adventurous one)—like its famous predecessor. Without stating it outright, this trailer constructs *Duel in the Sun* as an *epic* Western—in Rick Altman's terms, positioning the epic as an "adjectival" cycle within the genre of the Western.[5] This enables an undifferentiated (but specific and gendered) universal audience (the men, women and children who loved *Gone With the Wind*—and hopefully others like them) to be addressed to promote a film utilizing the heavily "masculine" genre iconography of the Western yet appealing to women by virtue of its female protagonist and a romance-driven story.

The trailer's identification segment follows, which in the process of introducing the stars, presents visual elements to back up the earlier enthymeme, which the narration has just spelled out ("spectacular, adventurous love story of the Old West"). Each of the three principal stars, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten and Gregory Peck, is introduced with

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a close-up or medium shot as he or she looks offscreen intensely. A romantic triangle is suggested. We then see a wide shot of about thirty men riding on horseback together, and are told, "...the unparalleled thrill-packed spectacle that was two years in the making!" The trailer cuts to a long shot of railroad workers laying track in the foreground with men riding over a hill in the background, the narration and subsequent shot constituting an equation common to later promotional campaigns for historical epics, noted by Vivian Sobchack: the monumentality of the building of the West linked with that of the making of the film.[6] This is followed by a shot of Jennifer Jones lying in the grass with Gregory Peck standing above her as two men ride towards them and clouds mass above brown, scrubby hills. The narration continues, "Photographed in magnificent Technicolor—Duel in the Sun!" and the identification segment goes on to present shots of Lionel Barrymore, Herbert Marshall, Walter Huston, Lillian Gish and Charles Bickford in settings characteristic of their Western roles.

The trailer then moves into its main segment, which further elaborates the central enthymeme's appeals to the audience ("you want more *Gone With the Wind*") by breaking it down into discrete units. A title appears over a sunset horizon: "*Duel in the Sun*—the picture of a thousand memorable *moments*" (italicized words in this segment are in big craggy block letters). At this point music swells and there is no more narration. The music changes to suit the mood of the "moments" as we see a series of short dialogue scenes designed to illustrate them. The title "moments of *romance*" is followed by a love scene with Jennifer Jones and Gregory Peck. Then we cut to the title "moments of *adventure*" over a long shot of a group of men riding screen right, which pans to where they're headed—a hill from which lots more horses ride over to join them—and then

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dollies in to Lionel Barrymore challenging the "yellowbellies" among them to leave. The trailer cuts to a long shot of Gish, Huston and Jones—"moments of *comedy*"—with antic woodwind music as Huston teases Jones; then "moments of *tenderness*" as an interior shot shows Joseph Cotten packing and declaring his love to Jennifer Jones; followed by "moments of *heartbreak*" with Lionel Barrymore in a wheelchair by a fire upbraiding Lillian Gish for bringing "that Indian baggage" into the house and ordering Gish to get her out. A summary title in craggy letters reads "*Moments never to be forgotten*!" as we see a high angle interior shot of people in a dance hall cheering as they watch a Native American woman (who might be Jennifer Jones) dance. Then in medium shot, her skirts twirl up and around the titles: "David O. Selznick's spectacular production of..." followed by a cut (accompanied by a gunshot sound) to the trailer's opening title against the sun with the title looming in and trombone fanfare.

This section of the trailer demonstrates one of the ways the rhetoric of genre enables the vaudeville mode's "something for everyone" rhetoric to be sustained even in trailers that depart from the proscenium model common to many early sound trailers. The variety show promoted in this trailer atomizes and packages experience—here, the feature film moviegoing experience—into structures of feeling called "moments" in order to construct the experience as a generic one. That is, the enumeration of what these moments contain (romance, adventure, comedy, tenderness, heartbreak) both displays industry assumptions of what kinds of emotions audiences might desire to experience in an epic Western, and in doing so *equates* specific emotions with a specific genre, thus commodifying and attempting to manage spectator emotions by linking them with genre appeals. In the process, this segment backs up the trailer's principal enthymeme ("You

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want more *Gone With the Wind*") and posits the Western as a genre of epic scope, containing a variety of sub-categories that will appeal to everyone—an "everyone," that is, who could relate to *Gone With the Wind.*

The rhetoric of genre here provides a perfect fit for appeals to the mythic universal audience in the classical era. The trailer demonstrates both some of the kinds of cinematic elements that can be elided by this rhetoric, and the way the ideology of the vaudeville mode's variety show motif can be (and typically is) recruited to appeal to the audience as a universal entity yet at the same time as individual consumers with the circumscribed freedoms of choice that implies. While the trailer appeals to all of "us" to see the film, we can choose which of these "moments" will most make us want to.

What doesn't get promoted by this trailer's strategy of appealing to the rhetoric of genre rather than story is the woman's point of view and identity, which merely remains on the screen as excess. Is Jennifer Jones's character an "Indian?" What are the choices she faces with regard to the two men? What does she have to do with Barrymore and Gish's ranch? Unlike many classical trailers for films that deal with a woman choosing between two men, her focalization is ignored, as is (virtually) the issue of race—except for the "moment of heartbreak" and the enthymeme's implicit assumption that the film would treat the issue similarly to *Gone With the Wind.* Linking Jennifer Jones's character with the willful Scarlett O'Hara belies the trailer's apparent treatment of her as currency exchanged among the male characters (to which the extratextual knowledge of Jones's status as Selznick's lover and "discovery" contributes). The marginalization of female subjectivity to which these "moments" of epic Western-dom call attention, moreover, is appropriate to the social space of the immediate post-war period in which this film was

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released, a period renowned for pulling out all the ideological stops to bring newly independent women back into the domestic arena.

The trailer for *Fifty Years Before Your Eyes* (1950), a Warner Bros. compilation film treating the first half of the century as filmed by newsreel cameras, is an example of the promotion of a nonfiction genre which demonstrates some of the ways trailers attempt to fold anomalous or variant types of films into familiar generic promotional terms. It promotes documentary as an adventure on an epic scale, treating its "current events" subject matter as a historical epic. This trailer from the tail end of the classical era demonstrates on a broader scale Hollywood's assumptions about audience interest in genres. Here, the documentary genre (as well as the newsreel as a genre, still an integral component of the feature film bill in 1950) is promoted as an adventure drama in which the (mythic universal) audience is a principal participant. This unusual "troubled trailer" is revealing as to how the classical trailer production system dealt with images of the historical world proper. Given my argument that fictional trailers also provide evidence of (assumptions of audience) attitudes about the historical world, this trailer adds significantly to the picture.

The trailer opens with a graphic of a spinning globe, inside which are superimposed iris-ed shots of movie stars, the Wright brothers' flight, Roosevelt, Hitler, and a mushroom cloud, as a ticker tape graphic ticks across the screen diagonally, describing the images inside the iris ("...Hitler proclaims 3rd Reich... The Atomic Age begins...") The iris closes within the globe, then a full screen title zooms in over a full-screen shot of a mushroom cloud: "The thundering events that shaped our destiny live

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again/ as Warner Bros. presents the most important document of all time! 50 Years Before your Eyes." Both the globe and the ticker tape signify encapsulation, inaugurating the trailer's approach to promoting the cinematic representation of historical events by packaging them. The graphic-heavy opening also serves to highlight these events as consumables, as "a show" like other shows (since these optical effects were familiar to audiences primarily from feature film trailers)—yet hyperbolically unlike them since it is "the most important document of all time."

The film title is superimposed over what seems to be an establishing shot of steamboats in the New York harbor, followed by a shot of New York city streets, with a horse-drawn streetcar below and a subway overhead. A narrator amplifies, "Yes, here it is, the whole exciting panorama of the last 50 years." The streetcar goes by, then after a wipe that looks like an explosion, we see a shot of an infantry advancing. "The most thrilling and significant era in the history of the world." We see earth exploding, then the trailer fades to a series of shots of the United Nations where men are signing something, followed by a shot of Truman. "This is the story *you* are writing, the story *you* are living." A wipe opens the image like a book opening, to reveal a shot of soldiers putting up the famous flag on Iwo Jima. "These are the vibrant and vital moments which history's tablets will forever carry." The images included in this grouping, set up to exemplify "the whole exciting panorama" of history, actually represent that panorama as comprising the city, transportation, war, and diplomacy: the trailer's central signifiers for "the modern world." The emphasis on "the story *you* are writing" onto "history's tablets" (an intertextual cinematic nod to Cecil B. DeMille), along with the book-opening wipe, appears to signal the trailer as operating within the rhetoric of story. These signifiers of

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"the book of life as your story" are interesting to consider in those terms, but the trailer is promoting its film on the basis of genre elements even more than story ones—for one thing, audiences already knew how much of this story "turned out" (as will be seen, the withholding of key elements of a film's story is crucial to feature film trailers operating within the rhetoric of story in the classical era). Furthermore, the overall effect of this appeal to "you" is more to remind audiences that it's a *familiar* story than to imply active historical agency. Historical events are being constructed not as narratively connected to one another, but as discontinuous, as attractions. However, like the *Duel in the Sun* "moments," for all their variety they fit within a generic type: the historical epic. Images continually stress bigness and spectacle, such as ships in the water, planes overhead, and explosions. Trailer-makers thus appear to hope the film will help audiences associate the goals of this documentary, and newsreels like it, with those of the feature film within the variety-show plurality of the classical era film bill, as belonging to a sort of meta-genre of the grand adventure of life.[7]

The trailer fades to a shot of Theodore Roosevelt speaking animatedly to an audience. The narrator continues, "Here are personalities—some whose fame," (cut to a shot of Hitler) "and some whose infamy," (cut to a shot of Churchill with Franklin Roosevelt, Stalin and a group of men) "will live long in the memory of man." A soft wipe reveals an image of Charlie Chaplin in uniform with a woman. "There are moments bright with the light of laughter" (Chaplin leans on a column, it tumbles and he grabs for it), "moments when the shadow of despair shrouded the earth" (a firefighter fights a big blaze in long shot). The trailer cuts to Gandhi seated, praying, surrounded by others. "Your heart will warm to chapters of man's understanding and humility," (the trailer

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wipes to a nuclear explosion at sea), "thrill to the terrible secrets his genius has unfolded." A wipe reveals a baseball field, as Lou Gehrig is shown saying his famous sound bite, "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth," followed by a Franklin Roosevelt inauguration sound bite: "The only thing we have to fear is... fear itself!" Next we see Rudolf Valentino in his sheik costume and the narrator exults, "Great personalities!" By intercutting images of political and religious figures with movie stars, evoking these "personalities'" effects on audiences' memories and emotions through narratorial hyperbole familiar from feature film trailers of this era, historical and fictional human subjects are equated and the horrors of recent history are rendered as safe to watch as a Charlie Chaplin film. The rhetoric of genre's appeal to audience interest in familiarity is called upon to comfort and to subdue feelings already extant in audiences, at the same time as the packaging of these events is constructed as appealing to their interest in the variety of types of historical subjects, and the novelty of watching the first fifty years of the century in one motion picture.

The trailer wraps up, beginning with a series of talking heads of newscasters as each says his name: "Brought to you through the added brilliance of today's greatest commentators." "This is Quentin Reynolds. This is H. V. Caltenborn. Milton Cross. Norman Brokenshire. André Baruch. Clem McCarthy. Arthur Godfrey...." A Warner Bros. microphone is seen at the bottom of each shot. There is a diamond wipe to a parade marching past the U.S. Capitol building, with a title superimposed: "A cavalcade of yesterdays march in mighty parade!" The fanfare music rises. Another crowd of men at a political summit is seen—apparently signing the treaty of Versailles. "The most inspirational and informative entertainment of all time!" The trailer cuts to the sea, where

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explosions are taking place, with the film title superimposed, followed by more explosions, and the musical fanfare. The trailer fades to the earlier image of the globe turning, and a final title is superimposed: "An unforgettable experience for every man—woman—and child! Produced at Warner Bros. Studios!"

The universality of "you" is directly asserted by this trailer, which while anomalous, seems to crystallize or literalize a quality of audience address seen more obliquely in fictional trailers, which also construct structures of feeling and display them as consumables, but which their fictional status seems to normalize. Moreover, by helping to place the rhetoric of the fictional trailers from this era in the context of the film bill as a whole, this trailer emphasizes a consistency of audience address across genres: a conventional notion of "you" is reinforced, opening up the "historical axis" that exists alongside fiction films and is sometimes invoked by their promotional discourses. The "historical spectator" (such as Charles Wolfe found to be addressed in *Newsweek*'s use of photographs of James Stewart's return from World War II)[8] is the figure this "you" interpellates, who is invited to participate in this trailer's argument that actuality films are a genre among others; that events are a show to watch.

This "cavalcade of yesterdays," like the *Duel in the Sun* trailer's "moments," reifies historical events as a series of "structures of feeling." Raymond Williams, who coined the term, saw structures of feeling as central to twentieth century culture's tendency to affirm that "separation of the social from the personal which is so powerful and directive a cultural mode..." (with a consequent relegation of the social to the past as a finished product).[9] This trailer's goal to *promote* these images of the (recent) past performs some interesting ideological gymnastics in the process of reconfiguring the

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historical world to fit into the rhetoric of genre's enthymemic call ("You want familiarity *and* novelty.") for the purpose of getting audiences into movie seats. As was discussed earlier, the predominant temporal mode of trailers is an amalgam of present and future tenses (along with, here, strong referential ties to the past). This trailer appears to contradict Williams's formulation that the social is relegated to the past as a finished product, in its insistence that the "fifty years" it places "before your eyes" are a story audiences are still "writing"—and one which by which they can be heartwarmed, inspired and thrilled in the future (by seeing the film). Yet the historical spectator is emplaced by the trailer—not just as a movie spectator but in relation to history "writ large"—as a consumer of attractions rather than an engaged subject. This trailer thus clarifies the contradictory positioning of implied audiences during the classical era with respect to the rhetoric of genre's appeals to their interest in novelty couched in familiarity within the genre terms of the historical epic, while providing an apparent resolution of these contradictions within the terms of a consumer identity.

Generic space in classical era trailers was promoted as a felicitous and familiar place where any and all audiences would want to go, while simultaneously offering new elements every time. The job of the rhetoric of genre in the classical era was primarily to promote familiarity by assuming unanimity within a discourse that also acknowledged consumer taste and allowed variety. Trailers demonstrate how the boundaries of traditional genres are expanded to assert their universal appeal and, in the process, posit a mythic universal American spectator who inhabited these familiar generic spaces right along with the stars on the screen. Such representations of generic spaces in turn imply a

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social space which is constructed as familiar and shared by all—an assumption which correlates with ideologies of unanimity that were promoted in the American public sphere in conjunction with both Depression recovery and World War II.

The three trailers selected out for their particularly overt audience address during this era all offer complex and contradictory images of how studios view this spectator, enabling some interesting questions about the relationships between promoters and their audiences. In the case of *A Day at the Races*, a surprisingly and atypically multi-racial and cross-class audience is represented and interpellated in a trailer that encourages a view of generic comedy as an outlet for populist, anarchic impulses. The *Duel in the Sun* trailer both typically reifies and packages audiences' assumed emotional responses to its film along generic lines, yet in doing so displays images from the film that bely such a smooth fit, giving evidence in spite of itself that this "epic western" might be a lot more puzzling than *Gone With the Wind.* The trailer for *50 Years Before Your Eyes* packages historical change as both something audiences are ostensibly effecting, and as a spectacular show—an historical epic—they can watch, demonstrating that trailers in the classical era could naturalize even nonfiction spectatorship as consumption through appeals to audience interests in genre. For all their atypicality, however, these examples of overt audience address add weight to the view that classical era trailermakers *thought* they were "talking to" an unproblematic audience which was accessible and present in the movie theater, and eager to come again soon.

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The Transitional Era: Chasing the Elusive Audience

As I have described, the era I identify as transitional between classical and New Hollywood is that period from the beginning of the 1950s through 1975, the watershed year associated with the emergence of the blockbuster and the release of *Jaws*. The challenge of writing about the trailers of the transitional era and attempting to identify their implied audiences is that trailer conventions don't seem to fall into any kind of cohesive order in this era. Thus, the case studies I have selected are simply a range of trailers for genre films that illustrate some of the many contradictions of audience address during this era. These trailers provide ample evidence of the industry's confusion about how to appeal to its no longer "universal" audience through the rhetoric of genre during the transitional era, and in them we see a variety of attempts to locate and lure audiences. The trailers I have selected stand out as examples of significant strains of audience address within the rhetoric of genre during this period, pointing again, however, not so much to typicality as to evidence of industry's questioning of or confusion about its audience(s) and their desires.

Perhaps the genre most frequently evoked in the popular media in relation to the historical epoch of the 1950s in America is science fiction. It is by now a truism that the proliferation of alien invasion films in the fifties (at both "A" and "B" budget levels) hit a nerve in their veiled expressions of the cultural anxieties of the country with regard to the Cold War. Science fiction films of the fifties have also been invoked in both critical discourse and the popular press to characterize the shift towards audience targeting and

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the cultivation of the teenage audience (along with the new feature film venue, the drive-in).[10]

Trailers for fifties science fiction films are among the most popular represented in the recent proliferation of trailer compilations and retrospectives, for they represent perhaps the industry's most pronounced camp-fodder. Classical era trailer conventions such as stentorious narrators, sweeping titles and booming music came to be exaggerated in trailers for science fiction films by the latter half of the '50s to the point of the baroque. This itself can be interpreted as a sign that, at least later in the '50s, the rhetoric no longer addresses an implied universal audience—by virtually quoting their own conventions, the trailers enter a realm of the playful that functions slightly differently in terms of audience address than they did earlier. As such, the development of this self-parodying trait in trailers during the '50s is of interest in assessing Hollywood's changing assumptions about its audience.

In the forefront of the fifties science fiction genre is the "A" work of producer George Pal, whose use of special effects was considered exemplary at the time, inspiring special mention in reviews of their virtuosity, their maker and their great expense.[11] *When Worlds Collide* (1951) and *The War of the Worlds* (1953), two "A" budget Paramount releases of Pal's, are promoted through the rhetoric of genre in two similar trailers that draw heavily on classical era conventions yet anticipate the camp appeal of later SF trailers. The later one, for the better-known film, is an interestingly "troubled" trailer for the way it introduces such modes in the early fifties—indeed prefiguring many of the motifs of trailers to come. The film's dual emphases (typical of the emerging '50s SF film) on the sober discourses of science and the military and on the magical visual

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spectacle of spaceships and star fields, are consolidated in the trailer's brief montage in such a way that the serious is counterbalanced by the spectacular, and hyperbolic appeals to audience interest in the latter have the (perhaps still) unintended effect of making the former appear not quite so serious.

The trailer for *The War of the Worlds* opens and closes with dramatic titles, but like many fifties trailers, minimizes their use (titles were usually relegated to openings and closings) along with that of other graphics such as wipes, in favor of allowing dialogue scenes, supported by narration, to move the trailer. The opening titles appear over a shot of an animated cloudy, starry sky with distant comets speeding across it. Successive titles read, "It's Coming!/ The BIGGEST STORY that could ever happen to our world/ filling the screen with a MIGHTY PANORAMA OF EARTH-SHAKING FURY!/ (as a large meteor falls to earth:) Paramount's The War of the Worlds." The meteor lands outside a town in extreme long shot as the narrator begins: "This could be the beginning of the end of the human race. For what men first thought were meteors, or the often-ridiculed flying saucers," (the "meteor" explodes in a bright light) "are in reality the flaming vanguard of the invasion from Mars!" A big saucer shaped craft slides into a farm house and wrecks it.

This opening establishes an enthymeme of a different logical type than those of classical era trailers. The juxtaposition of the title ("the BIGGEST STORY that could ever happen to our world") with the narration ("this could be the beginning of the end of the human race") represents an assumption of an audience that does not take the narrator's words completely seriously. The opening title's labeling of the film as a fiction (albeit one that "could" happen) combines with the narration's heretofore rare use as a

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means to state an intra-diegetic premise as if it applied to the world outside the movie theater ("this could be the beginning of the end of the human race"), forming a metacommunication akin to Gregory Bateson's nip that is not a bite: "this is play."[12] The assumed audience for this film might or might not be a young (i.e. playful) one, but this trailer's address to its audience appears to break new ground in enlisting the audience into the film's diegesis, inviting them to play along in this way. The precedent for this trailer is the film's precursor, Orson Welles's Mercury Theater radio production of "The War of the Worlds," which actually masqueraded as news reports of a real martian invasion, and whose broadcast itself became a story as audiences ignored the disclaimers and believed Martians were indeed invading the earth. It is interesting that the trailer draws on the pseudo-documentary conceit of the radio show while the film does not.

The rest of the trailer backs up this assumption of audience desire to "play along," presenting a series of military-industrial dialogue and action scenes overlaid by pseudo-news narration. Following the space-shipwreck we see a scene with Gene Barry (a scientist) discussing battle plans with a helmeted soldier as they crouch in a trench, then a brief extreme long shot of the spaceship glowing and rising, accompanied by ominous music. (This and the earlier wreck are the only actual shots of the alien ships in the trailer.[13]) With a sound overlap of dialogue that appears at first to be narration (continuing the blurring of the diegetic and extra-diegetic trailer discourse), the trailer fades to a scene where scientists and military men crowd around a blackboard. The uniformed man is explaining, "They slash across the country like scythes, wiping out everything that's trying to get away from them." He draws a blue chalk line across an inscrutable diagram of the aliens' movements. A suited man adds, "That explains why

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communication is cut the moment their machines begin moving." Others note unsuccessful attempts to reach various cities. The men move markers across a map as the narrator interjects, "The nations of the world mobilize their armed might, rushing to defend the earth against the unknown weapons of the super-race from the red planet." There is gunfire, cannons, a soldier runs by in flames. The narration continues to call on the film's dialogue to complete its points, querying, "Is there *nothing* that can stop the Martian death machines?" as a montage of three tanks shoot off charges. A two-star general responds from the thick of battle, "Guns, tanks, bombs, they're like toys against them!" From another grouping, Gene Barry expands, "we know now that we can't beat their machines." The camera dollies in to a closeup. "We've got to beat *them*!" Even setting aside or bracketing the hindsight of subsequent decades of viewing camp science fiction trailers and their parodies, it is hard to imagine that the strained seriousness of this exchange between the trailer's narrator and the film's dialogue was not meant to invite a playful, genre-based response from audiences—indeed perhaps, given its thinly disguised figuration of Cold War fears, one designed to appease public anxieties.

The next segment of the trailer sums up the havoc wreaked by these still unseen aliens. A long shot of the Los Angeles city hall with a siren in the foreground (which blares) is followed by a shot of refugees trudging up a hill, as the narrator announces, "From all over the world, human beings cower before the onslaught of these unearthly enemies who no one has ever seen." The trailer cuts to a newsstand with catastrophic newspaper headlines displayed, followed by shots of urban chaos and looting. The narrator links the preceding shots, continuing, "Panic that sweeps around the globe as the great masses of mankind flee blindly in a headlong stampede of hysteria." The idea

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and/or image of masses cowering is an iconographic staple of the science fiction genre of this time, as is the use of newspaper headlines or multi-lingual news reports to signify their international stature. Frequently, as in this early trailer, such images are juxtaposed to the vain but heroic efforts of science and the military to protect these masses. The masses also serve as the science fiction genre's stand-ins for the film viewer, and although in this trailer they do not actually *watch* the action as literal pro-filmic spectators would (indeed they "flee blindly"), their foregrounding in the trailer's summary scene underscores their importance to the genre (and the trailer's appeals to interest in genre).

The trailer wraps up with titles which echo the graphics from the opening, superimposed over a long shot of a ruined landscape with a fire raging in the background. "NOW after TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING!/ H. G. Wells's most famous and fantastic story comes to the screen./ Produced by George Pal, who gave you Destination Moon and When Worlds Collide./ In color by Technicolor./ Paramount's The War of the Worlds." (Smaller titles below cite director Byron Haskin.) The hyperbolic exclamation "two years in the making" fairly precisely dates this as a trailer from the early fifties—even a few years later, two years would not seem that long. It also emphasizes the promotional value of the compexity and artistry of special effects filmmaking (and specifically that of George Pal), later to become a key element in the selling of science fiction films. The evocations of *Destination Moon* and *When Worlds Collide* provide authorial as well as generic appeals to audience interest in familiarity.

As a precursor of many subsequent fifties SF trailers, this one lays out key generic elements that appeal to audience interest in the (here nascently) familiar, while providing

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the oblique hints of novel special effects that ensure product differentiation. The heavy emphasis on the military-scientific side of the genre in its selection of dialogue scenes along with its teasingly brief glimpses (and hyperbolic descriptions) of the film's beautiful other-worldly element, privilege audience interest in authenticity, a paradoxically crucial feature of this most fantastical genre. As Vivian Sobchack notes, "...the dull and flat language of reality is often used to create credibility and lend a documentary quality to SF cinema."[14] She goes on to recognize that "the language of science and technology is antiromantic and thus anti-individualistic," its intonations "exceedingly democratic in their reductive capacity, their ability to efface personality," lending to the generic creation of a "corporate consciousness, a group protagonist, ...quite appropriate to the *public* concerns of science fiction."[15] This trailer literalizes the group protagonist in its melding of the military general's dialogue with Gene Barry's and with the trailer narration, while its concluding emphasis on worldwide mass terror underscores the genre's public concerns.

Although the one-second shot of the Martian spaceship constitutes the trailer's most effective product differentiation in the sense of literal presentation of new images, the hyperbolic appeals to audience identification with a scared mob and the trailer's dominance by the publicly familiar sci-tech discourse combine with the trailer's overall assumption of audiences' desire to enjoy its fantastical generic premises, to produce a basically paranoid representation of the social space of the early 1950s. This trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience that wants its Cold War anxieties quelled. It posits an audience eager to view the military-industrial complex as something capable of being folded into a fictional sphere of fantastical adventure (generic space) instead of an

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intrusive part of the increasingly corporatized space of non-fiction daily life in the early fifties. By both playfully quoting classical era trailer discourse and prefiguring many conventions of the science fiction trailers of the decade to come, this trailer innovates through retrogression (as does the earlier George Pal *When Worlds Collide* trailer), making it a standout example of the paradoxical quality of the rhetoric of genre's strategy of tying product differentiation to familiarity.

Trailers' use of the rhetoric of genre to promote reconfigurations and other attempts to revise generic categories appears in the sample to become more common, or more pronounced, during this time of chasing a shrinking movie audience. One of the most frequently reconfigured genres from the studio era is the Western. In particular, 1950s and 1960s Western trailers assert new elements while assuming audience interest in familiar genre iconographies and narrative premises. The trailer for *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) draws on the rhetoric of genre in that although the trailer also strongly invokes the rhetorics of stardom and story, it reads primarily as a canonization of the Western, promoting its film as an artistic apotheosis of the genre. In retrospect, the film itself has indeed become one of the key works of the Western canon, cited by Thomas Schatz as central to the Western's transition from a genre that celebrated an idealized cultural self-image to one which "deconstructs and critiques that image, finally acknowledging the necessary role of myth and legend in the development of history and civilization."[16] However, the "troubled" trailer's contemporaneous assumptions about what's interesting in the film tell another story about its place in the culture of its time, emphasizing its continuity with past Westerns.

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The trailer reprises classical era trailer tropes, such as its familiar structure. It opens with a hyperbolic achronological sequence of shots (a bracket syntagma) exemplifying the film with overlay titles, then moves into a narrated segment that offers longer dialogue scenes and presents story premises, followed by an identification segment utilizing titles and shorter dialogue scenes to introduce the characters and stars, and reaches a dynamic crescendo (consisting of tantalizing fragments of the Western's ritual shoot-out scene) framed by the film's title and credits. Iconographically too, we are in the familiar territory of the "town-taming Western,"[17] with its (and thus the trailer's) visual emphasis on the peopled spaces of the genre's familiar saloon and storefront.

But the classical era's wipes and title swells have been replaced by subtler cuts and fades, and the trailer's choice of shots and scenes evidences not only the familiar assumptions that audiences are interested in generic iconography, stars and story, but also a sense that the film's cinematic artistry, trumpeted in the promotion of its auteur John Ford, is equally important to audiences (strong master shot compositions and shots exemplifying an exaggerated chiaroscuro effect common to sixties films that chose anachronistically to film in black and white, are prevalent). Although rhetorical appeals to stardom and story are central to this trailer, neither is dominant. The roles of John Wayne and James Stewart are obliquely presented and we never hear Stewart speak; and although the trailer sustains its core enigma—"who shot Liberty Valance?"—expository elements are very jumbled and confused in its presentation of the story. The film's draw as a Western, however, is promoted in every shot.

The trailer opens with a sampling of non-dialogue scenes with overlay titles introducing hyperbolic equations to promote the three principal hooks the trailer assumes

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will draw audiences: "As *Mighty/* as its cast../ The two great stars/ it brings together for the first time!" as we see a long shot of a rider intercepting a carriage. After a closer angle where the two are revealed as John Wayne and James Stewart, the trailer cuts to a shot of Stewart aiming his gun (from the target practice scene), and identificatory titles for each of the two stars. This scene fades to a long shot of a melée at the newspaper office, with a title: "As *Powerful* as its direction by the four-time Academy Award winner/ John Ford." Then there is a fade to an exterior fight scene, with Stewart being socked as a couple watches: "As *Explosive* as its characters who bring America's frontier to heroic life again in.../" The film's title moves from screen left to screen right, over a shot of a man on a horse in the middle of a town street, shooting off a gun as townspeople scurry away.

The trailer's assertion that stars, director and characters (more than story) are the film's most appealing features introduces its key assumptions: that audiences in 1962 will want their A-budget Westerns canonized with the imprimatur of the genre's paramount storyteller, and that the film centers on people and identity (that Ford's direction is character-centered). The trailer thus assumes that audiences want a new kind of Western. The opening also demonstrates an assumption that westerns as a genre (genre being the opening's unspoken but visually dominant element) are associated with might, power and explosiveness. The three opening titles thus attempt to court audiences interested at once in character-driven stories (increasingly typical of Hollywood fare in the '50s and early '60s) and in spectacle.

As we see a series of shots (linked by fades) of the principals (and various gawking townspeople) moving dramatically in and around the saloon, a narrator begins

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alliteratively and generically, "Out of the flame and fury of the frontier, the old West lives again, as only John Ford can recreate it. Peopled with wonderful characters, who have become legend in their own time." This narration asserts the film's continuity with past Westerns, and in particular with past John Ford Westerns. The trailer then presents most of the scene in which Wayne, Stewart and Lee Marvin have a confrontation, as the voice-over continues, "Of them all, two are the most memorable. Liberty Valance, and the man who shot him. And the man who shot him, was destined to become a hero." The dramatic impact of the scene is obscured by the trailer's extraction of it from its context, for we know neither the stakes nor the outcome of the confrontation, just that it reprises a familiar Western genre convention, the showdown, and that one of the three must be "the man who shot him."

The trailer fades to a crowd scene mobbing the bar, massing to screen right. "Yet strangely enough, only one of these people could be sure he knew the identity of the man who shot Liberty Valance." It then cuts to another confrontational scene of Stewart, Marvin and Wayne, where Marvin tells Wayne to stay out of it, then challenges Stewart, "You got a choice, dishwasher. Either you get out of town or tonight you be on that street, alone." The trailer sustains and heightens the mystery of who shot Liberty Valance by deliberate obscurity about both the characters' identities and the relationships among the three men, even as it touts the characters as "legends." The trailer then fades to begin its identification sequence, with titles introducing Stewart and Wayne, Vera Miles, Lee Marvin ("as Liberty Valance"), and a three-shot of Edmund O'Brien, Andy Devine, and Ken Murray. Questions of identity are thus established as a prime focus of the trailer

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through the rhetoric of story (the introduction of a key enigma), while these issues are presented in archetypal Western (genre) terms.

The trailer then moves into more pointed dialogue scenes: in the bar, Marvin looks around and speaks to the crowd: "You all heard him say he had a gun in his hand, didn't ya?" Men respond ("That ain't murder, Marshall, that's a clean-cut case of self-defense"), and another angle on the scene shows the setting to be a quintessential Western saloon, with card table in foreground, men standing around, a bartender in the center of the shot, a mirror behind, and people seen in the mirror—a classic Fordian master shot which organizes the space of the saloon in a particularly orderly way. Given the trailer's foregrounding of this scene, the master shot can be seen as comprising a signifier of "frontier justice" (indeed an enthymemic one, since the trailer assumes audience knowledge of the generic convention equating barroom and courtroom). The subsequent fade to a crowd scene—with campaigners, placards, top hats and ribbons, and titles proclaiming, "It has a great cast, great performances, in a picture about a man's greatness!"—visually links the mens' barroom witnessing to the more formal institutional regime of electoral politics.

The trailer begins its denouement with a medium shot of Stewart socking Wayne, who rubs his jaw from the ground as their identifying titles are repeated. It then fades to a dramatic night exterior shot on a porch, with screen-left darkened, Marvin at the railing. A title reads: "John Ford's production," there is a fade to a medium shot of Marvin aiming as he says "this time, right between the eyes," then back to the other angle as Marvin shoots and immediately is shot by an unseen gunman. The film title appears on screen left where it's darkened, followed by titles for director, producer, script, and the

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Paramount logo. A tacked-on afterthought intertitle reads: "Hear the legend come alive with the new hit song, "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," with music over (not the song).

As in the classical era examples, there are profilmic spectators who serve as correlates to the hypothetical trailer spectator. The frequent crowd scenes and appearances of observing townspeople help mark this film as a sub-genre familiar to audiences, the town-taming Western. But beyond that, the prevalence of these profilmic spectators and the iconographic dominance of the proscenium of the Western saloon setting in the pivotal master shot also enable us to make out in the trailer a representation of space appropriate to the historical moment of the film's production. Following the various crowd scenes, we see Marvin, in the archetypal saloon space, calling on the (mirrored) townspeople to be witnesses to his story, while the next shot, another crowd scene, links an overdetermined "greatness" (great cast, great performances, great man) to signifiers of electoral politics. Through this juxtaposition, the trailer thus valorizes spectatorship as citizenship, an appropriate equation to an era in which Hollywood is both anxiously recruiting spectators following the tremendous drops in feature film viewing at the end of the studio era; and is accustomed to the linking of film spectators (and the Hollywood institution in general) to their role in the public sphere following the political dramas of the HUAC years.

The simultaneous appeals to audience interest in Western grandeur, character-centered drama, and cinematic artistry make apparent this trailer's address to an audience that sees the John Ford Western as superlative filmmaking. With a couple of significant exceptions (including Ford, Hitchcock and Capra), appeals to audience awareness of the

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director's role in film production post-date the classical era, and their more frequent appearance during the transitional era in association with the rhetoric of genre is interesting. Trailers for other transitional era westerns, such as William Wyler's *The Big Country* (1958) and George Stevens's *Shane* (1953) also pointed to their directors' names as draws. Promoting even a familiar director such as Ford seems to serve primarily as an effort to align Ford with Westerns and thus at once to democratize interest in cinematic artistry by aligning it with its expression through genre, and to valorize the Western as worthy of interest by audiences who want "art films."[18]

The rhetoric of genre's mission to highlight product differentiation through familiarity here effectively utilizes the Hollywood auteur: even as the promotion of Ford serves to *differentiate* the film from the run-of-the-mill Western, the trailer celebrates this film's similarity by linking it to *other* Ford Westerns (rather than noting its thematic and ideological departure from them), thus corralling and containing Ford's oeuvre to the Western genre. The trailer's minimization of the complexities of the film's story and theme by its obscure presentation of the relationships among characters (that are nonetheless promoted as a principal draw) likewise privileges its appeals to familiar genre elements. The convoluted efforts to highlight the enigma of identity in the film while promoting it as a typical Western (rather than using the rhetoric of story to call attention to its emotional complexity or to assert that it stands apart from other Westerns) perhaps bespeak a confusion about identity that extends to a confusion about the identity of its audience. Gone are the tidy Western "moments" promoted to one and all by the *Duel in the Sun* trailer; gone is the *Yankee Doodle Dandy* trailer's sense that "a man's greatness" could stand in for 'our' own. In its place is not so much product differentiation

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as a narrative cypher, bolstered by assumptions that audiences will be drawn in by the familiar conventions of the Western, along with an appeal to assumed auteur-conscious audiences to trust veteran movie wrangler John Ford to work it all out.

In addition to reconfiguring studio era appeals to interest in genres with the post-studio era audience in mind, trailers from the transitional era participated in the revitalization and reinvention of flagging genres. The sample included a striking trailer for the musical *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972) which as a rerelease trailer, has the easier job of promoting a known quantity, but as such still holds interest for an examination of "who do they think they're talking to?" since it is charged with expanding the audience for an already successful film.[19] The trailer uses the conventions of the rhetoric of genre, such as musical iconography, repetition, and equations, to display assumptions about the audience's relationship to the musical's historical era, and to its own. I selected this "troubled trailer" to characterize the rhetoric of genre in the transitional era because its foreshortening of the film's theatrical mise en scène, crosscut with a narrative that represents moments of stark historical change, figures relationships between performers, audiences and history that speak to the social space of the early seventies—in the process of revitalizing and transforming the genre of the musical.

As one review implied, the industry had about given up on the movie musical prior to the release of *Cabaret*—1972 was the height of the post-*Easy Rider* "movie-brat" era, also known as the "Hollywood renaissance," in which smaller independent films, progressive content and generic innovation enjoyed new levels of success. Nonetheless, *Cabaret* surprised by cleaning up at the box office as well as the Academy Awards and

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by making a star out of Liza Minnelli.[20] According to a news item in *Variety*, it was billed as a "musical-drama" prior to release, and departed from the Broadway production by relying more on the original Christopher Isherwood "Berlin Stories," on which were based both the play "I Am a Camera" and the musical.[21] By the time the rerelease trailer appeared following the 1992 Academy Award telecast in the spring of 1973, [22] industry and audiences alike were aware of the film's innovative approach to the musical, and the trailer contributes to the film's reconfiguration of the genre for new audiences.

In an echo of the vaudeville mode's promotional use of the proscenium prevalent in classical era trailers, the trailer anchors its narrative clips from the film within the diegetic space of the cabaret stage and the song-and-dance numbers, into which the non-stage scenes are cut with an apparent effort at seamlessness. Liza (Sally Bowles) is first seen onstage from behind in close-up, haloed by a spotlight: we are onstage with her. She is singing, "Everybody, they love a winner," and the narrator repeats, "Everybody loves a winner," as we see a chorus line of dancers in shorts and stockings. "Cabaret, winner of eight Academy Awards, including Liza Minnelli, best actress, and Joel Grey, best supporting actor." The repeated line (which gets repeated again by the narrator at the end of the trailer) creates an enthymeme which, in this first instance, assumes that audiences will take the line literally—that the narrator's emphasis on the film as a winner at the Oscars will overshadow the considerable irony with which the line is delivered in Liza's number. It also serves to underline the fact that the "winner" is a *musical*, since the narrator is highlighting and thus validating, as it were, a song lyric.

A close-up of Liza and Joel Grey (the MC) in profile, their faces moving towards each other, follows. Beginning with a close-up of Liza looking in a mirror, we then see a

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series of shots of Liza, Joel and Michael York (Bob Roberts) singing "money makes the world go round," intercut with shots of them interacting offstage. They stick their tongues out at each other. At a shot of York and Liza in a doorway, the song ends and the characters introduce themselves to each other. She holds a movie program, he a newspaper. Another cabaret scene is shown, emphasizing shots of a happy German audience and liquor being poured. An Aryan looking man (Helmut Griem playing Maximilian von Heune) beckons the pair to his table, saying, "You are like me, adrift in Berlin. I think it's my duty to corrupt you, agreed?" Liza nods happily with a bottle at her lips, York nods too and looks at Liza. A short scene follows from a dance number with men in drag wearing Nazi helmets and using canes as rifles.

A shift in the trailer's happy tone is then marked by crosscutting between the drag show and increasingly ominous exterior shots. First there is a medium shot of one of the couple's friends (played by Marisa Berenson) saying to Griem, "Don't you see what is happening in Germany today?" We then cut back to a shot of the men goose-stepping in the drag show, followed by a medium shot of the three friends (York, Liza and Griem) embracing, and another of a child giving the Hitler salute. As they watch Nazis on parade, York asks Griem, "You still think you can control it?" The trailer cuts back to the drag show and a shot of Joel Grey in a wig holding a Nazi helmet up on a cane, laughing. Cut to Michael York knocking down a Nazi flag, followed by another shot of Grey on stage, singing, "So, life is disappointing, forget it! In here"—he spins around—"life is beautiful." We then see several medium shots of glum audience members, including a grouping that includes an evidently gay man combing his hair. Liza's Dietrich-esque number, "Bye-bye my Liebe herr," opens, and is then heard over narrative scenes such as

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Liza and York kissing upside-down and other clips from love scenes between them, ending with her waving goodbye over her shoulder. The scene returns to the song, and the narrator returns to announce, "Everybody loves a winner. Cabaret. Winner of eight Academy Awards." The trailer ends at the end of Liza's song, as she strikes a pose on a prop chair and the other dancers punctuate the song's ending by slapping the stage.

While signifiers of extra-cinematic spectacle are integral to the trailer's generic promotional regime by virtue of its representations of the cabaret show, gone are the wipes, the sustained cast identifications, most of the narration and the titles common to classical era trailers' promotion of both backstage musicals and cinematic spectacle. In their place, we see inklings of some of the conventions of New Hollywood trailers, including early use of diegetic music as a de facto sound track virtually throughout the trailer. We see, as well, a feature known in contemporary trailer production parlance as a "grid," which involves crosscutting between one narratively or (here) texturally important scene and various shorter scenes to advance exposition. There is also emphasis on gesture rather than dialogue to express characterizations. In this case, these conventions serve also to advance the trailer's generic rhetoric, since an emphasis on gesture, rhythm, and of course music, keep audiences aware that this is a trailer for a musical.

As many historians have noted about period films, they are almost always interesting in what they communicate about historical attitudes towards the era of their production as well as the period in which the film is set. In this regard, Thomas Elsaesser has written of *Cabaret* as a "polysemic text" which, because (like other big budget international commercial productions) it aims to address a wide audience "with very diverse entry points into its diegetic world" (and because it was such a huge success),

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> must in the first instance be regarded as a historical fact about 1972. As such, it records a number of (transgressive) cultural shifts (about popular music, gender, and sexuality) which have now become commonplaces, but which at the time perhaps needed to articulate themselves in the context of a referential world—Germany in the 1930s—which itself connoted transgression, danger, ambiguity.... *Cabaret* represented its diegetic universe as a blend of youth, the politics of the street, impending apocalypse, and sexual adventure, suggesting a number of *Zeitgeist* parallels between the 1930s and the 1970s....[23]

These issues are telescoped and even exaggerated in the trailer, which even more directly addresses audiences (with persuasive intent) than does the film. The rapid progression of fascist decadence in 1930s Germany and its interweaving with the genre of the backstage musical is given an intertextual and generic zing by virtue of the film starring (in her first big role) Liza Minnelli, daughter of Judy Garland. This "zing" functions perhaps even more strongly in the trailer than the film because of the way images of stars function in trailers—as will be discussed in a later chapter, trailers inevitably display more of the star's persona *as star* than as their character in the film, since the film (at least in the ordinary trailer exhibition situation) hasn't yet been seen.[24]

That the trailer successfully telegraphs a culture's fall into decadence and fascism via the discourse of musical entertainment and the rhetoric of genre makes it an interesting counterpart to the *Yankee Doodle Dandy* trailer's promotion of showbiz and

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moviegoing as patriotic in the classical era. Here a trailer promotes a film that problematizes and implicates its own medium and citizenry in social corruption. Given that the business of the trailer is, of course, still promotional, the interesting question becomes, how does the trailer make Germany's fall into fascism look? Even though the trailer happens fast, the characters and the profilmic audience seem to catch on more slowly than it is assumed that we (the trailer and film audience) do. Fascism destroys their love and makes them have to part, but the show goes on: "In here, life is beautiful." The shot of Joel Grey spinning onstage as he makes this declaration fits neatly into the familiar ideological construct of the sad clown. It also fits with the film's declared generic reconfiguration as a "musical drama," as do the connotations of his character as sinister and decadent. We even love a winner who is really a loser: by the time this line is repeated at the end of the trailer, "Everybody loves a winner" has come to encompass an assumption that the audience comprehends the ironic register in Liza's lyrics but has been persuaded to see the film for the added appeal of a range of dramatic elements in addition to its musical spectacle—elements moreover assumed to be familiar to the expanded audiences for art films in this era.

The rapidity of the perceived fall of Germany into decadence and fascism is one of the more striking elements of this trailer, enabled by the musical "grid." The trailer presents a neat narrative closure appropriate to a "musical drama," but here an entertainment which figures dystopia rather than utopia.[25] The product is differentiated within a framework of generic familiarity, and in the process the trailer displays assumptions that it's "talking to" a broad 1972 audience with a sophisticated appreciation of cinema as art, an audience that (it is assumed) desires to see the troubling social,

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sexual and political contradictions of its own era resolved, and an audience that, like the profilmic audience in the cabaret show, seeks this resolution in the safety of their theater seats, perhaps preferring the experience of spectatorship to the unmediated witnessing of its own historical era.

Trailers in the transitional era seem to be searching for the configurations of the new post-classical audience. There no longer seems to be an imaginary universal, raceless (but white by omission), classless (but middle- to working-class) assumed mass of folks with basically similar (and basically conservative) values that went to the movies. While who "You!" is/are no longer seems to go without saying as it was in the classical era, we are able to examine various ways this elusive audience is addressed within the rhetoric of genre, and in so doing to apprehend the trailers in this sample as representations of the social space of their time. In comparison to the sample from the classical era (where generic problematization was the exception), generic space is somehow problematized in *each* of these trailers. Each clearly utilizes the conventions of the rhetoric of genre to differentiate the product within a framework of familiarity, yet the social spaces represented in these trailers escape their generic confines. Whether they evoke a contemporary fictional social world responding to interplanetary invasion with global panic and chaos—in the process implying that it could be *non*fictional; a fictionalized historical America where the lines between Western heroes and villains are no longer clear to anyone; or a historical Europe where internal forces are collapsing society and entertainment is the last refuge; trailers of the transitional era display assumptions that audiences are no longer interested in genres in quite the same ways as before, and may

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not have the same values as before. Regardless of the content of the sample's many genre trailers made during this era, the rhetorical assumptions about audiences that emerge through trailers' efforts at product differentiation within generic terms map a fundamental confusion on the part of promoters about where the boundaries of appropriate or successful feature film genres are or should be drawn—and thus, a confusion about who, indeed, they are talking to.

The Contemporary Era: The Global Family Audience

By 1975, the watershed year for New Hollywood (as discussed previously), the market for motion pictures had undergone a number of transformations that affected how genres were conceived and perceived both within the industry and by audiences. While markets for "niche" films have expanded phenomenally in conjunction with new avenues of distribution, trailers for even these films follow a promotional model heavily dictated by the rhetorical logic of the dominant blockbuster market. Thus, theatrical trailers (unlike TV spots) are still charged with drawing as large an audience as possible to *every* film. Indeed, as a result of the success of films like *The Full Monty* (1999) and *The Opposite of Sex* (1999), the new "major independents" such as Miramax and New Line can always hope for a breakout hit even among smaller films, and thus gear even these promotional campaigns accordingly.[26] Moreover, "as large an audience as possible" has a different meaning in the context of New Hollywood's global reach (as do the parameters of Hollywood itself, a newly global entity no longer even remotely ascribable to a single specific geographic place).[27]

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Among the influences of the "movie brat" or film school generation on genre formation in New Hollywood is the redoubling of the referentiality of films to other films, both in the sense of increased use of intertextual jokes and references, and a more holistic referencing of earlier Hollywood genres and genre films, in both specific and amorphously nostalgic ways. In trailers, this feature of the contemporary film market combines with the impact of the high concept-driven promotional milieu of the blockbuster era, encompassing such elements as "the reliance on strong, reproducible images, the saturation campaign, and widespread product tie-ins" along with an emphasis on making the most of pre-sold elements such as "stars, familiar stories or situations, remakes, sequels, and series films."[28] The rhetoric of genre gains particular strength from the high concept era's integration of pre-production (packaging), production, and promotion, which engenders a coherent generic identity for most films from the start.

Like those of the classical era, contemporary trailers utilizing the rhetoric of genre privilege audience interest in the familiar over product differentiation, but in addition to memories of classic film genres, the familiar now encompasses a host of other cultural cues from television, music, and other forms of entertainment. Moreover, the reach of potential audiences for whom such cues are familiar is now assumed to be global. Much has been written about the generic hybridity of contemporary postmodern quotational popular culture, and trailers are no exception. The inclusiveness of trailer producers' conceptions of genre in the classical era is echoed with new energy in the image-bombarded '80s-'90s, where generic revitalization and recombination are standard (witness the 1999 film *Wild Wild West*, which industry buzz jokingly began to call "Men in Black Hats" on the basis of its trailer, in which the film's hybridization of western and

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science fiction genres was dominated by its promotion as another Will Smith vehicle along the lines of 1997's *Men in Black*). Whereas the transitional era encompassed two distinct periods of trailer production—the still National Screen Service dominated fifties and the roadshow/experimental sixties period (which overlapped with the early seventies)—the core characteristics of contemporary era trailer practices had all emerged by the mid-seventies.

Along with the famous *Jaws* promotional campaign, the trailer for *Rocky* (1976) is often cited as influential in the emergence of New Hollywood trailer conventions, and strikingly demonstrates an early incarnation of contemporary trailers' mission to avoid alienating any potential audience segment. Although this "troubled trailer" draws on the rhetoric of story as well as that of genre, it is exemplary in its combination of the two for the purpose of expanding the audience beyond the expected male "fight film" crowd. Although at the time *Rocky* was perceived as innovative, both because its star/screenwriter had emerged out of virtual obscurity and because the main character's heroism did not reside in his abilities,[29] it belonged to a time-honored genre which, like the gangster movie, had built-in male appeal. In classical era trailers, such films (the 1947 film *Body and Soul* for example) were still assumed to be of interest to a universal audience that would include women, but the dynamics of the transitional era changed that. A marketing textbook tellingly characterizes contemporary trailer practice using the example of the *Rocky* trailer:

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> The marketing plan sometimes calls for certain elements of the movie and the story to be played down to expand the target audience. For example, the boxing footage from *Rocky* turned off many women who were not interested in a movie about prize fighting. For this reason, the *Rocky* trailer did not use some of the most exciting footage from the movie. Although it set out to make the viewer root for a classic underdog who gets a million-to-one shot at respect and love, the trailer instead used the ice-skating sequence featuring Rocky and Clara (sic) with narration and dialogue telling about Rocky's dream and promising a simple but appealing love story. ... It was a good example of properly positioning a film to expand what might have been a limited target audience.[30]

The *Rocky* trailer uses a series of "grids", or crosscut scenes, that alternate between ones involving Rocky's boxing world (not actual fighting scenes) and a number of scenes between Sylvester Stallone as Rocky and Talia Shire as Adrian (including the one at the ice rink). The trailer's principal enthymeme is encapsulated by the tagline delivered early on by the narrator as we see Rocky kneel in a bathroom before the big fight, "His whole life was a million-to-one shot." The missing term in this enthymeme is just what exactly the odds are stacked against him *for*—the assumption is audiences will equate the fight with his only chance at success, and that audiences define success as accomplishment. While the trailer attempts to avoid pegging *Rocky* as a fight film, this line, and the subsequent scenes that serve to back up its assumption that audiences will want to see an underdog "go the distance," deliver nothing so much as it does classic

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boxing genre cues. The love story, I would argue, is incorporated but not privileged, much as romance is tied into adventure in classical era genre trailers. In spite of the campaign's attempt to position the film as not-a-fight-film in order to appeal to women, it relies on the appeal of "pre-sold elements" in the story: preeminently, the boxing genre convention of championing the underdog(s) —figured this time as *both* members of the heterosexual—and working class—couple.[31]

In the first clip from the ice skating scene, Stallone explains to Shire how he became a fighter because his father told him that since he didn't have any brains he'd better use his body. We then see a training scene with Burgess Meredith, then the trailer cuts back to the ice where Shire echoes, "My mother, she said 'you weren't born with much of a body so you better develop your brain.'" An aerial view of the boxing ring (and this trailer's profilmic audience), with the announcer speaking in voice-over, is followed by a scene at the gym with Stallone and Meredith where the trainer basically tells the fighter he could have been a contender. We then see the couple in Rocky's dressing room before the fight as he shows her his fear, followed by a scene where Burt Young (who plays Adrian's brother) tells Stallone "Adrian is a loser." Back to the dressing room: "You know you're looking very great today, y'know that?" Back to Burt: "And if she don't watch out she's gonna end up dyin' alone." Back to dressing room: "I gotta go now, but don't you leave town, huh?" Back to Burt: "And *you're* gonna end up dying alone." Stallone to Burt: "Hey, I don't see no crowd around you neither." Back to dressing room, Stallone to Shire: "Wish me luck, I'm gonna need it." We then hear cheering as we see Stallone go into the ring and the announcer says, "A 50-to-one underdog living a Cinderella story...."

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Another "grid" then pairs scenes of the two fighters approaching the ring to cheers with a scene of the couple at his house for the first time, followed by a "grid" pairing Stallone punching sides of beef and later a punching bag, with the confrontation between Stallone, Shire and Burt Young. Intermittently, Stallone tells Shire during the crosscutting, "It really don't matter if I lose this fight, 'cause all I wanna do is go the distance. I'm gonna know for the first time in my life that I weren't just another bum from the neighborhood." And Shire tells Burt Young, "You made me feel like a loser! I'm *not* a loser!" The trailer culminates with clips from the training setpiece where Stallone runs in downtown Philadelphia and pauses on the steps of a monument, raising his arms, as the soundtrack swells with the now-familiar "Rocky theme."

While in this case we have evidence that the heavy use of the "grid" formation throughout this trailer was intended to put the focus on the film's love story and thus differentiate the product and appeal to a broader audience, it functions to create an equation that also reinforces familiar generic cues: Rocky's battle to be more than just another bum from the neighborhood (more than just a body) is visually equated with Adrian's battle to prove she's not a loser (more than just a brain). (My notes on this trailer cite Shire's delivery of the line, "I'm not a loser!" as its emotional climax.) Both of these battles, and the romantic plotline, are subsumed within the conventions of the boxing film, here though figuring a new alliance of male and female underdogs—"I think we make a real sharp coupla coconuts, I'm dumb and you're sharp, whadya think?"

At the same time, the trailer's strategy of reinforcing its identity as a boxing film without showing actual boxing does differentiate it from prior boxing films in that the use of the "grid" to create a visual equation implies an equality between the man and the

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woman in the heterosexual romance. It is hardly liberating in this case, for unlike other early '70s films which begin to depict women's attempts at escape from domestic space (such as *Klute*, 1971, and *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 1974), Adrian's escape is into domestic space. We might even read the equation oppositionally, as drawing attention to the circumscription of Rocky's (class) choices (all he gets to do is go the distance, not win), insofar as it parallels Adrian's gender (*and* class) determined ones. The trailer's final tone of uplift tends to cover over any such oppositional readings, however, appearing to resolve all contradictions with Stallone's upraised fists of victory. Nonetheless, the trailer illustrates that contemporary era trailer producers' concerns with not alienating any potential audience can lead to new forms of genre-based inclusiveness (she's a "fighter" too) that can increase the visibility of contradictions among this global audience as well as cover them up. [32]

The working class figured more prominently in the social space of the 1970s than it had in any decade since World War II. Traditional worker-based forms of struggle such as trade unionism were enjoying recession-based, and New Left-fed, visibility (on the eve, however, of the Reagan air traffic controllers union debacle that would change this). Furthermore, a new multiracial proletarian chic was visible both in urban milieux (as exemplified by the disco movement) and nationwide (with the rise in popularity of martial arts), and these trends were brought to the screen in films such as *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and the Bruce Lee-influenced action film cycle. *Rocky* itself brought the working class phatic "Yo!" into common parlance for a brief period of time. The *Rocky* trailer, however, with its reconfiguration of the familiar fight film thematic and the redemption of the underdog through struggle into a "simple but appealing love story" in

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which the million-to-one victory of the protagonist constitutes the formation of the couple, implies the maintenance of a status quo of class oppression. The trailer seems to "think it's talking to" a global audience that sees the American working class from the outside, thus better identifying with the "simple, appealing" charms of its way of life than with its struggles.

The trailer promoting the third episode produced in the *Star Wars* saga, *Return of the Jedi* (1983) is interesting in the way it calls on the rhetoric of genre to promote a prominent New Hollywood cycle, interpollating audiences in ways that are both similar to earlier trailers and create new conventions for the promotion of the "family adventure film," making it serve as an interesting "troubled trailer" for the rhetoric of genre. This trailer demonstrates how genre and story appeals can be seamlessly interwoven in the contemporary trailer, while offering a culmination of many of the classical and transitional trailer practices of commodifying spectacle. It should be noted that George Lucas resisted the generic appelation "science fiction" for his new saga when it first appeared in 1977, preferring the term "space fantasy."[33] Thus, while the saga has inevitably been considered critically as science fiction, Lucas's promotional efforts focused heavily on differentiating it from prior science fiction films and emphasizing the particularities of the cycle's own characteristics, the familiarity and popularity of which are heavily referenced in the trailer for this third film of the series.

The trailer relies on the spectacular. It moves smoothly from clips of one of the film's key action set-pieces to another while inserting short bits of dialogue that hint at plot points without revealing them, as well as offering a number of in-jokes that assume

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audiences know the first two films without insisting they do. Eschewing the film's chronological development, the trailer presents its own trajectory of narrative action (including a coherent trailer "beginning" and "ending"), privileging spectacular images and rhythmic transitions that back up the trailer's central refrain, as laid out in the first title: "Return!" This hailing assumes, of course, that audiences have seen the first films of the saga—as well they had, in record numbers.

Following the 20th Century Fox logo, the trailer shows a field of stars as the pinpoints transform into vectored lines—the familiar visual cue for a spaceship's transition to hyperdrive, here signalling both the penetration of outer space and the start of a brand new—science fiction—adventure. Accompanying this visual is a high tech sound like the de-pressurizing hiss of the opening of a spaceship door lock, reinforcing the image of entry. A title bursts forth to the sound of an explosion: "RETURN," in the red capital letters of the *Return of the Jedi* logo. The familiar John Williams score swells, and a narrator announces, "Return! To a galaxy, far, far away." A title saying the same thing is then boxed in red, with the "Star Wars" logo at the top (a graphic configuration familiar to purchasers of *Star Wars* ancillary products). The first footage is a medium long shot of Han Solo (Harrison Ford) at the controls (with Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker standing behind him) looking around the interior of a spaceship and saying, "Ready, everybody?" In quick succession the familiar characters are presented: R2-D2 answers with a techno chirp, and Han shouts "Chewy," (as we see Chewbacca) "let's see what this piece of junk can do." We then see Luke and C3PO looking concerned, and as the music flares and the explosion sounds swell, we see several exterior space battle shots. C3PO comments, "here we go again!"[34]

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This opening works the imperative "Return!" into a more elaborate appeal to audiences' assumed desire to spend more time with their beloved characters. The opening hyperdrive shot, which virtually sucks audiences into the film's vortex, is followed by shots of the film's characters acting as profilmic spectators (of the spectacle and adventure seen through the cockpit/screen) and offering commentary that reinforces parallels between the characters' entry into an adventure and that of the audience ("Ready, everybody?" "Here we go again!"). With the graphic logo's echoing of *Star Wars* toy packaging, audiences are moreover assumed to want to return not only to the film but to its ancillary world of products as well.

After this opening the trailer cuts to the scene in Jabba's palace, with shots of Luke (seen in full Jedi regalia for the first time) attempting to rescue his friends. Luke uses the Force to make a guard's gun leap into his hands. There is a long shot of Luke falling *down* a trap door, then one of Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) in Jabba's clutches, followed by a reaction shot of the droids at a distance. The trailer cuts to Luke leaping *up* a diving plank (from the later scene on Jabba's barge) and the narrator reprises, "Return! To heroic adventure!" as a lightsaber shoots out of R2-D2's head and Luke flips in the air, catches the lightsaber, and leaps from one sand barge to another amid red laser fire. Han is dropped head-first into the mouth of a horrendous *vagina-dentata*-like creature buried in the sand, a tentacle grabs his leg in medium close-up and he screams. Since Luke's fall down the Jabba-hole is, through the magic of trailer montage, followed by his miraculous leap back up (into another scene), the trailer assumes we will trust that Han too will be rescued from his fall.

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The trailer jumps to the lightsaber battle, as Darth Vader tells Luke "You don't know the power of the Dark Side." They fight, lightsabers flash and hum, and battle music rises. The narrator reprises, "Return! To the ultimate confrontation." The opponents' lightsabers cross and the Emperor smiles above, followed by a shot of C3PO looking aghast (in a Kuleshovian kind of way...). The trailer cuts to a forest scene, as Leia rescues Han from stormtroopers. He says, "I love you." Leia replies, "I know," offering audiences familiar with *The Empire Strikes Back* a dialogue exchange with a certain semiotic density as well as an in-joke. The trailer then samples the forest battle: enemy troopers shoot R2-D2, ewoks swinging on vines attack the troopers, a Scout Walker shooting ewoks is hit from either side by two logs suspended on ropes that the ewoks have released with hatchets. The narrator reprises, "Return, for the climactic chapter of the Star Wars saga."

The trailer's "climax" then begins, signalled by R2's chirp and C3PO's editorial commentary, "Exciting is hardly the word I would choose," which serves both to communicate the character's apprehension about some as-yet-unseen plot development and to summarize the film's appeal as a spectacle defying description. We then see a speeder bike fly through the forest, followed by a shot of Luke with Leia behind, speeding through the forest on another bike. The narrator adds, "But most of all, return for the fun of it." They speed under a fallen log. The trailer cuts to a huge explosion on a space station, and the Millenium Falcon speeding through a corridor on the station and away, followed by a reverse angle of the ship in space being pursued by an X-wing. The film's title is superimposed over this shot, leaving audiences poised in outer space *in*

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medias chase, as the narrator concludes, "Return of the Jedi!" and the music comes to a crescendo. A postscript title reads, "Coming March 29 to a Theater Near You."

The use of profilmic spectators as correlates to the audience's assumed spectatorial interest or vantage point, seen frequently in trailers throughout the sound era (as well as a strong genre convention of science fiction), is here institutionalized with the help of the droids' meta-commentary. It is also, as has been argued, a pronounced feature of the films belonging to the genre of the "family adventure movie"—a genre that is currently "central both to the economics of the American film industry and to the moviegoing experiences of the American public."[35] Peter Krämer cites the endings of *Return of the Jedi*, *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* (1982) and *The Lion King* (1994) as scenes which exemplify intratextual invitations to a family audience to see itself on the screen as these "families," bidding farewell to the adventure and the film through literal farewell scenes, as they leave the theater for the reality of everyday family life. The *Return of the Jedi* trailer's various invitations and beckonings to the film's potential audience parallels this emphasis—here not on departure but on entry ("here we go again!"), thus luring spectators toward *future* entry into the film. These beckonings share qualities with such other forms of address inviting shared family adventure as advertisements for theme parks. As Krämer characterizes, the films in this genre (currently including about sixteen of the top twenty films in *Variety*'s list of all-time top grossers)

> ...all share certain basic characteristics. They are intended, and manage, to appeal to all age groups, especially children and their parents, by combining spectacular, often fantastic or magical action with a highly

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> emotional concern with familial relationships, and also by offering two distinct points of entry into the cinematic experiences they provide (childish delight and absorption on the one hand, adult self-awareness and nostalgia on the other hand).[36]

Following the market-dominant lead of the genre of the family adventure movie (as cited above), the two points of entry Kramer cites are common to trailers of many genres in the New Hollywood era. The ways in which and the extent to which this trailer assumes an audience "in the know" about this film cycle while appealing to the ever-repeatable novelty of childlike absorption is of interest as a feature of New Hollywood trailers as a whole (and especially those for genre films). The ease of the trailer's leaps around the film's various setpieces demonstrates assumptions that the audience cares more about the amount and dazzlement of the film's spectacle than its narrative comprehensibility. It demonstrates a primacy of appeals to interest in the familiar over product differentiation, reinforcing such appeals with reminders of repetition typical of sequel trailers ("return," "again").

The differentiation of Lucas's product had been achieved earlier on in the cycle by such strategies as positioning the films as mythic space fantasies that fused archetypal storytelling ("a long time ago") with science fictional outer space settings ("...in a galaxy far, far away"), and the work of the sequel trailers has been to promote their films through assumptions that that audiences want more of the same—of these films that are like no others (yet still bear marks of genre). Familiarity and differentiation are redoubled by the promotion of this cycle that "wants" so much *not* to be part of a genre that it

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reinscribes generic appeals on a number of levels anyway. Like the *Duel in the Sun* "moments," the things for which the narration implies audiences are assumed to want to return are enumerated as hyperbolic consumable elements and structures of feeling, here combining appeals to the rhetoric of genre and that of story: "a galaxy far, far away" (a generic place), "heroic adventure" (generic action with a mythic dimension), "the ultimate confrontation" (a plot point) "the climactic chapter of the Star Wars saga" (a major plot point), and "the fun of it" (a feeling).

By privileging these familiar—and novel—elements, the *Return of the Jedi* trailer thus reinforces the boundaries of Lucas's space fantasy cycle (as at once science fiction films and as something else) as well as the family adventure genre as a whole, in the process strengthening its market position. By appealing to families, and addressing (assumed) nostalgia-obsessed adults at the same time as childrens' (assumed) capacity for delight and absorption through these structures of feeling, the trailer also expresses the social space of the '80s-'90s, where family structures and family dynamics were increasingly invoked in various public discourses in order to subsume social systems and social relations to private, familial ones; and in the process to create a "kinder and gentler" capitalism in the public imaginary, masking the increasing dehumanization of the post-industrial global corporate climate. [37]

The trailer for Gus Van Sant's remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1998) is remarkable as an innovative yet typical contemporary trailer which can be seen as an apotheosis of the rhetoric of genre's core enthymeme: "You want familiarity *and* novelty." Its job is to sell a film that is a shot-for-shot reproduction of Hitchcock's classic

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horror film (1960), and it does so by appealing both to cinephiles (who want to see something novel done with a familiar Hitchcock film) and genre fans (who, more typically, want to see a new story that fits within a familiar genre). This "troubled trailer" is paradigmatic of postmodern New Hollywood's self-referentiality, incorporating assumptions of audience knowledge of Hollywood history and genres. Furthermore, the trailer is exemplary of the "new breed" of sophisticated montage artistry in the contemporary trailer industry.

As with many trailers for highly quotational postmodern films, it's clear that both sophisticated audiences (assumed to have substantial knowledge of film history as well as a strong interest in nostalgia) and younger horror fans (who may never have seen the original film) are being addressed. The combination results in the trailer's pushing a number of Hitchcock and horror buttons in the process of generating audience fear of the new Norman Bates (played by Vince Vaughn, a "flavor of the month" following his hip performance in the 1996 film *Swingers*), a monster whose difference from Anthony Perkins's Norman the trailer strongly asserts. The trailer for Hitchcock's original *Psycho*, a long chatty walk through the set with Hitch wherein he describes in a bemused tone what happens where, is a far cry from this one, which while reverential to Hitchcock by virtue of highlighting the film's key quotational setpieces, clearly demonstrates a high concept sensibility, simplifying the promotional message within stylistically complex terms.

Hollywood didn't know what to make of Gus Van Sant's decision to do not just a remake, but a virtual shot for shot reproduction of Hitchcock's master work. The buzz during production was highly skeptical, the film scoffed at by Hollywood pundits as the

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latest example of the cynical truism that there are no new stories.[38] Van Sant, a respected independent who had accelerated his Hollywood credibility enormously the previous year with the Oscar triumph of *Good Will Hunting*, was now in a prime position, having both the budget and the artistic sanction, to do something innovative within the popular film market.[39] The resulting film, far from being an "old story," challenged audiences and critics by asking fundamental questions about the nature of the filmmaking process as a creative and collaborative form in every shot (and with every strain of Bernard Herrmann's felicitously recycled score), while posing in genre terms the question, "What would be scary about Norman Bates in the nineties?"[40]

It is a visually striking trailer, probably containing more shots than any other trailer of its length; and at least one of its innovations, the defacement of the studio logo, has been taken up by several subsequent trailers in the year since the film's release.[41] As the trailer opens with the Universal logo and accompanying static sounds resembling an attempt to tune in a distant radio station, the familiar and stylish globe and lettering (versions of which we associate with so many past Hitchcock films) apparently freezes and seems to burn at the edges from the heat of the projector bulb. Then altered images of the logo are seen, solarized and in "day-glo" colors, followed by flashes of the familiar circled numbers of Academy leader, which then appear to fly off the sprockets. The outright destructiveness of this logo-defacement boldly asserts the film's novelty, while serving somewhat like the irreverent pie throw in the classical era's *Day at the Races* trailer. The studio logo has been up to now an untouchable icon, a contractually dictated component and the sole reliable "brand-identifier" of all trailers.[42] Its destruction invites audiences to look at the trailer as an upending of cinematic expectations, an apparent

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dethronement of the promotional message that yet banks on the audience registering the striking images and the brand attachment of the logo perhaps even more for the harsh treatment it gets.

The first image of the trailer "proper" arrives, a black title with white *sans serif* letters at screen left reading "This is the FACE of Norman Bates." We then see Vince Vaughn as Norman in medium long shot from the film's final scene—wrapped in a blanket. The camera dollies in a bit, then the image flips three times to negative and back to positive. The trailer cuts to a close-up of him looking up at the camera with his head bowed and smiling. The eerie static sounds have settled into droning electronic sounds, with an undercurrent of "Mother's" voice mumbling, and as Norman smiles the voice becomes more audible, saying "commit murder?" The image of Norman's face freezes and "burns" away from the heat of the projector bulb.

After another blackout, the title reads "This is the MIND of Norman Bates." The radio static continues, as we see a rapid-fire montage of almost subliminal images (each gets just a couple of frames), interspersed with black and white TV static, sometimes colorized. Images include: a nude woman in a mask, a big bug, a man with a pig-like monster face, people gesturing, someone with a knife, an open human chest, a model posing, a heart beating, a wild boar, a raven, a graphic of a hand below a curvy graphic arrow, a maniacal woman smiling, the face of a dummy, a cow dragged along the ground, a knife and fork. The images go by so fast that it's impossible to describe all of them without repeatedly freezing the trailer, but viewed in the ordinary way, each image is seen long enough to be somewhat consciously registered.

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The equation of this mildly disturbing montage with Norman Bates's disembodied mind encompasses an assumption that audiences believe that the contents of not only Norman's, but perhaps all our minds are metaphorically comprised of a string of images, in Norman's case significantly including *media* static. Of course the trailer's conceit is that Norman's mind consists of more disturbing images than those the rest of us might carry, enabling the trailer to assert in classic genre terms the horror monster's difference from the rest of humankind. At the same time, Norman's apparent normalcy is, as it was in the original, part of the horror, and this assumption that minds are containers for images could apply equally to the minds of both the postmodern cinephiles and the young MTV-fed audiences the trailer seems to "think it's talking to".

Another white-on-black title appears, "On Dec. 4," after which we see Vince Vaughn's eye at a peephole, followed by another title: "Discover the world of Norman Bates." There is a heartbeat sound effect, along with breathing. Ethereal music begins as the trailer cuts to a shot of Vaugn standing at a lake with his hands in his pockets, and the camera dollies in as he turns to look at it. Then begins a segment of quick-cut expository shots of no more than a couple of seconds each, and most are familiar to viewers of the original *Psycho*: the trailer fades to a shot of Julianne Moore walking towards the camera, shading her eyes (as she approaches the big house), followed by a low angle shot of the house window, a fade to a close-up from above of Anne Heche and Viggo Mortensen snuggling in bed, a cut to a close-up of Vaughn at the peephole, a fade to black, followed by a cut to a medium shot of him seated in the motel room with the stuffed birds, saying, "well, a boy's best friend is his mother." There is a flash of lightning, which is incorporated into a cut to a long shot of the house in the rain, as we see the form of the

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mother walk by a window on the second floor. The trailer cuts back to Vaughn as he laughs, then we see a blue-toned image of a bird flying out of a window, followed by the sideways close up of him from under his chin chewing and peering at something (the motel register), then an extreme interior close up of William Macy looking in a glass-paned door. As we see a low shot of the bottom of a door opening, there is a sound overlap of Vaughn's voice: "she just, uh..." Next we see Macy in a high angle shot as he takes one step (mid-staircase) on the hall stairs, followed by an overhead shot of "Mother" being carried out of the bedroom, and a pan across the front door panes looking out at Vaughn running up the front steps, over which we hear his voice again, "she just goes a little mad sometimes." As the overlapped line finishes, the trailer cuts to him speaking it (seated in the motel room), followed by a solarized close-up of his face at the peephole, then a regular version of the same shot—the cuts between the shots are flashes of lightning with lightning sound effects.

Each of these images from the body of the film "sells" at once the original version, Van Sant's artistry in quoting Hitchcock, and a new horror film. The clips appear to have been selected to integrate Hitchcock setpiece moments for the cinephiles (the lovers in bed, the POV shot walking to the house, the eye at the peephole, the overhead shot of Mother being carried) with generic horror moments for the new generation (the lightning, the bird flying out the window), and technical wizardry such as the solarization and sound effects to signify artistry and the sheer spectacular appeal of the film. They also sell "the world of Norman Bates," characterizing him, "Mother," and his famous Bates Motel as more Halloween-haunted-house scary than the actual film does, the latter

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trading more on the terror of not knowing what's concealed beneath the placid surfaces of Norman's personality.

The punctuation of the lightning signals the trailer's "crescendo," its remainder being a series of even shorter shots based on the motif of the peephole and the shower scene, a rather sophisticated sequence that compresses, underlines, and fetishizes the film's emphasis on eyes and looking: we see the peephole and through it Anne Heche's torso from behind, followed by an extreme close up of an eye's iris, through which we see another image of Heche superimposed on the pupil; the eye blinks, then we see it without the superimposed image; followed by extremely short shots that get shorter as the sequence progresses: Julianne Moore screaming as she knocks a hanging lightbulb (we can barely hear the scream under the music and heavy drums); Anne's legs in the shower, Vaughn seated medium shot and laughing (which we hear); Anne's torso as she showers, Vaughn's eye at the peephole, and then a barrage of shots from the shower scene with a couple of other shots inserted (two of the stuffed bird, one of a blue, clouded sky), then a shot of the dark hole of the shower drain with water running down. The camera pulls back and an eye is superimposed over the drain, the dark pupil in the place of the drain. The drain shot recedes, the pupil contracts, the eye blinks, and the screen is black as Vaughn shouts "Mother! Oh God, *Mother!*" This is the trailer's finest moment, both within the rhetoric of genre and as a piece of film in its own right. In one rapid-fire montage it pays homage to all that's Hitchcockian (and if any Hollywood auteur can be said to have achieved the stature of the generic, it would be him—the adjectival form of his name can actually be found in some dictionaries) and at the same time evokes (for the Hitch neophytes) the pure horror of being watched and vulnerable in the shower.

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With a percussive sound like a heavy metal or stone door slamming, the trailer cuts to an extreme close up of Vaughn's smiling face. The camera quickly pulls back, then cuts to a graphic of the film title in white on black (which splits horizontally like the original film's credits), followed by two more credit shots, then another shot of Vaughn's smiling face, followed in rapid succession by two more, increasingly larger stills of the same image, and the slamming noise repeats as the final title appears, "Dec. 4."

The climactic series of clips involving the eye and the peephole joins the trailer's opening segment in offering stylistically innovative and somewhat abstract trailer setpieces that overtly promote cinematic artistry by exemplifying it—not by showing pretty images out of context, but by creating, in the first instance, a montage of specially shot images, and in the second, a REM-like meditation on vision and looking that belongs to the trailer alone. In combination with the rest of the trailer's emphasis on imparting advance knowledge of this horror film's "monster," Norman Bates (including a juxtaposition of "Mother's" voice with Vaughn's face that basically gives away their fused identity), these innovations ultimately demonstrate the primacy of the trailer's appeal to audiences already in the know—the postmodern cinephiles over the first time viewers of *Psycho*. Yet because of the makeup of the contemporary movie market, the appeal to cinephiles does not come off as an elitist ploy: *Psycho* (1998) may be a special case, but promoting its particular form of repetition also appeals to audiences interested in repeat viewing in general, an increasingly common phenomenon in the contemporary era even when it's not a remake or recreation of a classic film. Repeat viewing, moreover, tends to be associated with *genre* films. Even this most innovative of trailers is steeped in

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the rhetoric of genre's core enthymeme, the assumption that audiences want any cinematic novelty to be couched within strongly familiar terms.

Thus, the sophistication of the trailer belies its promotional message—even cinematic innovation is reduced to a "fun ride." For all its multiple rapid-fire images, the *Psycho* (1998) trailer says basically, 'Norman Bates is scary. Mother is scary. This is a hip horror film,' and to the repeat viewers, 'You remember these great scenes.' The trailer makes no attempt to enlighten audiences as to the film's historical context or inform audiences as to why Hollywood film history is worth paying homage to or even knowing. Rather, it constructs that history as a series of visual references that serve to appeal to audience interest simply in seeing a film that quotes an earlier film within the same genre. Film historical knowledge is packaged by this trailer's appeals to interest in novelty couched within familiarity as merely "value added" for *some* audiences, not celebrated as the defining component and the very condition of this film's existence as a hip generic horror film.

The contemporary era's charge to avoid alienating any potential audience in the new global marketplace produces a body of trailers in the '80s and '90s privileging the rhetoric of genre that express the increasingly homogeneous cultural economy and social space of their time. New trailer conventions also become prevalent, such as a greater numbers of shots, a heavy use of "grids," and increased reliance on gestures in addition to dialogue to communicate characterization. Furthermore, contemporary trailers trumpet the pleasures of generic spectacle even more than did earlier trailers, often consciously appealing to audiences in terms that evoke nostalgia for the simpler generic conventions

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and cinematic forms of the classic era. Following the confusions and false starts of the transitional era's problematic genres, generic space in the contemporary era has a seamless quality in part attributable to its production within a high concept-dominated market.

These trailers, representing deliberate or overt audience address within the contemporary promotional market, all "talk to" their assumed global audience on registers that seem on some level to be centered on family dynamics, a characteristic which holds true for much of the rest of this era's sample. The assumptions generated by the *Rocky* trailer within the rhetoric of genre are that making the couple is more important than struggle; the *Return of the Jedi* trailer emphasizes its space fantasy cycle as an intergalactically stepped-up family outing; while in the new *Psycho* trailer, the core of the film's appeal for horror fans is a family's terrorizing dysfunctionality . Contemporary trailer production practice appears to want to shrink the enormous, multicultural global audience for Hollywood films by constructing it as a giant family system, assuming that, like a family, it possesses a shared set of values. More than the transitional era, which in the process of chasing its dwindling audience tended to acknowledge difference by default, or even than the classical era, where a universal audience was assumed to want to go to all films, contemporary trailers—for all their global reach—often assume their audiences live in a limited and circumscribed world that is experienced much like the "inner circle" of a family.

Trailers utilizing the rhetoric of genre thus demonstrate "who they think they're talking to" by promoting the allures of generic space(s) that audiences are assumed to want to "go to" when seeing a film by way of a guiding assumption that audiences want

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cinematic novelty to be couched in strongly familiar terms. Many of these assumptions about what kinds of generic space audiences want are suggestive of the social space of the era in which the trailer is made. Although none of these trailers definitively demarcates such social spaces, each pulls from within the film it promotes a beacon to lead audiences there, and in each of these beacons we can read rhetorical evidence both of the institutional relationships between the film industry and its audiences, and of some of the contradictions and anxieties of its age.

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[1] As explained in the introduction, the boundaries between these eras are not hard and fast in this particular periodization of Hollywood trailers. Hence I have included both the years 1950 and 1975 in two separate eras, to recognize the flexibility of the boundaries.

[2] Sklar, Robert, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies*, New York: Vintage Books, 1975, 182. Sklar notes that "More than any other movie comedians, before or since, [the Marxs and Mae West] turned traditional culture on its head," although "[a]fter 1934, the Production Code and changing audience tastes forced them to set the old values right side up again...."

[3] Cripps, Thomas, *Hollywood's High Noon: Moviemaking and Society Before Television.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, 64, 67.

[4] Laura Mulvey, for example, notes, "While the film remains visibly a 'Western,' the generic space seems to shift. The landscape of action, although present, is not the dramatic core of the film's story, rather it is the interior drama of a girl caught between two conflicting desires." "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)," *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, 35.

[5] "A fresh cycle may be initiated by attaching a new adjective to an existing noun genre, with the adjective standing for some recognizable location, plot type, or other differentiation factor." Rick Altman, "Reusable Packaging: Generic Products and the Recycling Process," in *Refiguring American Film Genres: Theory and History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 19-20.

[6] Sobchack, Vivian, "'Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* No. 29, Winter 1990: 24-49.

[7] See Eric Smoodin, *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 44-70.

[8] Wolfe, Charles, "The Return of Jimmy Stewart: the Publicity Photograph as Text," in Christine Gledhill, *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London: Routledge, 1991, 105.

[9] Williams, Raymond, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977, 128-29.

[10] See for example Ronald L. Davis, *Celluloid Mirrors: Hollywood and American Society Since 1945*, New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1997; and Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s.* Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988.

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[11] Indeed, during the production of *The War of the Worlds* Frank Scully notes in "Scully's Scrapbook" in *Variety* that the achievements of Pal's special effects "bunch" outrival the atomic bomb for sheer spectacle. "Having caught three disappointing atomic explosions to date," as Scully puts it, he witnessed a simulated atomic bomb on the set of *The War of the Worlds*, concluding, "These special effects, incidentally, are the stars of the picture. Of course, there are actors in it... but the stars are really stars." *Variety*, May 5, 1952, 61.

[12] Bateson, Gregory, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1972, 327.

[13] The withholding or rationing of special effects shots of space ships and creatures in trailers is sometimes a feature of production schedules (live action footage is available for promotional use sooner than are effects scenes), and sometimes a deliberate withholding, as was true of the promotional campaigns for *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) and *Godzilla* (1997).

[14] Sobchack, Vivian, *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 154.

[15] Sobchack 1997, 154-55, emphasis in original.

[16] Schatz, Thomas, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981, 77.

[17] Buscombe, Edward, *The BFI Companion to the Western*, New York: Atheneum, 1988, 44.

[18] The trailer for *The Big Country* (1958) also hyper-monumentalizes familiar Western tropes while citing its director's name to cement its status as a major "A" picture and thus rehabilitate the Western. It also weaves in the rhetoric of stardom (both by alluding to Charlton Heston's historical epic cachet and by reminding audiences of Caroll Baker's volatile *Baby Doll* which serves to bring the Western into the "adult" 1950s market). In an earlier trailer for *Shane*, where the film is similarly monumentalized as "the greatest Western ever filmed," the director is also flagged to enhance the film's (and the genre's) legitimacy for a newly art-conscious (assumed) audience, and the trailer notes other "masterpieces" directed by Stevens.

[19] Generally, rerelease trailers prominently cite any Academy Awards the film has won, and such insertions as these or critics' quotes are often the only alteration made to the original theatrical trailer for the rerelease version.

[20] "If the movie musical died, as was rumored last year, its reincarnation is 'Cabaret,' a smash hit featuring next year's Academy Award winner, Liza Minnelli," Guy H.

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Giampapa, WNAC-TV, Boston, cited in Mary Jo Gorman, "Allied Artists' 'Cabaret' Is Selected Blue Ribbon Award Winner for March," *Boxoffice*, April 24, 1972, 9.

[21] "'Cabaret' Follows Book More Closely Than Legituner," *Variety* July 12, 1971.

[22] This rerelease trailer adds award information in its narration but (again like most from the classical and transitional eras) is structurally the same as the original trailer.

[23] Elsaesser, Thomas, "Subject Positions, Speaking Positions: From *Holocaust, Our Hitler*, and *Heimat* to *Shoah* and *Schindler's List*," in Vivian Sobchack, ed., *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event*, New York: Routledge, 1996, 152-3.

[24] Elsaesser also argues that Liza Minnelli's literally "addressing an audience" in the film emerges from an unusually multi-vocal speaking position compared to other commercial films. This multivocal aspect of her performance is less directly seen in the trailer, which like many other trailers for commercial films with homosexual content, plays down this aspect (we glimpse the homosexual relationship between the two male characters and see Liza's Marlene-esque drag, but her speaking position is decidedly less multi-vocal in the trailer).

[25] Richard Dyer's influential article on musicals emphasizes them as a utopian genre, in which social contradictions are resolved narratively and musically through figurations of utopian moments. The *Cabaret* trailer similarly resolves the contradictions of promoting dystopic entertainment via generic cues. Richard Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," in Nichols, Bill, ed., *Movies and Methods*, Vol. 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 220-232.

[26] Since the acquisition of October Films by Universal in 1997, major studios also dominate independent film distribution. See Justin Wyatt, "The Formation of the Major Independent," and James Schamus: "To the Rear of the Back End: The Economics of Independent Cinema," in Steve Neale and Murray Smith, eds., *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, New York: Routledge, 1998, 74-106.

[27] See Tino Balio, "'A Major Presence in all of the World's Important Markets': The Globalization of Hollywood in the 1990s," in Neale and Smith, 58-73.

[28] Wyatt, Justin, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, 117, 129.

[29] The *Box Office* review of November 22, 1976, states, "Fight pictures being rare, 'Rocky' succeeds as an offbeat entry by combining a Cinderella story with a rich character study of a man who boxes because he doesn't know much else. Sylvester

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Stallone, who stars in his own original screenplay and choreographed the bouts, is being named for Oscar consideration."

[30] Goldberg, Fred, *Motion Picture Marketing and Distribution*, Boston: Focal Press, 1991, 42-43.

[31] Working class heroes were enjoying new prominence in the mid-seventies, inspired in part by the liberal post-Watergate climate. *Rocky* follows such films of working class rebellion as 1975's *Dog Day Afternoon* and *White Line Fever*.

[32] This trailer does, however, cover up the film's subtext of white working class racism in its near avoidance of shots of the Carl Weathers character.

[33] Lucas's early insistence on this generic retooling was for the most part effective in the popular imaginary, judging by the number of interviews and news articles that use "space fantasy" as a genre descriptor for the cycle (33 were located on a Lexis-Nexis search of entertainment news dating from 1985). However, critical studies of the science fiction genre such as Sobchack's *Screening Space* and Annette Kuhn's anthology (*Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, New York: Verso, 1990) include the *Star Wars* films under the science fiction umbrella.

[34] I have reversed my usual practice of privileging stars' names over those of the characters because the rhetoric of stardom is muted in this trailer, which partly because it's a sequel in a known cycle (audiences are assumed to be already familiar with the characters, not just their star personas), and partly because of the intermixing of human with alien and robot characters (who effectively don't have star personas), reinforces the primacy of characterization over star identity.

[35] Krämer, Peter, "Would You Take Your Child to See this Film? The Cultural and Social Work of the Family-Adventure Movie," in Neale and Smith, 306.

[36] Krämer, 305.

[37] As I have mentioned elsewhere, George Lucas's corporate identity is an example of this trend—borrowing from Japanese management styles, during the '70s and '80s he fashioned his company Lucasfilm into a California ranch style home away from home, offering employees a small town familial structure in the workplace (in a new twist on old paternalistic studio regimes), complete with pets, kitchens, sports teams, and ski trips. See my "Consuming Production: Documentaries about the Making of Movies," MA thesis, San Francisco State University, 1991. Spielberg et al. have perpetuated the paternal pattern at Dreamworks SKG, where gourmet meals and ample snacks are free, disguising the enforced intensity of the pace of production work.

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[38] For example, *Variety* editor Peter Bart, in a "Memo to Gus Van Sant," wrote, "To be honest, Gus, while I think the billboards are cool, I can't decide about the movie. I realize everything is being recycled these days, but a re-creation? Shot-by-shot? ... It's one thing to look to the past for inspiration, Gus, but you're taking the process a step further. Implicit in your exercise is the admission that we cannot, in fact, improve on previous work, so let's just re-constitute it." Peter Bart, "Inside Moves: Putting our Pop Culture on Rewind," *Variety* November 2-8, 1998, 2.

[39] Indeed, one critic, citing the expectant pre-release "buzz," noted, "It's not the full-on 'queer Psycho' that Van Sant fans predicted, but it is an extraordinary drag act." Jonathan Romney, "Horror Without a Hitch," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, January 17, 1999.

[40] The film's implicit parallelisms between '50s and '90s horrors are a worthy subject for further consideration.

[41] The Paramount and Columbia logos, respectively, are defaced in the openings of trailers for *Bringing Out the Dead* and *Blue Streak* (1999), while the *Mission Impossible II* (2000) trailer opens with a pan around the Paramount logo mountain to begin its narrative on a mountain face.

[42] While I'm reasonably sure there may have been earlier logo displacements or defacements in trailers, I believe this is the first one to influence significantly subsequent trailer practice. Of course, logos are tampered with or spoofed frequently during their appearances in actual films, such as the Paramount logo morphing into a bronze gong which is struck at the beginning of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1983), and on television, where Mary Tyler Moore's "MTM" logo replaces the MGM lion with a mewing kitten. Furthermore, the logos themselves have been transformed and modernized before our eyes over time by the studios themselves.

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Chapter Four

The Rhetoric of Story

Trailers that promote Hollywood films on the basis of the rhetoric of story make assumptions about what kinds of stories and what aspects of stories audiences want. This chapter and the next explore how trailers inscribe textual indicators of "who they think they're talking to" that illustrate persuasive modes related to industry conceptions of film narrative in the three eras of Hollywood film production under investigation. In the process, I hope to contribute to recent efforts to theorize (and historicize) the ways in which promotional messages have been integrated into narrative discourse in Hollywood cinema throughout the sound era. Specifically, I plan to investigate how the amalgams of promotion and narrative constructed by way of these assumptions about audiences within trailers display some of the historical contradictions of the motion picture industry during the three eras.

The fact that this chapter follows the one on the rhetoric of genre is not coincidental. While we can investigate trailers that privilege each of the three key rhetorical appeals (to genre, to story, and to stardom), most trailers combine aspects of all three within their rhetorical address, as I have discussed. In addition, the logical relationships among the three appeals are complementary rather than symmetrical—star appeals generally rely on, or are imbricated within, the conventions of story appeals, which in turn rely on the conventions of genre appeals. Thus, like the rhetoric of genre, the rhetoric of story also aims to differentiate the product within a framework of similarity, and thus the foregoing conventions of the rhetoric of genre (graphics and iconography, hyperbole and generalization, repetition, equations, and self-referentiality)

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are all in play within the rhetoric of story as well. (For example, aspects of stories can be promoted through use of graphic hyperbole, as well as aspects of genres.) But the conventions of the rhetoric of genre are the foundation for a new set having to do specifically with the promotion of narrative. Promoting narrative means identifying and rhetorically pointing to those features of a film's story that producers have identified as most saleable. In the process of such identification, boundaries that define the limits of appropriate entertainment within the Hollywood film industry are hinted at, evoked or reinforced.

Theories of filmic narrative have explored the various questions of how narrative is to be defined in relation to motion pictures, and how it functions with regard to other aspects of film signification, such as style or spectacle. Foremost among such questions have been efforts to define "who tells" a cinematic narrative (if a film is a "story" that's "told," who tells it: the intradiegetic narrator? the director? the screenwriter? the studio? or some combination of the above?); efforts to characterize the process by which the narrative is "told;" and efforts to characterize the content of cinematic narrative, sometimes referred to as the story or "plot." Much recent work in these areas relies on various groundbreaking narrative theories of structuralism, in particular those of Gérard Genette and Roland Barthes.[1] Of interest in this present context are efforts by Tom Gunning, referencing Stephen Heath's influential article on narrative space, to characterize the ways in which the process of narrating constructs a filmic "narrator":

> Defined by Stephen Heath, narrativization is precisely what holds Genette's three aspects of narrative [the content or plot, the narrative

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> discourse or means by which the content is communicated, and the act of narrating] together. The process of narrativization binds narrative discourse to story and rules the narrator's address to the spectator. It organizes discourse to tell a story, binding its elements into this single process. In this process the energies of a film are channeled toward the explication of a story, and through this channeling create and define a situation for the spectator.[2]

Gunning identifies three levels of filmic discourse that interrelate in this narrativization: the pro-filmic (or everything in front of the camera), the enframed image, and editing. "Taken together, they constitute the filmic narrator."[3] This narrator, while "not a flesh-and-blood entity[,] ...embodies the design organizing narrative discourse, the intentions which unify its effects." And while such organizing entities "do not exist outside the text but are evident in the rhetorical arrangement of its devices," the image of a narrator "does provide, in the words of Ricoeur, the image of the author within the text[,]... the sense of an intervening figure who has arranged the images on the screen in a particular manner with specific social consequences. The concept of the filmic narrator helps us relate filmic form to broader contexts."[4] In trailers, in addition to inscribing the image of the story's "author" (often a different image than that gained from the narrators of films themselves), the trailer's filmic narrator rhetorically inscribes an image of who that "author" is addressing—or more specifically, persuading—to see the film, a hypothetical addressee that helps us relate trailer form to broader social and ideological contexts. The rhetoric of story utilizes such a trailer "narrator" –and often a flesh-and-

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blood voice-over narrator as well—to promote filmic narrative. Trailers' redoubling of the phenomena of narrator (as both evidence of this threefold filmic narrator, and a trailer narrator who promotes the filmic narration) and narrative (the trailer narrator tells the trailer's *own* narrative *about* the film narrative) results in trailers constituting condensed layers of storytelling about storytelling that inevitably withhold more than they reveal—and the withholding can be just as revealing as what's shown.

Gunning's clarification of the cinematic narrator as a discursive function evident within the film text as the interaction of the pro-filmic, the enframed image and editing provides an effective, cinema-specific definition of what Roman Jakobson's earlier communicational model of narrative termed the "sender" of a message.[5] Each of these three material aspects of film can be described by looking at the film itself, yet each inscribes a "sense of an intervening figure," a narrator or sender, as a visible component of the cultural institution and communicational system that constitutes the American film industry. Having so identified the sender of the cinematic message (Gunning's threefold "narrator"), the relational terms of both cinematic narrative (here, Hollywood cinema) and more specifically trailer rhetoric, can be explored.

The message of a trailer is thus a metacommunication about the film, and the system of trailer rhetoric is a metacommunicational system about Hollywood narrative film. It is, moreover, a specific type of metacommunication, a persuasive one, sent by a different sender than the one Gunning identifies as the story's filmic narrator. I would suggest that the narrator of a trailer (in this communicational sense—the "sender" of the promotional message) consists of the interaction between any of the three rhetorical appeals of the promotional discourse (along with their affective helpmates such as the

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invocation of spectacular excess or verisimilitude) and the film's narrator as characterized by Gunning. The primary message of any trailer is: "See the film." But beyond this, the trailer (as I have already shown) inscribes assumptions about its audience (the "receiver" of the promotional message) that metacommunicate about the film on more specific registers than just this one imperative. Following the terms laid out by Gérard Genette with reference to literary works, trailers can accurately be considered as "paratexts" of the films they promote. Paratexts are those textual elements that emerge from and impart significance to a (literary) text but aren't considered integral to the text itself, such as all prefatory material, dust jacket blurbs, advertisements and reviews. Specifically, trailers can be seen as instances of a film's "public epitext."[6] Because of their heavily quotational aspect and the way they rhetorically reconfigure scenes from the film, endowing them with persuasive content, they are also meta-texts, and like other forms of metacommunication, allow us to begin to "look for the abstract structural frameworks and systemic processes, the codes and constraints, which allow only certain messages to be transmitted in the system."[7] In other words, an analysis of trailers' promotional rhetoric with regard to narrative speaks to the ideological and cultural conditions of, or constraints within, Hollywood cinematic narrative itself in specific historical moments.

Unlike the rhetoric of genre's concerns with promoting overall generic categories that evoke promises about the space or "feel" of a film, the rhetoric of story deals with specific, not-yet-seen story elements. But just as Hollywood films fit into genres, their stories can fit into story types—and even when they don't, story elements can be enthymemically linked to *experiences*that are assumed to be desired by audiences. As

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mentioned previously, the overall enthymemic message of the rhetoric of story could be expressed as: "You would like to experience these events—*at the movies*." Movies, in other words, aren't just like ordinary experience (although verisimilitude is often assumed to be a desired feature of certain types of narratives), but provide safe opportunities to experience events narratively that audiences might avoid, fear, or for other reasons *not* experience outside the movie theater. In addition, the rhetoric of story withholds the actual experiencing of these narrative events in their fullness, obviously in order to promote the film effectively and to one degree or another, "not to give away the product."

Along these lines, Vinzenz Hediger has identified what he calls a "narrative turn" in the development of trailer practice. He argues that studio trailermakers started out in the classical era emphasizing the withholding of story elements as much as possible (on the assumption that the story *is* the product). Trailers would lay out instead a bundle of questions that the viewing of the film would answer. Later, he argues, trailers move to a "two-thirds formula," wherein two-thirds of the film's story arc is revealed by the trailer (on the assumption that contemporary marketing practices, along with the phenomenon of repeat viewing, have lessened the necessity to withhold story elements). Hediger's research shows that this "turn" began during the transitional era but was not fully in place until the mid-seventies.[8] His findings beg the question: what is "the product" when it ceases to be the story? I argue that in the contemporary era, the product becomes the movie event (as will be discussed). Nonetheless, the idea of *knowledge* of the story—withheld as well as given—is an important aspect of trailers' rhetoric of story throughout the sound era. In the process of making assumptions about what kinds of experiences and

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types of stories audiences want, and through providing as well as withholding knowledge about film stories, broader assumptions about relationships between audiences, experience and knowledge in the three eras of trailer production can be discerned.

Within trailers' persuasive meta-textual system, the rhetoric of story operates at a meta-narrative level. Narrative theory's concern with "who tells" a film story (and the attendant questions of whether films are "told" or "shown," or some combination of the two, which Gunning's formulation nicely resolves) becomes reconfigured as "what sells" a film story. In a more recent article elaborating his earlier characterization of the "cinema of attractions" and treating it as interactive with cinematic narrative, Gunning enumerates what he calls the "basic données" of film narrative, referring to Roland Barthes's pioneering work on narrative structure, *S/Z*. These givens are: "characterization (motives and psychology); causality (or the causal concatenation of actions, which Roland Barthes calls the proairetic); narrative suspense (spectator involvement with the outcome of events, which Barthes calls the chain of enigmas); [and] the creation of a consistent fictional world (the diegesis of classical film semiotics)."[9] These aspects of, or domains within, narrative correspond closely to what my trailer samples revealed as the conventions of the rhetoric of story promoted in Hollywood trailers throughout the sound era ("what sells" a film story). Indeed, trailers operating within the register of the rhetoric of story tend to promote their films' stories precisely on the basis of the four principal rhetorical "hooks" identified by Barthes, which guide the trailers' enthymemes: characterization, causality, suspense, and narrative worlds.

These narrative characteristics are interesting to compare to the communicational agendas of other advertising. It is commonly known that one of the features of

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advertising is to try to persuade the consumer that by purchasing a particular product she/he will receive more than the product itself is capable of delivering. Answering the question of what trailers offer that's *more* than the individual film being promoted is one of the goals of my exploration of "who they think they're talking to," and a review of the semiotics of advertising is useful here. In *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being*, the authors describe a study of magazine advertising utilizing "a combined semiological/content analysis approach" which revealed four basic advertising formats: the product-information format, the product-image format, the personalized format, and the lifestyle format.[10] In the magazines studied, the approaches were seen to be both historically sequential (respective to their order above) and all to be synchronically present among the corpus of ads in the contemporary period (generally depending on the type of product advertised). These formats are somewhat parallel to the parameters of the rhetoric of story in trailers, with the product-information format corresponding to the promotion of a film's narrative causality (as well as the promotion of narrative suspense, seen as the promotion of withheld information); the personalized format corresponding to the promotion of a film's narrative characterizations (as well as to the rhetoric of stardom); and the product-image and lifestyle formats corresponding to the promotion of a film's narrative world. In the sections that follow, I will revisit these apparent parallels in an attempt to build an analysis of the rhetoric of story in trailers that accommodates their hybrid status as meta-narratives that function also as advertisements for narrative.

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Conventions of the Rhetoric of Story

Like the rhetoric of genre, which performs the inherently contradictory task of product differentiation within a framework of promoting familiarity, the rhetoric of story operates within a contradictory framework. By appealing to audiences' desires to experience events, watching them play out through narrative in ways they can only do at the movies, the rhetoric of story assumes that narratives present experiences familiar to audiences, while assuming that narratives fulfill their desires for events never experienced. In the process, trailers both satisfy audience desire to know enough about a film's story to want to see it, and *withold* satisfaction of the desire to know, so that they will see it. Both the rhetorical appeal to known and unknown experiences and the rhetorical appeal to story knowledge in general operate within the textual domain of what Bill Nichols refers to as "epistephilia," or desire to know.[11] Of course, all trailers assume that audiences desire to know what happens in the film they promote, but by analyzing the trailers' persuasive strategies in order to examine the industry's assumptions about that desire, we can thematize industry assumptions about other desires for knowledge and experience in the audience. Again, the two other rhetorical appeals (to genre and to stardom) can be present at the same time, and frequently it is difficult to determine which of the three is dominant (increasingly so with contemporary trailers). Nonetheless, the operations of the rhetoric of story, the promotion of narrative characterizations, causality, suspense, and narrative worlds, (and their interactions) can still be described on their own in order to investigate the narrative "desires" of implied audiences for Hollywood film.

I identified the rhetoric of story as dominant in trailers in which some aspect of the film's narrative is promoted with greater emphasis than is given to either its genre or

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its stars. The most salient feature of trailers where this rhetoric is dominant is a reliance on commentary and exposition to a greater degree than the others. This commentary need not only be voice-over narration or titles (although in classical and early transitional era trailers these forms are preeminent), but also can be in the form of a series of nuggets of dialogue selected for their expository semiotic density, or even a series of action scenes with minimal dialogue, but in which the visual imagery and its editing serves an expository function.

In trailers where narrative is promoted primarily through a film's *characterizations*, several conventions prevail across the three eras. The trailer may use its cast identification segment to introduce a number of characters, describing the film's story by delineating their narrative identities, as exemplified by the voice-over narration for the *Dr. Zhivago* (1966) trailer: "Geraldine Chaplin as Tonya, tender child. Delicate woman. Loving wife of Zhivago. Julie Christie as Lara, the violent, sensual, sensitive girl, Zhivago's great love, and mistress. [Tom Courtenay as] The dedicated young revolutionary leader. And Omar Sharif as Zhivago, a man of peace, forced into war. A man who will love deeply, tenderly, passionately. Zhivago—a man in love—with life."

Often such trailers use the film's principal character to introduce an enumeration of the film's narrative virtues, such as *Ramrod* (1947): "The story of a woman/ whose weapon was deadlier than steel!..." or *Tip on a Dead Jockey* (1957): (titles): "He'd take a chance on *anything*/ anywhere/ with *anyone*/ he'd even take a "tip on a dead jockey"...(followed by narration): "International intrigue and interesting women were Lloyd Treadman's hobbies..." or *F.I.S.T.* (1977): "His name was Johnny Kovac. He was

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born in central Europe. He grew up in the slums of Cleveland. (...) In the '30s, he fought company goons and Pinkertons. And he built a union. A union that became — a fist."

Sometimes characters are introduced but de-specified narratorially through the use of personal pronouns, describing their actions or roles more in terms of function than character, which enables the trailer to better place the audience enthymemically within its discourse. For example, using titles, the trailer for *Undercover Man* (1942) spells out story premises while showing scenes of the principals and introducing them: "He smiled in the face of death!/ She had to be nice to the man who killed her brother!/ He pitted himself against the craftiest brains of the upper-Underworld/ with a girl who flung aside *convention*/ risked honor and love/ ..braved *death*/ for the sake of *vengeance*!" The missing term in these enthymemes could be expressed as: "he/she could be you!"

Contemporary trailers often expand on this trope, linking the second person with the third in their address to audiences, as in *Running* (1979): "The one thing he's good at is the one thing nobody understands. He's finally decided to do it his way. It's about having the courage to be what you are." Or in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975): "His name is Randall P. McMurphy. They say he's crazy."—scenes deliver shorthand exposition from the film, culminating with the shock therapy scene—"If he's crazy, what does that make you?"

Less frequently, trailers allow the principal actors to narrate in character or in their star personae or both, such as *None But the Brave* (1965), in which Frank Sinatra (whom we also see in a behind-the-scenes clip, directing the film) is introduced by a voice-over narrator ("Let him tell you in his own words...") and then addresses the audience directly to characterize his role in the film, winding up, "...it's something very

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few can answer. None but the brave." By addressing the audience and simultaneously being seen in clips, Sinatra's character is able to cross the line between character and narrator, and his address to the audience serves to acknowledge them and invite them into the film's narrative situation. In *An American in Paris* (1951), each of the three male actors does a bit of the narration, introducing themselves by their actor's names but speaking in character, such as Oscar Levant speaking of Gene Kelly's character: "He has a lot of good friends, and I'm one of them."[12] In a different vein, Martin Sheen's in-character voice-over in the trailer for *Apocalypse Now* (1979), speaks reflectively about his character's narrative situation, without acknowledging the audience: "I wanted a mission for my sins. And when it was over, I'd never want another one." In the trailer for *The Conversation* (1974), the narrator *addresses* the character from within the terms of the character's narrative situation, inviting audience curiosity as to how Harry will respond: "Be careful, Harry, you're *just* supposed to listen. Not look, not feel, not care." Generally, such characterization-based narrations open the trailer, which then proceeds to use a combination of narration (or titles) and scenes to elaborate on or back up the characterization.

These appeals to interest in narrative characterization draw audiences to films on the basis of identification with the character, as does the rhetoric of stardom, but more specifically, audiences are invited to identify with the character's situation or motivation in the particular film, and to want to participate or share in its narrative resolution. (Here, it's worth noting that the "personalized" advertising format identified by Leiss, Kline and Jhally creates meaning by focusing on questions such as "what does the product mean in terms of the type of person I am and how I relate to others?"[13]) Trailers utilizing the

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conventions wherein characterization promotes narrative likewise create cinematic meanings that circulate around questions dealing with identity and relationships, both within the film they promote and hypothetically treating such issues as they apply to the film's assumed audience, through enthymemes. For example, a typical trailer syllogism might express the following: "This is quite a character and quite a situation he/she's in." And the missing term or enthymeme could be expressed as: "You would like to experience his/her situation—*at the movies*, and find out how he/she resolves it." Through appeals to characterization, the satisfaction of audience desire to know about a character's personality and narrative situation is heightened and/or withheld as a means to create identification or fascination with the character, which in these cases trailermakers believe is the most appealing way "in" to the film.

Trailers which promote films by assuming audience interest in the film's *narrative causality* often do so utilizing a list format, spelling out sequentially the film's key plot points. For example, the *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974) trailer is narrated with illustrative quick-cut scenes: "A preacher, a killer, a car thief... a chase, a getaway, a gang, a bank, a gun, a plan... a team, a caper, a movie—*the* movie, a knockout." In the trailer for *True Confessions* (1981), titles and then a narrator similarly extoll, "Two brothers/ a priest/ a cop/ brought together/ torn apart... The questions. The answers. The secrets. The truth... The past. The present. The memories. The sins." Such segments can also combine emphasis on characterization with an enumeration of causality, as in the narrated trailer for *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966), a film which promotes its characterizations in its very title. The trailer presents a barrage of quick-cut scenes, each accompanying a narrated phrase: "The blue... the grey... the Civil War... the good... the

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bad... the ugly... the questions (a bloody interrogation scene)... the answers (two men fall off a train)... the showdown (a graveyard)... the reason... the gold."

Other trailers utilize such lists without the staccato commentary (which seems to be primarily a transitional era phenomenon), as in the trailer for *Army Girl* (1938), which announces in voice-over, "Here are a few scenes from this outstanding production," and delivers clips from the film that delineate elements of the plot sequentially but without making strong interconnections between the scenes, giving the impression of showing only the tip of the iceberg of the film's story. Many trailers give minimal or no introductory narration, but rather clips edited to privilege the film's narrative causality. The trailer for *Places in the Heart* (1984) opens with a brief narration, delivering the film's high concept ("a motion picture about a woman who fought for the greatest dream there is—the future"), which then backs off as it presents a series of scenes that spell out the plot, emphasizing Sally Field's struggle to keep her land over the film's character relationships. The contemporary "mini-movie" trailer format, as exemplified by the famous *Cliffhanger* (1993) trailer (which delineates the film's most spectacular action set-pieces, sans dialogue, choreographed to Mozart), also privileges narrative causality, although by altering the sequence of some of the film's images, it can in addition (as previously discussed) create trailer-specific narrative trajectories that diverge from that of the film.

Another way causality is promoted in trailers within the rhetoric of story is when the film's historical premise is promoted as the basis of its story, imbricating the audience within a historical as well as a narrative discourse of cause-and-effect. This is seen frequently in trailers for films made during World War II, such as *The Flying Tigers*

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(1942); voice-over tells us, "a timely picturization of those brave volunteers... The great American spirit takes to the air to free the skies of cowardly monsters that release instruments of death and destruction upon a gallant people..." Later a title expands, "A tribute to the heroic men who guard the skies with their lives.../ and the *Brave Women* who inspire them to daring!" Another trailer, for *Blood on the Sun* (1945), promotes its story by invoking wartime security measures as preventing it from being told any earlier, in both titles: "Now it can be told!/ The inside story of history's most diabolical plot!" and narration: "Yesterday... ambitious little men across the Pacific were boasting. Today Americans have earned the right to laugh at such boasts through one American, ...single-handed fight against the might of an empire. Adventure that set the world on fire!" The convention of setting up a historical fact as a narrative premise is also present in trailers for historical epics, such as *Yanks* (1979), which tells us that "Between 1942 and 1944 more than a million Americans arrived in England and fell in love on their way to war;" and *The Hawaiians* (1970), which informs us, "It began 2000 years ago... There were those who would endure anything to reach it. It held limitless treasures for those strong enough to take them. Life, filled with the promise of paradise. ... These are the people who build the foundations of an empire, the race of golden men." Such trailers assume, again, that audiences would like to experience these events and watch their narrative trajectories play out at the movies: the enthymeme could be summarized as "You are there!"

Of the many trailers that promote cinematic innovation, one interesting example promotes its film's innovative way of presenting narrative causality: the trailer for *The Power and the Glory* (1933) promotes its film's narrative technique called "narratage,"

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which unlike the film that uses it, has since been relegated to obscurity (it appears to have been an early sound era attempt to differentiate product by giving a fancy name to the narrative presentation of a story emplotted in reverse chronological order). "[title:] Be present at the birth of a new idea! A picture greater than its title/ ...newer than tomorrow/... An amazing story/ Amazingly told! /A story told *not* from youth to age.../ but from age to youth!/ ... The motion picture that introduces narratage—the talking screen's newest wonder!" The scenes interspersed with these titles give a shorthand trajectory of the film's plot (interestingly, in causally sequential terms).

Whether narrative flow or causality per se is the focus or whether the trailer promotes its film on the basis of a historical causality, these conventions posit an audience who wants both to *experience* the film's events and to *know* what happens in a film story. Like the "product-information format" of other advertising, trailers operating in this register address the viewer as a discriminating consumer, and while they are easily as likely to deceive about a film's narrative focus and trajectory as they are to inform in their two to three minutes of screen time, the impression they create is one of straightforwardness, sampling the film's experiences and informing about the film's events—it's the "just the facts ma'am" tradition of trailer-making. The lists or series of clips they give audiences are carefully edited to satisfy certain aspects of epistephilia, while the omissions and "spaces between" are designed simultaneously to create it. Cinematic causality is treated by this rhetoric somewhat like a journey on which the audience is invited along, and for which the trailer serves as a sort of travelogue. Trailer narration in the contemporary era can be very formulaic in the way it expresses such causal elements. For example "Now" is a familiar trope: after the film's basic premises

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are laid out, many trailers introduce the core causal element of the narrative with this word, as in "now, in order to ... he must ...."

Trailers for films involving substantial *suspense* elements, including but obviously not limited to those for films in suspense-driven genres such as mysteries, film noir or thrillers, frequently hang the promotion of the film on teasing hints of the film's core enigma. Within an enigmatic syllogism, i.e. a trailer that presents a film's suspenseful narrative premise yet withholds key elements, the enthymeme consists of clips and/or narration that explicate plot developments while leaving out others, and the missing term is the assumption that audiences will want to guess the rest, and that their guess might well be wrong. Unlike appeals to causality, where we get the sense of a film as a journey not yet taken, of which we see travelogue-like excerpts in the trailer, appeals to suspense promote the film more along the lines of an amusement park attraction; the trailer informs us that by seeing the film we will get a number of shocks or revelations which the trailer cannot divulge—and encourages us to let our imaginations run wild.

Often the suspense-building narrations and titles for these trailers are backed up by teasing visual clips, such as someone pointing a gun at an unseen party, someone opening a door or entering a dark place, or hints of impending monster attacks of various kinds. On the soundtrack, sound overlaps (giving an auditory hint of the trailer's next narrative feature) are increasingly heard in the transitional era to the point where they are all but a ubiquitous convention in contemporary trailers. Suspense is frequently promoted in narration and titles, such as the trailer for *The House Across the Street* (1948): "This man can't tell/ This man *won't* tell.../ This woman is *afraid* to tell/ About the strange

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things that happened in/ The House Across the Street." Or the *Body Heat* (1981) trailer, "Ned Racine is waiting for something to happen—then something special *does* happen... But Ned Racine isn't ready for what happens next." Some trailers prompt interest in suspense elements by directly asking questions, such as the one for *The Letter* (1940): "What are the forbidden secrets in the letter?/ What is the strange spell that made this woman defy the *unwritten law* of the Orient?" Or the innovative *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) trailer, which flashes bold black and white block titles, many delivered one word at a time, while a collage of sound clips of intradiegetic voices (including a woman's voice) say the words; interspersed with clips from the film: "Why/ did/ U.S./ bombers/ attack/ Russia?/ What/ was/ the/ first/ word/ said/ on/ the/ hotline?.... How does the fate of the world hang on a /Coca-Cola machine?" This trailer uses suspense to heighten the promotional appeal of the absurdity of its black comedy.

Trailers promote the appeal of narrative enigma in suspense films even when key suspense elements are also apparently revealed, such as the *Double Indemnity* (1944) trailer, which announces the murder plans but creates suspense around Fred MacMurray's confession— "Could they get away from him [Keyes] and his relentless pursuit? And could they get away with murder?" Similarly, the trailer for *Rope* (1948) reveals the film's murder but promotes the suspense elements of the murderers being caught by James Stewart's character, announcing the film as "Alfred Hitchcock's most startling adventure in suspense." Trailers for films made from other works (of which, it is assumed, many in the audience must "know the outcome") can even be promoted in enigmatic terms. In these cases, the film's story might be treated teasingly, as apparently unfilmable, as in the trailers for *Lolita* (1963) ("How did they ever make a movie of

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Lolita?"), *Peyton Place* (1957), and *Paths of Glory* (1957) ("Since the publication of the book almost 25 years ago, no one dared to make this movie. It was too shocking, too frank").

Such suspense-based trailers hope to create strong desire in the audience to resolve the enigma by seeing the film, thereby experiencing the emotional exhilaration of suspense (coupled with its resolution) that the trailer offers. Thus, they display assumptions about what kinds of mysteries, shocks or suspenseful experiences trailer producers believe audiences will find thrilling and desirable, hypothesizing answers to a question Leiss, Kline and Jhally found that advertisements in the personified format address: "how can I become happy through consumption [here, spectatorship]?"[14] Withholding the resolution of a film's enigma entails a display of assumptions about what kinds of cinematic narrative experiences will satisfy audiences' desires for knowledge, both of story outcomes and more broadly, of social and historical unknowns.

The most frequent convention of the rhetoric of story is the promotion of a film's *narrative world.* The contemporary cliché of trailer narration, "In a world where..." gives evidence to the extent to which such a formulation is considered effective, whether on its own or in combination with other appeals. Narrative worlds are carefully drawn throughout the two hours of a feature film, and a majority of trailers address the challenge to draw their viewers, who are still settling in their seats, talking and rustling candy papers, into experiencing this world (and wanting to experience more of it) in two to three minutes. Many trailers depict their films' narrative worlds in conjuction with promoting other narrative aspects such as characterization or causality. Some, such as the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) trailer, narrate from within this narrative world

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(not "in a world where," but "here we are in it"): "They come from another world. Spawned in the light-years of space *unleashed* to take over the bodies and souls of the people of our planet. Bringing a new dimension in terror to the giant super-scope screen!"[15] Some trailers offer a narrator who belongs to the narrative world of the film but not as a character, such as the *City For Conquest* (1940) trailer's use of an onscreen hobo to introduce the story with New York "local color": "Maybe you don't know me, but I guess you know this city of mine. Nobody knows New York better than me. And what a place it is. New York. City for conquest. She never stands still and she never grows old. Because the dreams of her children are the life blood that flows through her heart. And this city has a heart... a great heart. But it's hard to find it. This is a story of five young people who looked for the heart of New York, each searching in their own way." In the contemporary era the same function (narration by someone within the film's narrative world but not a character) is filled for example by the narrator in the *Jurassic Park* (1993) teaser, who details the discovery that dinosaur DNA "can" be extracted from fossilized mosquitos. Or narrations promote the film's world by describing it from the outside, as in the *Boys Town* (1938) trailer: "Boys Town is *real.* And now, crystallized in the story of a boy... the picture that holds a mirror to life," or the trailer for *The Mummy* (1959): "Egypt, 4000 years ago. A land of strange rituals. And savage cruelty. Many of their secrets are still hidden from the eyes of 20th century man. Secrets that protect their dead. Supernatural powers that, once released, can live again in our modern world."

Another convention wherein a film's narrative world is the principal feature promoted in trailers is where the film is based on a "pre-sold" property or story. Trailers rarely let an opportunity pass to mention if a film is based on a best-selling novel or a

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successful play, but some emphasize that entity's narrative world as a place the audience has been to and is assumed to want to go again, often literally picturing the book from which the film was made, its pages fluttering or its words magnified as they come to life in clips from the film. The trailer for the 1959 *Ben Hur* announces, "No book save the Bible has ever been so widely read throughout the world. Millions have learned to know and love its characters, for more than anything else Ben Hur is a story of people—people brought vividly to life in this magnificent motion picture." The trailer for *Voice of the Turtle* (1947) offers titles that sustain the theme of the film title, announcing them as "Voices that proclaim the greatness of our next attraction": "The Voice of the Theatre" (a narrator details the play's successful run as we see Broadway at night); "The Voice of the Critic" (the narrator quotes several reviews of the play as we see a typewriter and a radio); and "The Voice of the Public," followed by the narrator exclaiming, as we see a montage of shots of audiences, with close-ups of their clapping hands superimposed, "Yes, this is the most important voice of all, the applause, the acclaim, of audiences all over the world for the warmth, gaiety, the romance, of The Voice of the Turtle." The trailer follows this sequence with narrative clips from the film, but the narrative world of this filmed play is thus depicted as substantially suffused with the theatrical world of its prior form.

Narrative worlds are also promoted in trailers that succinctly characterize a film's high concept (or its equivalent in pre-high concept eras) by delivering a tagline. The trailer for *A Night in Heaven* (1983) tells us "He was every woman's fantasy, and became one woman's obsession. When the feeling hit them, there was no place better than heaven." In the *Scarface* (1983) trailer, "1980 Miami. The American Dream had a

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pricetag. ... One man in a million. For one brief moment, the world was his... He loved the American Dream... with a vengeance." In the *Runaway Train* (1985) trailer, "They escaped together... But their train to freedom was out of control."

One group of trailers also promote a narrative world beyond that of their film, which I came to call the narrative of "Hollywood." In these, significant trailer time is devoted to describing innovations in technology, showing footage of the film's premiere (expanding on the "voice of the theatre" motif above but within the cinematic, not theatrical world), or representing some other aspect of the institution of Hollywood, which is seen in these trailers as belonging to a coherent narrative world important enough to the audience for the trailer to step outside the strict promotion of its film's story.[16] The trailer for *The Jazz Singer*(1927) presents a man in front of a stage curtain announcing the arrival of sound on film. *Carousel*'s (1955) trailer begins with a long sequence promoting Cinemascope '55, in which Darryl Zanuck himself does a mini-lecture on the format: "Let me point out the differences. You see four times the area of the old film. What this means to you is that the sharpness of focus, the vast photographic field, the tremendous sense of audience participation have been improved beyond anything you have seen in the theater." The trailer presents only titles from the film itself, no scenes. Carl Reiner promotes *The Thrill of it All* (1963) comically by addressing the audience directly: "How do you do? ...Here now are just a few scenes... (the wrong movie is projected) They burnt it at the Cannes Film Festival!"

The narrative of Hollywood serves to place the film being promoted within its institutional context, both naturalizing and celebrating the activity of going to the movies. While this is an activity in which trailer spectators are obviously already engaged, such

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meta-trailers provide evidence that Hollywood promoters have felt this message needed reinforcement, and/or that this is a world (of information, technology, art and celebrity) to which the audience wants entry.[17] Contemporary trailers evoke the narrative of Hollywood less directly—primarily by occasional inter-trailer referentiality, such as the *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999) teaser which opens mimicking *Star Wars* imagery and with a sound effect like Darth Vader breathing, announcing "If you're going to see one movie this summer, see... *Star Wars*. But if you're going to see two, see *Austin Powers*." The trailers for the *Naked Gun* series of films also use jokes which trade on inter-trailer referentiality.

Promoting narrative worlds serves similar functions to the promotion of genres, including the evocation of a particular (here, narrative) space evoked by the film. However, where the rhetoric of genre reminded audiences of the similarity of such spaces to ones experienced previously, the rhetoric of story promotes narrative worlds that tend to be unique to the film being promoted. Often the evocation of the film's narrative world is a key means by which the trailer differentiates the product, yet trailers that center on this appeal can deliver a great deal of information about their narrative worlds while still withholding enough information about the film's characters, events and suspense elements to sustain the film's appeal. These trailers also display enthymemic assumptions as to what kinds of spectatorial experiences—here what kinds of narrative worlds—audiences will embrace. By offering these worlds as desirable, they draw a perimeter around them, implicitly communicating norms or ideas as to what kinds of (narrative) worlds or experiences might be *un*desirable within the parameters of Hollywood film.

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Through the conventions of the rhetoric of story, trailers generate promotional meta-narratives which display assumptions about the implied audiences for the films they promote. By playing at the edges of the audience's assumed desires to experience a film's events and know its narrative trajectory, and at the same time, *not* to know about the film's narrative (to save it for the viewing experience)—whether promoting elements of characterization, narrative causality, enigma and/or the film's narrative world, these meta-narratives begin to assert rhetorical boundaries as to what constitutes appropriate cinematic narrative for the audiences of their time.

Typical Trailers: The Rhetoric of Story

The following trailers are typical of ways each era's trailers operate within the rhetoric of story. As the examples show, the classical era is characterized by well circumscribed story types and correspondingly broad assumptions about historical knowledge. In the transitional era, a questioning of how stories should be promoted is evident, accompanied by a confusion about the nature and the interests of audiences and their desires for experience and knowledge. The contemporary era's high concept production practices result in strong images and easily identifiable types of stories within the corpus of popular film,with an increase in hybridized appeals to multiple audiences in trailers and more frequent assumptions that audiences' desires for knowledge don't stray very far outside the boundaries of story—that audiences aren't going to the movies to gain knowledge about the world so much as themselves. From the transitional era I have selected a trailer typifying a mid-sixties "roadshow" production, a prevalent strain of filmmaking during this era most typified by atypicality. This example illustrates some of

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the era's moves away from classical modes. Each of the three trailers promotes its film's story, whether on the basis of its characterizations, causality, suspense, narrative worlds or a combination thereof, as a series of experiences that are assumed to be desired by the audience, with the contemporary example illustrating how the rhetoric of story can serve to promote narrative events and experiences that perhaps audiences would *only* want to have at the movies. These trailers all promote film stories through an overall enthymemic structure that tells audiences: "Movies are emplotted experiences. They may be 'true-to-life' experiences like those you have had or want to have in real life, or they may be dangerous, terrifying, or otherwise emotionally heightened experiences that you *don't* want to have in real life." Either way, the missing term of the syllogism is: "You want to know and have these experiences—at the movies." In the process, each illustrates in some way just who trailermakers thought they were "talking to" in that era; each also makes assumptions about audiences' desires to know and experience stories that draw implicit boundaries around what constitutes appropriate narrative for each era.

The *Casablanca* (1942) trailer is a good example from the classical era of the interweaving of narrative causality with issues of historical causality within an overall appeal to interest in the film's narrative world.[18] This trailer displays assumptions about how audiences will respond to the film's narrative and its relationships to history, while also demonstrating some typical ways classical trailers integrated genre and story appeals.

The trailer's opening evokes the narrative world of the film's geographically framed premise, that of the waiting zone of Casablanca in wartime Europe. An iris opens

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up to clips from the police chase scene in the street market, interspersed with superimposed titles, "If you are looking for adventure/ you will find it/ in Casablanca." In a shortened version of the film's prologue, we see a series of long shots of the street scene, connected by a variety of wipes. A narrator begins, "Casablanca, city of hope and despair. Located in French Morocco in North Africa." There are a number of very brief shots (1-4 seconds apiece) of people on the street, moving into shots of a pickpocket being grabbed and police giving chase. Narration continues, "the meeting place of adventurers, fugitives, criminals, refugees, lured into this danger-swept oasis by the hope of escape to the Americas." We see Peter Lorre escaping police and closing a big ornate door behind him as the narrator continues, "But they're all trapped." Lorre shoots behind him at the door as policemen push through it. "For there *is* no escape." Even causal story elements (Lorre's predicament) are swept up into the trailer's evocation of the film's narrative world, which is enthymemically linked to the adventure genre (the trailer assumes audiences "are looking for adventure," and that the film's world of "adventurers, fugitives, criminals and refugees" trapped in a "city of hope and despair" constitutes the specific adventure they seek and will find in *Casablanca*). The trailer at once draws on audience interest in its present historical moment and yet elides the historical conditions of the majority of fugitives and refugees victimized by World War II, repositioning these historical subjects as ideal protagonists for an adventure story.

As the narrator says, "Against this fascinating background is woven...," the screen is divided into four by a pinwheel-like wipe to a shot of Germans entering Rick's Café Americaine and crossing the room. There is a curved wipe to a clinch (a shot of a couple embracing) with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, then a serpentine-edged

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wipe to a shot of her seated, flanked by Paul Henreid and Sydney Greenstreet, as the narrator continues "...the story of an imperishable love. And the enthralling saga..." a wipe like a curtain drawn to one side reveals a shot of Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt and two other uniformed men seated at a table, "of six desperate people, each in Casablanca to keep an appointment with destiny." During this sentence the trailer wipes to a medium shot of Bergman in her room in which a mirror reflects her face on the right side of the screen. This splits apart with a wipe like a mirror cracking in pieces to a medium long shot of Bogart at the airport in the fog. The narration's characterization of the story with summary clichés ("imperishable love," "enthralling saga," "appointment with destiny") is also typical, as is its collapsing of a historical fact (massive wartime displacement) into a focus on a few fictional characters ("six desperate people"). The narration also continues the trailer's couching of its story appeals within terms compatible with the adventure genre.

Clips from dialogue scenes follow, backed by a score that evokes the film's key diegetic song, "As Time Goes By": Bogart at the airport, in a closer angle, says "I was willing to shoot Captain Reynaud and I'm willing to shoot you. All right, Major, you asked for it." A shot rings out and the trailer wipes to a shot of Bogart running in Rick's with his cast identification title superimposed, which spins around to become another title, as he accosts a man at the bar: "The most dangerous man in the world's most dangerous city!" Ingrid Bergman's identification shot follows, a close-up of her teary face, with the title (on the flip side of her name), "Fighting the strange fascination that draws her closer and closer to him!" These cast identification segments typically are the source of classical trailers' use of characterizations to cement story appeals, as they

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usually say or show something identificatory about the character in the process of introducing the actor. In another shot, Bergman walks toward Bogart and we then cut to their famous profile clinch, "If you knew how much I loved you, how much I still love you," followed by a kiss. Paul Henreid's identification shot is a close-up with a serious expression as he looks around, which wipes to a two-shot of him with Bogart: "I know a good deal more about you than you suspect. [closer angle] I know for instance, that you're in love with a woman. It's perhaps a strange circumstance that we should both love the same woman." Sydney Greenstreet's identification shot is also followed by a two-shot of him with Bogart, as he asks "What do you want for Sam?" "I don't buy and sell human beings." "That's too bad, that's Casablanca's leading commodity." These introductions also serve to impart elements of story information through characterization.

The trailer then uses a more emphatic diamond wipe, signifying an end to the identification segment, as the trailer returns to clips which sample the film's plot, beginning with a scene which gives indications of the film's "macguffin," the letters of transit: in a two-shot of Bogart and Bergman, she says, "You can ask any price you want, but you must give me those letters." He refuses, then we see her in medium shot with a gun, "All right, I tried to reason with you, I tried everything. Now I want those letters." As Bogart walks toward her the shot has an iris-ed edge, and the title, "Casablanca," is superimposed over the shot, which then wipes to a street scene, with another title: "Where every burning moment brings a new danger." A carful of police arrives at Rick's, the police rush out, and a strange scalloped, jaw-like wipe opens up to a two-shot of Bergman with Henreid. "Where every kiss may be the last!" He kisses her forehead, and a curtain-wipe reveals a long shot of Bogart standing with Rains and a young couple,

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serving as a generalization shot over which the names of the three main stars are superimposed. Over another generalizing shot (ELS) of Rick's, the four other stars' names are then superimposed, with orchestra music that has the flavor of a Hollywood "exotic" version of North African music. The trailer's final image is a track left and forward in the interior of Rick's Café, with anonymous shadowed figures in the foreground, and the studio credit superimposed.

The summary ("Casablanca, where every burning moment brings a new danger") neatly folds the trailer's primary rhetorical appeal—story causality ("every burning moment") within a narrative world (the waiting zone of Casablanca)—into the context of a simultaneous appeal to the interest in the adventure genre assumed at the outset. Typical appeals to audience interest in story very much drew upon the rhetoric of genre as well, even in the classical era, and this trailer's illustration of how these layerings work can be extrapolated into transitional and contemporary era trailers, allowing for their stylistic differences. The transformation of the representation of historical *facts* (which like many trailers this one assumes will pique audience interest) into an appeal to interest in a narrative specificity which in the trailer (more than the film) digresses from the historical *truth*, is also typical. The film's wartime audiences, which as I have argued, were assumed in the classical era to be a "mythic universal American," non-segmented group, are assumed to want an "enthralling saga" filled with dangerous, "burning moments" as well as smouldering ones. They are assumed to want all these moments imbricated within the arguably enthralling, dangerous and burning historical setting of the audience's own present day situation—and thus to desire their diffuse wartime angst

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soothed by distilling and individualizing it into the satisfyingly finite and emplotted dimensions of a story of adventure and love.

The trailer for *The Great Escape* (1963), a story of a group of Allied soldiers in World War II who plan an escape from a Nazi prison camp, represents a typical example from the transitional era of a rhetorical appeal to story that assumes audiences are primarily interested in sampling the film's narrative causality. It illustrates the tendency of trailers for big-budget widescreen "roadshow" productions of the early '60s to minimize trailer narration and titles, privileging dynamic action clips and expository montage structures, supplemented by brief explanatory dialogue scenes. Its fairly simple structure presents a montage of summary action clips, a series of longer expository clips followed by another action montage (of escape preparations) into which are inserted cast identifications, another group of expository clips, then a rapid montage of (escape) action clips culminating in what appears to be a climactic moment of escape. Its straightforwardness and shortage of hyperbolic elements demonstrate an assumption that the film "sells itself" to its audience, which, however, the one-dimensionality of the escape story (no comic relief, no love scenes) seems to indicate was assumed to be primarily (male) action film fans, no longer a mythical "everybody."

From the outset the trailer establishes a rhythm of images accompanied by pounding drums that lets us know there will be no narration or titles: trucks arrive at a prison camp in long shot, followed by a closer shot of Steve McQueen tossing a baseball into a catcher's mitt as he arrives. The montage that follows illustrates, bracket syntagma style, pre-escape life at the prison camp: someone clips a barbed wire fence at night,

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prisoners march dressed like the "Spirit of '76" painting, someone hops into the back of a car and disappears under leafy camouflage, men hoe small garden plots outside barracks, men are seen sneaking around at night, someone explains a blackboard drawing of a bird, a man climbs a fence, another knocks down a guard who tries to shoot him, a tower guard kills the man on the fence. The inclusion of this montage appears to have been intended to show audiences what made the men want to escape, whether under the assumption that audiences might not know what conditions were like in Nazi prison camps, or perhaps (given the tameness of most of the shots) to reassure them that this film does not dwell on the horrors of war. In any event, the brevity and relative uninformativeness of the clips in this segment are typical both of transitional trailers' efforts to promote story elements without resorting to heavy-handed narration and titles, and their confusion as to how to do so.

The shot of the dead man on the fence lingers (as punctuation), and the following shot begins an expository dialogue segment: a Nazi officer, in medium shot, says "Give up your hopeless attempts to escape." Men are seen seated, planning: Richard Attenborough says, "We're gonna devote our energies to sports, gardening, all the cultural pursuits, and meanwhile, *we dig*." James Garner and David McCallum are seen in close-up listening. The trailer cuts to Steve McQueen asking another man, "How many are you taking out?" The man replies, "Two hundred and fifty." McQueen repeats the number, amazed, and the film's title is superimposed in red over the shot of the two men, accompanied by a martial sounding musical fanfare.

Since this film's premise is aptly encapsulated by a mere three-word title, the simplicity of the minimal extracted dialogue is the only exposition required: the trailer

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dwells instead on the causal mechanics of escape. A montage of preparation shots ensues, to martial music: a pickaxe pounding, lifting out a square from the floor, a row of men making something, men handing bags of dirt along in the tunnel, wood being passed down a hole, a man jumping down a hole, another flat on a small trolley in the tunnel, bags of dirt emptied out. Like the staccato lists of causal elements many transitional trailers deliver through narration, these montages signify for audiences an *accumulation* of elements and story interest, assuming that transitional era audiences will associate quantity with quality, but will want the *film*, not the trailer, to connect all these dots.

As the "Great Escape" theme music begins, a shot of McQueen lingers as he slides down a wall and an identificatory title appears, naming him and his character, followed by similar (but briefer) identification shots of James Garner (he hands something in a window), Charles Bronson (he crawls along the tunnel), James Coburn (he smiles), Richard Attenborough (assigning each man a task), followed by Donald Pleasence's identification (Attenborough: "Which one's the forgery?" Pleasence: "They both are!") and one for James Donald, who says, "It is the sworn duty of every officer to try to escape."

The trailer cuts to a medium shot of a German officer (without identificatory title) shouting "There will be no escapes from this camp," signalling a shift to another expository sequence of short clips of escape preparation scenes, this time focusing on obstacles to the escape. Someone yells, "Omigod, they found Tom!" as guards blow whistles, we see a furnace being lifted, guards with rifles drawn run across the screen, Bronson unspools a wire as he wheels through the tunnel, and finally, McQueen jumps down the tunnel and approaches two men: "Hold onto yourself Bartlett, you're 20 feet

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short. The hole is right here in the open. The guard is between us and the lights." Next we see a long shot of the lit fence and guard towers, over which is superimposed "The Mirisch Company Presents," followed by a shot of men climbing out of a hole to escape, over which the film's title—with a barbed wire graphic motif—is superimposed. (The screenwriter's credit follows.) The trailer's focus on the minutiae of escape—bags of dirt, forged papers, trolleys in tunnels, "20 feet short"—contributes to the film's promotion as a pure adventure, and compared to the big sweep of the *Casablanca* trailer's narrative of escape, seems almost reactively divorced from a sense of connection with a historical reality—the Nazis seem like an excuse or macguffin, and the audience seems to be assumed to want to avoid "all that political stuff" and stick to the "how-to"—a quintessential rhetoric of causality which, ironically, avoids causes.

Following this segment a montage of the actual escape begins: McQueen ties a trip wire, a German motorcyclist is tripped by it, McQueen is chased on his motorcycle by a German, two men jump off a moving train, a man on foot is pursued by Germans, a man disguised as a German soldier takes a motorcycle, another man runs on a rooftop, a motorcycle chase is seen, a man kicks another at an airfield, there is a wipe to the plane he's commandeered flying, a group of people appear over the rise of a hill, McQueen rides along a barbed wire fence on the motorcycle, a German knocks an escapee down at a train station and the escapee shoots himself with the German's gun, more from the motorcycle chase, we see Pleasence and Garner in the plane cockpit, followed by a long shot of the plane landing dangerously and having its wings clipped off by trees, and a final shot of Steve McQueen riding in a meadow: he speeds up a hill and leaps over the barbed wire fence.[19] The trailer ends abruptly, presenting a United Artists logo.

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This heavily action-driven finale, with its motorcycle-heavy texture, seems even more clearly to have been designed to target the film to a male audience assumed to be motivated to see the film by the excitement of watching vehicles in motion and guys doing stuff (mostly fighting)—for a righteous cause of course, but that's beside the point. The trailer's action montages could be considered an enthymeme of product differentiation: the syllogism "action is all you need to see, and action-oriented dialogue is all you need to hear" I would suggest, contains a missing, implied term: "you're sick of talky movies," telling the film's potential (male) audience that unlike past films (as this trailer is unlike past trailers), this one will deliver an abundance of action goods.[20] As discussed earlier, such shorthand is typical of transitional era trailers that promote story causality. Unsure about who to "talk to" to bring as many people into the theater as possible, trailers during this time "spoke" more overtly than any other time to assumed groupings of specific genders and age groups (and to a lesser degree, of specific classes and/or races), here assumed to desire less historical knowledge than the cinematic experience of the thrill-ride of escape.

The trailer for *The Crossing Guard* (1995), Sean Penn's revenge tale starring Jack Nicholson, is a good example of how contemporary trailers typically encompass assumptions about audience interest in a story's characterizations and enigmatic structure. It presents a high concept-driven narration and uses "grids" to intersperse characterization and exposition elements. The trailer also typifies contemporary graphic conventions, using a black and white pattern motif as well as informational intertitles (in addition to narration). Many contemporary trailers use both narration and titles, and while

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almost always applied more sparely than in classical trailers, the resurgence of these conventions that provide multiple avenues of audience address as well as strong signifiers of "packaging," (differentiating the trailer from the film) bear witness to a "neoclassical" promotional mode within the contemporary era. The film's four-person cast and emphasis on psychological suspense lends itself to a character-driven trailer, but the withheld enigma contributes strongly to the rhetorical appeal to story interest as well. The trailer demonstrates conventions developed in the high concept era enabling appeals to a wide range of audiences while simultaneously heightening interest for those audiences assumed to be pre-sold on the film (whether by way of its story type, its star, or its "indy" cachet as Sean Penn's directorial debut). As discussed earlier, this strategy of melding mass and niche appeals is typical of trailers for a number of the "major independent" films of the '90s (the film was distributed by Miramax).

The opening "grid" consists of a series of high contrast black and white slow motion (read: "arty") shots of Jack Nicholson preparing and shooting a gun accompanied by voice-over narration, intercut with a dialogue scene between Nicholson and Angelica Huston. Following the first shot of Nicholson's face (in black and white), the narrator begins, "He's traced the route." Nicholson tells Huston (in the dialogue scene), "Harriet, there's something that you should know." Over shots of Nicholson's face and hands (black and white), narration continues, "He's counted the days." Nicholson tells Huston, "Really great news, I mean *spectacular* news." In profile, Nicholson (black and white) is seen shooting the gun, with narration over: "He's practiced the act." Huston asks, "What's your great news?" Nicholson replies, "He's out." We see David Morse holding a box, walking in slow motion, then in long shot kissing his parents. "John Booth is out."

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We see Nicholson nodding: "I'm gonna kill him." In black and white again, we see an extreme close-up of a gun aimed at the screen, and hear sound effects of a gunshot as the screen goes white. The punctuating gunshot image is a time-honored cinematic attraction seen in trailers from each era (this time emphasized by the sound effect and ensuing white-out), yet its photographic stylization participates in an updating of the convention. The high contrast black and white sequence of which the gunshot is the culmination is special trailer footage, and its inclusion in the trailer's opening "grid" constitutes one of the typical ways contemporary trailers differentiate their montages from the films they promote, in this case heightening the film's suspenseful premise in narratively simple but visually complex ways.

Drums pound as a montage begins of shots each lasting 2-3 seconds: Nicholson walking, Morse's face, Nicholson from the rear as he turns to face the camera and it zooms in and cuts to white, Morse in profile, shirtless, smoking, as the narrator continues, "Now, six years later, one man cannot forget." Morse walks by some boats in medium shot, the trailer fades to a close-up of Robin Wright, followed by another of her caressing Morse's face. She says (in a sound overlap), "Your guilt is a little too much competition for me." The inclusion of this particular line is typical of the adeptness with which high concept era trailers manage to include snippets of dialogue that adroitly encapsulate characterization and/or story elements. Wright's line functions as a contemporary version of "Something for the Women," giving her character's presence in the trailer a narrative weight that belies the amount of time the trailer allots it. She finishes the line in a crouch with a cigarette in her mouth, and the trailer fades to an extreme close-up of Nicholson's eyes, which open in slow motion as the narrator says, "And the other cannot forgive," and

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the trailer fades to white. The narration's comparison of the two men is a typical focus of contemporary appeals to characterization, which by assigning an equal weight (if not identity) to the two characters' predicaments or emotional states, avoids implying clear-cut protagonists or antagonists, thereby promoting the film's emotional depth and complexity.

Slightly longer expository clips are incorporated: Nicholson brandishes a gun inside a boat, Morse raises up in bed to look at him, and Nicholson says, "I'm gonna give you three days." A closer angle: "Three days." A brief drum riff punctuates this clip, then we see Nicholson looking at a bullet, followed by a medium shot of Morse, "He threatened to kill me last night," and another of Wright responding, "Was he serious?" There's a scuffle at a restaurant between Nicholson and another man, women shriek, and the trailer fades to a crowd street scene, with Nicholson seen in the midst of it smoking. "I look around at the marriages people have," he says in voice-over and we then see him at a dinner table surrounded by women, followed by a close-up of him speaking, "We had a good one, didn't we?" Angelica Huston is seen in close-up, "It was a wonderful time." She looks down and a tear falls. Huston's falling tear, the first of two in the trailer, punctuates this clip's significance ("for the women") almost as decisively as the gunshot earlier does (perhaps "for the men"), especially since the trailer's inclusion of this dialogue exchange constitutes an extratextual reference—trailermakers clearly assume most audiences know that Huston and Nicholson themselves were long-time lovers. We next see Nicholson begin to recount a dream, ("... driving past the elementary school. There's a crosswalk. The crossing guard is John Booth.") and as he speaks, corresponding images are seen: a shot of a street and its white line from the POV of a car

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driver, a close-up of Nicholson driving, and a shot of Booth running in the street in slow motion. The trailer's sandwiching of the compelling tear close-up between clips that include a significant number of textural action shots (brandishing, scuffling, driving, running) demonstrates the extreme tonal variation of narrative elements within even brief montages typically utilized by contemporary trailers in order to appeal to a range of audiences.

The trailer's first title appears in black capital letters on a white background (echoing the black and white graphic scheme from the opening): "In seventy-two hours," followed by a negative image of the title, as the letters grow. Angelica Huston is heard in voice-over, "Freddie, whatever you're doing, stop it," as we see Nicholson running with a gun—he falls on the street and a car approaches, honking, and he yanks his gun arm out of the car's path. Another black on white title appears: "Two lives will collide," and flips to a negative image as the letters grow. We see a chase in the woods: a police car, Nicholson running, Morse running. A third title appears: "A destiny will be decided." As is typical of many trailers throughout their history, a future time is invoked: here, the "seventy-two hours" (also referred to as "three days") are a shorthand which layers additional narrative urgency onto the already tense clips we see—while also, of course, reminding audiences of the future: that temporal locus where the film can/will/should be seen. The titles' spelling out yet withholding of the "destiny" the film "decides" sums up the appeal to enigma and suspense that the trailer's complex montage has been building, while bringing the women (who aren't "colliding" but are nonetheless part of the "destiny") back into play.

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The cuts in the montage become more rapid: we see Morse and Wright hug, Nicholson punching someone, an exotic dancer spins, two men ogle her, a shadow of a man running outside a building, a close shot of legs running, a helicopter shining its beam at the camera, Nicholson's face, Nicholson and Huston standing, close-ups of Huston, then Nicholson, yelling at each other (no sound), a cut to white, Nicholson with gun drawn, Wright dancing in her room alone, a stripper in underwear writhing (underwater?), Nicholson aiming a gun, Morse aiming a rifle, and finally a graphic appears of thick white bars moving vertically and flashing intermittently on a black screen (like abstracted highway white lines) and a sound effect is heard punctuating the scene with a boom. Such climaxes, building up visual and aural sensation to a final ejaculatory "pop," are a familiar contemporary trailer wrap-up, as is the nondescript but loud slamming or booming sound effect (this variant is somewhat gunshot-like). Interestingly, this segment of the trailer contains more "equal time" for images of women than the rest—the men seem almost to collide with the women.

The narrator identifies Jack Nicholson, David Morse, Robin Wright and Angelica Huston, and we see shots of each with the graphic interspersing them. Huston is shown with a second tear falling down her cheek. After another shot of the line graphic, we see Nicholson in medium long shot from the black and white high contrast footage seen earlier, with street lights behind him, a cigarette in his mouth. He walks a few steps, takes the cigarette out, then raises his hand as if it were a gun. The narrator says, "Some men wait a lifetime to cross the line. Some can't wait another day." Nicholson drops his thumb to signify shooting (again, at the screen). The line graphic expands outward as white on black letters form the film's title. Subsequent titles read, "A film by Sean Penn,"

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and "This fall at theaters everywhere." Again, the two principals (Nicholson and Morse) are compared by narration, which names their common narrative situation as "crossing the line," (typically, bringing in a reminder of the film's title) the import of which is made obvious by the gun gesture. The trailer's promise that seeing the film will solve the enigma of how each ultimately does so is thus brought home, allowing the trailer to display its assumptions about contemporary audiences' desires for knowledge. The trailer's focus on narrative issues of "deciding destiny" through "crossing the line" assumes an audience who wants to know what it feels like to go "outside the line"—at least, at the movies; drawing on an image of a contemporary social world in which knowledge or experience of margins or sites outside the boundaries of conventional (law-abiding) lives is increasingly assumed to be remote.

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[1] See especially Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse, Revisited.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988; and Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay.* Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

[2] Gunning, Tom, *D. W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991, 18.

[3] Gunning (1991), 18-21.

[4] Gunning (1991), 24-25.

[5] See Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. T. A. Sebeok, Cambridge: MIT Technology Press, 1960, 350-77.

[6] Genette defines the epitext as "any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space." Trailers correspond to what Genette calls the "publisher's epitext," encompassing "posters, advertisements, press releases and other prospectuses ..., periodical bulletins addressed to booksellers, and 'promotional dossiers' for the use of sales reps." Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 344, 47.

[7] Wilden, Anthony, *System and Structure*, London: Tavistock, 1972, 238.

[8] Hediger, Vinzenz, "The Narrative Turn in Film Advertising: On the Physiognomy of Contemporary Trailers," presented at "You Can Have It: Kinorituale," Vienna, Austria, November 1999.

[9] Gunning, Tom, "The Whole Town's Gawking: Early Cinema and the Visual Experience of Modernity," *Yale Journal of Criticism*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1994: 190.

[10] Leiss, William, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally, *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products, and Images of Well-Being*, New York: Methuen, 1986, 228 *passim.*

[11] For Nichols epistephilia replaces scopophilia as the principal psychic motor of documentary film, but while trailers are the domain of fiction and do evoke the realm of scopophilia, I find epistephilia a useful concept to discuss in relation to their persuasive arguments that we should see the film they promote—at the least, trailers allude to this "pleasure in knowing" by oscillating between witholding and satisfying audience desire for story knowledge. Perhaps we can see trailers as in some sense a documentary mode, in that they do make truth claims about their source films (for example, while we expect other sorts of advertisements to lie, we protest when trailers mislead us). See Bill

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Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, 31, 178.

[12] The trailer does not, however, allow Leslie Caron to narrate. The use of female narrators in trailers throughout the sound era is highly scarce.

[13] Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 282.

[14] Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 281.

[15] The rhetoric of genre operates similarly to promote generic worlds. We saw in the *War of the Worlds* trailer the use of intradiegetic narration to draw audiences into the science fiction film's environment. In this example it more specifically promotes the appeal of the film's narrative premises.

[16] This aspect of trailers was instrumental in my decision to write at length about them—it is precisely their status as narratives of Hollywood that most clearly speaks to my ongoing interest in the discourse of "Hollywood" and its various articulations in popular culture.

[17] The rhetoric of stardom also invites audiences to participate in the glamour of cinematic celebrity, and the last chapters treats ways in which the promotional world of Hollywood is specifically evoked via stars. Here, Hollywood is promoted as a narrative world—where the *story* (in addition to the film's story) is that of the making of the film, and/or the "narrative" world of which filmmaking is a part.

[18] Actually the trailer, a fairly standard formulaic NSS pre-release handling of the film, pales in relation to the film release's impact on its historical moment, which has been explored in at least one article: Richard Raskin, "*Casablanca* and United States Foreign Policy," *Film History* Volume 4, 1990: 153-164.

[19] Other than McQueen, Garner and Pleasence, the escapees are generally seen in long shots where their faces are not identifiable—probably to preserve an element of suspense so that moviegoers will be less sure which of the principals survives the escape.

[20] Indeed, the fact that the film was made a year after the successful World War II epic, *The Longest Day*, which elongates (even within its title) the action of D-Day may have been an element of the trailer's product differentiation efforts.

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Chapter Five

Talking to Audiences Through The Rhetoric of Story: Troubled Trailers

As I have argued, the rhetoric of story builds on the conventions of the rhetoric of genre, since almost all stories in the Hollywood film industry have been in some way conceived as belonging to genres. Thus, many of the conventions of the rhetoric of genre, while not dominant, are in play in those trailers in which the rhetoric of story dominates. The trailer case studies that follow illustrate how the rhetoric of story throughout the sound era exemplifies the conventions of the promotion of narrative worlds, causality, enigma and characterizations, reconfiguring film narratives into short film texts that posit "what sells" film narratives. The enthymemic structure guiding trailers that operate within the rhetoric of story is part of an overall syllogism that could be expressed as: "Film stories offer a series of structured, fictionalized experiences. These experiences and events are interesting (or beautiful, frightening, spectacular, true-to-life, sad, etc.)." The missing term, or enthymeme could be expressed as: "Film stories are experiences you want to have—safely, at the movies." Interwoven with the definition of stories as vicarious experiences are assumptions trailers make about audience knowledge of stories and of experience, and their desires for knowledge. A dynamic of providing and withholding knowledge of story is always in play.

In this chapter, I explore the ways the rhetoric of story is expressed in Hollywood trailers that demonstrate either unusually direct address to audiences, or an apparent inability to locate a film's potential audience: the standout trailers that reveal where the typical promotional rhetoric—"who they think they're talking to"—either breaks down or is exceeded. Again, by studying both typical operations and the "failures" or anomalies of

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trailer rhetoric, I am attempting to begin to characterize some of the ways trailers bear witness to broader social questions or preoccupations during each era. While each is in some ways typical of trailers of their era, each also foregrounds trailers' contradictory missions to inform and withhold, to sample a story and promote a story, in ways that lend visibility to other kinds of contradictions.

When generalizing about issues of narrative, it can at times be difficult to separate the meanings produced by the trailers from those produced by the films themselves, but this discussion will obviously address the trailers' selections, omissions, juxtapositions, and narrative characterizations of the films rather than the films' overall narrative characteristics or thematics. Thus, the following analyses, although relying on knowledge about the films, are based on close viewing of the trailers alone.

The Classical Era: Story Knowledge Circumscribed

Trailers help delineate the kinds of stories that were assumed to be desired by the hypothetical "mythic universal American" who constituted the classical Hollywood audience. Through the rhetoric of story, trailers both impart and withhold story knowledge, performing a balancing act which both provides enough information and holds back enough information to maximize interest in seeing the film. In the classical era, the process is complicated by actual regulation against, literally, telling certain stories or including plot elements that the Production Code had deemed inappropriate, as detailed in the famous list of "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" and the various strictures that subsequently governed film production during these years.[1] Overall, the rhetoric of story in the classical era works similarly to the rhetoric of genre in that its address to audiences

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tends to assume that there is something for (a mythical) everyone in each story type. The following case studies illustrate the rhetoric of story's appeals to audience interest in characterization, narrative causality, suspense or enigma, and narrative worlds, while being paradigmatic of various kinds of address to, and assumptions about, audiences. They also exemplify a boundary-policing around story interest typical during this era, whether necessitated by the Production Code or other ideological pressures.

The trailer for *Fury* (1936), Fritz Lang's classic film about mob violence, is in some ways typical of early thirties trailers, which generally display both familiar classical Hollywood trailer conventions in their early stages and an incomplete command of the nascent language of film promotion. As was conventional for classical era trailers, it opens with bold, brief expository titles (it uses no voice-over narration, which appears to have become more prevalent towards the latter part of the '30s). Wipes are used for transitions, and there are many short scenes contextualized by titles. Major and some minor cast members are introduced in short identifying scenes.

The *Fury* trailer looks like it was made earlier in the '30s. Many classical era trailers from the latter half of the '30s enable viewers to surmise a sort of *de facto* "high concept" for the film, without giving away a film's major plot points, through the selection of scenes which place it within familiar generic terms of the era and lay out the basic story situation with some degree of emphasis on stars. However, like a number of early sound trailers, the *Fury*trailer doesn't package the film's story in this way, but rather offers oblique and tantalizing hints of the story that lay out the barest of premises. Since

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it nonetheless relies on the rhetoric of story more than either that of genre or stardom, it thus serves as a fascinating early example of the promotion of withheld knowledge.

Although the film was touted by reviewers as an "anti-lynch picture" for example,[2] the generalized mob scenes of the trailer de-specify this historical thematic even more than does the film's deliberate de-racialization of the lynching issue.[3] Not only are we removed from the discourse of race relations, but the trailer obscures even the nature of the accusations against Tracy. The audience is enjoined by the trailer's very incomprehensibility to see the film in order to make sense of this "fury" (which the trailer ascribes to the mob alone, omitting all scenes of Tracy's vengeful excesses). The fact that *Fury*'s trailer attempts to promote this film that "dropped all the formulas" within *promotionally* formulaic terms—albeit at a time when classical promotional formulas were still being determined—makes it an interesting case study of a troubled trailer. Even in this early and rather crude example of the appeal to audience interest in story, there are clear textual assertions of the promotional value of enigma going hand in hand with ideologically determined absences.

While the rhetorical enthymemes are not as clearly lined up for audiences as they tend to be in later trailers, the trailer still relies on commonplaces that are assumed to be shared by audiences. The principal enthymemes displayed in the trailer entail assumptions about the value of character identification, inviting the audience immediately into a hypothetical experience of the film's (sketchily presented) premises from the point of view of the wronged couple; as well as assumptions about audience interest in the workings of mobs and the justice system. The trailer opens with the title, "It might happen to anyone," over a shot of Spencer Tracy and Sylvia Sidney talking

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intimately in profile, followed by another title, "It did happen to them!" over a shot of Tracy yelling from a jail cell. The missing term of this enthymeme, clearly, is "It could happen to you!"

This image is erased by a wipe matching the vertical bars of the cell and replaced with a shot of a mob accompanied by the title, "The Fury of a hate-driven mob," followed by another shot of the mob advancing towards screen left with clubs. A title follows, "Innocent of any crime...They were victims of mob violence." A wipe shaped like two hearts transitions the trailer from a shot of men trying to fend off the mob to the next shot, of Spencer Tracy looking out through a barred window. The heart wipe at first seems incongruous, but serves to demonstrate the occasionally narrative function of wipes: here, an anticipatory one, for the next title reads: "Two lovers tossed into the inferno of men's maddest Passions." As flames start licking the prison wall, a slow fade takes us to Sylvia Sidney's horrified face, followed by a title with the (less enigmatic than baffling) question: "What could they do to bring vengeance to the 22 accused of one murder?" The couple is not only united by this discourse into one dramatic unit with which audiences can identify regardless of gender (belying the fact that the couple is both physically and motivationally separated throughout the actual film's central dramatic portion), but their couplehood is also linked by the heart wipes and the title's wording ("lovers/passions") to the mob's fury, firmly cementing drama to romance in keeping with the inclusive conception of genres we saw as common to classical Hollywood trailers.

This is the extent of the plot description, and ensuing clips of scenes from the film are then laid out with no apparent narrative bridges. After this opening, shots follow in

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rapid succession: two men, whose roles and allegiances we do not yet understand, vowing revenge on "them skunks" while they play with puppies on a bedroom floor; Sylvia Sidney flanked by two men (one of whom was in the previous scene) and crying, "I know he's alive!"; a tense courtroom outburst in which an unknown woman begs someone's forgiveness for her testimony. Through a selection that emphasizes tense dialogue and dramatic outbursts over exposition, the audience's interest in dramatic action is assumed to be piqued by watching intense emotion on the screen.

The trailer moves into its actor (and director) identification segment with a shot of the mob seen through prison bars superimposed with "FURY, directed by Fritz Lang" and the MGM logo.[4] Supporting actors are then introduced with short scenes—the identifications of Bruce Cabot, Edward Ellis and Walter Brennan form a virtual courtroom interrogation scene, as each responds to an unseen character, asking, respectively: "What are you trying to do, Hummell?" "Where did you say you spent the night before last?" "I ain't answering the questions, buddy, you are. C'mon, get out." Rapid repetition of similar types of shots or scenes is a familiar convention throughout Hollywood trailer history, and when repetition is utilized in terms of the rhetoric of story, such clips can connote accumulation, underlining the trailer-makers' assumptions about audiences' interests in knowing more, or here, in getting to "the truth." The final identification shot, of George Walcott, has him speak the line, "She must love you an awful lot," followed by a cut to Sylvia Sidney walking to Spencer Tracy in the courtroom and embracing him. The words, "Two great stars, in their greatest roles. The year's strangest...most powerful dramatic surprise" are superimposed over their kiss, followed

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by the title and the MGM lion supered over a high shot of the mob rushing the jail building, as the music crescendos.

Although we can assume the two main stars are the "innocent victims of mob violence," we understand neither why they are nor what they do about it. The trailer's disjointed narrative and its emphasis on high emotion (largely textured by fear of an unidentified mob), on the discourse of legal justice, and on the triumph of heterosexual romance, presents an argument that what is most important to audiences is not Spencer Tracy's moral rectitude or course of action, of which the trailer give us little idea, so much as the couple's fear of the mob, with which we are invited to identify ("It could happen to anyone"), and its ultimate resolution through the justice system's interrogatory discourse, with the woman's courtroom embrace as final reward. The other reward the trailer offers audiences, "the year's strangest ... most powerful dramatic surprise," is an interesting example of the way some early trailers promoted enigma by announcement—here, reinforcing the suspense the trailer has attempted to build—it's an overkill that still, contradictorily, withholds more than it reveals. The spectators in this trailer's courtroom scenes, its profilmic audience, again stand in for the trailer spectators, here serving the function of reminding us of the inherent "watchability" or spectacular value of getting to "the truth," solving the film's mystery in the courtroom.

The trailer demonstrates an assumption that audiences find the cinematic experience of mob fear and its narrative resolution in the courtroom unusual, interesting and thus desirable, and that this is the aspect of the film about which they will be most curious. The embrace is shown as the trailer's climax without revealing its prior motivation, figuring at once a juridical and a romantic resolution—of what we don't quite

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know. The emphasis on causality found by recent historians to be dominant in classical Hollywood cinema is here diffused by the trailer's obliqueness in its efforts to privilege enigma over exposition, evidencing promoters' wariness about disclosing controversial aspects of the film to audiences assumed to prefer to avoid controversy. This results in a fairly open text built primarily around an assumption that audiences share the characters' fears and believe in the possibility of resolving conflict in the courtroom. Indeed, this is held out by the trailer as at once a resolution for the characters and the audience, whose real resolution can be achieved only by seeing the film.

This trailer ascribes to audiences, both by its representations of the film and by the information it withholds, a desire for knowledge—perhaps even beyond the narrative knowledge the film will impart—while at the same time contradictorily withholding even more than just the story's enigma, in the way it builds on the film's whitewashing of the lynching issue by obscuring core plot elements. In the prewar social world of a country which welcomed this film's emigré director when he fled the Nazi "mob," the possibility of gaining knowledge of "the truth" (a word which today can rarely be used without quotation marks) was still embraced as a reality. Yet the exigencies of the Production Code rigidly determined and circumscribed the parameters of how much and what kinds of knowledge were appropriate to go on movie screens, and this trailer's attempts to appeal to audiences' interest in its story display evidence of Hollywood's contradictory role in fulfilling, yet not fulfilling this interest. Its use of the rhetoric of story to promote the film's enigmatic elements serves more than anything to distract audiences from the fact that without acknowledging the film's controversial elements, there's not much to promote. The trailer's "shell game"—of hyperbolic dramatic cues without a real drama in

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evidence, and hints of a "surprise" that must be announced yet cannot be disclosed—reveals some of the at times bizarre assumptions made by classical promoters as to what audiences really wanted out of film stories.

The Grapes of Wrath (1940), John Ford's classic film based on the Steinbeck novel of 1939, was promoted with a "troubled trailer" privileging the popular novel's narrative world. The trailer both assumes and represents this world as being well known to American audiences—so well known, apparently, that an assumption is made that we don't need to see it or be told what it's about. Indeed, the cast identification segment of the trailer and one other shot are all we see of the film itself.[5] One might have expected the trailer to promote the film's reconfiguration of the book's indictment of class-based injustice into a cinematic reinforcement of "Ma's values..., the small-town ethos of self-help and good neighborliness"[6]—which, in fact, it doesn't address. Nor (predictably) does it highlight the film's admirable departure from Hollywood norms through individual scenes (such as the destruction of Muley's shack) that demonstrate an awareness of the economic causes of the Okies' plight, in the case of the Muley scene figuring "one of the most eloquent expressions of social victimization ever put on film."[7] Instead, the film (and novel) are couched by the trailer within a text exemplary of classical era trailers' treatments of that phenomenon I have identified in trailer discourse as the narrative of Hollywood. That is, the narrative world of *The Grapes of Wrath* is promoted with very little description, while its treatment at the hands of the "narrative world" of Hollywood is shown in surprising detail, down to revealing how much money the studio paid for the novel. Newsreel conventions, such as music typical of newsreels of

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the time and a voice-over narrator familiar to newsreel audiences, are utilized. The trailer begs the question, "who do they think they're talking to," by virtue of its unusually frequent invocation and representation of audiences and their reactions to this narrative world.

It opens with a map of the United States papered with multiple covers of the book: *The Grapes of Wrath*. The narrator extols this "...human, revealing, soul-searching story, that instantly becomes the most discussed novel of modern literature." As he speaks the word "most," the trailer cuts to another view of the U.S. map, with now only 3-5 (larger) book covers visible on it. Then there is a close-up of the novel's cover as the narrator states the title. The combination of the brief, blurb-like adjectival clause with the hyperbolic mapping which indicates the book's "takeover" of the country, establishes the trailer's main enthymeme: the assumption is that audiences will go see *The Grapes of Wrath* because of the *popularity* of its story, not its (sketchily described) content. (The syllogism here: "Everyone's talking about it; everyone's bought it." The missing term: "It's so popular, you still want more!") The cover fades to a double-exposure of another angle on the book cover with a long shot of a group of women at a library counter. "*Grapes of Wrath*, please." "I'll have to put you on a waiting list—we've never had such a demand for a book." The book image remaining under, the other image fades to a medium long shot of a woman in a bookstore asking, "Do you have a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath*?" "Sorry, we're all sold out." This image fades to a man on the telephone in a bookstore: "Yes, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Well, send me as many copies as you can. I can't supply the demand." He fades to a shot of people looking in a bookstore window as the double-exposed image of the book opens and its pages are turned. We hear; "grapes of

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wrath, grapes of wrath..." in a verbal collage of different (male) voices. People crowding outside a bookstore wave into its window. This image fades to a montage of newspapers (still over the double-exposed image of the opened book). We see the headline, "Wrath hits 300,000 mark" and the narrator states, "As sales skyrocket, *The Grapes of Wrath* becomes the book of the nation." We next see the headline: "Steinbeck amazes book world" as the narrator says, "Everyone, everywhere, joins in the discussion of its social problems." We then see the headline: "*Grapes* breaks all records! Critics acclaim Steinbeck's hit!" This remarkable series of accumulated shots of people clamoring for the book (rare actual images of classical era trailers' "mythic universal Americans"), layered voices, and even print superimposed upon print is a cinematic palimpsest promoting the popularity of the Steinbeck novel—about which all we now know is that it's a "human, revealing, soul-searching story" about "social problems." It's a visual ode to reading (consuming stories) as a marker of both capitalist success and the formation of national community, which is then built upon by promoting, naturally, the *film* made from the book.

The narrator continues, "Due to this unprecedented popularity, producers vie for the motion picture rights." We see trade journal headlines in the *Hollywood Reporter*: "Film Studios Bid for Grapes of Wrath—Producers offer fabulous sums for sensational novel." In *Variety*: "Hollywood battles over Grapes of Wrath."[8] The narrator goes on, "Finally, 20th Century-Fox announces the purchase of the book, and plans for its immediate production." We see a *Motion-Picture Daily* headline: "Zanuck gets Grapes of Wrath—20th Century-Fox pays 70,000 for best-selling novel," followed by a *Variety* headline: "Millions demand 'Wrath'—Steinbeck's readers ask Hollywood to go ahead

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with filming." This last headline stays on the screen and is then double-exposed with a montage of (more of your basic "mythic universal American") people talking about a film that doesn't exist yet: studio bosses in an office, a cook and a waitress in a kitchen, and a priest in a pulpit; as the narrator comments, "A storm of discussion arouses the nation. Speculation and rumor are rife to the effect that no producer will venture to film this great, dramatic masterpiece of human hearts." Another headline (from an unidentified newspaper) is seen: "Zanuck asked to shelve book—object to daring attack in Grapes of Wrath," superimposed with long shots of a delivery man and woman talking, followed by one of three farmers talking alongside their haytruck. (Here, the promotion of an extracinematic enigma: what "daring attack"?)

The image fades to a single image of Zanuck, as the narrator goes on, "Darryl F. Zanuck, production head of 20th Century-Fox, emphatically announces that the Grapes of Wrath *will be* (filmed). All of the resources of this vast studio are marshalled for the production." As he narrates, we see an aerial pan over the studio lots, double-exposed with a montage of production scenes: cameras being loaded, camera men with cameras, men talking over photographs, one man at a drafting table, a truck driving by. The narrator continues, "John Ford, Academy Award winner, is given the directorial assignment. The cast is carefully chosen to make John Steinbeck's unforgettable characters come to life." We see women in a studio library doing research, men in a mechanical shop, a sound truck with a man in back, three men talking over film cans, men walking in what looks like a sound mixing area, a film cutter sitting at an editorial table holding film.

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This series of bracket syntagmas (again, Metz's term for a series of non-chronological descriptive film segments) overlaid on, first, headlines, and then the aerial pan of the studio, continues the palimpsest effect of the book montage: the images of movie work, workers, and equipment, layered with the print image carried over from the earlier segment creates a paean to *cinematic* writing, an avalanche of discourse, all devoted to bringing (the still unglimpsed) *The Grapes of Wrath* to the screen. As the images accumulate (both on top of one another and in our minds), the success of the film becomes a foregone conclusion since the film's visual treatment is equated to the success of the book, and "we" are inscribed enthymemically as influential in that success, since our onscreen counterparts have been so busy buying the book—the assumption being that we will continue such behavior by flocking to the movie.

The trailer finally cuts to a single image of Henry Fonda in a hat, smiling, walking forward screen left. The narrator says, "Tom Joad is played by Henry Fonda. Ma Joad is played by Jane Darwell. Casey is played by John Carradine...." and on through the major and minor cast, as we see close-ups of each major actor in character, with fades between each, and wider shots of minor actors, some standing against tents. The trailer then fades to a shot of the road, an Arizona state sign to the right of a bridge, as the camera travels onto the bridge and the narrator says, "and now, at last, The Grapes of Wrath," and the trailer tantalizingly ends. Stars and the road are all we see of the film, and none of these images stimulates much thought about America's "social problems." The most important thing for audiences to know in advance about the narrative world containing these "problems," the trailer asserts, is that—through the elaborate and complicated agency of the narrative world of Hollywood—it sells.

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Our assumed desire here is not so much to gain knowledge of a mystified story, as the *Fury* trailer's promotion of its film's withheld narrative enigma inscribed on the part of audiences, as it is to be a spectatorial version of the hungry readers (as seen in the trailer) who already know the *world* of *The Grapes of Wrath*'s story, which is all but withheld from us. Moreover, the narrative world the trailer wants us to want to know constitutes not so much the book's world itself, or its controversial images of and ideas about America, as it does the cultural capital of being in the know *about* those controversies. The book is a downer, but its success isn't—a success which appears to contradict the book's message about the failure of the American dream and its economic causes. This trailer's enthymemes about the narrative world of Hollywood, containing assumptions about audiences' desires to "be in the know"—along with the trailer's withholding of knowledge of the narrative world of *The Grapes of Wrath* –set in motion a play of knowing/not knowing (and desire/apathy) that displays the fundamentally contradictory character of a trailer which attempts to engage audiences to participate in the success of a film about the failures of capitalism. It "thinks it's talking to" an audience that neither has experienced, nor perhaps even cares to experience, the rigors of the Dustbowl, but will do just about anything to belong to the satisfied and communal group of people who participate in the novel's, and the film's, success.

Later in the classical era, the trailer for Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), a film of Patrick Hamilton's play that presented a thinly disguised dramatization of the Leopold and Loeb thrill murder case, offers an example of use of the rhetoric of story to promote interest in narrative causality as well as enigma. Like many trailers for Hitchcock films, this one

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departs from typical trailer formulas in many ways, but utilizes at the same time a number of familiar conventions.[9] It begins with an unusual sequence of specially shot footage which actually provides additional scenes for the film, presenting audiences with a backstory that those who haven't seen this trailer never get.[10] The trailer plays with questions of visibility and invisibility, of disclosure and withholding, in ways both typical of classical trailers and that depart from them: since the film itself plays with these same elements within its narrative, the trailer is in a way more accurate than most in representing its film's narrative concerns.

It opens with a title, "New York, One Spring Afternoon," over an aerial long shot of Central Park, followed by an idyllic dialogue scene between the murder victim David Kentley and his potential fiancée, Janet Walker. They are seated on a park bench as he tries to convince her to say yes to his marriage proposal. She resists because she wants to wait until after he graduates, but he won't have it—"Sorry, I personally consider us engaged as of now. Congratulations." He glances at the camera, leans in and kisses her briefly. She protests, looking around to see if they were seen. More words and a kiss are exchanged as they part without having resolved the issue, followed by a shot from her POV as she watches him walk away, then followed by a medium close-up of her waving, and James Stewart's voice-over begins, "That's the last time she ever saw him alive."

The trailer cuts to Stewart (in character), standing in a domestic interior like the one in which the film takes place, who continues (facing the camera), "And that's the last time *you'll* ever see him alive. What happened to David Kentley changed my life completely. And the lives of seven others...." The semi-intra-diegetic voice-over (he's in character but he addresses the trailer audience directly) jars audiences out of the happy

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mood of the preceding scene with its direct, almost accusatory address, as if we've seen something we weren't supposed to. This audience address serves to promote *Rope* on the basis of Stewart's characterization, since we are assumed both to "get" that he is talking to us in character, and to want to trust in this character's apparent authority (the character is not named—we haven't even been "properly introduced") as he introduces us to the film's core narrative premise: "what happened to David Kentley."

Stewart continues as he lists the characters and we see harsh *Dragnet*-like close-ups of each looking around with serious, worried or sad expressions against a blue studio backdrop, wearing the dinner party clothing they wear in the film. Stewart's narration gives each character (other than Janet Walker, who was in the park scene) a brief characterization as he or she is named ("Henry Kentley, the boy's father. His aunt, Mrs. Atwater. His best friend, Kenneth Lawrence. A housekeeper, named Mrs. Wilson. And the two who were responsible for everything..."). The descriptions in no way amplify the harsh facticity of the images—other than Stewart's, the trailer does not promote this film's narrative on the basis of its characterizations, but rather the close-ups seem to victimize all the characters, scrutinizing them with a morbid curiosity. The music returns as we see a medium shot of the two men standing as if in a lineup, in the suits they wear at the party, their shoulders touching. Both first look screen right, then Brandon (John Dall) looks at Philip (Farley Granger) as Philip looks at the camera, then Philip looks at Brandon. A big crescendo on the music track accompanies a cut to a close-up of Brandon with his mouth open and a rather menacing look, slightly to screen right, as Stewart says "Brandon Shaw... and Philip Morgan." We see a close-up of Philip looking worried, slightly screen left. Music swells.

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There is a vertical wipe (from periphery to center, like curtains closing) to a shot of the apartment window exterior with closed curtains, and the sound of a man screaming, as distinctively Hitchcockian orchestral music is heard. The trailer then begins a segment of dialogue scenes combined with generalized views over which titles are superimposed. The wipe opens back up to a medium shot of James Stewart, looking down and screen right, and his identificatory title then falls forward (like a calendar page dropping) onto the screen. The trailer fades to a long shot of the three men, Stewart talking inaudibly, the wooden chest in the foreground with books on it. A big yellow title appears, "Alfred Hitchcock's ROPE!" The title recedes and Philip throws a glass down violently, saying "Cat and mouse, cat and mouse." Brandon: "That's enough of that." Philip (angrily): "Which is the cat, and which is the mouse?" With another wipe the scene switches to a long shot of the party showing the penthouse setting with its New York skyline, the aunt and Janet seated listening to Philip play the piano, with the rest of the cast identifications superimposed. The camera pulls back so that we see the chest, now set up as a buffet table with food, candlesticks, and a tablecloth. A diagonal wipe takes us to a long shot of Stewart and Brandon in the living room later, and both look at the chest, which now has piles of books on it and no tablecloth. The film title swells out to big yellow letters. Stewart walks toward the chest. Title: "Alfred Hitchcock's most startling adventure in suspense..." He lifts the lid violently in the foreground, books falling towards "us," the lid concealing our view of the chest's contents. The trailer's emphasis on murder and suspense has led us to believe we know what is in the chest, yet the party setting and other benign elements such as the opening with its "One Spring Morning"

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title and happy conversation, have the effect of making our suspicions themselves seem morbid and unclean. We *know*, yet we can't quite believe—until we see the film.

An iris opens out from black to an extreme close-up of Stewart's hand in his pocket, and he pulls out the rope. There is a cut to a medium close-up of Brandon and Philip watching, and Philip yells, "He's got it! He knows, he knows!" The camera travels with him as Philip crosses the room, grabs something, and Brandon tries to placate him ("Easy, I'll take care of it") as we see that Philip has a gun pointed at Brandon: "No you won't! I'd just as soon kill you as kill him!" Stewart lunges for the gun as the title appears again in big yellow letters. He grabs the gun and wrestles with Philip, his hand on Philip's wrist, and the camera moves in closer as a title appears, "Alfred Hitchcock tells a story you will never forget!/ ROPE!" (below the final title are studio credits). The two still wrestle as the gun goes off harmlessly into the floor by the piano in a smoky blur, the music crescendos and the trailer cuts off abruptly.

Although the suspenseful elements of the film are highlighted in the titles, the trailer emphasizes the promotion of the suspense of finding out "what happened" in the story (the process) over appeals to interest in actual story enigmas (such as who did it). It both shows us who gets murdered and names the murderers by introducing Brandon and Philip as "the two who were responsible for everything," even obliquely showing the murder victim being revealed to Stewart, as he is seen opening the chest where the body is kept throughout the film. But rather than promote "what happened" within the terms of the usual promotion of narrative causality (as a journey audiences will go on when they see the film), causality is promoted as *itself* an enigma: the shock of the trailer's opening, with its unusual direct address to the audience and its special footage only to be seen by

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trailer spectators, creates interest in the suspenseful workings of the basically known story primarily by evoking its transgressive elements and heightening the story's shock value. In a very real way, we're seeing something we're not supposed to see—a piece of the film that's not part of the film. Janet's surreptitiousness as the couple kisses contributes to this effect, as do the trailer's subsequent voyeuristic close-ups of the characters affected by the murder.

This is a fitting approach in a trailer for a film story that is in a sense about something that it's not supposed to say it's about, "the homosexual element," a strong subtext in the film and an important part of the Leopold and Loeb case on which the film (and play) are based. Homosexuality was obviously an unacceptable plot element in classical Hollywood film. Yet in *Rope* it could be said to be at once everywhere and nowhere, "hiding in plain sight." As happens in other areas of social discourse, it "went without saying" that forbidden interest in homosexuality was an integral aspect of the film's appeal.[11] Even reviews of the film at the time, one indicator of its contemporaneous reception, are full of intimations of transgressions of various kinds, hinting at but not naming homosexuality as one of them.[12] The trailer's greater focus on the more specifically gay-coded of the two men, Farley Granger/Philip, with his emotional excess and repetition in the trailer of phrases with potentially sexual connotations ("cat and mouse, cat and mouse;" "he's got it," "he knows, he knows"), puts this unmentionable aspect of the film's story at least virtually on the screen, as does the trailer's culminating emphasis on the crotch-level shots of Stewart and Granger tussling with a gun, which is eventually fired at the trailer's climax. Again the rhetoric of story's core contradiction—appealing to interest in audience knowledge about, here, what

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happens and why, while at the same time withholding it—is thickened within this trailer by another level of contradiction between visibility and invisibility that was overtly operating to draw boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate narrative stories or subjects in Hollywood film during the classical era.

Obviously not all films made during this time dealt with such potentially controversial topics as lynching, the social impact of the Dustbowl, or homosexuality. But the extent to which the Production Code Administration was instrumental in determining what kinds of stories were deemed appropriate for audiences is well documented, and the ways in which these "troubled trailers" give evidence to this boundary-policing through the rhetoric of story can perhaps illuminate some of the ways trailers in general reconfigure film stories in response to various kinds of social and ideological pressures, whether overt or less overt ones. All three of these trailers assume audience interest in both the represented and withheld elements of the films' stories. The withholding of enigma in the *Fury* trailer attempts to heighten audience desire to know a narrative truth, while effectively concealing the very (potentially controversial) narrative stakes that would make it interesting. The unusual withholding of *The Grapes of Wrath*'s narrative world heightens interest in participating in the broader narrative world that made it into a movie, drawing on audiences' assumed desires to join that world where, the trailer shows us, "everybody" is either reading the book or seeing the film. The withholding of causal information in the *Rope* trailer both heightens curiosity about the film's crime and its transgressive subtext, and gives audiences that pleasantly squirmy feeling of complicity (for which Hitchcock was famous) by virtue of our very desire to

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see what's withheld. These limit cases of classical era trailers demonstrate that the rhetoric of story attempts—not always successfully—to ensure that circumscribed story knowledge (along with circumscribed stories, and types of stories) are going to be appealing to audiences.

The Transitional Era: Story Knowledge as Genre Knowledge

New kinds of stories opened up as potential subjects for Hollywood film in the transitional era. From the emphasis on more "adult" themes that accompanied the economic and ideological shifts and the breakdown of Production Code Administration enforcement practices during the '50s and early '60s, to the stylistic experimentations and thematic liberalism of the later '60s and early '70s, film stories differed in many ways from those of the classical era. Trailer production also went through marked shifts during this period, but were not always in sync with the changes that were taking place in film practice. The rhetoric of story in trailers of this period demonstrates that trailermakers were unsure how to promote new kinds of stories to the transitional era's fragmenting audience. A mismatch is often evident in the rhetoric of story in trailers: throughout this era, the assumptions of trailer producers as to what audiences want in a story and what a film is "about" test new ground, and appear to miss the mark more frequently than in the classical era. Doubting the former certitude about who they thought they were talking to, promoters experimented with the kinds of story information they provided and/or withheld in trailers, often falling back on genre terms to define stories. Thus, in a sense, all transitional trailers are "troubled." The "typical" example (i.e., *The Great Escape*) demonstrates the extent to which experimentation was going on in the latter half of this

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era, even for big budget promotional campaigns, while nonetheless offering a solution that does seem to match, or be adequate to, its promotional agenda. The following case studies, conversely, place in sharper relief some of the contradictions of transitional era trailers.

The trailer for *Bad Day at Black Rock*(1955) resembles classical era trailers, but demonstrates a slightly more restrained use of titles and an emphasis on promoting the widescreen format. It also demonstrates some changes in trailer practice typical of the early transitional era—most prominent, an effort to shift the rhetoric of story away from an actual narrator's voice to an intradiegetic narratorial one (characters serving as de facto narrators in sound overlaps). Like the *Fury* trailer, it is structured around the promotional appeal of withheld plot information. Here however, more strongly than in the earlier trailer, the rhetorical appeal to story interest interacts with appeals to audience interests in stars and genres. By 1955 Spencer Tracy was a superstar, whose persona now contained the intertextual connotations of all his prior films, including, significantly, those of *Fury*, a film which was instrumental in the formation of the Tracy persona. Seeing Tracy in a role where he goes up against mob mentality has a reassuringly familiar ring to it, adding to the draw of his star power here in a film in which a male outsider also attempts to enforce the law in a community not his own. The trailer also evokes the genre of the Western, and the interaction of appeals to star and genre with that of story demonstrate their increasingly seamless interworkings during the transitional era. However, the trailer's dominant appeal is to audience interest in the suspense generated by the withheld narrative enigma.

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Bad Day at Black Rock's trailer opens with a shot of a train, accompanied by the sound of a train horn and music from the film soundtrack. Superimposed titles announce, "From MGM's world-famous studios comes a provocative drama of suspense," followed by the film's title, all superimposed over different views of the train (the horizontality of which are enhanced by the widescreen format). In a succession of shots, Spencer Tracy gets off the train and proceeds to walk into town, the trailer underscoring the narrative importance of his arrival by presenting a sustained portion of the scene.[13] Cast identifications follow, beginning with Tracy, the only one whose character is identified ("Starring Spencer Tracy as John Macreedy"), with each member of the supporting ensemble (Robert Ryan, Anne Francis, Dean Jagger, Walter Brennan, John Ericson, Ernest Borgnine, and Lee Marvin) given equal treatment in medium shots accompanied by music from the film's soundtrack. The rhetoric of genre's contribution to the trailer lies mostly in its title and largely Western iconographic compositions with low, wide angle exterior shots of monumentalized individuals against distant mountains (linked by vertical wipes and cuts).

There is no voice-over narration, but following the cast identifications and subsequent titles (using the rhetorical convention of asking questions: "What shocking secret did this unwelcome stranger expose at Black Rock—a desert town in the southwest[?]") as Tracy walks away from the train station with his suitcase, we hear Tracy's voice and assume it is a low-key voice-over narration: "There aren't many towns like this in America. But one town like it is enough. Because I think something kinda bad happened here, something they can't quite seem to find a handle to." As the trailer cuts away from Tracy walking through the town to a dialogue scene with Anne Francis, what

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seemed to be voice-over is seen to be dialogue addressed to Francis, who responds "You don't know what you're talking about." This technique is varied in the next scene (introduced by a vertical wipe) when, as we see Tracy poking around an oil derrick, we hear Robert Ryan saying "Somebody's always looking for something in this part of the west. This place is our west, and I wish they'd leave us alone!" We see someone (Robert Ryan?) in the distance watching Tracy with binoculars, then cut to a dialogue scene between Ryan and Tracy as Tracy responds to Ryan's apparent voice-over, "This is where you're beginning to make me mad." A later sequence again repeats the technique when Walter Brennan's dialogue, "Four years ago something terrible happened here. We did nothing about it, nothing!" begins as voice-over and is completed in on-screen dialogue. This implicit narration has an odd effect—as trailer spectators, we give the voices the authority of narration, expectantly attending to their words as additional information about the stark images we see, yet because the voices have the low-key timbre of intradiegetic dialogue (instead of the booming voice-of-God effect typical of trailer narration), they seem intimate, personal, conspiratorial; and inform us only partially. The classical era "trailer narrator"—in both the institutional sense and the aural sense—has been dethroned: instead of booming certitudes and hyperbole, this opening has offered audiences questions (in title form) and conversational dialogue; displaying, perhaps, an assumption that audiences no longer want to be told what to think.

Cryptic clips from several scenes follow, all of which contribute to an accumulation of narrative question-marks and suspenseful moments: Tracy's interrogation of townspeople; Tracy being threatened ("They're gonna kill you with no hard feelings!"); four men discussing Macreedy (Tracy) and plotting to get rid of him;

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Anne Francis mysteriously confronted by Robert Ryan ("This is liable to be the hardest ten dollars you ever earned in your life"); Tracy yelling more pointedly at townspeople to tell him what happened; a chase scene; Tracy and Francis being shot at; and finally, concluding titles (which fall back on classical rhetorical modes): "Caught in a crossfire of emotion from which there is no escape! The MGM thrill drama that will hold you in suspense!" followed by familiar '50s titles promoting Cinemascope, "with the added wonder of stereophonic sound." The final generalizing shots under the titles hint tantalizingly that an unspecified denouement has happened, in which justice has prevailed. We see the jail and the town in long shot, and a group of police cars pulls away as Tracy and Jagger watch, followed by a long shot of the train pulling up to the station to take Tracy away.

The experimental use of dialogue overlaps as "narration" signals this trailer's departure from classical trailer conventions in that it invites different characters (even antagonists) to contribute to the trailer's textual authority. Knowledge is derived from these multivocal sources, in addition to emerging from the trailer's somewhat less authoritative (than in the classical era) titles. While the pseudo-narration is unusual, experimentation is typical of '50s trailers, which exhibit many unusual or anomalous promotional strategies and frequently show an eagerness to discard the familiar dramatic voice-overs, titles and identification segments for more impressionistic or self-consciously new trailer techniques. It also shifts the terms of the trailer's audience address, at least superficially, away from the institutional to the personal. Narrators, even semi-intradiegetic ones such as James Stewart's narration in *Rope*, stand in for the institution that wants us to go see the film, speaking to us from a place somewhere

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between the film's diegesis and the narrative of Hollywood. Narrators after the fact, characters speaking the film's dialogue which is transformed by trailer producers through sound overlaps into a de facto narration, insert audiences virtually within the film's story. We listen as if we were the person being talked to, only afterwards realizing the character was talking to somebody within the film. In the context of a trailer that still utilizes many classical era conventions, this personalization creates a rather odd disjuncture in the trailer's address to audiences.

The rhetoric of genre is also mobilized here. The thematic of the lone gunman who comes to an isolationist town to straighten out a corrupt law enforcement system (referred to earlier as the "town-taming Western") is backed up by the film's title and the trailer's strongly Western iconography, with its frequent selection of exterior low angle shots of men in lanky cowboy poses against mountains and its association of the one woman in the film with money, echoing the Western archetype of the prostitute. This theme is also underscored by the trailer's selection of dialogue—"The rule of law has left here, and the gorillas have taken over," "This place is our west..."—and the early superimposition describing Black Rock as "a desert town in the southwest." In assuming audience interest in the answer to its question—"What shocking secret did this unwelcome stranger expose...?"—this title's geographic reference links the genre of the Western with the plot's withheld mystery.

The mystery being withheld by the trailer is the fact that the Japanese-American farmer who Tracy has come to visit was murdered by the townspeople the day after Pearl Harbor. The town's sinister secret is its racism. By omitting any indication of this aspect of the film, the trailer emphasizes the film's connections to its film-historical genre over

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its connections to its own historical moment and specific story: the trailer's iconography and odd, conspiratorial pseudo-narration links its Western cues to a figuration of the generally repressive climate of the fifties without bringing out the film's highly topical theme of the evils of guilt by association.[14]

The interaction between the generic cues and the trailer's primary hook ("What shocking secret did this unwelcome stranger expose?") creates a rhetoric of enigma and suspense firmly grounded in the Western's discourse of spatial conquest, wherein the secrets of the Other can be uncovered by moving in on the Other's territory. Beyond the withheld plot information, of course, this trailer assumes of its audience a more generalized desire for knowledge: a desire to know the secrets of the Other—here coded as an isolationist town populated mainly by retrograde modern cowboys. As many historians have recently pointed out, the value of knowledge shifts after World War II, and the search for the "truth"—such as the *Fury* trailer's promotional discourse invokes—becomes problematized by recognition of the human potential for atrocity. The trailer reflects this shift in the way its deflection of textual authority to intradiegetic "narrators" lends it a more gossipy than pedagogical tone.

Knowing the secrets of the Other in one's own back yard can be seen as a prime goal in the paranoid Cold War cultural environment, and this trailer's rhetorical appeals to an audience assumed to prefer to trust its own authority (or more precisely, that of its surrogates in the film's characters) over an institutional one to guide it to discovering this town's "shocking secret," suggests that seeing the film can fulfill this desire—but that at the same time, such a multivocal knowledge might not be so clear-cut. The trailer contradictorily assumes audience desire for a story that enables them to *participate* in the

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conspiratorial mode of the isolationist townspeople and their appealing Western environment almost as much as it engenders interest in rooting for Spencer Tracy's one-man investigation. The enthymeme guiding the rhetoric of story, "You would like to have these (novel) experiences—at the movies," here interacts with the rhetoric of genre's invocation of the desire for (familiar) Western iconography and dynamics, complicating and problematizing audience interest in having the specific protagonist's experiences. Again, the trailer hints that the film's story contains controversial subject matter that it still doesn't quite dare promote (racism: here a more pointed element of the plot of the film than it was in *Fury*), resulting in an ambiguity about the film's appeal that ultimately dilutes the impact of the rhetoric of story, its principal appeal, in favor of that of genre. The trailer seems to be "talking to" an audience that is assumed to be able to handle the film's racial angle (along with other more "adult" subject matter newly deemed appropriate during the '50s), but still an audience that race won't bring into the theater. Its hedging in this regard thus interestingly displays some of the contradictions visible in trailer rhetoric during the 1950s.

The trailer for *The Graduate* (1967), Mike Nichols's countercultural zeitgeist, coming-of-age film, is an interesting "troubled trailer" from the transitional era because it exemplifies the mismatch between promotional discourses and cinematic meaning common to trailers for many of the more innovative films of the mid- to late sixties. Thus, it displays some of the contradictions prevalent within the film industry during this time. It uses a type of "mini-movie" format increasingly common in the later years of the transitional era, eschewing narration for a montage that creates its own trailer narrative

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and emphasizing a series of dialogue scenes presented almost completely in medium shots. These are accompanied by the film's music track, snatches of the Simon and Garfunkel songs "Parsley Sage Rosemary and Thyme," "The Sounds of Silence," and "Mrs. Robinson."

The primary convention of the rhetoric of story that this trailer utilizes is the promotion of narrative causality, although its early section seems to imply a greater focus on narrative characterization than it ultimately delivers. The assumptions it makes about what audiences want from the film's *story* result in an emphasis on the film as a "sex comedy" (i.e. highlight its *genre*), and leave many other aspects of the film's appeal and ultimate success barely visible on the screen.

The first shot of the trailer is a long shot of Dustin Hoffman as Benjamin seated at a fountain on the Berkeley campus of the University of California, an American flag waving in the foreground. The shot immediately establishes an enthymeme that assumes audience recognition of both the setting (a college campus) and its import in 1967, when campuses, and particularly Berkeley's, were "ground zero" of the widespread youth-based social protest movement of the time—and of which American flags (especially their irreverent "mis"use) were moreover a frequent signifier in the popular media. The enthymeme ("He's on a college campus; a flag is prominent." The missing term could perhaps be expressed: "on sixties college campuses, flags connote protest") places this film's story in the narrative context of college in the 1960s, building on the film's title, which metonymically links the story to that world. We hear "Parsley, Sage" and the film's producer credits and title are superimposed over the shot. The music stops as the camera zooms back to an extreme long shot of the campus positioning the flag in the

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center of the frame, as we hear a sound overlap of a woman's voice: "Listen everybody, I want you all to be quiet. I've got Ben's college yearbook here, and I just want to read you some of the *wonderful* things about Ben." Here, unlike the examples of sound overlap voice-over in the *Bad Day at Black Rock* trailer, there is an obvious intradiegetic addressee, an "everybody" who belongs to the scene we have by now learned to expect the trailer to show next. But in fact the dialogue does establish that this segment of the trailer will focus on characterization, so in a way we are part of the "everybody" who is being hailed and admonished to pay attention to information about Ben. The juxtaposition of the woman's voice with the long shot of Ben on the campus jars us into an expectancy for the next scene, while the two layers of meaning create an assumption that we will read the voice, and the subsequent scene, ironically.

The trailer cuts to a shot of Benjamin sitting in his room, a sad clown painting on the wall. "Hey, there's the award-winning scholar!" A traveling close-up of Ben coming downstairs is interspersed with close shots (some from his POV) of people patting him on the back, women kissing him and ruffling his hair (he fixes it), as a man asks him "How are ya track star" and someone else asks "What are you going to do now?" Benjamin replies "I was going to go upstairs for a minute." "I meant with your future. Your *life*." "Oh. Well that's a little hard to say." Ben's face and voice, as well as the intrusive hand-held shots of his party guests, fulfill our expectations of the scene's ironic tone. The trailer cuts to a shot of him sitting in front of a fish tank, as we hear "The Sounds of Silence." His seatedness in both places (campus, bedroom) seems to demonstrate the same listless affect.

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There is a cut to a shot of him in a suit with a slight smile, looking apprehensively at something, which cuts to a brief shot of him in the foreground and Mrs. Robinson (Anne Bancroft) in the background sitting at her home bar, followed by a shot of Mrs. Robinson in the foreground and Benjamin the background, the famous shot through her leg as he says, "Mrs. Robinson, you're trying to seduce me," (she laughs) "aren't you?" The trailer cuts to the couple in the hotel lobby discussing the room, then to a two-shot in the room. "I'll get undressed now, is that all right? Shall I, or do I just stand here? I mean I don't know what you want me to do." "Why don't you watch?" He folds his arms, "Oh, sure, thank you." The trailer then cuts to a shot of Benjamin and Elaine (Katharine Ross) in his car, as she asks, "Benjamin, are you having an affair with someone?" This trailer opening shorthands the story's causality ruthlessly, leaping from an apathetic Ben to the affair to the girlfriend such that the primary interest audiences are assumed to have in the film is in these sexual escapades. But the specificity of the presented scenes to this particular story (the lack of generic coding) demonstrates that it is the rhetoric of story, rather than that of genre, that dominates.

The trailer continues with a series of comedic and dramatic clips, many of which seem disjointed, cadged together only because they impart story information. We next see Benjamin entering Elaine's dorm room with a pizza and becoming startled as he sees her father silhouetted in the dark smoking a cigar. Their dialogue scene is presented in a series of over-the-shoulder separation shots, culminating with Benjamin's line, "The point is, I don't love your wife, I love your daughter, Sir." The trailer cuts to Elaine getting in a car, and fades to him watching, followed by a shot from above which zooms in to him writing her name on a piece of paper. "Parsley, Sage" begins again. There is a

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fade to an extreme long shot of him in his car on a bridge, which then cuts to Elaine entering a door angrily, "I want to ask you a question, and then I'm going. I want to know why you're here in Berkeley." We see him with shaving cream on his face, and back to her: "Is it because I'm here?" He says, "Well look, I love you." The trailer cuts to them kissing, and he yawns, asking sleepily "Will you marry me?" Then we see them watching a game, as she asks, "Why don't you just drag me off if you want to marry me so much?" The selection of this series of clips, and especially the inclusion of the last line, also compresses story elements under the assumption that the primary audience interest is in the story's causal elements. The film's ending is rather awkwardly foreshadowed without imparting any character information about Elaine that might make more sense of her statement, yet without also allowing the withholding of characterization to serve as an enigmatic element of the trailer.

The next clip is from the scene of Benjamin and Mrs. Robinson in her bedroom, with Benjamin saying "You can't stop me from seeing her, Mrs. Robinson. I'll find her." Mrs. Robinson says, "I'm sorry we won't be able to invite you to the wedding, Benjamin, but the arrangements have been so rushed." She crosses the room picking lint off a garment she holds. The trailer cuts to him driving, then running, the "Mrs. Robinson" song on the soundtrack; it then cuts to a church scene, with Benjamin behind a glass partition saying "Jesus God," and yelling "Elaine!" Elaine looks at her mother, and we see shots of the mother, the father and the groom all cursing silently, and Elaine yells "Ben!" The trailer withholds the final scene, cutting to a title crawl that includes stars, screenwriter, songs, producer and director credits, with "Parsley Sage" playing.

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Like many sixties trailers, this one seems, from the perspective of the nineties, to not "get" the film. Its overriding assumption that audiences are most interested in the film's sexual plot dynamics undersells the thematic and stylistic richness that enabled the film to strike a nerve with the public as "the biggest box-office success of the late sixties."[15] The odd juxtaposition of the mother's party speech with the shot of Ben on campus seated under a looming flag *almost* alludes to the film's core structuring absence, the Vietnam War (the preeminent career choice with which graduating men in 1968 were confronted), but the way the trailer rushes on to the next scene leaves this idea unexplored. Ben's apathy is reconstructed as merely a causal plot element, an individual personality trait that leaves him susceptible to Mrs. Robinson's seduction. In retrospect, the trailer producers seemed clueless to the fact that a film dealing with sixties cultural alienation could actually bring disaffected youth into the theater—that identifying with Ben's apathy wouldn't necessarily extend to an apathy of the pocketbook. Indeed, the also clueless *Boxoffice* review of the film provided this handy "Exploitip" for exhibitors: "Hold a cap-and-gown preview with free admission to all dressed in graduation outfits," again marking the extreme mismatch between promotional strategies and the nature of this film's impact.[16]

Stylistically the trailer also underemphasizes the elements of the film that were most innovative and struck reviewers of the time: that is, the film's "switched-on cinematics,"[17] or the "sly and surprising things" Bosley Crowther felt Mike Nichols and Robert Surtees achieved with the actors and the camera such that "the overall picture has the quality of a very extensive and revealing social scan."[18] Occasional handheld camera shots and the odd angle under Anne Bancroft's leg are about all the trailer offers that hint

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at unconventional technique. Yet the film's stylistic advances were in large part responsible for its success. Indeed, the film is remarked as one that integrates formal and narrative elements of film meaning in its critique of dominant values. In a discussion of the new narrative strategies of a number of films from the late sixties, Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner note,

> The frequent use of discontinuous, reflexive, and interrupted narratives ... is ... not only a playful formal device. It gets at the heart of the American imaginary, inasmuch as that is based in narratives (of individual success, of American history, and so on). The fact that the American imaginary is inseparable from cultural representations implies that its critique is inseparable from formal and generic revisions. Consequently, that critique is frequently carried out at the level of image construction, camera technique, editing, generic mixing, and so on ... *The Graduate* was ... innovative in style, relying on imported French New Wave techniques—jump cuts, long takes with hand-held cameras, tight close-ups—to render the experience of alienation from the American ideal of material success.[19]

The fact that the trailer for *The Graduate* is able to virtually strip the film of these aspects of its narration in order to stress the causal chain of its story not only demonstrates a resistance on the part of studio promoters to recognize the audience appeal of thematic and stylistic innovation, but it also reveals a typical strategy utilized in this era to promote such films without calling attention to their social critique or

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revolutionary cinematic form: that is, story causality is reified. Such trailers contribute to naturalizing the narrative parameters of commercially-oriented Hollywood storytelling as the sum total of the moviegoing experience. In this case, the contradictions between the film's actual appeals and the terms in which it is promoted are thus almost concealed by the trailer's one-dimensional focus on the "sex comedy" aspect—indeed, a generic aspect. At most they are visible only obliquely, in retrospect, in our memory of the trailer's initial image of its main character sitting on a college campus under a flag—the repressed historic that almost returns, but not quite.

The *Chinatown* (1974) trailer still belongs to the transitional era by virtue of its complex presentation of the story. While its montage has a sophisticated, contemporary look, the trailer also helps demarcate the twilight of the pre-contemporary era in that it does not bear evidence of high concept marketing; rather, it emphasizes the complexities of the story in the context of promoting the characterization of its main character—a characterization that doesn't quite seem to match in impact Jack Nicholson's Jake, making it interesting as a "troubled trailer."[20] The trailer frames this characterization in terms of the centrality of Jake's search for the truth about Evelyn Mulwray and the case, presenting such a quest in ways that differ from the ways other searches for truth were promoted in the foregoing classical era and earlier transitional era examples, but in ways illustrative of the trailer's and film's historical moment of the early '70s. The trailer constructs the search for the truth not so much as a straightforward feature of the narrative's enigmatic structure that trailer producers assume audiences will desire to see uncovered *for them* (by seeing the film), but more as a feature of the main character's

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identity, such that the revelation of the truth is constructed as a revelation *for him*. Thus, it's how the narrative enigma affects the character and his identity that the trailer assumes audiences want to see.

It opens with a graphic of the title on black, the moving image enclosed within the letters. The letters divide and split, revealing an image of a car in the desert, with noir-ish music. Over a pan to Jack Nicholson watching the desert, the voice-over narrator begins: "Los Angeles, 1937. There are lots of guys like J. J. Gittes. They're easy to find, if you want to find 'em." Nicholson steps back a bit. This narration contains the assumption that audiences will associate its hardboiled yet intimate tone with the detective conventions of film noir, at once establishing the importance of the film's revision of a familiar generic world and introducing a *narrative* world in which Gittes's character is central to the story. The narrator's use of "you" attempts to draw the trailer audience into identificatory participation not only with the character but also with the film's period setting and its world-weary attitudinal posture.

The trailer cuts to a medium shot of Faye Dunaway in Gittes's office, who says, "Mr. Gittes, have we *ever* met?" "Well, no." "Never?" "Never." The music begins again as the trailer cuts to a double-iris binocular view of a man holding a map, getting out of a car, and consulting the map, then a medium long shot of Nicholson with binoculars. We hear Dunaway in voice-over: "Since you agree with me that we've never met before, would you also agree with me that I've never hired you to do anything, certainly not spy on my husband." There is a cut to Nicholson snooping, he picks up a checkbook, then back to the scene with Dunaway, who says as she goes out the door, "I don't get tough with anyone, Mr. Gittes, my lawyer does." We then see a car pull up and the view in the

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car window of Dunaway with her daughter. The narrator returns, "You do your job." We see a reaction shot of Nicholson looking into the car. "And sometimes you find the answers to questions that should never be asked."

The segment serves primarily to further the trailer's focus on the detective's characterization—the "you" by which the narration first assumed audiences could identify with a hypothetical person who wanted to find someone *like* Jake becomes an association of Jake himself with the audience that is now assumed to be identifying with *him*. The romantic intrigue between Nicholson and Dunaway and enigmatic elements of the detective story are also established, but in ways that are obscure by comparison to the trailer's core focus on Nicholson's character. Only in retrospect (after having seen the film) does the narrator's line as Nicholson looks into Dunaway's car make any story sense, even enigmatically—so far we have no idea what could be meant by "questions that should never be asked."

Next we see Nicholson selecting stopwatches from his glove compartment and placing two of them behind the tires of a car. The narrator continues, "Or, you find out what happens to people who ask them." Nicholson climbs a fence, as we hear Roman Polanski's voice, "Hold it there kitty cat," and there follow clips from the scene in which Polanski, playing a hood, knifes Nicholson's nose: "You're a very nosy fellow, kitty cat, huh?" We see a low angle close-up of Polanski with the knife in the foreground. "You know what happens to nosy fellas?" The scene is cut short and we next see Nicholson holding his nose with a bloody hand, followed by a shot of Polanski looking down at him.

The trailer cuts to Faye Dunaway sitting at a restaurant table (we hear piano music) wearing pearls and a veil, saying "I dislike the word 'cheat.'" Nicholson asks,

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"Did you have affairs?" "Mr. Gittes..." "Did he know about it?" The trailer cuts to Nicholson watching something, in another scene (pre-nose bandage), then to what he sees: the dead husband being dragged out of the riverbed by police. The restaurant dialogue continues in voice-over: "Where were you when your husband died?" We return to the restaurant scene (this segment verges on the contemporary trailer feature of the "grid," or series of clips from one expository dialogue scene which are intercut with other, usually illustrative action scenes), and she lights her cigarette. "You were seeing someone too." As the trailer cuts to Nicholson, his nose bandage is revealed for the first time, and the trailer then cuts back to Dunaway who looks at it. "For very long?" "I never see anyone for very long, Mr. Gittes. It's difficult for me." The trailer's consolidation of the "nose scene" and the developing interrogatory/sexual relationship between Dunaway and Nicholson results in an emphasis on the romance element over the action (in the trailer's terms, the main outcome of the nose injury seems to be its impact on his relationship with the woman), as does the use of the Nicholson/Dunaway clips as a "grid" into which are intercut action clips.

The trailer cuts to a night scene, and Nicholson jumps over a fence, as John Huston's voice begins, "Mr. Gittes," then we see Huston (as Noah Cross), "You're dealing with a disturbed woman, who's just lost her husband. I don't want her taken advantage of." There is a cut to a love scene as she bandages Nicholson: she touches his face with a fingernail, they kiss; followed by a cut to him slapping her around, then grabbing her: "The truth! I said I want the truth!" He knocks her into a table, and there follows a series of action shots from various scenes, accompanied by high tinkling piano music. The trailer groups the shots together to form a bracket syntagma instantiating

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Nicholson's search for the truth. He gets a hairpin out of his wallet; someone's feet shuffle into slippers, a door opens, Dunaway looks fearfully at something, he ducks down at night, thugs shoot his tires, a car drives into a tree, a man with a camera is seen in extreme close-up, an iris shot through the camera's lens shows an older man and young girl, Nicholson pushes the door further open, a flashlight shines out at him, a fight, the gun falls to the floor, we hear shots. An Asian couple helps Faye Dunaway and the girl into a car as drums dominate the score, and we see an extreme close-up of a hand picking up eyeglasses in a handkerchief, followed by a shot of Nicholson leaping onto the running board of Dunaway's car at night and a man shooting at them, then by a shot of the neon lights of Chinatown seen from a moving car. This segment represents the trailer's climax, again folding the film's various action scenes (presented out of sequence) into the dynamics of the relationship between the two principals (presented sequentially), but establishing that the two aspects of the story, action and romance (formerly separated by a binary "grid" treatment), are beginning to merge. We see that either the relationship or the detective's search for truth (or both) provokes Nicholson himself to violence. The chronological presentation of characterization and relationship elements privilege this aspect of the story over its suspense elements.

The trailer ends on the film's final scene: we see a policeman shoot after Dunaway's car, then we see the car in the distance, as music swells (throbbing violins). Nicholson stands with two cops, one of whom says "Go home, Jake. I'm doing you a favor." We see Nicholson looking miserable. The other cop walks him away. The detective joins them, puts a hand on Nicholson's back, saying "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown." The narrator summarizes, "You get tough. You get tender. You get close to

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each other. Maybe you even get close to the truth." We see the remaining crowd, then the narrator concludes, "Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway in a Robert Evans production of a Roman Polanski film, Chinatown," as the scene fades to a high shot of the street and the music throbs to a close.

This trailer makes clear the effects of a focus on characterization within the rhetoric of story, in that it can be seen to frame its assumptions about what audiences want from the story within the domain of identity and relationships. The narration's continual use of the second person reinforces this by encouraging audience identification with Jake's hard-bitten detective. Paraphrasing Leiss, Kline and Jhally, the trailer attempts to frame for audiences such questions as "what does the film mean in terms of the type of person I am and how I relate to others?"—assumed to be answerable by a viewing of the film. The emphasis on audience identification assumes a parallel between audiences of 1974 and the cynical *noir* detective figure revived in Jake, a parallel about which Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner have remarked,

> Indeed, the entire *film noir* revival of the mid-seventies can be said to instantiate the emerging reality of political liberalism—that it was powerless against the entrenched economic power blocs of the country.... It is in the tragic figure of the *noir* detective, determined to do right yet incapable of changing the basic realities, that the liberal ideal, with all of its well-deserved self-pity, finds its strongest expression at this point in time.[21]

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The trailer's assumptions that the film's representations of romantic, rather than social or political powerlessness, are what will most attract audiences to *Chinatown* are exemplified by the primacy of the trailer's chronological, and thus more coherently displayed, romantic plot elements—while its political exposé elements are either withheld or veiled by being presented non-chronologically. This emphasis reasserts Hollywood moviemaking's primary narrative thrust on the formation of the couple—even though it's clear from the trailer that in this film (as in many of its *noir* predecessors), the couple is also destroyed. Through a focus on characterization within the rhetoric of story, *Chinatown* is generically reconfigured or assumed to be of interest more as a tragic romance than as a political thriller—demonstrating again, as did the trailer for *The Graduate*, how appealing to particular kinds of assumed audience interest in *story* information can posit a viable (in promotional terms) *genre* identity for an ambiguous or puzzling film.

In the transitional era, films dealt with topics formerly avoided by Hollywood in an effort to bring audiences back to the big screen following the drop-offs in movie attendance at the close of the studio era. Trailers both promoted these changes by calling attention to movies' newly provocative themes, and yet were challenged to promote elements that sometimes seem to have been considered unpromotable, whether because of subject matter, style, or other kinds of innovations. What these trailers tell and what they withhold through the rhetoric of story is thus revealing as to trailer-makers' assumptions about the kinds of epistephilia audiences had, as well as to the ideological dictates of promotional rhetoric, during a crisis time in Hollywood (and the culture).

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These "troubled trailers" begin to tease out some of the problems of audience address during this era, which were sometimes less immediately evident but nonetheless present within the broader sample (as indicated by the typical case study). Historical contradictions, increasingly visible within films themselves during this era, often tended to be brought into relief within the trailers not by a faithful promotion of the films' innovations, but by the inadequacy of the trailers' ability to represent new paradigms of cinematic representation, resulting in quirky mismatches and mixed messages about the film in question.

Within the rhetoric of story this is borne out by, in the case of *Bad Day at Black Rock*, the trailer's emphasis on the enigmatic aspects of its narrative in such a way that a pointed contemporary political drama resembles more an updated Western (one in which clearcut knowledge about good and evil is no longer to be found). In the case of *The Graduate*, the trailer's emphasis on story causality results in a generic labelling that doesn't seem to have promoted the aspects of the film that were eventually responsible for its appeal, while in *Chinatown*, the emphasis on narrative characterization also contributes to generic reconfiguration—the trailer treats the film's resurrection of *noir* conventions in a way that subordinates the political to the romantic. Regardless of which aspect of narrative these trailers promoted, the transitional era's new emphasis on provocative themes and innovative stylistic techniques tended to be recuperated into an increased focus on subjectivity and character. The sense classical era trailers provided that films depicted an external reality that could be known (however circumscribed its representation on the screen) had shifted, along with trailers' assumptions that audiences

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might fulfill their desires for knowledge and experience of an external reality through film stories.

The Contemporary Era: Story Knowledge Simplified

An *Entertainment Weekly* article from 1993 surveyed trailer producers to determine the "Ten Tricky Commandments" of trailer production, a document which backs up my overall contention that story, never the strongest of the three rhetorical appeals in any era of Hollywood production, recedes even more in the contemporary era:

> --Let the Stars Shine. ...Big surprise--name brands sell...
> --No Stars? Go for the Gut.
> --Use All the Best Jokes. ...A few honest laughs are all a film needs to make a nice dishonest trailer...
> --Choose your Sex Appeal. Don't try to sell a "woman's movie" to men, or vice versa...
> --Less Is More--and Least Can Be Most.
> --Score with the Music.
> --Get a Whole Lotta Love.
> --Cut to the Chase. Who needs a story line when you've got killer visuals?...
> --Never Say Die. How do you promote a movie about death? Go into deep denial...
> --Test, Test, Test. Even a great trailer can't save a clunker... "Sometimes," says [Aspect Ratio's Bob] Israel, "the truth just shines through."...[22]

These formulas correspond fairly accurately to prevailing popular wisdom about trailers, which audiences complain often lie by giving an overdramatized, overspectacularized or oversexed version that doesn't seem reflective of the movie at all. This popular press assessment of the guidelines contemporary trailer producers utilize in marketing films serves to introduce a deeper consideration of the codes at work in the

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contemporary movie market to transform narrative film stories into ads for themselves. Persuasive strategies of concealment, selective positioning, emotional appeal, and even dishonesty, are clearly indicated. Contemporary production practices, which as a recent *Daily Variety* article noted, are increasingly driven by marketing departments,[23] result in high concept-oriented trailers that frequently synthesize appeals to genre, story and stardom in broad strokes, delivering finely crafted yet apparently simple trailers. Graphics are streamlined, narration is punchy, and there is an increased reliance on sound effects and music to heighten the sensory assault of the images.[24] The "troubled trailers" selected to exemplify this era's promotional challenges with regard to the rhetoric of story are all striking in the ways they demonstrate assumptions about audience interest (or lack of it) in relation to both story knowledge and historical knowledge, thus revealing "who they think they're talking to." Enthymemes in contemporary era trailers consist less frequently of narratorial pronouncements, but even without such hyperbolic verbal statements, assumptions can be discerned that follow the pattern of the incomplete syllogism (where something assumed by the trailer's visual, aural or verbal argument to "go without saying" can be problematized).

The trailer for Terrence Malick's maverick second film *Days of Heaven* (1978), a lyrical story of a love triangle in the rural midwest in 1916, is a striking early example of the contemporary "mini-movie" mode. Within rhetorically minimal but visually rich terms, the trailer's appeal to story interest is dominant, and in particular, its evocation of the film's narrative world outweighs considerations of characterization, enigma or causality. Moreover, the rhetoric of story promotes a second narrative in the process of

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promoting the film's narrative world, that of the American mythology of manifest destiny. It is a fascinating "troubled trailer" which overtly comments on extracinematic "narratives," which other contemporary trailers also tend to do, if more obliquely. The film's lyrical scenes are excerpted, accompanied by a voice-over narration which initially renders the story a history lesson. Malick had made his name in 1974 with *Badlands*, a film which pioneered the use of non-omniscient voice-over narration by featuring the diary of its fifteen-year-old female protagonist. The second film continues this tradition, employing a narration by a secondary character (also a young girl). The *trailer* backs up its selections from the film's meditative imagery with a narration (predictably male) that is at once more traditional and overtly historical than that of the film and yet itself breaks with most trailer uses of voice-over—as if the originality of the images demanded that the trailer narration follow the lead of the film narration and respond to the visuals on more than one promotional register. The trailer also breaks with tradition by virtually eliminating dialogue.

Demonstrating the contemporary era's more sophisticated ability to promote elements of a film's visual style than earlier eras, the trailer's opening shots are samples of the film's striking cinematography (for which Nestor Almendros won the Academy Award), constituting a bracket syntagma set to music and characterized (as is the entire trailer) by rhythmic and graceful movement, whether of the camera or its mechanical, agricultural or human subjects. This beginning sets the scene for the remainder of the trailer. We see a storm-clouded sky over a prairie, a seagull flying, Richard Gere walking in a field, clouds overhead, and a group of adults and children standing on a riverbank holding period umbrellas.[25]

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The narrator begins, "In 1916, America was changing." A sun sets over a river, then an industrial furnace door opens to its fiery innards as Gere shovels coal inside. Red-hot steel columns tumble out of their molds. In an exterior shot, a man with a megaphone in a chaotic crowd of people and horses yells, "I need stockers." There is an extreme long shot of a train on a trestle with an expanse of blue sky behind, as the narrator adds, "Expanding." As we see from behind a caravan of vehicles and huddled people heading across the plains, the narrator goes on, "Holding a promise of new prosperity." We then see two men in suits and pince-nez sitting incongruously in a field of grain, one looking through a telescope, the other seated and working an adding machine at a table upon which also sits a microscope. Another long shot shows just the wheat waving in the field, as music continues. A low-angle shot of railroad tracks shows men and women running to hop on a train, as the narrator continues, "People heard the call." As a couple of children and young men from this group scramble and fight, the narrator goes on, "It made them restless."

The choice of shots and the voice-over function to generalize the film's narrative specificity: shots which—in the film—belong to scenes integral to the construction of its narrative meanings (coal-shoveling, hiring, train-hopping) are extricated in order to serve a historical enthymeme: trailer audiences are assumed to desire knowledge of the historical backdrop of this film in order to better experience its narrative world. In extracting Almendros's lyrical images from their context and assigning them this generalizing voice-over, the trailer reduces this imagery to *National Geographic* clichés of Americana (the red-hot steel ingots, the waving wheat fields, the train...) This historical enthymeme ("These are people and activities you will see in the film. They

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represent how it was in America in 1916.") contains a missing term, the assumption that these represented historical subjects, the "restless people," (the only ones of whom we see are itinerants and entrepreneurs) are all able to better themselves in one classless, equal-opportunity response to "America ... changing, expanding."

A steam tractor billows smoke, driving towards the camera. Period seeding planes soar up and away from the moving camera, and from another angle we see Sam Shepard watch them from the aforementioned table in the field as they fly up behind him, and we see his character's house in the background. "Empires were being built in the wide-open spaces." In the same diegetic space, a man on a horse points instructions to two men in bowlers, suits and dusters, as a tractor moves screen right. Another shot in evening light shows several tractors moving screen left. An extreme long shot shows four tractors silhouetted against the horizon at sunset. A low angle medium close-up shows Sam Shepard gesturing by waving his arm slowly from screen left to screen right, as the narrator continues, "And so they came." An extreme close-up of wheat being cut by a threshing machine is followed by a long shot of the horse-drawn threshers in the field, moving screen left. A long shot shows a locomotive slowly moving screen left, followed by a closer angle as a hobo jumps off. In a high angle long shot of the top of a train car, we see Gere and Brooke Adams resting. She's leaning back on her arms, looking contemplative. The trailer returns to the shot of the other train car moving left, and another hobo jumps off. A long shot shows many people running across the field with luggage, as the narrator adds, "Each one boldly, blindly searching..." We see a succession of close shots of the three principals: Shepard looks out at the horizon, Adams puts the back of her hand to her sweaty forehead, Gere looks out, Adams and Gere kiss in

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a field, then they are seen playing under a wagon in another scene; "... for the days ..." the trailer cuts to an extreme long shot of Adams and Gere standing near the house on the field as she strokes his cheek; "... of heaven."

In this segment, the generalized historical world of the previous section is gradually intermingled with the film's narrative world: Sam Shepard is identified as the story's "empire builder," and Richard Gere and Brooke Adams as some of the "restless people." We see their arrival and assume they will be working for Shepard (who wears upper-class clothing).[26] The itinerants and the agricultural entrepreneurs are then merged by the narration, as images of Gere, Adams and Shepard are all associated with the activity of "boldly, blindly searching for the days of heaven," enthymemically asserting that both capitalist and worker are looking for the same thing, and then positing that thing as personal happiness. In Leiss, Kline and Jhally's "lifestyle format" of product advertising, "People, products and settings of consumption are harmonized around a unified impression."[27] In this section, the film's narrative world is promoted as a sort of idyll potentiality building undefined happiness, collapsing at once historical and narrative specificity in apparent deference to assumed dictates of the film's meditative visual style, which like a lifestyle ad, is assumed to have the power to persuade audiences, with minimal (story) information (let alone star or genre information), to see the film.

The trailer then continues its move away from the generalized shots of folks enacting manifest destiny to a more pointed focus on the three principals and their narrative situation. A series of shots of people walking in the field at sunset fades to a shot of waving wheat followed by a cut to an extreme long shot of a man in the bottom of a river bed with a gun and badge, who points. The narrator returns, "Days of Heaven, ..."

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as we see a reaction shot of Gere as if he sees the man pointing at him; and the narrator continues, "the story of a man who had nothing," as we see Gere run away through the bushes, a shot of the policemen in a closer angle galloping towards the camera, then the horses galloping by the camera in medium shot, splashing water on the lens. Adams props herself up in a makeshift tent (a gun serves as a tentpole) and looks around. Gere runs through trees with a gun, and we next see a close-up of his feet, followed by a shot of a cop on a horse with his gun drawn riding towards the camera. As we see a close-up of Adams looking horrified, the narrator continues, "the woman who loved him, ..." and we get a series of shots from other scenes. Gere looks at Adams in close-up, followed by a long shot of them running, beautifully backlit. She's wearing nightclothes and it's evident they've snuck off for a tryst. We see Shepard walking along the "widow's walk" of the house, looking down, apparently worried, as the narrator continues, "and the man who would give her everything ...." The camera returns to the couple, seen in the distance by the house, as Adams walks away from Gere and the narrator concludes, "for a share of that love." In a reverse angle, she walks towards the house, backlit.

The shift in the trailer's narration away from the generalizations of the narrative of manifest destiny to more specific information about the film's love triangle—including its class dynamics—has not been accompanied by any other stylistic or graphic shift in the trailer's format, instead imparting information about the plot dynamics primarily through the same kinds of assemblages of subtle, lyrical imagery as those brought to the service of the earlier historical segment. As in the previous section, the film's narrative details are overwhelmed by generalized visual impressions. The narrative world of the film is thus linked with the manifest destiny rhetoric in a way that creates a trailer-

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specific equation between the love triangle, the film's "traffic in women," and the acquisitive thrust of westward expansion.

In the final segment, Shepard gets up from lying in the field, and says, "You know what I thought when I first saw you?" There is a medium close-up of Shepard looking (perhaps at her), as his line continues in voice-over: "I thought if only I could touch her, that everything would be all right." During this line, the camera cuts to a close-up of Adams's legs as she removes black stockings, seated on a bed. The narrator returns, "Three people whose destinies join briefly in a dream," during which the trailer cuts to a medium shot of Shepard, as he turns out the light, followed by a medium close-up of Gere outdoors, looking up at the night sky in profile. The camera pans around and away from him and we see from behind that he's looking up at a lit window in the house, and as the camera pans, the narrator concludes, "but how long could it last?" The trailer freezes on this long shot of Gere (out of focus) looking at the window (which is in focus). The music crescendos as credit titles appear in yellow over the image.

The final segment asserts the preeminence of the love triangle, ending with a question ("how long could it last?") that, unlike most other questions asked in trailers, does not function enigmatically—essentially, we do know the answer to this rhetorical question. Instead, the trailer assumes we are interested in the play of "three people whose destinies join briefly in a dream," the narration here completing its about-face from its earlier assumption of audience interest in the historical specificity of the film's narrative world to positing the three principals' joining as "a dream," an idyll set outside of historical time. It thus expresses an assumption about the audience's desire to know that ultimately privileges "the 'eternal present' of Hollywood film, the appearance that

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everything occurs in a nonhistorical space."[28] The promotion of the film's narrative world entails addressing the troubling historical specificity of the film's images by assuming audiences prefer them boiled down to a classless "search for happiness," which is constructed as a fitting backdrop for a film that has been configured as a timeless rural "upstairs/downstairs" story. While the trailer is clearly at ease with positioning the film's visual artistry as a key selling point (unlike most transitional era trailers), the images serve a story the film itself does not tell, here policing the boundaries of appropriate Hollywood narrative by drawing one apparently wider ("America...expanding") but ultimately narrower ("three people whose destinies join briefly in a dream") than the film would appear to warrant. The trailer's striking amalgamation of story with the historical draws attention to the possibility that such rhetorical strategies are present in less obvious ways in other contemporary trailers.

The *Thunderheart* (1992) trailer, for Michael Apted's film in which an Indian FBI agent (Val Kilmer) who has denied his cultural heritage is sent to a reservation to solve a murder,[29] is a well-executed example of the way contemporary trailers privilege appeals to audience interest in story (specifically plot enigma and characterization) while integrally incorporating appeals to interest in genre and stars as well.[30] The trailer represents a familiar contemporary trailer mode (initiated, as discussed earlier, during the transitional era): the "mini-movie." In the "mini-movie," a film's narrative trajectory is chronologically presented in sophisticated high concept terms (such as extracted dialogue that succinctly states the film's clear and simple premises interspersed with judiciously placed close-ups and action clips in rapid montages, often significantly featuring "grids")

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usually with the aid of a voice-over narrator and/or a strong musical accompaniment, while key plot resolutions are withheld. While typical in many ways of contemporary trailers, this one qualifies as a "troubled trailer" by virtue of the complexity with which it attempts to present issues of individual and cultural identity in the process of promoting a film.

The *Thunderheart* trailer begins with a prologue of evocative, silhouetted and slow motion scenes of what appear to be Indian ritual activity (but which are actually shots of a murder taking place). This is followed by the narrator setting up the film's premise—"They sent him to a foreign land...in the middle of America...to uncover the truth"—and a dialogue scene (an FBI briefing) that is intercut with aerial shots of the southwestern landscape and clips of Kilmer driving to the reservation. This opening "grid" lays out expository information and samples the film's visual texture at the same time. The rest of the trailer is textured by an expanded "grid" (where several scenes are reprised more than once) which alternates between a number of short action scenes and one-line dialogue scenes ("Look, it's the Washington Redskin," "You must be the Indian FBI," "They're not my people," "You had yourself a vision"); one longer dialogue scene played for comic effect and to establish the relationship between Kilmer and Graham Greene (the Native American sidekick); various shots of Native American rituals and mysteries and the main character's spiritual visions; and scenes which lay out more familiar images of detective thriller enigmas (where'd the body come from, who did it, etc.).

The trailer privileges the identity struggle of the "Indian FBI" protagonist, who is shown being ridiculed by the people on the reservation as the narrator informs us that

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"Now, to find the truth, he must face the mystery within himself." Such alternations shape an enthymeme which links the issue of spiritual identity to the murder mystery. The syllogism, "He's got to solve a murder. At the same time, he's got to find himself," contains a missing term: "So his quest is not so different from yours." The rhetoric is based on the assumption that character identification interests the audience more than cultural knowledge, but that both of these can enhance audience interest in the murder plot's resolution (while prominently displaying good old murder mystery codes for those who—in the PC-backlash of the '90s—can't relate).

The trailer tantalizes with scenes of spiritual realities (which are often indicated to be the Kilmer character's visions), and uses sound overlaps (a staple of trailer rhetoric by the 1990s) to further problematize the physical reality of its images. Scenes of the Indians who used to roam the canyons where police helicopters now cruise are intercut with Kilmer's multidimensional quest for truth. The drama of the juxtaposition and equation of two kinds of mystery is evoked with a sound overlap of fellow FBI man Sam Shepard speaking over a shimmering long shot of a circle of Indians in traditional costume: "We can't get suckered into that. We're here to take our man and go home." As he completes the line, the trailer cuts to a shot of him opening a Coke. This equation, drawing on shared assumptions about Coca-Cola as a signifier of both modernity (vs. tradition) and American-ness (the FBI man drinks Coke in a "foreign land... in the middle of America") in addition to the aforementioned Western generic conventions, presents an updated image of the lone lawman conquering the (narrative) space of the Other. The trailer creates a dynamic impression of Native spirituality (through editing in one particular series of shots: we see a Native American leaping away from gunfire; a shot of

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a woman telling Kilmer that "he can shapeshift...into different animals,"[31] and then a shot of Kilmer whirling to see a buck leaping away into the bushes.

The relationship between the film's message of finding one's identity by following one's heart and the quest to solve a murder mystery is condensed into an attractively promoted visual drama in this trailer. Touristic images of the Other and the land are counterposed with a protagonist who is attempting to come to terms with the Other within himself, amplifying the sense of mystery as a mystery of identity (in the sense of a quest for roots) which, I would suggest, is subjectively experienced by contemporary audiences without regard to ethnicity. Hollywood's familiar ideological project of de-specifying cultural histories is here turned on its head: this trailer posits cultural specificity as the key to finding identity by juxtaposing a condensed presentation of the film's fairly standard cop thriller suspense codes with Native American spiritual imagery.

This trailer's use of Western iconography, partly by its reversal of the standard Western hierarchy of cowboys and Indians, asserts that cultural roots are spatially localized and locatable within a multicultural American landscape. As Robert Burgoyne has claimed, *Thunderheart* itself uses the discourse of the Western to critique conventional Western ideologies, and bring the "genre memory" of the Western to bear on a "war myth that can be transposed and reenacted from the perspective of the margins."[32] Burgoyne's discussion of the film explores the ways narrative and generic conventions are evoked in order to be subverted or reinscribed in a re-visioning of nationalities and community in the contemporary U.S. The trailer participates in this reinscription, albeit in a minor way: rhetorically privileging audiences' identification with the character's search for identity, opening with juxtapositions of the Western landscape

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with the U.S. Capitol to dramatize the contradictions the character feels, and using a shorthand narrative trajectory of the character's ethnic awakening.

Conventional Hollywood representations of Indians seem resolved or "healed" by the trailer's representation of the character's quest for identity, even as such conventions are maintained (in the comic relief "helper" figure of Graham Greene as tribal policeman, for example, whose charm is real but whose role as sidekick is generically familiar in its de-subjectivization). In the trailer, all these elements are couched within the principal promotional trope of withholding the solution to the film's mystery. The trailer teases the audience with the promise that the film, through Kilmer's character, will "uncover the truth," a truth which involves more the actualization of identity than it does crime-solving—and even less any resolution of the economic and cultural crisis of that "foreign land... in the middle of America" which is the source of Kilmer's disavowal.

By privileging audience identification with both aspects of Kilmer's search, this trailer assumes audience epistephilia in the form of desire for self-knowledge. This incorporates (like the *Bad Day at Black Rock* trailer) knowledge of the secrets of the Other—now figured as an Other within—as well as (like the *Fury* trailer) knowledge as the path to truth: here, not "the Truth," but a truth. With its emphasis on the equation between solving the mystery and Kilmer's internal transformation, the trailer implicitly assumes that "truth" can only be a partial one, a truth of subjectivity and identity—not exactly a ready "hook" on which to hang a film's promotion for a mass audience. Like the earlier examples of the rhetoric of narrative enigma, the trailer calls attention to other stories than that of the film it promotes, illustrating by the desires it assumes on the part of audiences some of the values of different kinds of cultural knowledge according to the

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contemporary Hollywood film production industry. And although the *Thunderheart* trailer in many ways (like the film) wouldn't be considered typical, its construction of the search for knowledge as a personal quest does, in the end, typify the epistephilia contemporary trailers ascribe to audiences: one which is overwhelmingly centered on self and the individualization or privatization of social discourse.

The trailer for *Men in Black* (1997), Barry Sonnenberg's popular genre-bending science fiction comedy about a squad of cops who police extraterrestrial aliens, typifies the contemporary era's seamless integration of the three rhetorical appeals (to genre, story and stardom). Essentially, however, it relies more on story information than genre identity to sell the film, while promoting also Will Smith's post-*Independence Day* (1996) star turn. Like many contemporary trailers, it falls into several "acts," which in this case are structured to privilege audience interest in the film's narrative causality. It moves from teasing audiences with enigmatic images of what the "men in black" do, to addressing the question of whether Will Smith will join up with them, to watching how he joins up, to celebrating what it's like to be a "man in black," and finally, summing up with a high concept punchline the trailer's description of what the "men" do. It incorporates titles and other graphics as well as a narrator, in addition to a heavy use of sound-overlaps and non-diegetic dialogue as de facto narration. Typical of blockbuster high concept trailers of the late '90s, it demonstrates the extent to which many such contemporary trailers have evolved into reconfigured versions of the classical era's highly layered promotional messages (and have moved away from the later transitional era's attempt to downplay the hard sell with a bare-bones "slice of the movie" approach).

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Where once there were wipes, now there are percussive sound effects. But titles and narration have become prominent again, in reconfigured forms. Yet by combining an appeal to audience interest in narrative causality (things happen) with a quintessentially postmodern attitude of irony (nothing matters), the trailer reveals some of the contradictions of the ironic promotional register of postmodernism, making it an interesting "troubled trailer" for the rhetoric of story.

The trailer's opening "act" begins with an unidentifiable generic trailer sound effect, like a "shoop," accompanying a light flash that leaves a white-on-black title, "MORE SECRETIVE THAN THE CIA," which then recedes. A car pulls up and the camera dollies in to a close-up of Tommy Lee Jones, whose voice is heard in voice-over, a de facto narration: "We work for a highly funded yet unofficial government agency." Jones is seen commandeering a border-patrol raid on a van full of undocumented aliens (who are revealed to be extraterrestrial aliens in human disguise). A big round blue and white light flash punctuates the trailer, receding and leaving another title: "MORE POWERFUL THAN THE FBI." As we see a tracking shot over a collection of alien weapons, we hear Tommy Lee Jones's voice again, "narrating" in an overly deadpan professional voice that recalls Vivian Sobchack's comments about "...the dull and flat language of reality ... often used to create credibility and lend a documentary quality to SF cinema:" "Our mission is to monitor extra-terrestrial activity on earth."[33] A graphic of a high-tech tracking device pinpoints a location, Jones points a weapon (in the border-patrol scene), an alien rushes him, gets shot, and goo explodes over the border patrolman.

A title flashes: "AND THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN," inaugurating the second segment. A sound overlap over this title begins, "You're all here

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because you're the best of the best. And we're looking for one of you." The camera dollies in to a room full of egg-shaped space-age chairs, and Rip Torn is speaking to the men who sit in them, including Will Smith, who laughs. Torn asks, "What's so funny, Edwards?" Smith: "I got *no clue* why we're here." Smith's laugh and line immediately position his character as (like the audience) a bemused (entertained) outsider. Next we see Jones and Smith in a two-shot in a hallway as Jones says, "I want to get some coffee, you want some coffee?" and opens a door to a coffee room, in which we see over his shoulder from Smith's point of view a group of 2-foot salamander-like aliens drinking and spilling coffee. Jones asks, "How ya doin, fellas?" "Hey Jay." "You guys getting along all right?" "Yeah." Will Smith, watching, says, "All right, I'm in." The juxtaposition of Jones's casual cop competency with the outlandishness of the aliens is both funny and intriguing (in that they are not necessarily "bad guys"), and audiences, assumed to identify with Smith, are at this point also "in," i.e., assumed to be recruited to see the film.

Another flash is followed by a title: "THEY ARE THE MEN IN BLACK," opening the trailer's third segment. A machine removes Smith's hand-prints as we hear Jones's voice in expository voice-over: "From now on, you will have no identifying marks of any kind. You are no longer part of the system." We watch as the birth certificate and all computer records of Smith's character are deleted on a computer screen. As we see an extreme close-up of sunglasses being put into a tailored jacket pocket, Jones's voice-over says, "We are the men in black." The two walk up to a door in natty black suits. We see each of the two smartly put on his sunglasses in successive medium shots, as we hear Smith's voice-over, "You know what the difference is between

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you and me?" We see Smith with his sunglasses on: "I make this look good." Smith, as the *Black* man in black, thus layers a cool factor into the film's characterological and star dynamics, and the moment serves as a comic aside to African-American audiences, assuming and asserting (through the rhetoric of stardom) the film's special appeal for them while also amusing whites (a feat of which Will Smith's prior box office success had proved him capable). Paradoxically, the trailer asserts that all audiences can "be" the "few good men"—at the movies.[34]

In a pawn shop, a set of gun racks mechanically flips over to reveal alien weaponry. Jones: "Series four, de-atomizer." Jones hands Smith a large gun. "Now that's what I'm talkin' about." (Smith's line, with its inclusion of a hip African-American catchphrase, adds another aside to that portion of the film's assumed audience.) From Jones's point of view, he then hands Smith a tiny gun, disappointing him. From another scene, Smith shoots the tiny gun at a truck, which explodes, and Smith flies through the air from the gun's kickback and lands on a car windshield, breaking it. We hear Rip Torn in voice-over: "Aww, it gets better," a line of extracted dialogue that serves as a sort of aural wipe, transitioning the trailer to its next "act." This third segment, with its figuration of "cool" and its inclusion of the size joke, reinforces the film's eponymous masculinity as hyperbolically smooth yet paradoxically threatened (to become a "man" one must lose one's identity and be assigned a small, powerful yet destabilizing weapon), thus promoting the film's fittingly contradictory, '90s definition of manhood.

A space ship or meteor lands on a truck at night, and Rip Torn, viewing a sophisticated screen with graphics and multiple images of the ship's landing, says, "We had an unauthorized landing somewhere in upstate New York." Smith (in medium shot),

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comments wryly, continuing his role in the trailer as a commentator able to step outside the narrative trajectory, "Aw, that can't be good." We briefly see the film's mechanical memory-erasing device as a transitional image, followed by a high angle shot of the two men from Smith's point of view, with Jones standing in a pit. "I don't suppose you know what kind of alien leaves a green spectral trail and craves sugar water, do you?" Smith (again, wryly): "Uh, that was on Final Jeopardy last night." Jones gets on the phone: "... We have a bug." We see a very frightening large alien in a pit with its jaws open menacingly (hardly the sort of "bug" one would think would elicit Jones's blasé tone), and each man removes his sunglasses from his pocket and puts them on. Both Jones and Smith[35] are endowed with attitudinal postures that are empowering to audiences within the trailer's rhetoric of story vis-à-vis the scarier aliens. Jones's world-weary professionalism (which articulates the film's humorous send-up of classic science fiction characters) and Smith's clowning outsider persona invite audiences to enjoy the pleasures of vicariously nailing aliens more than those of fearing them.

A narrator begins, "This summer, ..." we see a side angle of both men in a car, Jones says, "Fasten your seat belt," (implicitly continuing the narrator's address to the audience) and huge jet engines are seen at the back of the car as it drives through a tunnel, and Smith screams in close-up. The car goes up the side of the tunnel wall to skirt around other cars. The narrator continues, "Columbia Pictures and Amblin Entertainment present, ..." We see a man on a morgue table, and his face comes off as steam emerges from behind it like a door lock opening, and Smith steps away, shocked. Inside the man's face we see a tiny alien seated in a cockpit. Linda Fiorentino, standing by the morgue table, says, "I knew it. This is an alien, and you guys are from some government agency,

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trying to keep it under wraps." There is an insert shot of the alien pilot in his face/cockpit, then we see Smith in close-up, with Fiorentino also in the frame, as Smith protests, "Naw, sh----." With this segment, Will Smith's wry clowning becomes a literal, if humorous, ironic disavowal of any authenticity or truth to his identity as a "man in black."

We see Jones's face as he holds up a metal pen-sized device, then the device alone, and a flash to Jones's identificatory title. Jones then is seen pointing a big gun in the pawn shop: "I'm gonna count to three." The pawn shop proprietor, seen in close-up, says, "He's always crazy. Why don't you get a massage or take a cruise." Jones is seen shooting. The trailer flashes to white, and we see that the man's head, apparently blown off, has been shrunk into his body and proceeds to re-grow and pop back out. Jones: "Three." The man says, "Do you have any idea how much that stings?" Smith is seen in an ersatz reaction close up, tilting his head and holding the pen-like device. We see a title and hear the narrator identify "Will Smith." Next we see Smith in medium shot, "What the hell are you?" followed by a close-up of a man, who says, "Your world's gonna end." He blinks—but only his irises close, not his eyelids. We see titles: "In a new film/ from the director of The Addams Family, and Get Shorty."

A space ship moves towards a big stadium in high angle, and the two men are seen with flame throwers. Jones is seen walking, getting a gun out, and then both aim their large guns. The space ship explodes as it flies through a monument, and crashes at the feet of the two men, who watch as the crash comes closer. We see a montage of shots of the men's hands reaching inside jackets for guns, then cocking their guns, and kicking a door open and we see the two silhouetted in a doorway. The narrator says, "Men in

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Black." "Protecting the earth from the scum of the universe"—a tagline that encapsulates the film's comic hybridization of science fiction and Dragnet-like police genre films. The doorway recedes and becomes a graphic "I" forming part of a larger graphic spelling "MIB." We see Smith in medium shot, low angle, holding a big gun, who (now a fully engaged "man in black") says, "Step away from your busted-ass vehicle and put your hands on your head." There is a reverse-angle shot of a large bug-like alien flopping down from above, roaring, and a light flashes to a title: July 2nd, with the studio logos and the website address listed below. The music comes to a Dragnet-like close.

The trailer's trajectory of segments that configure the film's story as a narrative of Will Smith's "joining up" while highlighting his ironic apathy about his position right up until the final clip creates an interesting dynamic within the rhetoric of story (inflected by the rhetoric of stardom). His ironic attitude (prior to the final "busted-ass" line) is assumed to be appealing to audiences (who are assumed to want something new and sophisticated in science fiction[36]), even as the story is promoted as a process of his coming to care and to enlist. In the context of a trailer which also displays the film's hip and comic, postmodern, generic hybridity and sophisticated special effects, the character/star's attitude contributes to the trailer's articulation of some of the contradictory ideological dimensions of postmodern popular culture. While the character is shown being convinced to become a "man in black" he is simultaneously shown not to care or believe in much of anything.

Thus Smith's ultimate display of a hyperbolic police-state posture (coded as humorous) as he stands holding his (now big) gun and confronting an offscreen intergalactic outlaw begs the question of what, indeed, is there to believe in? And the

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trailer has answered this question with its tagline—"Protecting the earth from the scum of the universe," which figures an intergalactic (and multiracial) police state where questions such as "how do we determine who the 'scum' is?" are elided by the naturalization of a multiracial fascism against extraterrestrial aliens—all, of course, "in fun."[37] This "troubled trailer" ends up assuming that audiences (including, significantly, African-American ones) desire a story which subtextually asserts that police states might be okay, if the job can be carried out with an appropriately arch sense of humor.[38] At the least, the trailer demonstrates that it is always worth examining these forms of "postmodern fun" within popular promotional discourses, for what kinds of attitudes they assume of audiences.

These contemporary examples demonstrate that the rhetoric of story in the high concept era has moved away from the classical era's problem of promoting stories that couldn't quite be told, as well as the transitional era's problem of promoting cinematic innovations that weren't yet understood. There is more leeway in the regulation of cinematic storytelling in the contemporary movie market than in the classical era, and in spite of the stylistic repetitiveness of much studio product, overall there is arguably more stylistic experimentation within the current generation of Hollywood filmmakers (which now, as was stated earlier, must be said to include most of the "independents") than there was even in the "Hollywood renaissance" of the early seventies.

But this examination of studios' textual assumptions about audience interest in story knowledge, and thus other kinds of knowledge, within these "troubled" trailers points to another kind of problem or lack within the promotional discourse of the high

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concept era: a paucity of faith in the audience's desire to know anything in particular. In an era of apparent cinematic abundance, as these "troubled trailers" hint, the things audiences are assumed to want from films have dwindled to: an evocation of a historical world that reverberates back to an "eternal present;" a search for truth that can only ultimately inform about the self; and an institutionalization of apathy that potentially veils more overtly political forms of solipsism. Obviously I am being polemical. These three contemporary trailers, comprising some of the more extreme examples of the "cracks" in contemporary promotional discourse, can perhaps only serve to point obliquely to contradictions and issues that are worth examining in the broader body of trailers, in order to continue to ask "who they think they're talking to" in our own era.

The rhetoric of story in trailers can thus be examined to decipher some of the kinds of assumptions Hollywood promoters have made about audiences' interests in film stories: assumptions both about what kinds of stories audiences want and what kinds of knowledges audiences desire to gain from them. In the process of *advertising* stories, trailers *tell* stories about what the trailer "narrator(s)" think audiences want. These stories, the domain of ideology, selectively display and withhold elements or aspects of film narratives, textually demonstrating in each three minute trailer some indications of Hollywood's image of its audiences' desires.

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[1] These strictures are cited in Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s*, New York: Doubleday, 1990, 281-292.

[2] It was thus termed in the headline for a review in *Newsweek*, June 13, 1936, which praised the film's honesty, arguing that MGM "dropped all the formulas" and that the film "not only condemns lynching, visibly proving that the wrong man can be the victim of mob hysteria, but completely indicts the clannishness of communities where lynchings have occurred..." The review concludes, "Because of the integrity with which it presents the subject, *Fury* is one of the most praiseworthy films ever produced. Unmistakably, it shows the effectiveness of the motion picture for educational propaganda."

[3] Ruth Vasey notes that "[t]he PCA [Production Code Administration] had a policy of not approving stories that dealt with ethnic bigotry, on the basis that such treatments were 'provocative and inflammatory.'... The PCA would have perceived a story featuring the persecution of African Americans as 'inflammatory' to the point of being unthinkable, and indeed, such subjects were simply not on the studios' agenda." Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997, 137-39.

[4] Lang's director credit in the trailer was somewhat unusual for '30s trailers, evidencing the fact that his "imported artist" cachet was already of value with his first American film.

[5] The version I saw of the trailer at the UCLA Film and Television Archive was damaged, but appeared to be complete.

[6] Roffman, Peter and Jim Purdy, *The Hollywood Social Problem Film: Madness, Despair and Politics from the Depression to the Fifties*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, 130.

[7] Ibid., 127.

[8] In general, I italicize film or book titles named within trailer titles only if the trailer title itself does so, and I do not italicize them when they are part of trailer narrations. Trailers are not usually sticklers for bibliographic form.

[9] Hitchcock was reputed to have had creative control of most of his trailers, and although this trailer was made by the Warner Bros. trailer department (which after 1940 had a contract with National Screen as well but still produced trailers), we can assume that for the most part, Hitchcock made it. About the later Universal ones we know that Robert

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Faber was heavily involved, but even in those cases, as Hitchcock's assistant for 20 years, Peggy Robertson, put it, "You have to remember that every Hitchcock picture was 99 9/10 Hitchcock. It was always Hitch, and the trailers worked the same way." Michael Goodwin, "The Lost Films of Alfred Hitchcock," *New West*, April 1981, 87.

[10] The effect of this extra piece of footage (which I experienced, of course, differently than was intended, since I saw this trailer *after* having seen *Rope*) was striking: it was as if the extra scene, which was visually compatible with the rest of the film (except for its setting), pointed to the fragmentary character of the film itself, or indeed of any film. We are reminded that a film is a selective set of shots and scenes that tell a story, yet that the story is a thing unto itself which could have included other shots and scenes: the trailer teaches audiences to distinguish between a film's narrative discourse and its plot. I have since come across evidence that Hitchcock deliberately used his trailers to teach audiences more about his films. At the recent Hitchcock centennial celebration at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, "From the Hitchcock Collection," host Peter Bogdanovich introduced the trailer for *Psycho* by recounting his confession to "Hitch" in 1961 that it was not his favorite Hitchcock film, and Hitchcock's response. Hitchcock told Bogdanovich, "You didn't see the humor in it," and insisted that Peggy Robertson show Bogdanovich the long trailer for the film, which is narrated by Hitchcock in a very tongue-in-cheek way as he strolls around the set, and is accompanied by a playful television style music score that resembles the theme song for *Leave it to Beaver.*

[11] D. A. Miller, who writes from a gay perspective about the curious absence (even in critical discourse) of discussion of this aspect of the film, while the lesser transgression of the conceit of the "one-shot film" is considered the film's big rule-breaker, notes, "Though by their cursory mention of it critics seem to imply that the protagonists' homosexuality is as plain to see as its proofs may go without saying, homosexuality is in fact extensively prevented from enjoying any such obviousness not only, of course, by the famously hardass Production Code in force at the time of the film's making, which strictly forbade the display and even denomination of homosexuality, but also, more diffusely, by the cultural surround of legal, social, psychic, and aesthetic practices (the last including those of spectatorship) that tolerate homosexuality only on condition that it be kept out of sight." D. A. Miller, "Anal *Rope*," in Diana Fuss, ed., *Inside Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, New York: Routledge, 1991, 123.

[12] The *Variety* review notes, "It's definitely not for the kiddies," and recommends marketing it to "key situations where large groups of the morbidly curious can be attracted." The review makes a note of the film's backdrop of the Leopold-Loeb case on which Patrick Hamilton's play was based, remarking that the "theme of a thrill murder...is in questionable taste." (*Variety*, September 1, 1948.) Bosley Crowther's *New York Times* review also dances around the film's transgressive elements, chiding Hitchcock in his opening, "The fondness of Alfred Hitchcock for cinematic tours de force is admirable evidence of the agility and aggressiveness of his mind. But it is also a disposition which sometimes leads him to stick out his neck and place it, professionally

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speaking, in positions of evident peril. It is in such a delicate position that his neck now appears to be lodged as the consequence of his having stretched it in his new film, an item called 'Rope.'" Crowther also notes that "the emphasis on the macabre in this small story is frightfully intense," and calls Stewart's performance "limp and mopish."

[13] The trailer's emphasis on Tracy's entrance into town is cemented in the film's pressbook by print ads and other exploitation elements (such as a coloring contest using the picture of Tracy with his suitcase on the train tracks). Interestingly, the pressbook and ads also feature the fact that Tracy's character has one arm, which the trailer virtually conceals by using shots that deemphasize it.

[14] The trailer for *High Noon*, the quintessential '50s revisionist Western to which *Bad Day* is compared in at least one review (*New York Times*, Feb. 6, 1955), similarly refrains from characterizing its story in ways that might hint at the film's allegorical thematic of the Blacklist.

[15] Ryan, Michael, and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990, 20.

[16] *Boxoffice*, January 1, 1968, from *Boxoffice* Online Reviews (http://www.boxoff.com/classic.html)

[17] *Variety*, December 20, 1967.

[18] *New York Times*, December 22, 1967, 44.

[19] Ryan and Kellner, 19, 20.

[20] This mismatch is interesting—of course, the extent of the cult appeal of Nicholson's character could not have been known before the film came out, yet contemporary trailers rarely "undersell" heroic or star-making characterizations in the way this transitional era trailer does, perhaps because of the greater melding of star image and characterization in the contemporary era, a subject that will be explored in the following chapter.

[21] Ryan and Kellner, 83.

[22] Hruska, Bronwen, "The Trailer Hitch: Movie Marketers' Ten Tricky Commandments," *Entertainment Weekly*, December 3, 1993, 40-41.

[23] "With shrinking margins and rising production costs, studios are losing their appetite for making movies. And getting approval to make them is harder—and increasingly in the hands of marketing and exhibition execs." Christian Moerk and Claude Brodesser, "The 'OK' Corral: Admen, Exex Shoot it out over Greenlights," *Daily Variety*, Sept. 29, 1999, 1.

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[24] As a number of recent articles have noted (and my own experience backs up), trailers have become increasingly loud in recent years. See, for example, Bill Desowitz, "The Loud Debate over Trailers," *Los Angeles Times Calendar*, July 6, 1997: 1; and Paul Farhi, "Blockbusters that Thrill You to Deaf," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1998: A1; which both cite loud trailers as significant contributors to (if not scapegoats for, according to Desowitz) the trend towards louder movies.

[25] One indication that visual style and its sensory appeal were indeed key features of this film's promotional campaign is the tagline attributed to the film on the Internet Movie Database (source unknown): "Your eyes... Your ears... Your senses... will be overwhelmed."

[26] Unlike the *Casablanca* trailer, which while eliding historical knowledge and story knowledge does signal the break from historical to story-specific information via narration ("Against this fascinating background is woven the story of an imperishable love"), this trailer never really attempts to separate the two.

[27] Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 259.

[28] Ryan and Kellner, 83-4.

[29] While making *Thunderheart*, director Michael Apted also completed a documentary about Indian activist Leonard Pelletier called *Incident at Oglala*, textually manifesting the political dimensions of the kind of institutional frameup of Native Americans that the fictional film presents less overtly in its privileging of the suspense narrative. The trailer for the documentary evokes a drama of the truth revealed—and is less compelling than the *Thunderheart* one.

[30] Interestingly, like the other primary case studies of the rhetoric of story's appeals to audience interest in enigma (*Fury* and *Bad Day at Black Rock*), the *Thunderheart* trailer deals with conflicts that arise when a male outsider attempts to enforce the law in a community not his own. Also like the other two, it treats the issue of race or racism as well as the issue of American-ness. All of these films were made during times of national redefinition (the national crisis of the Depression, the Cold War, and the multiculturalism debates of the '90s), and all three appear to be liberal interventions in these contemporary issues or debates. As such, it's useful to compare the ways their trailers' respective promotions of story enigma assume audiences' desires for various kinds of knowledge.

[31] Interestingly, in the film, however, we see that she is pulling his leg—the trailer audience learns only after seeing the film that it, like Kilmer, has been suckered by its own willingness to believe the stereotypes, and that the trailer has traded on these audience-held stereotypes of Native Americans.

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[32] Burgoyne, Robert, *Film Nation: Hollywood Looks at U.S. History*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 47.

[33] Sobchack, Vivian, *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 154.

[34] I would argue that this also includes women in an identificatory capacity, not just as those who *desire* the "men." The very generality of the film's concept of "men in black" seems to paradoxically allow, rather than exclude, women's identification, a notion the film itself backs up by including at the end a woman as one of the "men."

[35] It is perhaps an interesting footnote (albeit for the rhetoric of stardom) that the two stars' names are almost as generic as the virtually nameless characters they play, since it reminds us that a significant element of stars' promotion, especially in the classical era, was a reassignment of names and erasure of former identities that at times resembled this film's narrative erasure of identity.

[36] In this regard the studio may be deliberately attempting to follow in the footsteps of the successful *Mars Attacks* (1996).

[37] The tagline and trailer also essentially elide the film's differentiation between law-abiding and outlaw aliens.

[38] Walter Benjamin's point about fascism representing an aestheticization of politics might thus perhaps be reconfigured for the postmodern era, wherein the emphasis is not so much on aestheticization as on an overlay of ironic "fun" as a way that texts such as this trailer can veil their own reactionary subtexts. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt, ed., New York: Schocken, 1968, 242.

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Chapter Six

The Rhetoric of Stardom

Trailers that promote films on the basis of the rhetoric of stardom make assumptions about what audiences desire from stars. Stars function differently in trailers than they do in most other facets of film promotional campaigns (with the partial exception of television spots), and of course differently than they do in the film itself. The rhetoric of stardom in trailers is the most ubiquitous of the three rhetorical appeals, since the mere representation of a star's image in a trailer constitutes a strong promotional message about that star, so almost all trailers draw on the rhetoric of stardom. At the same time it is the most particularized of the appeals, since promoters appealing to audience interest in a film's stars are banking on their very specific characteristics to draw audiences back into the theater.

The ubiquity of stars and their centrality to film promotional discourses of all kinds makes the analysis of how stars elucidate who trailermakers "think they're talking to" when they appeal to audience interest in stardom more problematic in many ways than the previous two appeals of trailer rhetoric. Do stars function primarily as signifiers of sexuality and/or provokers of sexual desire in trailer audiences? Or is their promotional status as commodities linked more to their particular capacity to evoke intertextual associations among films as signifiers of genre, of fashion, or simply of their own offscreen personae, than to their sexual appeal? The specific goal of this chapter and the case studies that follow is to interrogate the commodity status of stars, along with their facticity as historical and eroticized subjects, in relation to the ways stars demonstrate trailermakers' rhetorical constructions of movie audiences. In the process I

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hope to illuminate the "marriage of semiotic and commodity theories" that Barbara Klinger thought the analysis of such cinematic "epiphenomena" as trailers could achieve.[1]

Movie stardom and the social ramifications of its various mythologies and typologies have been discussed at length in both popular and critical literature on film; numerous writers have considered seriously various ways in which the star system has naturalized audience interest in seeing particular individuals and character types on the screen.[2] Over the years, promotional discourses have reflected the codification of both typologies of stereotypes such as elaborated by Edgar Morin and mythologies of stars' uniqueness and individual artistry such as characterized by Richard Dyer. As with the rhetoric of genre, promotional appeals to star familiarity and differentiation operated concurrently. In the contemporary era, stardom has outgrown the consciously-crafted parameters of the studio era star system to encompass new and ever more pervasive and extracinematic realms of fame and celebrity, so that in recent decades the boundaries between movie stardom and other personality-influenced segments of the public sphere such as politics and big business have eroded. Indeed, the extent to which "star" personality is enfolded in public discourse in the current social world has been heavily influenced by the pervasive culture of movie (and television) stardom.[3]

Scholarly interest in star studies, also, has increased, and recent scholarship has addressed questions of stars' commodity status as well as their performative agency in ways that both complicate and elucidate stars' function as textual features of films. As Danae Clark points out,

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> Since actors appear in their commodity form as textual representations, evidence of an actor's work seems to be recorded on the screen in terms of performance, thus causing a confusion between dramatic expression and human labor. This performance is, in turn, inextricably linked to character, narrative, and publicity images. Because of such linkages, film scholars have often conflated the star with the star image or with filmic representation... actors are alternately equated with the image and superseded by the image.[4]

Clark's argument, that a focus on the star-text relation "reinscribe[s] the inequities that exist behind the image by refusing to examine the material conditions out of which this signfication is produced," opens up an important consideration of the labor history of Hollywood actors, one which as she argues, most text-centered film histories tend to obfuscate. [5] My *audience*-centered textual study, however, seeks to uncover the rhetorical significance of stars as promotional "hooks," and by doing so, to facilitate audience detachment from the assigned identities implied by "who they think they're talking to." In such an approach, the star-text relation is crucial, because many of the ways promotional discourses are used by producers to conceal the material conditions of actors' labor from audiences can be read in promotional texts themselves.[6]

Stars as the source of rhetorical appeals within trailers are inevitably entwined with genre and story appeals, and the interactions among the three appeals are multiply determined. In this regard, the scholarly literature on stardom includes a number of attempts to reconcile the respective weight of the signifying systems of stardom, narrative

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and genres within Hollywood film history. Here Dyer's formulation of the multiple determinations of the meanings of stars as a "structured polysemy" stands as a general but accurate description of these interactions. Elaborating on stars' polysemic impact, Dyer attributes to star "vehicles" significatory characteristics comparable to genres, in that "as with genres proper, one can discern across a star's vehicles continuities of iconography ... visual style ... and structure."[7]

In an article rebutting Dyer's formulation, Andrew Britton proposes that "the existence of a genre, *and of a relation between the genres*, is a prior condition of the [star] vehicle."[8] He focuses on ways ideological contradictions visible within stars' performances (as opposed to the stars' extracinematic publicity) are inseparable from those contradictions that are constitutive components of genres; thus he emphasizes the "complementary relation between star personae and between the genres, and ... the dialectical interaction between genre and vehicle." He argues:

> The star in his/her films must always be read as a dramatic presence which is predicated by, and which intervenes in, enormously complex and elaborate themes and motifs, and thereby refers us to a particular state of the social reality of genre, and of the relation between the genres.[9]

Following Britton, I would argue that the star in his/her *trailers* must also be read as predicated by genres and their interrelationships—since stars are explicitly represented within the diegetic framework of the film itself, and only implicitly in the context of their

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extratextual publicity (in which other kinds of information and narrative features are more heavily in play).

In an interesting take on this interrelationship between the star system and genres, Christine Gledhill posits that the star system itself works on a register akin to a cinematic genre, and, more particularly, that "stars function as signs in a rhetorical system which works as melodrama."[10] She elaborates:

> Melodramatic excess exists in paradoxical relation to the form's commitment to the real world. The star system works with similar paradoxes. If the excessive moment in melodrama infuses ordinary characters and relationships with excitement and significance, stars represent ordinary people whose ordinary joys and sorrows become extraordinary in the intensity stardom imparts to them. If melodrama, while confirming the boundaries of social convention, derives its energy through the villain's willingness to break them, the star system promotes model domestic lives irradiated by exciting hints of scandal.[11]

Indeed, Gledhill writes, "[t]he first promise of the star is access to the personality itself. At the same time the visibility of the star system and the operation of fictional and generic structures emphasize the economic, social and cultural forces that make such access an illusion. The excess of stardom represents a melodramatic response in the face of this dilemma."[12] We might ask, then if a trailer's use of the rhetoric of stardom results

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in a melodramatic trailer, regardless of the genre of the film itself? The melodramatic features of star-oriented trailers will be explored further in the case studies that follow.

Virginia Wright Wexman also defines stardom's place with respect to genre as well as to story within Hollywood film by invoking different "regimes of verismilitude," noting that

> stars can be understood as representing a means by which Hollywood could invest the *generic verisimilitude* of its stories with the *cultural verisimilitude* of the major players who took part in these stories. Through practices like typecasting and personal publicity, Hollywood used the star system to give its productions a greater—and qualitatively different—aura of realism.[13]

This formulation begins to get at a key difference between stardom and genres or stardom and stories with regard to their impact as rhetorical appeals within promotional discourses: namely, the star's indexical relationship to the real world, which in Wexman's terms, contributes to cinematic realism in ways that generic and story registers cannot.

In the classical Hollywood era, the star system's interaction with story—film narrative—was even at times constitutive of the story itself. Kathy Klaprat's case study of stardom as a market strategy uses the example of Bette Davis to make the point that movie advertising functioned not only to differentiate a particular star from others, but that the ads were "also conditioning the audience to expect a specific plot structure."[14]

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That is, star marketing strategies fed back into the structures of the stories themselves, in that "if the protagonist was constructed by the traits and actions of star differentiation, then the narrative was structured by the star. Structuring a narrative around a star played a crucial role in the production process by providing a framework to standardize and reproduce a star's pictures."[15] Thus audience expectations both for stars and story structures were constituted and fed by the interactions of the two appeals in publicity discourses. Noted earlier, the prevalence of elements of the rhetoric of stardom even in classical era trailers where the rhetorics of story or genre dominated is elucidated by Klaprat's argument. But the extent to which stars could overwhelm story or generic considerations in Hollywood films diminished with the end of the studio era, as Hortense Powdermaker notes in 1948, citing two articles in *Variety* that indicated a new trend away from star-driven formulas, under the headlines "Stars Ain't What They Used to Be," and "Hot Stars with Cold Yarns Give Hollywood Lukewarm Profits."[16] Transitional era trailers (those made between 1950 and 1975) indeed evidence confusion as to how stars fit into the selling of films. Nonetheless, in the contemporary era's high concept driven market, stars are again seen to potentially overwhelm story elements. As Justin Wyatt explains:

> While Hollywood has always privileged the presentation of clearly definable, consistent characters, high concept relies even more strongly than previous Hollywood films upon character typing, rather than character exposition. ... Star persona reinforces this character typage by limiting the boundaries between which a character may be defined. Stars

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> are, to some extent, predicated on style—a particular set of physical characteristics, demeanor, and attitude. This emphasis often overwhelms the character being portrayed so that the character is identified more strongly with the star than as an integral part of a unique story.[17]

These complexities of the "structured polysemy" of the star system within Hollywood film as a whole are duplicated within the general rhetoric of stardom in trailers. But since the theatrical trailer is a specific, self-contained type of cinematic/promotional text, we can again apply Anthony Wilden's communicational model of logical typing to somewhat clarify the rhetoric of stardom's operations with respect to the other two rhetorical appeals. By assessing the logical types of the rhetoric of stardom, story and genre, we can theorize these relationships in trailers more accurately, mapping their interactions while acknowledging that they are not merely symmetrical or oppositional categories.

Since Hollywood trailers virtually always represent stars as part of cinematic narratives, which in turn are virtually always represented as belonging to genres, the rhetoric of stardom in trailers is of a lower logical type than either the rhetoric of story or the rhetoric of genre. Anthony Wilden's discussion of logical typing notes that the lower the logical type, the higher the level of organization—the more systematization and semiotic freedom within the classification.[18] This characterization is borne out by the Hollywood star system's greater level of individualization and specificity than the other two rhetorical appeals under discussion: as previously noted, the rhetoric of stardom is the only one of the three forms of appeal that relies on a feature of the film that possesses

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an indexical relationship to the social world. Furthermore, stars implictly bring to their representation in trailers an association not only with the corpus of their prior films and the typologies of all the characters they've played, but also with all of the extratextual knowledge that Hollywood promotional and publicity mechanisms have imparted about them. This is a more systematized and semiotically dense kind of information than a trailer's invocation (in two to three minutes) of either story types and details, or generic features.

The conventions of the rhetoric of stardom are nonetheless folded into the conventions of the other two rhetorical appeals: particular qualities of stars may be promoted, for example, in a trailer that also promotes a film's narrative enigmas within a framework of familiarity with the film's genre. As Wilden notes, this imbrication is crucial to analyzing phenomena which are of lower logical types. Thus, in Wilden's discussion below, I have substituted film specific terminology in order to make his statement explanatory of the specific communicational system of movie trailers:

> Since the code [within a given trailer] of the class ['stars'] is a subset member of the class ['film narrative'], and since both are members of the class ['Hollywood films belonging to genres'], every ... phenomenon must be dealt with both in terms of its own level of logical typing and in terms of the higher synchronic levels of logical typing which make it possible.[19]

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The rhetoric of stardom thus rests on the foundation of the conventions described in the foregoing chapters. Stars can either be called into service within a trailer to support appeals to story or genre, or highlighted as the trailer's primary appeal, in which case story and genre appeals recede but their conventions still tend to provide the superstructures of the trailer's signifying system (since in the Hollywood system, stars are part of stories, which fall within genres).

Stars are thus a crucial factor of the entire signifying system of trailers and the goal of this section is to ascertain, through rhetorical textual analysis, how the representation of stars in trailers enables us to understand how the Hollywood production industry sees its audience(s) and their desires. While (as noted) stars are featured in virtually all trailers, this present discussion will center on those where the rhetoric of stardom is the dominant appeal. Furthermore, although the word "desire" in relation to the spectator is a heavily loaded one within the irrevocably psychoanalytically-inflected culture of film studies, I will concentrate here on an analysis of trailers' rhetorical assumptions about audience desires for various types of cinematic pleasure and knowledge in the context of a social history in which gender is but one of a number of social categories about which such assumptions are made. Nonetheless, when the focus is on stars, any discussion of visual pleasure must address issues of gendered subjectivity and sexual desire. Trailers, as core illustrative texts of Hollywood's "economy of desire," demonstrate how inchoate audience yearnings for specific stars are reconfigured by the industry into the desire to spend money at the movies.

Like the rhetorics of genre and story, the rhetoric of stardom within trailers is founded on a core contradiction. Here, the contradiction is the need to bring stars closer

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to audiences so that they seem real and accessible for audience identification (enhancing audience desire to *be* the star); and the simultaneous need to keep stars magically and mythically distant from audiences' everyday lives in order to perpetuate their allure and aura (enhancing audience desire to *desire* the star). Because the eroticized desires invoked within the rhetoric of stardom are inflected by sexual difference, this contradiction is moreover built upon all the extracinematic contradictions of the representation of sexual desire and gendered identities in twentieth century popular culture. This chapter attempts to address ways in which these broader contradictions are visible in trailer texts which display ideologies of gender identity and desire within the rhetoric of stardom and through enthymemes that indicate "who they think they're talking to."[20]

The indexical basis of the rhetoric of stardom is key to understanding these dynamics within trailers. In an article furthering his seminal study on stars, Dyer calls attention to indexicality as a guarantor of stars' authenticity, an authenticity which nonetheless contains a built-in instability, since, of course, the extratextual star publicity and "behind-the-scenes" glimpses of the real life of the star are not unproblematically authentic (as Gledhill also notes, above) but rather participate in what Dyer calls "a rhetoric of authenticity."[21] This rhetoric of authenticity ensures that when stars are displayed, the dynamics of the screen's surface (which include an implied "beneath-the-surface") are visible by virtue of stars' known indexical ties to the world external to the film. The visible fact of the star's existence in the world, however much we think we know or don't know about him or her, can invoke an awareness of both the cinematic apparatus and the extratextual world of the specific film.

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In trailers, even as stars can be seen in terms of typologies and stereotypes, they are endowed with a greater level of textual specificity than any of the features of the other rhetorical appeals. As we watch a trailer, the images we see of the star are endowed with all our past associations of him or her, perhaps more significantly than our apprehension of what the star's doing in this film that we haven't yet seen. In the trailer, the star is distanced from his or her character within this individual (still hypothetical) film, and is understood in large part on the basis of our intertextual knowledge. Yet while trailers remove the stars' images from the film's story continuity (albeit not from the film's genre), they generally also don't provide audiences with much extratextual information about their lives; thus the stars exist in a kind of limbo, suspended between their past star personae (and roles) and their present characterological one. This limbo is a space of tension and oscillation. Since the trailer gives us a sumptuous widescreen, Dolby-ized and THX'd image of the star yet denies us much of the pleasure in identifying with him or her "in character" in the present film which we haven't yet seen *and* also the pleasure of insider knowledge that other forms of star publicity provide, our desire to see "more" of the star intensifies: trailers are indeed teasers. And the locus of their "tease" within the rhetoric of stardom is precisely this play at the edge of indexicality that separates and joins the cinematic apparatus and the social world.

Indexicality has often been discussed in film studies as the (albeit always problematic) bottom line of film's truth claims. Thus Bill Nichols, in his study of documentary, points to the Hollywood star system as evidence that indexicality alone "is not enough to produce the impression of a unique historical referent reproduced as image."[22]

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> A photographic image of Lauren Bacall, Mary Tyler Moore, Madonna, or Ronald Reagan will enjoy an indexical bond with its subject regardless of whether it is a candid shot of the subject in his or her own backyard or a highly crafted depiction of the subject in the thick of a performance.
>
> Fiction generally and the star system specifically depend on this effect. But the movement remains centripedal. When we recognize a star appearing in a new role, we take it less as documentary evidence of how he or she occupies a historical space and more as an anchor and reference point from which we depart, moving into the specificities of this narrative and its imaginary world. The indexical bond remains, but its evidentiary value is sharply discounted. ... Our attention flows inward, to comprehend and interpret a story set in *a* world rather than outward, to understand and assess an argument about *the* world.[23]

While this is true of the level to which the star's indexicality is discounted in the spectator's experience of the feature film, with promotional discourses it's a bit different. The promotional world of which trailers are a part is a realm which relies on the "rhetoric of authenticity" that Dyer characterizes—appealing neither to true authenticity nor to the centripedal pull of the fiction film. What results is a demimonde, another zone between the storied world of the film and the historical world. It constitutes the world of "Hollywood"—that promotional realm where audiences, stars and filmmakers alike play roles, and where there is a different set of expectations as to truth claims than either

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fiction or documentary engender. This promotional world is a known entity yet it has no geographic or even conceptual boundaries. It's a culturally determined site, a shared commonplace: everyone knows what you mean when you say "Hollywood." And wherever stars physically reside, they are the denizens of Hollywood along with the invisible technical crews and semi-visible above-the-line production personnel such as directors and writers (who also sometimes appear in trailers).

Like "the narrative of Hollywood," which the rhetoric of story exploits, shared knowledge of the promotional "*world* of Hollywood"—considered as the dwelling-place of the stars—is a hook trailers use to enhance the audience appeal of films on the basis of the rhetoric of stardom. Trailers usually don't give us more information about the actual world of Hollywood; rather they rely on our preexisting knowledge of it to amplify the indexical connection of the stars to the social world—here mythologized and naturalized as this promotional world of Hollywood wherein audiences too are called upon to play their part by patronizing the movies. Thus, in trailers, the industry relies on the audience's sense of stars' indexical relation to the historical world *stopping* at this demimonde and not going further—to knowledge of the stars' real working conditions (*pace* Danae Clark) or alienation within the industry for example (unless such details fit the category of scandal, which Dyer sees as enhancing the rhetoric of authenticity). Like the kingdom of Oz, Hollywood is a place where ordinary people who might otherwise work and live right alongside us are endowed with spectacular, fantastic characteristics. The contradictory axis of the rhetoric of stardom, wherein trailers appeal to audience desire to feel close to stars (to be them) yet also appeal to their desire to consider stars out of reach and larger than life (to want them), constitutes a dizzying ride akin to Dorothy's

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trip through the tornado. Of all cinematic texts within popular American film, trailers are perhaps the most embedded in the contradictory pulls of this promotional world of Hollywood, a "place" where closeness and distance fold into each other like some impossible Escher puzzle.

Of the three rhetorical appeals in trailers, it is thus the rhetoric of stardom that potentially has the most power to invoke audiences' desire to be physically close to what's on the screen, even as this rhetorical appeal provides the most vivid reminders of audiences' distance from what's on the screen. And the rhetoric of stardom's core contradiction is built on its oscillation, which in specific instances is in turn inflected by gender and sexuality. This contradiction can be expressed in terms of oppositions such as:

closeness/distance

identity/difference

identification/desire;

and it forms the basis of my analysis of how the rhetoric of stardom communicates Hollywood's assumptions about audience desires within trailer texts, and promotes certain ideologies of desire and identification. Thus, in relation to trailers, I would agree with Gledhill, who suggests that the "genuine paradox" of the star-audience relation is the way these contradictions play out more often than not along melodramatic registers:

> Stars represent "gestures" at identity, engineered largely to entice audiences to consume narratives for the price of a cinema seat in the hope of access to the image in its illusory wholeness and coherence. At the heart of this cine-psychoanalytic argument is the delusion of the "photo-effect"

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> reduplicated in the star. For, paradoxically, the star, more overwhelmingly present than any actor can be to a theatre audience, is also not, and never can be, there for the audience to cinema. This poignant "presence in absence" lies at the heart of the desires stimulated by stardom. But it is a genuine paradox in which presence can be understood not as simple mystification but as an assertion by the melodramatic imagination in the face of absence.[24]

As previous chapters have elaborated, romantic and sexual desires are not the only desires that Hollywood ascribes to audiences. The mechanics of the star system relies heavily on them, however, as Richard de Cordova has noted: "The star system, and arguably twentieth century culture in general, depends on an interpretive schema that equates identity with the private and furthermore accords the sexual the status of the most private, and thus the most truthful, locus of identity."[25]

Even in trailers, where extratextual stories of star lives while present implicitly are usually not visible, star images connote the realm of eroticism. But since not everyone in the audience is "supposed" to be erotically attracted to all of the stars, other kinds of attraction are also called upon, particularly identification. The job of the theatrical trailer to maximize the potential audience for a given film is complicated by the fact that, assuming a heterosexual audience (which evidence suggests most Hollywood promoters did and do), each star is assumed to be only either desirable or identifiable to part of the audience at any given time. The ideological and economic function of the rhetoric of stardom is thus to appeal to a range of possible desires for, and identification with, a

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given star. Obviously, audiences receive the promotional messages of the rhetoric of stardom in a number of ways, many of which might be oppositional to their industry function. But as the trailers demonstrate, assumptions are made as to culturally appropriate forms of desire and identification, while "inappropriate" sexual desires or cultural identifications are implicitly rejected. Even while addressing the largest possible audience, the rhetoric of stardom assumes that audiences *desire* stars who represent *sexual* difference (male/female), while they *identify with* stars' representations of *cultural* sameness ("Even though they're beautiful, famous and rich, they're like you"). This is an ideological complement that conceals the more culturally threatening possibilities of stardom's appeal for audiences: sexual desire for stars of the same gender, or identification with stars who represent cultural difference (apart from the homogenous "differences" available within the promotional world of Hollywood). [26]

The ideological function of the promotion of desire for and identification with stars feeds into the rhetoric of stardom's maintenance of a contradictory balance between inviting audiences to feel close to stars and sustaining the mystique and allure of their distance from everyday life. With their powerful indexical ties to the promotional world of Hollywood, stars are thus the industry's most effective salespeople, and beyond the immediate assumption that audiences will desire or identify with particular stars in particular films, the rhetoric of stardom in trailers demonstrates the industry's assumptions that stars can stand in for the pleasures of moviegoing itself. The following section on the conventions of the rhetoric of stardom points to ways in which this closeness/distance oscillation functions to promote moviegoing by promoting stars—followed in turn by an example from each of the three eras of how the rhetoric of stardom

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typically operates. The later case studies of "troubled trailers" explore some more overt examples of ways trailers assume audience desires and forms of identification within these terms, pointing to limit cases that elucidate some of the more contradictory aspects of the rhetoric of stardom within each of the three eras of Hollywood sound film: classical, transitional and contemporary.

Conventions of the Rhetoric of Stardom

Trailers which primarily promote films on the basis of the rhetoric of stardom demonstrate assumptions that audience interest in the film rests more heavily in its stars than on either of the other two rhetorical appeals—although as discussed, appeals to interest in stars generally rely on (or are couched within) the other appeals as well. While the ways the three rhetorical appeals interact vary from trailer to trailer and from the classical to the contemporary era, the primary ways that stars function within trailers to promote moviegoing as a whole can be characterized as relatively consistent across the eras. Trailers rhetorically assert both the desirability and the identificatory value of stars. The enthymeme of the rhetoric of stardom as a whole comprises an assertion that, regardless of the individual star(s) being promoted, stars are at once *like* audiences, possessing familiar and identifiable characteristics, and *unlike* them, in their celestial distance and dazzling unattainability. The missing term here could be expressed as: "Whether you want to be these stars *or* have them, you can—at the movies." Audience interest in stars is usually assumed to take the following three forms, each of which has its own conventions: stars in their mythic or spectacular aspect (that is, stars in relation to their own image and star quality); stars in intertextual relation to other stars or to their

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appearance in other films; and stars in relation to the institution of cinema (that is, as guides to or exemplars of the workings of the star system and the moviemaking apparatus). Each of the three eras of Hollywood production treats these three aspects of stardom in particular ways yet each era's trailers entail their conventions. Trailers that appeal primarily to audience interest in *star quality* generally make assumptions about audience desires relating to questions of self and identity; those appealing to interest in stars and *relationality* tend to address questions dealing with the Other; those that appeal to interest in the *star system* make assumptions about the role of the individual within social institutions. And, within each of these enthymemic frameworks, stars are called into service to promote moviegoing as a whole.

The common denominator of those trailers that promote stars in mythic or spectacular terms (the first principal convention of the rhetoric of stardom) is the trailer's focus on a *quality* with which the star is associated in him or herself: the star as icon—or in the more precise terms offered by S. Paige Baty, as potential icon. In her study of the Marilyn Monroe phenomenon in mass culture, Baty characterizes the icon as a more institutionalized unit of mass-cultural signification than the familiar Peircian definition of it solely in terms of resemblance: "Icons are culturally resonant units that convey a familiar set of 'original' meanings and images." She differentiates these from mass-cultural units of signification she calles "mediaphemes" which are "quick encapsulations; once a story, person, or event is translated into mediapheme form, it ricochets through the channels of mass mediation with ease. Mediaphemes may become icons, but they rarely do; they tend to last as long as a story, issue, or person is 'hot.'"[27] For example, in Baty's terms, obviously Marilyn is an icon; but familiar film "bytes" such as Arnold

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Schwarzenegger saying "hasta la vista, baby" in *The Terminator* or Sharon Stone crossing her legs in *Basic Instinct* would be considered mediaphemes that participate in the potential construction of Schwarzenegger and Stone as icons. Trailers and key art for Hollywood films are prime sites where these mediaphemes are offered up and through which they circulate, ever hopeful of helping to confer iconic status on the stars they figure. And such mediaphemes, like icons, refer not only to their "object," a historical and historicized identity, but also to "the economy within which [that object] is produced and circulated."[28]

The overriding assumption of trailers that promote star quality is that audiences go to movies in order to derive pleasure from individual stars themselves (rather than watching or being reminded primarily of their interactions with other stars/films, or even getting a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the star system in action). They emphasize either the visual or aural pleasures associated with the star as spectacle, or the narrative pleasure of recognizing a beloved star's familiar personality or qualities in a new but familiar film story. The pleasures of seeing movies for the sake of stars, such trailers imply, lie in the opportunity for audiences to experience either dazzlement by the star's spectacular presence, or the pleasure of increased knowledge of (and thus closeness to) the star that the film will provide—or both. Trailers may assume audiences want to either be (identify with) or have (possess sexually) a given star because he or she is so much like them. Or, they may assume audiences want to be or have the star because he or she is *not* like them and represents something they can only wish to be. Many trailers make both kinds of assumptions at once.

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The trailer for *Good Neighbor Sam* (1964) highlights the quality of its star Jack Lemmon assumed to be key to audience interest in him: lovability. A series of titles written on a graphic of a billboard provides a call and response for audiences, as scenes from the film are seen below: "Who do contented cows moo for?/ Who do discriminating ducks quack for?/ Who do sophisticated sheep baa for?" The film's title appears after each question, followed by another title which is simultaneously read by a narrator, "The sincere story of a clean-living family man." Over another scene a title reads, "Lovable Lemmon in one tight squeeze after another." Clips illustrate the humorous "tight squeezes," relying also on conventions of the rhetoric of genre and showing Lemmon apparently caught in romantically compromising situations in the familiar "clean-living family" milieu of the American suburbs of the early '60s. Lemmon, whose previous films included *The Apartment* (1959), *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), *Irma La Douce* and *Under the Yum Yum Tree* (1963), was a star who in 1964 connoted—at once—wholesomeness, innocence, sexual repression, and a sort of free-floating anxiety. This trailer's assumption that his qualities could be summed up as "lovability" (and that audiences loved him) demonstrates a way in which the rhetoric of stardom indicates the ideological centrality of a star to the zeitgeist of the time. By assuming audiences "love" Lemmon, the trailer appeals to both men's and women's desires for their romantic yearnings and/or escapades to be accepted ("loved") in an era in which sexual repression was a stifling factor of the social fabric, promising that such acceptance can be found at the movies.

The trailer for *St. Ives* (1976) opens with its narrator stating, "Charles Bronson *is* St. Ives," and continues, "He'll bet on anything. Even his life. St. Ives. A go-between

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who knows the places ... to find the people ... who have the answers. As the stakes go up, the odds go down. He's *clean*, he's *mean*, he's a go-*between*." Although this trailer is also an example of the promotion of narrative characterization within the rhetoric of story, it emphasizes less the film's plot than those qualities associated with Bronson in the '70s: sexiness, risk, rugged action, the conjunction of decency with vigilanteism. A *Shaft*-like score and '70s split screen techniques underline the trailer's focus on Bronson, following the opening equation, which relies on previous audience knowledge of the Bronson persona to engender interest in the plot. The trailer's juxtaposition of "cleanness" and "meanness" makes sense to audiences familiar with Bronson's supposedly justified *Death Wish* vigilanteism, and such qualities appeal to audience desires either to win by breaking the rules (by identifying with Bronson) or to possess someone at once dangerous and heroic (by desiring Bronson himself)—moviegoing, the trailer implies, enables such contradictory fantasies to be fulfilled (to be "good" *and* "bad"—like *Shaft*).

Star quality is most precisely emphasized in trailers that promote films *about* stardom, such as the trailers for *Jolson Sings Again* (1949), *Man of a Thousand Faces* (1957), *Lenny* (1974), *A Star is Born* (1976) or *The Greatest* (1977). Such meta-star rhetoric often layers assumptions about audience interest in stars onto the hyperbole of biopic trailer conventions within the rhetoric of genre, giving the trailer an opportunity to remind audiences of their own prior participation in a star's success. The narration of the *Man of a Thousand Faces* trailer reminds audiences that "the world, fascinated and thrilled, called him [Lon Chaney] the man of a thousand faces." The *Jolson Sings Again* trailer is a typical sequel trailer, also evoking audiences' prior interest in its subject

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matter with titles: "the most eagerly awaited event in the history of motion pictures... Be sure to be in the audience when – Jolson Sings Again!" A shot of the audience is seen under the final title. Such overdetermined appeals to (proven) audience interest in star quality serve to emphasize the power of (certain types of) individual personality and identity—overwhelmingly those associated with showmanship—to draw audiences, who are assumed to want to see shows about stars that earlier audiences enjoyed.

Conflating stars with their characters is a fairly common convention of trailers that posit a quality or qualities of the star(s) as a film's primary appeal: the trailer for *Giant* (1956) conflates the two in a narration that begins, "Rock Hudson, born to tower over a million acres. He never stood so tall as when he crawled. Elizabeth Taylor, the gently bred bride who became a lady, Texas style. And James Dean. The star who became a legend. Who spoke for all the restless young, as no one has before or since, as Jet Rink, the eternal outsider of Giant." Clips from scenes that play under the trailer's narration are clearly selected to illustrate this narration, cementing the trailer's equations between the Hudson, Taylor and Dean personae and their characters in *Giant*. Similarly, the trailer for *Raw Deal* (1986), opens with titles that proclaim, "The system gave Schwarzenegger a raw deal. Nobody gives Schwarzenegger a raw deal." The trailer follows this up with a barrage of unconnected action scenes which communicate little about the film's story but layer on more evidence of Schwarzenegger's overarching omnipotent persona, the narration repeating towards the end, "Nobody gives Schwarzenegger a raw deal." In both these examples, the conflation of star and character serves to enhance the larger-than-life quality of the characters, endowing the fictional

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characters with a surplus sheen of star quality and unreachability that reminds audiences of the pleasures of stars, and thus moviegoing, as spectacles.

Indeed, stars are often assumed to draw audiences for their sheer spectacular appeal, whether as signifiers of glamour, action, musical performance, high art, or other cinematic elements. A quintessential example of the rhetoric of stardom's emphasis on the spectacular is the trailer for *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951), which recruits Hedda Hopper for an extended and specially shot scene in which she addresses the audience to theorize the nature of glamour: "... What is it? Who knows! I don't. But I do know we've had the It girl, the platinum blonde, the Oomph girl, the love goddess, sweater girls, yes and I know a couple of girls who've become stars for... more than one reason. But the other day I saw a motion picture called Pandora and the Flying Dutchman, starring Ava Gardner as Pandora. And for my money, Ava Gardner will be Miss Glamour of 1951." The trailer then shifts gears as it departs from Hedda to show clips from the film, switching as it does so to a booming male voice to back these up ("This is Pandora. She was bold and beautiful. Desired by every man who met her. ...") This trailer's buildup of Ava Gardner on two fronts, the extra- and intradiegetic, displays typical 1950s transitional era confusion as to how to appeal to *all* audiences, here literally splitting off the two appeals by bringing on Hedda to appeal to women's desire for glamour while the intradiegetic section's male narrator emphasizes her femme fatale appeal to men (and reminds audiences that women may qualify to speak authoritatively about glamour, but the male voice is required to preside over the film itself). Both appeals assume audience desire to place the star at a remove from the mundane and on a

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pedestal, where her unattainable perfection (for those assumed to want to be her) or unattainable sexuality (for those assumed to desire her) can shine beckoningly.

How much we see of a star is also at issue in trailers, and the *Pandora* trailer also provides evidence that, as with the rhetoric of story, a dynamic of revealing/not revealing contributes to the trailer's promotional value (and the star's appearance of unattainability). As trailer producer Jack Atlas recalled of this particular campaign, "Ava was really gorgeous in it and the man [an MGM executive] kept saying, 'Why not use more of her?'... Finally I said, 'If they want to see more they'll have to pay two dollars and buy a ticket.' You cannot lay everything down on the line in a trailer. You have to let the audience use their imagination."[29]

Other trailers also evoke glamour as an unattainable quality held only by stars, such as another Ava Gardner trailer for *One Touch of Venus* (1948), which displays a title reading "It takes a Venus to play Venus/ and here she is *in the flesh*!" A narrator adds, "Just look at her, the most beautiful girl in Hollywood with the perfect figure and face." A trailer for *Let's Make Love* (1960) announces, "Hold it! Here comes the girl who put mmmm into movies! Marilyn Monroe," later telling audiences, "It's all about what you can't get enough of. Fun, joy, and..." (a woman's voice interjects, in a clear attempt to appeal to the rest of the audience for whom Marilyn doesn't put the 'mmmm' in movies) "love, love, love." Glamour is cemented even more directly to the unattainable realm of the screen in trailers that promote their glamourous female stars in the same breath as promoting cinematic processes: the *Cobra Woman* (1944) trailer narrates, "[Maria] Montez, Queen of Technicolor!" while a trailer for *River of No Return* (1954) announces

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that Marilyn Monroe "celebrates Cinemascope," offering a final title that proclaims, "Made for each other/ Mitchum and Monroe in Cinemascope!"

In musical films, stars are also promoted as icons in musical terms, such as Frank Sinatra's characterization in the *Step Lively* (1944) trailer as "upbeat, downbeat, always a deadbeat," reminding audiences at once of his musical stardom and down-to-earth qualities; and as "the voice all America loves." Trailers for musicals tend to feature their stars as musical icons (within the rhetoric of genre), sampling their singing (and dancing) appeal during a long portion of the trailer which often, as in the case of the *Iceland* (1942) and *South Pacific* (1958) trailers, evokes the rhetoric of stardom almost more than that of the films' genre by their sustained focus on the star. The trailers for the Elvis Presley musicals incorporate segments sampling Elvis's singing with descriptions of other aspects of his stardom: the one for *Loving You* (1957) is "the first big modern musical built around the personality of Elvis Presley." The *Kid Galahad* (1962) trailer extols "that Elvis kind of action... of lovin'... of twisting, and that exciting Elvis kind of singing." Here, the star himself has become an adjective. In the *Jailhouse Rock* (1957) trailer a new element is layered in: a title proclaims "Elvis with a sock!" as scenes of fistfights are excerpted. Musical trailers literalize the crossing of the two promotional axes of distance and closeness: while the singing segments enhance the stars' allure and separateness from everyday life, the trailers repeatedly insert and alternate clips from dialogue scenes that tend to contradict this emphasis by presenting the stars "off their pedestals," regular folks available for identification, whether as figures of romance or action.[30]

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Male stars are frequently promoted in tandem with action genre cues, as in the Bronson and Schwarzenegger examples cited above. The trailers for *One-Eyed Jacks* (1961) and *Serpico* (1973) both use stills to freeze and codify their films' action scenes, serving to highlight the faces and bodies of the films' stars (Marlon Brando and Al Pacino respectively). Narration emphasizes that *Jacks* is "the first film directed by and starring Marlon Brando... A new experience in entertainment... A new tradition in excitement... A new concept in greatness... The one man/ The one story/ The one motion picture." In the *Serpico* trailer, stills and scenes are interspersed, as narration amplifies, "There are many sides to Serpico... The most dangerous man alive: an honest cop. The man. The book. The movie. The performance." (While this narration refers to the appeal of both the character and the star's performance, the trailer ultimately privileges the star over the character by its visual emphasis on stills of Pacino). The quality of each star is essentialized by being frozen in still images accompanied by clipped verbal encapsulations—monumentalizing each man without having to say much specific about them. Like the unattainable beauty featured in the glamour trailers, male action hero qualities are held up as ineffable and untouchable.

In the high concept era, action stars are rapidly codified as monumental and heroic icons by virtue of high concept films' facile linkages of genre and star cues: many action trailers tend to utilize similar types of shots of stars. In examples such as the trailers for *Air Force One* (1997) and *The Siege* (1998), the action star's face and body (Harrison Ford and Denzel Washington respectively) are first seen in monumentalizing slow-motion close-ups. But both of these examples also show the star in vulnerable situations (Harrison Ford is repeatedly grabbed, hit, kicked, and choked, and is shown

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with his hands up and crying, while Denzel Washington is shown almost being killed by a bomb blast) followed by excerpts of vengeful payoffs. The action hero's monumentality is tempered by their vulnerability and by these trailers' emphases (through story cues) on their "normal" human reactions—as things any of us might do under the extreme circumstances.

Star quality is associated with prestige in films that are promoted as high art. In such trailers stars may function either to make audiences feel closer, as when stars are enlisted to bring familiarity to a filmed version of a novel or play that might be unknown to many in the audience, or to stress distance, enhancing the prestige and allure of a film by emphasizing the artistry of stars' performances. In the classical era, stars were endowed with extra prestige by the prior prestige of the film property, such as the trailer for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1936) which links "a cast of 1000 headed by 15 great stars" to prestige signifiers not only of Shakespeare, but also of the film's international audience ("America Applauded! Europe Cheered! Asia Thrilled! ...") and its premium price ("... and paid $2.20 to see it!"), along with evocations of Max Reinhardt and Felix Mendlessohn. Similarly, the trailer for *Alice in Wonderland* (1933) visually emphasizes the film's innovative set design as it touts "the world's greatest story with the world's greatest cast," featuring an extended high-powered cast identification segment superimposed over long shots from the tea party, croquet and chess game scenes, to surreal effect. The trailer for *The Misfits* (1961) capitalizes on the prestige of its author Arthur Miller, assuming audiences know of his relationship with star Marilyn Monroe, and utilizes "art film" signifiers such as black and white stills of its stars and director (John Huston), and puzzle piece graphics on the film's logo. The narration refers to the

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film's three stars as "giants of the entertainment world" playing characters who are "caught in ... emotional crosscurrents" stressing the film's intensity and seriousness and the gritty realism of its performances. The *Trojan Women* trailer (1971) also showcases the theatricality of its cast, sampling performances by Katherine Hepburn, Vanessa Redgrave, Genevieve Bujold and Irene Pappas, and setting it apart from the spectacle-driven Hollywood epic by noting that it is a "Cacoyannis film." Contemporary trailers for "art films" similarly link their stars to various prestige signifiers such as Academy Awards, names of prestigious directors or classic book titles.

In trailers that focus on star quality, assumptions that audiences will want to be or desire the star enable a direct promotional link between a star image and the lure of the movies. By going to the movie, such trailers imply, you will be that much closer to being like or making love to the star whose qualities are promoted, while paradoxically, you are reminded that these stars' qualities are so hyperbolically set apart from the realm of average folk that the movies are the only place such qualities can be found. Thus through spectatorship, the rhetoric of stardom asserts, audiences can at once have their own familiar experiences validated and experience the impossible, through the figure of the star, whose iconic (or sometimes just "mediaphemic") characteristics often stand in for historicized questions or concerns about identity. These trailers make assumptions about what kinds of people audiences want to be and what kinds of lovers they want to have—as the following case studies will explore.

The second principal appeal and set of conventions of trailers where the rhetoric of stardom is dominant is a focus on star *relationality*. The common denominator here is

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that other stars or other star texts participate strongly in the trailer's appeals to audience interest in an individual star. By emphasizing relationality as a value, these trailers make assumptions both about how or where audiences assign the relative value of a promoted star(s) with respect to other stars, and about the kinds of relationships audiences want to have with others in general. These trailers name names, juxtapose faces with others, and at times create their own imaginary dialogues between stars, in the process positing notions about how relationships happen in real life as well as offering representations of perfected relationships that avoid all the messiness of real life ones.

Pairings, whether of the romantic or "buddy" variety, are often promoted. Typical of this type of appeal in the classical era is the trailer for *The Paleface* (1948), which announces in titles, "The news is spreading like wildfire!/ Paramount matches two terrific stars/ and when they meet/ it's dynamite!" A clip from an explosion scene follows, and then the two are introduced as "Calamity Jane Russell... and the only man tough enough to handle her, Two-gun Bob Hope." A narrator then amplifies, "Lamour was lovely, Goddard was glorious. But when Bob starts to nestle up to Russell, something new has been added. He's the dizziest dentist that ever yanked molar. She's the deadliest shot who ever stalked an outlaw. When they ride the Indian trail together, there's howls-a-poppin." An assumption of audience knowledge of the individual stars' qualities is folded into the trailer's emphasis on what will *happen* when the two meet onscreen, here trading on the "opposites attract" ideology of heterosexual romance. The trailer spells out that "something new has been added," implying an exponential increase in your moviegoing pleasure due to the screen union of these two stars.

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Less obviously, the narration in the trailer for *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), discussed earlier as Rick Altman's example of the promotion of multiple genres, links up its two romantic leads' characterological qualities: "Out of the fog steps a girl with a questionable past and a devil-may-care future. Out of the clouds drops a man with a propellor blade for a heart and an expert's eye for a pretty face." While this introduction to the pair reveals more about story elements than the stars, the remainder of the trailer presents frequent close-ups of Cary Grant and Jean Arthur, and their relationship is the only one among the film's many (typically Hawksian) relationships that is spelled out. Towards the end, titles remind us: "Combining the superb talents of two of the screen's brightest stars." The sparks depicted between the two stars are the trailer's strongest selling point, again (and of course typical of Hollywood film) positioning the primacy of heterosexual romance among the range of human relationships.

Transitional trailers continue to depict specific star pairings as momentous *events*, from *The Millionairess* (1960), which touts the combination of Sophia Loren and Peter Sellers by announcing, "when a woman looks like this, beware!" followed by strobe-like flashing cuts between images of him and her to the beat of drums; to 1967's trailer for *More than a Miracle* in which a narrator (not atypically, especially during this era) reads from a dictionary, defining "miracle," then adds, "Miracle: the magical beauty of Sophia Loren. Miracle: the fire and mystery of Omar Sharif. Together, they're more than a miracle." Again math enters the picture, in this case clearly delineating that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and equating their pairing with an event.

Contemporary trailers emphasize pairings even more than do earlier ones. The contemporary star system appears to rely on relational cues and the interconnection of

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multiple stars more than was the case in the studio era, when stars were the property of individual studios. While contemporary trailers seem more frequently to integrate the rhetoric of stardom with those of story and genre, star promotion in the rampantly quotational, intertextual contemporary promotional regime almost always entails simultaneous (explicit or implied) reminders of other stars and other films along with the star being promoted, whether in romantic terms, or, with apparently more frequency than earlier eras, confrontational ones. Significant promotions of pairings include the trailers for *Face/Off* (1997) which uses special footage to map antagonist Nicolas Cage onto John Travolta so that as the camera pans around the back of the star's head the latter becomes the former, and mouths in Travolta's voice, "I will become him." Subsequent clips emphasize the confrontational pairing as the film's main event, assuming that the major draw of the film for audiences will be the pitting of the two megastars against each other. The trailer for *The Siege* (1998) intersperses clips of Denzel Washington's FBI good-guy with Bruce Willis's proto-fascistic military bad-guy in ways that invite audiences to enjoy the confrontation of two very different star personae. Younger stars are promoted through their pairing with older guard megastars (and/or vice versa) in trailers for *Meet Joe Black* (1998, pairing Brad Pitt with Anthony Hopkins) *Stepmom* (1999, pairing Julia Roberts with Susan Sarandon)—in both cases the relationship in question is presented as a (pseudo-) familial one, with a strong component of rivalry. Repeat pairings are heavily promoted as cinematic events (such as 1998's *You've Got Mail*, which pairs 1993's *Sleepless in Seattle* stars Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks) and *Runaway Bride*, 1999, which pairs 1990's *Pretty Woman* stars Julia Roberts and Richard Gere) even without directly referencing the former pairing, and contemporary trailers utilizing the rhetoric of stardom

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also implicitly encourage those audiences in the know to enjoy the event of a simultaneous onscreen and offscreen pairing (such as the 1997 film *She's So Lovely*'s Sean Penn and Robin Wright Penn, and the 1999 film *Eyes Wide Shut*'s Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise).

Promoting stars by considering the romantic, adversarial and/or familial screen relationships among them as cinematic events serves to naturalize relationships as events that *happen* to individuals, rather than as ongoing components of people's lives, reinforcing ideologies of individualism. And whether the relationships the trailers promote are assumed to be "true-to-life," idealized, or dramatized, these trailers assume that audiences desire to experience relationships at the movies in ways that heighten the appeal of individual stars. Relationships are thus intensified and simplified: stars are lovers, stars are enemies, or stars are family (occasionally, stars are friends); regardless, the rhetoric of stardom asserts that a major reason audiences go to the movies is to watch the star power.

Beyond dualistic pairings, ensembles and groups are also promoted as such, in trailers that imply that as the number of stars increases, so do the odds of the audience's cinematic pleasure. A trailer for *Six of a Kind* (1934) plays on the title's poker reference, using playing card graphics with the stars' faces on the jokers and titles which inform us, "The cards are stacked!/ to give you the most hilarious time you ever spent in a theater/ 3 pairs of comedians—six of a kind with the jokers wild./ Put together they spell hilarity./ 6 cylinder comedy cast that runs on laughing gas!" Similarly using graphics to emphasize an abundance of stars, a trailer for *City Streets* (1938) instructs audiences to "Imagine five great stars in one picture!" and helps us to imagine this by presenting a graphic of

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stars in a sky, in which the stars zoom forward, flipping over to reveal photographs of a (movie) star inside each (celestial) star, their identification titles below. This is followed by a graphic shift to a different kind of abundance, where a title, "The front page of tomorrow's newspaper leaps to life!" is accompanied by a graphic of stacks of newspapers, followed by a shot of a street with movie marquees blazing. "5 great stars/ in the greatest performances of their careers!" Like many, this trailer overdetermines the notion of quantity (lots of stars and lots of story) as equalling quality.

Transitional era trailers also promote films by emphasizing the hyperbolic confluence of numerous stars, such as the trailers for *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), *That's Entertainment* (1974), and trailers for films in the emergent all-star disaster film genre such as *Airport* (1970) and *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972). Again, quantity is assumed to equal quality, and star-centered trailers for seventies disaster films were incorporated in promotional campaigns that also emphasized their accumulated star power by posters that incorporated a line-up of a number of stars' pictures, usually accompanied by characterological captions. A rerelease trailer for *American Graffiti* (1973) reprises the nostalgia appeal of the original trailer's tagline, "Where were you in '62" by asking "Remember Mel's? That's where we'll meet. We're having a reunion. ... Dreyfuss will be there... A reunion of the brightest stars of a generation." Contemporary trailers such as those for *Silverado* (1985), *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Paradise Road* (1997) and *Mystery Men* (1999) use visual techniques and editing to emphasize the promotional value of their ensemble casts. The *Silverado* trailer's widescreen visual line-up of revisionist cowboys in dusters walking in slow motion is more memorable as a "mediapheme" than was the film, and the *Reservoir Dogs* trailer includes an ensemble

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macho stroll shot that echoes the same Spaghetti Westerns it borrows from. Most contemporary trailers for ensemble films use the editing of identification segments, as do the trailers for *Paradise Road* and *Mystery Men*, to juxtapose familiar stars in rapid succession in ways that underscore the appeal of seeing multiple stars together (All those strong actresses in one movie! All those cool Gen-X stars in one movie!).

With ensembles, trailers generally emphasize both the number of big stars and their variety, drawing on the confluence of hyperbolic and something-for-everyone rhetorical tropes familiar from genre-based trailers. Like trailers that emphasize pairings, those that promote films on the basis of star ensembles make assumptions about audiences' interest in seeing stars in relationship to one another. With larger ensembles, these relationships border on representations of collectivities. Like profilmic spectators, collective groups of stars are sometimes shown as mass groupings engaged in the same activity, such as walking, singing, or conversing. More often, their numbers are emphasized by a sequential enumeration or identification segment that implies that the more stars there are to interact with one another, the more complex and interesting the movie must be. But either way, trailers promoting films on the basis of the rhetoric of stardom set groups of stars apart from other collective groups they may figure by emphasizing their individual star identities at least as much as the mass character of their activities as an ensemble, so that when and if they are seen in a group activity, individuality is still privileged. The ensemble provides both additional purchase for audiences' assumed closeness to stars ('somewhere in this group you can find yourself') and additional emphasis for the lure of stars' distance ('this is a privileged group you may watch but never join').

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Relationships between the film being promoted and other films in which the star has appeared are another form the relational rhetoric of stardom can take. Such references are usually verbal, although trailers are also endowed with intertextual richness when a film's visual quotations of other films get included in the trailer such as the *Reservoir Dogs* example above. Music, too, can be used to remind audiences (overtly or subliminally) of a star's prior films, such as the trailer for *Sliver* (1993) which uses the score from Sharon Stone's earlier hit film *Basic Instinct* (1992) and the trailer for *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) which uses the score from Tom Hanks's earlier hit *Big* (1988).[31] In the classical era, such intertextual references often cemented the trailer's appeals to audience interest in star pairings, such as in the *Vivacious Lady* (1938) trailer, where opening titles read, "The girl from 'Stage Door' Ginger Rogers/ Meets the boy from 'Seventh Heaven' James Stewart." Or even more gushingly in the *I'll Be Seeing You* (1944) trailer, "The melody of a song that will last forever/ unites the screen's newest romantic couple/ in the strangest holiday 2 people ever shared!/ Ginger Rogers and Joseph Cotten in their first motion picture together...." A narrator amplifies, "Do you remember how appealing Joseph Cotten was in Since You Went Away, opposite Claudette Colbert and Jennifer Jones? Well he's even better in I'll Be Seeing You, and this time the girl in question is the lovely Ginger Rogers." Clips amplify the trailer's claims. These appeals to audiences' cinematic memories operate so as to balance familiarity with product differentiation (an operation shared by the rhetoric of genre).

Intertextual references also serve to emphasize the consistency of a star's qualities by reminding us of his/her notable past roles, such as the trailer for *The Glass Key* (1942), which integrates two other film titles into its own narrative. A narrator says, "It's a battle

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of the sexes starring Brian Donlevy, the Great McGinty, back in politics and tougher than ever!" And later a title reports, "Dashiell Hammett's terrific story/ about/ The Thin Man's two big brothers ...." The *Force of Evil* (1948) trailer, after summarizing John Garfield's character as "the man who couldn't live/ *within* the law/ or *without* love!," continues, "His greatest role since 'Body and Soul.'" Likewise, a transitional era trailer for *Gaby* (1956) proclaims in titles, "You fell in love with *this girl* before/ Remember Leslie Caron in Lili?/ Only *one girl* could take Lili's place/ Leslie Caron as/ Gaby." A narrator adds, "Leslie Caron is excitingly co-starred with John Kerr, who rose to fame in the celebrated stage play, Tea and Sympathy." Often prior film titles are collapsed familiarly in a trailer's narration, such as Brando being referred to as "That 'Streetcar' man" in a trailer for *The Wild One* (1955); or in the *Jailhouse Rock* (1957) trailer: "Vince Everett, dynamically portrayed by Elvis Presley, was a tough blackboard jungle kid. Jailhouse Rock is the astounding success story of this rebel with a voice that rocked the world." This example makes clear the extent to which the rhetoric of genre also participates in star promotion—the teenpic was in strong ascendancy as a genre in 1957, and the two other films embedded in this trailer's narration (*Blackboard Jungle* and *Rebel Without a Cause*, both 1955 and neither starring Presley) were among its principal inaugural texts. Sometimes, and particularly from the transitional era on, trailers evidence a self-awareness or sense of humor about a star's past performance (as well as a star's linkage to promotion), relying on audiences to have seen the earlier film so they can get the joke, such as including in a trailer for *What's Up Doc* (1972) this exchange between Barbra Streisand and Ryan O'Neal (star of 1970's *Love Story*): Streisand: "Love means never

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having to say you're sorry." O'Neal: "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard!" The line, of course, had been *Love Story*'s principal promotional tagline.

Intertextual references to stars' other performances in contemporary trailers are often much less overt, although there are increased inter-trailer references as a whole (such as the Austin Powers example cited earlier). Due to the higher levels of media saturation that obtain in the contemporary market, where well-known stars' faces and celebrity are a ubiquitous feature of the cultural landscape, the showing of a star's face in a trailer always already connotes that star's iconic image (and thus his or her prior roles) to a degree beyond that possible in the studio era. Regardless of whether intertextual star references are explicit or implicit, they serve throughout sound era trailers as reminders of and appeals to the audience's assumed knowledge of the star's qualities and/or relational dynamics in past films. Thus, they reinforce trailers' assumptions that audiences will want to either identify with or desire the star—by demonstrating that audiences already have. Through intertextuality, such trailers also remind audiences that moviegoing itself is a relational activity (in which audiences too are enjoined to take part), that no film stands alone and that movies are interdependent in the Hollywood firmament. Such a reminder helps reinforce moviegoing as a frequently repeated activity by implying that the next film will more than likely be just as good as any films audiences liked in the past, as well as implicitly patting audiences on the back for recognizing the references (i.e., for their past moviegoing).

Relationships are thus promoted within the rhetoric of stardom in trailers as a means of reinforcing the repetition of moviegoing, reminding audiences that other movies also feature these stars, and that the relational dynamics of the particular film being

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promoted are but one facet or iteration of the stars' potential relational positioning in other films. They are also promoted as a means of singling out particular assumptions as to the kinds of relationships audiences desire to watch take place on the screen. Overwhelmingly, these are romantic, adversarial, or familial, treating relationships as events that happen to individuals, with even collective groupings paradoxically hyperbolizing individuality by showing ensembles as individual stars multiplied, rather than representing collective activity.

The third principal convention of the rhetoric of stardom in trailers is the promotion of stars in relation to the *star system*. During the studio and transitional eras, frequent explicit references were made to the "star system" itself, with trailers incorporating assumptions of audiences' understanding of and participation in the making of stars. For the most part, this convention is specific to trailers from the two earlier eras, probably due to the greater media visibility of stars in the contemporary era and to their increasingly diffuse "provenance" in contrast to being the "property" of an individual studio. There are many examples in the classical and transitional eras of trailers that invite and take audiences along with stars to go behind the scenes of the making of the movie or in which the star addresses the audience directly. Other examples promote the movie by explicitly characterizing its participation in the Hollywood star-making discourse. All these trailers assume a shared understanding of Hollywood as a place where stars are made and where audiences help make them (just by going to the movies, audiences are thus "in" Hollywood).

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For example, trailers for *Man on Fire* (1948) and *High Society* (1956) both utilize special footage of Bing Crosby with Ed Sullivan chatting on the set. Sullivan serves as a promoter for each film by hyperbolically rousing interest as if he were introducing his own show (Sullivan was already a popular radio personality), while the down-home Crosby persona is highlighted by his asides to the audience apparently designed to demystify the film and its stars ("That's our little group of strolling players"). In the *High Society* trailer, Crosby (in voice-over) interjects comments about the film clips, calling out to Celeste Holm (who he says is "also quite mad about me") right before she is seen in the clip being startled (so that she appears to respond to his extradiegetic voice), and is also shown trading quips with Sullivan, who says, "They tell me this High Society is really a knockout." Crosby: "Not here in front of everybody!" Sullivan: "You told me to say that , didn't you?" Crosby: "Yes, but I thought you'd be a little more adroit about it." The trailer-specific pairing enables the film's stars to be promoted as at once dazzling, worthy of the Ed Sullivan Show, and as Bing Crosby-certified "just folks" who can make fun of themselves and even of film promotion.

Stars also address audiences in a quasi-epistolary mode in several trailers. In a trailer for *Anna Karenina* (1935), Freddie Bartholomew addresses his fans in close up: "Hello Ladies and Gentlemen, First of all thank you for all the lovely letters you've sent me. Secondly, thank you for all the encouragement you've given me since David Copperfield. It's a great pleasure and honor to work with Miss Garbo and Mr. March in our new picture. And I hope and believe you'll like it just as much as you did David Copperfield. Thank you." A trailer for *Sitting Pretty* (1948) contains an endorsement by Bob Hope (who is not in the film) that wraps up, "You'll thank me for recommending

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Sitting Pretty. Yours truly, Bob Hope." In a trailer for *Pulp* (1972), Lionel Stander wraps up his audience address with "Yours sincerely, Lionel Stander." These trailers' more blatant assumptions of prior audience interest in its stars and their talking heads documentary imagery serve to remind audiences of their own role in the operations of stardom, and act as polite solicitations of the audiences' continued participation through moviegoing, implying in the process *both* the star's closeness and distance: the star replying to audiences' implied fan letters *is* direct communication of a sort, but it also reminds audiences of the stars' lofty apartness.

In the contemporary era, such apparently confessional uses of star narrators to demystify the promotional process are still occasionally seen, such as in the famous teaser for *Toys* (1992) wherein Robin Williams does stand-up comedy in a field, ridiculing the prior trailers the audiences in theaters are assumed to have seen ("I don't know about you, but that last trailer..."), then plugging *Toys* by way of multiple references to other films such as *The Terminator* (1984), *Rain Man* (1988), and *Boyz 'N The Hood* (1991). Albert Brooks does a self-effacing stand-up routine in the teaser for *The Muse* (1999). Teasers, of course, often rely on footage other than as-yet-unavailable clips from the film. But other than comedic genres, in the contemporary era stars almost never step outside their characters, and rarely outside the film's diegesis, to comment on the film in either trailers *or* teasers. The *Face/Off* trailer features commentary by John Travolta in character (written for the trailer, not dialogue from the film) describing how he will catch Nicolas Cage (he concludes, "I will become him" but Cage is seen—in special footage—mouthing the words), and the trailer for *Alive* (1993) begins with special footage of John Malkovich in character discoursing on God ("That's the God I met on the

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mountain...") in extreme close-up, followed by action clips. Even the occasional examples of more direct forms of audience address by stars found in a few contemporary trailers, while at times blatantly satirical of promotional discourses (like the *Toys* and *Muse* teasers), tend not to acknowledge the star system to the great extent that trailers in the earlier eras did.

The star-making machinery frequently represented in classical era trailers—along with the audience's assumed participation in it—is nowhere more explicit, perhaps, than in the trailer for *Night after Night* (1932), which opens with a graphic of a finger pointing at the audience followed by a series of titles that fade from one to the other: "YOU made him a success in Scarface, You talked about him in Dancers in the Dark. You applauded him in The Sporting Widow./ YOU (the type takes up the whole screen) were right!/ You (the graphic swells) the maker of the stars... have made *him* a star!/ George Raft, a Man's Man. A Woman's Lover. In Night after Night." The trailer then characterizes Raft ("a man and his women... —but what a man! And what women!"), followed by clips of scenes from the film, winding up with another graphic that lays out the four female stars' names in a diamond around Raft's name, then Raft's face fades into the center. Such trailers as these beg the very question that underpins this research: who do they think they're talking to? This series of extratextual references to Raft's earlier films serves primarily to assert Raft's appeal to both genders and to adult fans of multiple genres, in an attempt to cast the nets of "YOU" as widely as possible. It also simultaneously evokes the audience's closeness to and distance from the star (since "we're" the ones that made him, he's close, but now that he's made, he's distant).

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In the trailer for *I've Always Loved You* (1946) the making of stars is attributed not to the audience but to the director, while the audience is addressed as a group somewhat unattuned to past motion pictures (atypically, citing the films as if audiences *hadn't* seen them), in order to solicit their special interest in *this* motion picture. In an allusion peculiar to trailers' unique temporal status as discussed earlier, the trailer not only refers to *past* films but also evokes audiences' *future* memories. It opens with a series of titles, "In your whole lifetime/ You'll remember perhaps only ten truly great films!/ We confidently predict one of these will be/ Frank Borzage's I've Always Loved You. ..." A narrator then chimes in, "Frank Borzage, Starmaker. Master of film romance ... Now brings to the screen the most beautiful romance of his brilliant career." The narrator cites other films in the romance genre directed by Borzage, followed by hyperbolic descriptions of the film's stars which characterize their trajectory of success ("Lovely Catherine McLeod, zooming to overnight stardom" and "William Carter, a dominant new personality destined for screen renown"), along with dialogue scenes.

The trailer for *Live and Learn* (1937) uses a newspaper headline graphic superimposed over a shot of a city street to announce, "Hollywood, Calif. Screen starlets Vote to Select Ideal Lover." We next see a series of talking heads of starlets (who, as *potential* stars, signify both audiences and stars) addressing the camera to tout the film's star, Jack Carson. Here the audience is conflated with stars, and both are thus seen as the starmakers. The trailer for *Made for Each Other* (1939) addresses the audience in titles that likewise evoke genre and its stars (Carole Lombard and James Stewart) at once: "... The intimate story of a burning love that defied all of modern life to destroy it. Comedy—romance –heartbreak –laughter and thrilling action. Moments that might have

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been your very own. This is the picture that hit the headlines when an outstanding star turned from comedy to serious drama to accept her finest role." By switching genres, the trailer implies, the star daringly helps create her *own* stardom. In the trailer for *The Voice of the Turtle* (1947), a title emphasizes the rejuvenation a filmed play gets by attaching new stars to it: "With a *new* star-bright love team to give your heart a lift!"

By reminding audiences of the mechanism of star-making, these trailers associate their films with celebrity and success, implying that since their stars have already made it, the film must be a success as well; moreover, perhaps the stars' success can additionally rub off on the audience. Stars' success narratives are the principal subject of the massive extracinematic publicity discourses that grew up around the Hollywood star system prior to and during the sound era. Perhaps the convergence of the development of trailer rhetoric in the early sound era with the Depression, during which time movies held a special appeal to audiences for whom success seemed a remote dream, had some impact on trailers' audience address throughout the classical era and into the transitional era, furthering an ideology of luck, rather than hard work, as the primary reason for success (since, in the Depression, hard work didn't pay off). The rhetoric of stardom's focus on the star system in terms that evoke at once closeness and distance seems to be "talking to" an audience that (it is assumed) both needs stars to be emblems of unimaginable success and wants to feel that, with luck, their success is within the audience's own reach.

While the star system is rarely overtly represented like this in trailers of the contemporary era, celebrity and stardom are nonetheless embedded into many contemporary trailers in ways that tend to underscore the trailers' appeals to audience interest in stars. In examples such as the trailers for *Air Force One* (1997), *Any Given*

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Sunday (1999), and *The Hurricane* (1999), the buildup of the protagonist's star celebrity *within* the story is an allegorical mobilizing force of much of the trailer's montage. Similarly, trailers for *The Siege* (1998), and *Meet Joe Black* (1998) trade on celebrity by building up the anti-celebrity (anonymity or notoriety) of their antagonists (appealing to audiences' fears of the anonymity of terrorists and personifying Death as a terrifying yet appealing superstar, respectively). In popular film franchises of the contemporary era, trailers foreground the star and the franchise in ways that are mutually enhancing. Without actually referring to the star system, these trailers' centering of the stars within the overall film package can contribute to audience awareness of the contemporary promotional discourse. The trailer for *Wild Wild West* (1999), whose producers hoped to achieve summer blockbuster status on the basis of Will Smith's star turn (popular press references to Smith as king of the 4th of July movie openings, alluding to his former hits *Independence Day* and *Men in Black*, abounded), privileged Smith's wisecracking persona in ways that made the film resemble an oblique sequel to *Men in Black*, and the trailer for *Batman and Robin* (1998) which introduces new stars to an existing franchise, positions them centrally as well. Whether it is the star or the story that is new this time around, continuity is emphasized in trailers for franchise (or de facto franchise) films in ways that foreground stars.

In the contemporary era, the mythological place that is Hollywood seems less rhetorically circumscribed within trailers than in earlier eras. Stardom still "happens" in Hollywood, regardless of whether trailers overtly represent the process, and since (as mentioned earlier) a characteristic of the contemporary era's massive media saturation is a "Hollywoodization" of other public discourses in which celebrity figures, contemporary

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trailers' assumptions as to audience involvement in the discourses of celebrity are broader than ever. It is assumed that audiences hear the latest star "buzz" to such an extent now that trailers need not remind them of it. In the contemporary environment of image-glut, keeping the stars' images in frequent view seems to be more important to trailer-makers—on the assumption that seeing is desiring.

These three primary appeals and conventions related to the rhetoric of stardom point to the principal foci that trailers tend to take in relation to the types of textual evidence they provide of who trailermakers "think they're talking to." Trailers' appeals to audience interest in stars assume things about the kinds of selves audiences want to be (or have), the kinds of social relationships that are important to audiences at the movies, and the kinds of ways audiences want to relate to social institutions. Within Hollywood trailers, these assumptions are articulated within the broader terms of a shared imaginary space, the promotional world of Hollywood (the presumed dwelling place of the stars), to which audiences are invited yet from which they're always simultaneously excluded. In each of the eras, the assumptions trailers make about audience interest in stars enable us to gain a clearer picture of this imaginary place and how the audience is assumed to relate to it. More often than not, trailers express these assumptions in a melodrama of inclusion and exclusion that works as intermittent reinforcement, keeping audiences coming back to the movies again and again—for a "more" they can never have.[32]

Typical Trailers: The Rhetoric of Stardom

The following trailers are typical of ways the rhetoric of stardom operates in each era. In the classical era, stardom and the star system, as we have seen, ruled, and the

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example illustrates how stars often signified spectacle itself. The transitional era's questionings of the meanings of a reconfigured stardom for a reduced—and newly segmented—audience are demonstrated in a trailer that tries new ways to "talk" to audiences. The contemporary trailer example demonstrates how trailermakers increasingly assume that intertextual knowledge and references are givens, demonstrating how stardom operates in conjunction with other appeals. Each of the trailers promotes its film's stars, whether on the basis of their qualities, relationality, place within a star system, or combination thereof, as at once like, and unlike, audiences in their identificatory availability and/or celestial distance—and the push/pull of the trailers' evocations of the closeness and distance of stars can be seen to work within the parameters of a "melodrama of stardom." These trailers all promote stars through an overall enthymemic structure that reminds audiences "You can be these stars *or* have them, but only at the movies." In the process, each illustrates in some way just who trailermakers thought they were "talking to" in that era, and the assumptions each makes about audiences' desires and identities often reveal broader film industry assumptions about desire and identity within each era.

The trailer for *Saigon* (1948), subtitled "The Paris of the Orient," is typical of the majority of classical era trailers focusing on the rhetoric of stardom in that it treats the film's various scenes and spectacles as settings for the film's jewels, its stars; and that it emphasizes the stars' qualities as quantities known to audiences from their previous pairings. It also makes a point to remind viewers of the main star's rapid emergence and thus of the Hollywood star-making machinery—thus, it touches on all three conventions

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of the rhetoric of stardom. Primarily, however, it typifies the promotion of star quality in the classical era, assuming audiences want action and adventure (genre appeals are prevalent here too)—but specifically as they are filtered through the star personae of Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake.

The trailer opens with an extreme closeup of a large gun barrel aimed at the screen—literally targetting the audience. A title is superimposed: "A shock/ that made a star!" The gun shoots, the screen goes grey and smoky, then the trailer cuts to a medium shot of Alan Ladd from behind, who immediately shoots at a door. A narrator begins, "Five short years ago, a startling melodrama focused the attention of picture-goers everywhere upon the exciting performance of a new screen personality." As he speaks, there is a soft iris wipe to a silent dialogue scene with Ladd and a dishevelled woman apparently shouting at him. A vertical wipe reveals another scene as Ladd enters a room wearing a trenchcoat with a gun drawn, and looks around the room. The narrator continues, "Unknown before, he was predestined to become one of Hollywood's most famous and popular stars, Alan Ladd." This series of clips from *The Glass Key* (1942) reinforces the rhetoric of stardom through its assumption that stories exist primarily to focus audiences' attention on stars. Presenting the earlier film as a "shock that made a star," the trailer "wakes up" audiences to an awareness of the reliance of the star system on their participation in the success of the film, in one film-historically rich moment.[33]

A wipe to a different clip reveals a shot of Veronica Lake from behind, and Ladd opens a door to enter (again) with his gun drawn. The narrator continues, "And starred with him in that historic hit was fascinating Veronica Lake, an explosive and unforgettable combination." Combustibility, as previously noted, is a frequently

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emphasized feature of star pairings. Over a different clip of Ladd with a gun, the narrator goes on, "Since then, this dynamic star rose right to the top with such roles as: the guerilla leader in 'China,'" (we see a two-shot of him with Loretta Young) "the romantic young doctor of 'And Now, Tomorrow,'" (Ladd grabs Young's arms as they move across a room) "the mutineer of 'Two Years Before the Mast,'" (Ladd stands in a ship's rigging with two guns drawn), "the daring secret agent of 'OSS,'" (Ladd skulks), and the series of clips winds up with a vertical wipe to a long shot of Ladd and Lake in formal dress on an elegant veranda as they walk slowly towards each other. The inclusion of clips from prior films is done in this trailer in such a way that the scenes all seem as if they could have come from the film being promoted—they are all hyperbolic moments of action or romance apparently calculated to designate the common denominators of Ladd's star persona (a fighter and a lover). As such, they do not assume audiences have seen the prior films, yet they do serve as promotionally potent *aides-memoire* for those who have. This conceit borrows from the rhetoric of film posters, which at the time often laid out stills or titles from a star's previous successes. Sampling Ladd's other films diachronically as clips, however, enables the imagery to blend with that of the film being promoted in viewers' minds, increasing the "piggyback" factor for the promotion of this film (which was panned by Crowther in the *New York Times*, who noted that unlike Ladd's earlier films, audiences laughed in the wrong places).[34]

The trailer moves on to sample *Saigon*: "And now, Paramount reunites Ladd with the star of his first three hits, Veronica Lake." The two meet, then in a closer angle they kiss. "Yes, they had to meet again, to love again, to clash again, ..." The trailer cuts to a shot of him pulling her up from a chair into his embrace. "... in this high tension story of

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the far east today, 'Saigon.'" Ladd has thrown Lake onto a bed and is shown walking away. The trailer's emphasis on the pairing of Ladd and Lake as a tumultuous one assumes that audiences desire to see their romantic leads both "love" and "clash." The assumption trades on the familiar ideology of romantic, heterosexual love as fireworks or conflict, and feeds into this trailer's promotion of multiple generic elements within the Ladd/Lake adventure films, positioning their romance as a component of the film's adventure drama. Typical of classical era trailers, the amount the two are shown actually "loving" and "clashing" is reduced to very brief shots within this montage.

The narrator recedes momentarily as a brief dialogue scene from the film is excerpted: Ladd and Lake are seen arguing, and she yells, "You arrogant, blackmailing..." Ladd protests as she slaps him, and in close-up seen over her shoulder, says, "I wouldn't do that too often if I were you." There ends the trailer's sampling of dialogue: the narrator returns, "Ladd, a reckless soldier of fortune." Ladd knocks on a door and Lake emerges. "Lake, a sultry adventuress. Drawn together in a story seething with all the intrigue and menace of its colorful background: The black markets of Shanghai ... the jungles of Indochina. ...and the luxurious treachery-ridden city they call the powder-keg of the Orient, Saigon." This narration contains an overall assumption that audiences are drawn to "the Orient," and its phrases tout the stereotypical lures of that continent, while accompanying clips show Ladd and Lake in various action situations within hotel lobbies and luxurious dinner clubs (it may be dangerous, but it's still a desirable place to go—at the movies).

This trailer's heavily narrated, virtually unrelenting montage structure is typical of many star-based trailers from the classical era, which rely less on either delineating story

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elements or drawing audiences into a generic space. It serves to place greater emphasis on star quality than relationality (or story elements), associating "reckless" Ladd and "sultry" Lake with the "intrigue and menace" of exotic locales—which the trailer tours in the typical travelogue fashion noted earlier by Altman as a feature of genre promotions in the classical era. While this structure prevents ready identification by audiences with the characters, whose relationship is merely depicted without allowing any deeper experience that dialogue clips might afford, what it does allow or encourage in audiences is enjoyment of the extent of the stars' engagement with spectacular places and adventurous activities. The trailer participates in a melodrama of audience inclusion and exclusion typical of star appeals: we are seduced to want to come see the film in order to enjoy the stars experiencing adventurous action in spectacular places, even as we are excluded by the trailer's reminder that the stars too are spectacular, are set apart from ordinary life and ordinary emotions by their iconic linkage to the spectacular.

Several sustained excerpts from a gun battle scene, without narration, provide the trailer's climax, followed by a fade to a shot of Ladd entering a small plane and looking back, that begins its wrap-up. A title is superimposed as Lake comes into the frame and looks at him: "Ladd/ climaxing five years of stardom."[35] A vertical wipe to a shot of Ladd, Lake and another man struggling in a plane is overlaid with another title, "... with this thrill-swept romantic adventure ..." An inward iris wipe reveals a shot of Ladd and Lake against shutters on the veranda, as identifying titles for each are superimposed, followed by an outward vertical wipe from the center to a dinner table scene with a group of men. Other actors' names are listed, followed by a vertical wipe to a generalizing crowd scene with soldiers, and a superimposition of the film title, as music crescendos.

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This finale's heavy use of wipes underscores the trailer's classical era promotional style, centered on packaged samplings of spectacle—here without revealing any significant plot points, or even detail about Ladd himself, whose action hero qualities are nonetheless the trailer's primary draw. Action per se is assumed to draw audiences who, regardless of gender, will want to watch as Ladd attractively traverses a Hollywood version of Asia. Ladd, like Lake, is thus presented as almost as much of a cypher as is Asia—all three are assumed to be appealing to audiences as visual spectacles that signify mystery and adventure. The trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience who will attend a film primarily to see handsome stars behaving in vaguely colonizing ways in exotic settings. As in many classical trailers, audiences are not so much included as choice-makers in this trailer's melodrama of stardom, as they are teased with an assumed interest in visual pleasure: excluded from such adventurous lives outside the theater, the trailer presses their noses up against a window that opens into lives that only exist for the privileged pair who hyperbolically "love and clash" on the screen.

The trailer for *My Sister Eileen* (1955) illustrates how the rhetoric of stardom operates in ways that demonstrate Hollywood studios' assumptions about audiences in the transitional era. While the way stars were promoted during this era was different than either the classical or New Hollywood eras, this trailer incorporates traits both particular to its era and illustrative of some of the characteristics of the rhetoric of stardom seen across the sound era. It presents a direct address to the audience by the star, trailer-specific pseudo-dialogue between one star and another, and hyperbolic appeals to audience interest in a glamourous, unattainable star (common in the classical era); as well

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as equations between the star's qualities and the film's qualities, and overdetermined references to celebrity as a component of the story (seen more or less overtly in each era).

The trailer opens with a long shot of men lined up in front of a phone booth (which is covered with graffiti consisting of the name and phone number of Eileen) in what looks like a drug store, followed by a close-up of a man on the phone asking, "Can I speak to your sister Eileen?" We see a medium shot of Betty Garrett (on the other end of the phone) who says "she's not in," smiles and hangs up. We then see Vince Edwards making a similar call, with similar results. Then another caller is heard in voice-over as the camera stays on Betty Garrett. The camera cuts back to the caller, Jack Lemmon, who says, "Any idea when she'll be back?" The trailer cuts to Betty again, who addresses the camera: "Everybody wants to see my sister Eileen." Then Lemmon is seen in long shot in the booth, with three more men waiting screen left. He also addresses the screen, walking forward as another man walks into the booth, and answering Betty Garrett's line. "Well, ya can't really blame 'em. Oh, hello." He tips his hat. "My name is Jack Lemmon." He leans on an old fashioned cash register in the store. "Just about everybody here is trying to get a date with Eileen." He looks back at the men, then back at the camera. "Would you like to meet her?" His eyes bug and his eyebrows go up and down, and the music starts as pink titles flip up: "EILEEN is a dreamboat." We see a shot of Janet Leigh in a teddy with her hands on her hips in her bedroom, looking around. Then a title, "EILEEN is a living doll" is seen over a long shot of Leigh exiting a stage entrance as two men approach her. "Did ya get the job?" "Did I get the—they wanted to know if I stripped!"

The opening's special footage of men ostensibly lined up to get blind dates with a woman whose phone number is scrawled in a phone booth offers an apt metaphor for

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movie spectatorship—and one that, with its emphasis on direct address, repetition, and tame *double entendre*, is typical of transitional era comedy trailers. The trailer pursues the metaphor in numerous ways. The slippage in this scene between the men's assumed desires to "meet," "see," and "get a date with" a woman whose easy virtue is implied by the scrawled phone number, along with their obvious linkage with assumed audience desires to see the film ("Everyone wants to see My Sister Eileen") create an enthymeme of Eileen's desirability equated with the film's desirability. Like the billboard of her name that Gladys Glover (Judy Holliday) erects in *It Should Happen to You* (1954) in order to gain celebrity, Eileen's name and phone number are empty signifiers that are filled with meaning by the assumptions of those who read them. This trailer shorthands the earlier film's peculiarly '50s fascination with the discourse of celebrity, utilizing it to promote satirically, as many transitional trailers began to do—but not (as the Holliday film does) to satirize promotion. This opening also immediately establishes the dual appeals of stars as at once "just folks" who can come down to "our" level and address us directly (as do both Betty Garret and Jack Lemmon), and as hyperbolically desirable and unattainable (Janet Leigh).

The trailer then fades to two women running down subway stairs, accompanied by synchronized music that emphasizes the sex appeal of their movements. A couple at the top of the stairs watch, then turn and wave to the girls in unison as the film's title is superimposed. The activity of watching women be sexy is thereby linked with the activity of watching the film (and presented as appealing to both sexes). The title is wiped off and replaced by an identificatory title that spreads out from the center of the screen: "starring lovely Janet Leigh as Eileen," over a shot of Leigh lighting a stove burner, and flames

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rising. The trailer fades to a shot of Lemmon in a business suit kissing his secretary on her forehead, walking screen left and kissing Betty Garrett briefly on the lips, telling her goodbye. He then turns back and says, "Oh, I'm terribly sorry, I don't know you, do I?" The trailer fades to Betty Garrett's identificatory title as she bumps against a closet door with her hip, then looks at the hip and says, "the heck with it, let it spread." This clip both establishes the centrality of Betty Garrett's character to the film and implies her anonymity and sexual inferiority (communicated by her character's corporeal apathy) compared to Eileen. The setting and dialogue also provide genre cues already implied by Lemmon's presence and prior film roles: it's an urban sex comedy.

We next see a long shot of a dance, with titles of the minor cast members superimposed, and non-diegetic dance music. The trailer cuts to Garrett with a date at a nightclub, seated at a table with a zebra skin seat back. The man is saying, "I seen a lotta girls come in and out of the store since I been working there." Garrett looks offscreen in horror, and the trailer cuts to Lemmon entering a nightclub with another woman. Then Garrett hides her face as the man she's with says, "but never one like Eileen." Lemmon sees them. The man continues, "I'll never forget the first time she came into the store." Garrett hides under the table, and Lemmon and his date come and look under it. "Well good evening, Miss Sherwood." "Oh, hello Mr. Baker, fancy meeting you here." Again, these clips highlight in the same breath Eileen/Leigh's hyperbolic desirability and Garrett's inferiority, functioning to focus audience interest in Garrett's role in the story while withholding images of the elusive Eileen. And typically of the rhetoric of stardom, the excerpts of the film's dialogue add to the trailer's overdetermined emphasis on the desirability of the characters (and hence of the stars).

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There is a vertical wipe to Garrett and three others singing a Dixieland song, then bursting into a dance, and titles are superimposed over a long shot of them dancing. The word "Eileen" is constant, while the other words in the title are replaced: "Eileen has beauty./ Eileen has romance. And ..." we see Lemmon and Betty Garrett in a clinch, and she asks, "Are you sure you want to publish my stories, or is this a package deal?" The title returns, "Eileen is a riot./ Eileen is a panic./ Everybody loves Eileen/ and so will you!" This segment elaborates on story elements, while Janet Leigh's near absence in the trailer both contributes to appeals to audience interest in story enigma (just which girl will be gotten here?) and highlights the unattainability expressed in the trailer opening, presenting a tease to audiences who (it is assumed) hope they will get more of Leigh if they go to the film.

Finally, there are a series of generalized long shots of soldiers chasing after Garrett and Leigh, then lifting them up in the air. The music crescendos as a number of soldiers line up, toss their hats in the air, and as the film title is superimposed, the men run to get their girlfriends and go off into the street and the trailer ends. Like classical era trailers, this one wraps up with narratively vague but generically expressive long shots under titles (guys and gals cavorting equals urban postwar sex comedy). While the gender dynamics of this trailer's star-based address would seem to favor male audiences who are assumed to both identify with Lemmon and desire to see more of Eileen, the inclusion of a second female character who is more accessible and who (like Lemmon) addresses the audience, shifts the balance. The presence and voice of this *non*-star (Garrett) is "something for the women," functioning through the rhetoric of *stardom* to draw audiences (women) who are assumed to be interested in where her character fits into the

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story. It thus demonstrates some of the typical ways trailers operating within the rhetoric of stardom draw on rhetorical appeals to story and genre as well.

In the trailer for *Air Force One* (1997), Harrison Ford's star image of grim-faced patriotic righteousness, honed through a career that has moved from playfully defeating an evil empire (in the *Star Wars* series) to dolefully protecting various families from various multinational terrorists (in the Tom Clancy series), is brought to bear in promoting a film that trumpets the satisfactions of watching the president of the United States kick ass. The quintessentially star-based trailer assumes an audience ready to ogle Ford's masculine potency in the service of American national security. It's also a typically wishful trailer for an era in which it is increasingly difficult to discern the forces that actually rule the country and the planet. In this post-Cold War fairy tale, the trailer reassures us, stars will win the war for us—even when there isn't one.

The trailer opens with choir music over the Columbia logo, followed by a voice-over news announcer, first overlapped onto the logo, then over soft-edged small square black and white images which are framed by black within the larger film frame to make them look like TV news footage. The images (a Kennedy-at-Dallas-like montage of Ford and family departing Moscow) and a collage of news announcers' voices present exposition explaining that Air Force One and the president may be at risk. This introduction's use of smaller screen and black and white images, reconfigured from film footage especially for the trailer to signify television news, elides technology by slapping on the barest of conventional indicators that what we're seeing should be taken as television. Yet this works because TV as a small-screen black-and-white phenomenon

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(compared to film) is still a shared commonplace of cinema spectators, even though in the '90s it's watched in color on a big screen. References to CNN and the use of female newscasters helps to keep the paradoxically retro TV image anchored in the present day, allowing the segment to get a great deal of exposition out of the way rapidly. The opening is typical of contemporary trailers' frequent use of graphics to reconfigure the cinematic image. It also sets up the trailer's overdetermination of appeals to audience interest in Ford's celebrity—as he waves at his admirers regally on a small screen, his image is established as doubly watchable (we're watching a favorite star who is being watched by millions on television as a popular president).

The trailer fades to black, which is overlapped by Glenn Close's voice (she plays the vice-president), then we see her in full frame and full color standing at a podium with the presidential seal behind her, saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have a statement. The president's plane, Air Force One, has been hijacked." Close's image fades to one of the plane flying toward us, and we hear jet sound effects. The film title enters the frame from the front as huge letters, which shrink as the title is positioned in the frame, followed by another, "From the director of *In the Line of Fire*."[36] As each title zooms rearwards into place we hear a thumping/slamming sound effect, a typical accompaniment to contemporary era action trailer titles, serving to remind us that loud, dramatic, violent sounds will be heard in this film (somewhat as trailer graphics cue audiences to expect the dazzlement of visual spectacle).

The fact that the first full-screen image is of Glenn Close standing in for the missing president, and that the ensuing titles segment off the foregoing news clips as a sort of trailer prologue, cue us to Close's importance to the promotion of the film within

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the rhetoric of stardom—which at first seems paradoxical given Ford's importance to the trailer's rhetoric. At once a "thinking woman's" star in Hollywood terms (*Dangerous Liaisons*, 1988, *Reversal of Fortune*, 1990, *Hamlet*, 1990) and a genre actress (*Fatal Attraction*, 1987, *101 Dalmatians*, 1996, *Mars Attacks*, 1996) Close's presence connotes *serious acting* along with a game accessibility, and enables the male-oriented action trailer to offer "something for the women." Audiences are thus primed to watch themselves be governed by a hyperbolically "presidential" male-female star team that is inevitably configured as an ideal set of "parents."

The trailer's next segment is a rapid-fire montage of brief action shots on the plane which establish the danger the president is in, utilizing the rhetorics of story (for the expository elements) and genre (the rapid visuals and loud sounds cuing audiences to expect an action film). We learn that Ford's wife and child are with him as he is abducted, that there is a group of men in a military situation room working on it, and that Close is an effective leader of that group. As we see terrorists burst into a room, we hear a sound overlap of Ford's voice, "You know who I am?" followed by Ford in close-up, his hands raised in surrender. "I'm the *president* of the United States!" Gary Oldham socks him. This clip seems to have been designed to be inserted into a trailer, both for its shock value and as a gag: in the contradictory environment of the trailer exhibition experience it is somehow possible to offer audiences an illicit laugh at Ford's expense without detracting from the seriousness of his predicament—it serves to remind audiences that "it's only a movie" (i.e. audiences might answer him, "No you're not! You're Harrison Ford and you get socked by bad guys all the time!").

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The violence to Ford continues as a "grid" of clips which are interspersed with scenes of the vice president: Dean Stockwell says to Close: "The United States does *not* negotate with terrorists!" The line overlaps a shot of Oldham jerking Ford to a kneeling position, his wife reacting in close-up, then Oldham slamming Ford to the ground, his face (another close-up) against the rug with Oldham's foot on his head. Then in medium long shot Oldham rushes the daughter, as Ford watches from the rear of the shot. Then Ford is seen in close-up, crying abjectly as he says, "Just leave my family alone!" The trailer cuts to a decidedly non-abject Glenn Close seated in the situation room in a blue suit and pearls, leaning forward animatedly as she says, "The president is up there with a gun to his head!" Her line overlaps a shot of Oldham gut-punching Ford, followed by a shot of Ford grabbed by his necktie, then a close-up of Oldham, who addresses Ford, "Which one lives?" We see the wife and daughter in close-up, followed by a close-up of Ford's pained face as he is grabbed away and shoved up against an instrument panel. The shot lingers on him reacting, as a tense ambient jet-like noise is heard. The noise continues as the trailer cuts to black and Harrison Ford's identificatory title zooms rearward with a swooshing thump. It lingers as Close's voice begins, "I would like to ask (we see her at the podium) *all* Americans (beat, as we see the members of the press listening to her, then back on Close) ... to pray for the safety of everyone (the trailer fades to black) on board Air Force One."

In this segment, any hint of humor at Ford's plight is erased by the violence of the montage and the striking powerlessness of the pummelled president. It is as if the trailer is compelled to enact the repetition of every body blow in order to convince audiences, assumed to have faith in Ford's (and in the president's) overarching might, that this

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superstar's character is really in danger. In this context, Glenn Close's scenes seem positioned to offer a countervailing sense of security—a vice president whose '90s career-girl femininity authoritatively yet nurturingly, gathers the anxious profilmic audience (here "*all* Americans") for a spiritual group hug. The trailer's depiction of the terrorist threat to the American way of life in the '90s is endowed with a Rocky Balboa viscerality as the president, who in the figure of Ford is a signifier at once of national identity and hyperbolic masculine potency, is put at risk in the most vivid of ways. Yet Close's vice-president, the yin to Ford's yang, keeps the family system together through it all. Such incorporations of assumptions about audience patriotism within action trailer dynamics are typical of '90s trailers, where male stars are often called into service to personify national might.

We hear sound effects of a jet engine, as the trailer's final action montage begins, a cascade of redemptive presidential violence accompanied by percussive action music. Ford attacks someone from the rear, a jet zooms past, paratroopers jump, men in the situation room rush away with papers. The seated Glenn Close puts her hand to her mouth in alarm, a helicopter lands, Oldham yells (MOS), the pilot yells. Ford does something decisive, a gunman shoots, paratroopers land, Ford aims a gun from behind a wall, and helicopters are shown in the air. Ford hits a terrorist with both (tied) hands, his daughter rushes to him, and they embrace. Men run on the ground, an explosion hits a building as men attack terrorists, a fighter jet flies, men run low-angle out of the jet, and Ford holds onto the plane as he hangs in open air (two shots). Men in suits with guns run through the plane, Ford embraces his wife and daughter, men open a door in the jet and shoot, and we see an extreme long shot of the jet from below. The jet sound effects and

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music quiet, and the film title appears in a black field, at first as just a row of lines, then like soldiers at attention the letters turn and face front (with a swooshing sound effect), again demonstrating the extent to which contemporary trailers' graphic motifs echo classical ones (in which, as we have seen, titles turning, flipping and flopping into view was common). The letters grow, then fade to black and there is silence for a long beat, followed by a shot of Ford slamming a terrorist with a metal stool, accompanied by violent sound effects and the man's yell. Ford looks at the man. The trailer cuts to black, and a title reads "This summer."

The rhythmic following of the trailer's climactic montage with a brief violent coda is an increasingly common convention of contemporary action trailers that was probably innovated by the trailer for *Twister* (1996). In that case, after the trailer seemingly concludes, displaying the final title, it resumes again with another shot of a truck hurtling at the screen, accompanied by a final loud swooshing thump. In this case, the shot is assumed to offer audiences, whom the trailer has just taken on an emotional roller-coaster ride, a satisfyingly macho closure that yet (since it is tagged on—or "trails"—after the trailer's ostensible ending) invites audiences to anticipate the *next* sensation, i.e. seeing the film itself.

While the trailer takes pains to offer bi-gendered star turns that depict a '90s world seemingly safe for feminism (in which a woman *can* be vice-president), this coda emphatically validates the ultimate primacy of the gut-punching "yang" of masculine star power. In addition to its anticipatory promotional function, the shot structures within it a rhetorical assumption that the male audience's *cojones* will appreciate—and perhaps need—extra validation in order to be convinced to see a film in which the male star takes

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such a beating. Within this typical trailer's melodrama of stardom, the president and vice-president form a symbolic (and literally) nuclear family unit, reassuring audiences that the film will fulfill their desires to see themselves being governed with an appropriately familial (and familiar) balance of potency and nurturance—yet satisfyingly amped up beyond the capabilities of either real families or real presidents by the intertextually multivalent star power of Harrison Ford and Glenn Close.

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[1] Klinger, Barbara, "Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture," in James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, eds., *Modernity and Mass Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, 120.

[2]Among those scholars whose work has been primarily associated with star analysis, Edgar Morin (*The Stars*, London: Grove Press, 1960) and Richard Dyer (*Stars*, London: British Film Institute, 1979) loom as the central figures from the "first generation" of film studies, along with the interrupted work of the late Charles Eckert (such as his "Shirley Temple in the House of Rockefeller, in Peter Steven, ed., *Jump Cut*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985, 35-51). Recent work from scholars such as Richard DeCordova (*Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990), Barry King ("Stardom as an Occupation," in Paul Kerr, ed., *The Hollywood Film Industry*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), Thomas Schatz (*The Genius of the System*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), Miriam Hansen (*Babel & Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), Jackie Stacey (*Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*, New York: Routledge, 1994), and Danae Clark (*Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), has investigated the star system from perspectives informed by the field's increased emphasis on primary historical documents and reception studies. See bibliography for further citations.

[3] Joshua Gamson traces the influence of stardom on public discourse to the demise of the studio system and the subsequent emergence of the independent profession of publicity and public relations (PR) in the early 1950s. See his *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 41-44.

[4] Clark, Danae, *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, 7-8.

[5] Ibid., 4.

[6] My focus on the star-text relation is thus not incompatible with Clark's focus on the star-labor relation, demonstrating that textual analysis can serve to support a materialist analysis of film—a focus on the text does not doom an approach to textual determinism.

[7] Dyer, Richard, *Stars*, rev. ed., London: British Film Institute, 1998, 62.

[8] Britton, Andrew, "Stars and Genre," in Christine Gledhill, *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London: Routledge, 1991: 198 (emphasis in original).

[9] Britton, 205.

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[10]Gledhill, Christine, "Signs of Melodrama," in Gledhill (1991): 207

[11] Ibid., 213.

[12] Ibid., 226.

[13] Wexman, Virginia Wright, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage, and Hollywood Performance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, 23 (emphasis in original).

[14] Klaprat, Kathy, "The Star as Market Strategy," in Tino Balio, *The American Film Industry*, Revised Edition, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, 368.

[15] Klaprat, 369-70.

[16] Powdermaker, Hortense, *Hollywood The Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1951, 251-2.

[17] Wyatt, Justin, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, 53-5.

[18] Wilden, Anthony, *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange*, London: Tavistock, 1972, 238.

[19] Wilden, 238-9 (the removed material relates to a discussion of the structure of the unconscious).

[20] Of course, such contradictions are not unique to trailers' promotion of stars. As Allen and Gomery note, "Nearly every scholar who has investigated the phenomenon has commented on the set of paradoxes that lie at the basis of stardom. The star is powerless, yet powerful; different from 'ordinary' people, yet at one time was 'just like us.' Stars make huge salaries, yet the work for which they are handsomely paid does not appear to be work on the screen. ... The star's private life has little if anything to do with his or her 'job' of acting in the movies, yet a large portion of a star's image is constructed on the basis of 'private' matters: romance, marriage, tastes in fashion, and home life." Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, 174.

[21] Dyer, Richard, "*A Star is Born* and the Construction of Authenticity," in Gledhill, 137.

[22] Nichols, Bill, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991: 150.

[23] Ibid.

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[24] Gledhill, 219.

[25] DeCordova, Richard, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990, 140.

[26] Using the Greimasian semiotic rectangle in the manner suggested by Fredric Jameson (as a model for ideological closure, wherein the semiotic rectangle "becomes powerfully restructured into a relationship of tension between presence and absence," able to "interrogate the ideological organization of texts and identify the ways ideological contradictions are represented or disguised in textual features"), the rhetoric of stardom in trailers can be examined for the ways in which it promotes stars along the two axes of desire and identification. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981: 48-49; quotations here are from Teresa L. Ebert, "The Romance of Patriarchy: Ideology, Subjectivity, and Postmodern Feminist Cultural Theory," *Cultural Critique* No. 10, Fall 1988: 29.

[27] Baty, S. Paige, *American Monroe: The Making of a Body Politic*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 60.

[28] Ibid., quoted in Vivian Sobchack, "'Happy New Year/Auld Lang Syne': On Televisual Montage and Historical Consciousness," unpublished manuscript, 1999, 23 (forthcoming in James Friedman, ed., *Reality ^{2}*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press).

[29] Quoted in Kenneth Turan, "The Lure of Trailers," *American Film*, October 1982, 52.

[30] The alternations between narrative and musical segments in musical films themselves, of course, highlight the oppositions between spectacle and the everyday as well, as Richard Dyer's article, "Entertainment and Utopia" explores. But the effects of such juxtapositions are amplified and foreshortened in trailers. Richard Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," in Nichols, Bill, ed., *Movies and Methods*, Vol. 2., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 220-232.

[31] I am grateful to Vinzenz Hediger for noting the *Sleepless in Seattle* example.

[32] Intermittent reinforcement, the technique of arbitrarily selective rewarding of behaviors, results in lab rats consistently performing the desired behavior regardless of whether they are rewarded.

[33] The image echoes, of course, *The Great Train Robbery*'s seminal shot of the film audience being shot by the train robber.

[34] "...The bobby-sox audience at the Paramount yesterday... appeared to respond much more lightly to the drugstore hauteur of their boy than ever this same type of audience has

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dared demonstrate in the past. ... [I]t is something to hear that audience merrily haw-haw when Mr. Ladd gives them the old business that used to evoke rapturous squeals." Bosley Crowther, review of *Saigon*, *The New York Times*, April 1, 1948, 30.

[35] The fact that Ladd's performance is promoted as "climaxing five years of stardom" is unusual in that it both characterizes the star's Hollywood career and implies that this is his last film—as if Paramount (for whom this was indeed Ladd and Lake's last film as a screen couple) wanted to forestall his success at any other future studio.

[36] For auteurists in the know, this reference to Wolfgang Petersen increases the film's artistic cachet, since Petersen's *Das Boot* (1981) worked such visual wonders with another cramped military space. Yet by citing not the director's name but his most popular film (starring Clint Eastwood), the trailer also offers intertextual juice to Eastwood fans (and action movie fans) who aren't aware of directors.

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Chapter Seven

Talking to Audiences Through The Rhetoric of Stardom: Troubled Trailers

Of the three types of rhetorics, trailers that appeal to audience interest in stars rely on the most specific and (as discussed) semiotically dense kind of information: individual qualities of actual gendered human subjects (singly or in pairs or groups), filtered through rhetorical displays of trailermakers' assumptions of audience knowledge of the stars' place(s) within the promotional world of Hollywood. In order to construct such appeals while also "talking to" the broadest audiences possible, star-driven trailers—more than story-driven ones—tend to create their "own" stories. That is, more than genre- or story-driven trailers, they construct within their "own" genre (the melodrama of stardom), trailer-specific narratives about stars; the more effectively to engage a range of audiences in a range of potential ways to desire the star(s).

The case studies that follow explore some of the ways trailers' rhetoric of stardom, by appealing to audience desires to be close to stars yet perpetuating the unattainable lure of stardom, generates a "melodramatic" dynamic in trailer texts throughout the three eras, this in the sense of Christine Gledhill's definition of melodrama as "a tension... between emblematic typage which is public and personalization which stresses the private...," a tension which, like the dynamics of stardom, "arises from a contradictory demand for a mythic significance grounded in the real world."[1] These two-minute melodramas of stars' relationships to their potential audiences epitomize studio formulations of audience desires, regardless of the gender dynamics of the individual trailer. By appealing both to audiences' desires to identify with the star and to possess him or her sexually (and by at once satisfying these desires

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and withholding their satisfaction), trailers manage to appeal to a broad range of audiences and still incorporate an erotic dimension, in the process demonstrating how audience desires are ideologically constructed by studio discourses.

I have selected the following trailer case studies of the rhetoric of stardom on the basis of both how strongly they appeal to audience interest in stars according to the conventions elaborated previously, and how interesting they are as articulations of "who they think they're talking to" (what kinds of desiring subjects) in each era. Again, these are trailers that stand out from the sample as paradigmatic of my concern with the construction of audiences—a group of "troubled trailers" which by their more visible figuration of some of the contradictions of audience address within the rhetoric of stardom, help illuminate the presence of such contradictions more broadly within the trailers of their time(s). A variety of genres, studios and star types is represented, from a range of years within each era. While the examples presented in these case studies invariably offer only select stars, the chosen trailers nonetheless exemplify broader features of stars and stardom *per se* that are assumed to be of interest to audiences.

The Classical Era: Stars Sell Stardom

The star system in the classical era had clear parameters. Under contract to individual studios (but "loanable" to others), stars participated in fairly formulaic publicity efforts, of which the trailer is but one example. Pressbooks in this era often amplified how individual stars were promoted for each film, presenting studio-sanctioned interviews and suggesting promotional tie-ins. From the time movies became big business in the silent era, when stars were discovered to be "the surefire box-office

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money-makers," as Robert Sklar put it, a mystique built up around just what it was that made a star:

> Stage success apparently had nothing to do with it. ... Acting ability, traditionally defined, did not indicate star potential. Previous experience or training did not necessarily play a part. Natural movement, the glow of a vital personality, perhaps one's resemblance to a type, were what seemed to count on the screen. Even so, there was sometimes a magical transformation from a person to his or her reproduced image. One might gain in magnetism and fascination—or lose. Not even the professionals could always tell; the ultimate judge was the mysterious collective choice made by moviegoers in the dark. Potentially anyone, anywhere, possessed the special quality that made one out of thousands a star.[2]

By the early sound era, each studio's "stable" of featured and star players was well established, with the emergence of new ones an ongoing aspect of promoting stars. Trailers, as one of the prime sites where this "mysterious collective choice" of stars took place, had a large stake in making them look good. The "mythic universal American" who, as we've seen, was assumed to want both novel and familiar genres along with clearly circumscribed types of stories during the classical era, was also assumed to want certain types of stars and certain narratives of stardom.

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The trailer for *Dinner at Eight* (1933) lays out in clear terms the operations of the rhetoric of stardom's focus on relationality in the early sound era, while providing a strongly overdetermined emphasis on stardom through simultaneous incorporation of story appeals. As such, it is an interesting "troubled trailer" because it displays more distinctly than most trailers of its time the push-pull dynamics of the melodrama of stardom. Each member of the film's ensemble cast is introduced both as a star and as the character he/she plays; the stars are presented sequentially and linked narratively to one another. Typically of trailers made in the early '30s, these linkages are laid out without attempting to create a seamless narrative or dramatic structure internal to the trailer itself (this would wait for more sophisticated trailer rhetoric to develop toward the mid-'30s). The star introductions function rather like diachronically-presented poster elements, spotlighting the draw of the film's star ensemble as a sequentially-built aggregate while integrating discrete nuggets of story information and creating enigmas. The sequential introduction of this film's ensemble cast and of its characters' interrelationships is in line with reviewers' perceptions of the film more as a "star-studded" variety show than a unified story. The film is referred to as "a fascinating mosaic," which "offers a greater variety of characterizations than have been witnessed in any other picture,"[3] and two reviewers note that the film could hardly be anything but a hit, since "veteran players of the stage, who have since been won over to talking pictures, are the principal assets;" with *Variety* gushing, "Marquee speaks for itself. Spells money and couldn't very well be otherwise."[4] That said, the trailer still generates its own melodramatic narrative, building its poster-like star segments into a teasing appeal to audiences' assumed ambivalent desires to be or have stars.

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The trailer opens with a title card, unaccompanied by music. We then see a still of Marie Dressler with her name in cursive (her implied autograph) diagonally scrawled across the screen, which cuts to another still of Dressler's face juxtaposed to a full shot of her in character, with a title, "... as the musical comedy star—living in the glories of the past!" A new line flashes into the title: "among them..." (flash) "her playboy memory... Lionel Barrymore." The still of Dressler's face is replaced with Barrymore's, while the full shot of Dressler remains next to it. This replacement of her close-up with his, while her full shot remains, creates a dynamic graphic linkage signifying that he's the one she's dreaming of. The graphic also implies a weakening of Dressler's star positioning vis-à-vis that of Barrymore (the bigger star) and by implication, a weakening of her star/character identity—he has moved in on her identificatory territory. (While the autographed-still motif continues to link the members of the ensemble to one another, only one other star "moves in on" another visually in this way.) In terms of the conventions of the rhetoric of stardom, this also graphically establishes the idea that in this film, relationality is as important as individual identity or star quality, while the trailer does assume some audience awareness of these stars' qualities, such as Billie Burke's matriarchal purity, the younger Barrymore's reputation as a rake and Harlow's femme fatale status. The trailer then cuts to a clip from the film of Barrymore and Dressler seated on a sofa, as Dressler says, "I was very fond of you, Arthur," and Barrymore replies, "I was very much *in love* with you, Carlotta. You were the most entrancing creature in the world." Neatly encapsulating the relationship between the two, this clip exemplifies early trailermakers' efforts to use clips that lay out as clearly as

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possible expositional elements, and initiates a use of the stars' interconnected narrative clips to integrate story aspects into an appeal to interest in stardom.

Next we see two juxtaposed still shots of Barrymore—a stern head shot and a full length shot of him seated on the sofa from the previous scene, the background removed, with his signature diagonally across the middle. The title flashes to: "a successful businessman" (flash) "now ... on the brink of failure!" (flash) "Married to... " The image fades to bright rays, then two similar stills of Billie Burke appear, with her signature across. Interestingly, the "as" incorporated in the first star introduction ("Marie Dressler/ as the musical comedy star...") has now disappeared, enabling a conflation throughout this segment of stars with their characters. One still is of Burke's face, the other is a long shot of her on the phone accompanied by a baby. A title flashes in, "who would sacrifice everything to give a society dinner!" We then see a clip from the film of Billie Burke, Barrymore and his young mistress standing in a drawing room, as Burke says, "I've got eight people! Eight people isn't a dinner! Who could I get? And you come to me with your idiotic little... *I'm* the one who ought to be in *bed*!" In this case the stills and titles provide exposition about the Barrymore and Burke characters, while the clip functions enigmatically, offering enticement to an audience assumed to enjoy romantic intrigue (she *knows* about his lover???).

The trailer returns to the still image format with two images juxtaposed of Madge Evans's face and figure, with the star's "signature" across the frame. A title flashes in, "her daughter ..." (flash) "recklessly worshipping a forbidden lover." The trailer flashes the rays again, then a pair of stills of John Barrymore, his face on the right, his dissolute figure leaning on a plush stool on the left. Titles flash, "as the fallen screen idol" (flash)

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"who has outlived everything but his vanity!" The trailer cuts to a typical clinch scene on a divan, with Madge Evans on top of Barrymore (the younger), as Evans says, "Oh darling, it's so awful not to be with you every minute!" They kiss. The titles' implicit judgments of these two characters are visually contradicted by the clinch scene's implicit assumption of audience desire to participate in the characters' romance nonetheless.

The trailer cuts to another set of introductory stills of Lee Tracy (head shot on right, long shot of him in a suit carrying an overcoat on left), with signature title. A title flashes in, "as the theatrical agent" (flash) "who tells actors *the truth* about themselves!" We then see the intertitle's characterization literalized in a scene between him and John Barrymore: "All right, if you think I've been lying to you all this time, you're gonna get the truth now." The audience is privy to this "truth" (but is assumed to enjoy watching him get his comeuppance from this character's voice of sobriety). The trailer's rhetoric of stardom feeds into the fact that the film is *about* stardom and its effects in the lives of those connected to it, and like the narratives of stars' personal lives provided by film publicity discourses, those effects are assumed to be at once unappealing and appealing—yet both their scandals and successes are equally watchable.

Another character is introduced with stills: Wallace Beery, seen in head shot and full figure in white tie with signature, with titles that flash over: "as the financial tyrant" (flash) "who rules everyone but his wife." The title stays on the screen as his face is replaced with Jean Harlow's face and title below (the first name in cursive but the surname in big block letters). Again, the bigger (this time, female) star moves in on the other's identification shot, here signifying a narrative control over him as well as the star's dominance. Then we see a clip of a dialogue scene between Beery and Harlow as

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she says "It's the first chance I've ever got with a decent..." (the scene is cut off), followed by more stills of Harlow with her signature, a head shot and full shot of her in a cocktail dress grinning widely, and a title: "who couldn't get enough of anything" (flash) "including love!... and..." The light rays flash again, followed by stills and signature of Edmund Lowe, and title, "... as the society physician," (flash) "specializing in the bedside manner!" The trailer cuts to a scene of Harlow in bed with Lowe seated next to her as she says, "Oh Wayne darling," then reaches up and kisses him. The voyeuristic yet superior attitude the trailer has thus far assumed of the audience is here given a gossipy edge, the clip again offering risqué romantic action as the titles nudge the audience in the ribs.

The trailer then cuts to a long shot of all eleven stars dressed for dinner. A title reads, "All of them" (as they start walking together into the dining room), "covering up enough secrets to make a dozen sensational dramas... / *together* in the most glamourous production of all time." A dinner gong sounds. Dressler shouts imperiously, "I want to sit next to Oliver. Oliver, where are you? Oh, there you are...." Servants close the dining room doors on us, and a rapid horizontal wipe up the screen leaves a star field graphic with a big star in the middle, as the stars' names come forward one by one in a title crawl, and as each name appears, a still of the star appears within the large star. Music swells, and the trailer ends with a brief shot of the title graphic. The finale shuts us out of the dinner party both verbally and visually (we have to see the film to get invited in), yet the trailer has already let us in on many of the characters' secrets. This simultaneous exclusion and inclusion plays into the rhetoric of stardom's contradictory appeals to audience desires to be close to stars yet to perceive them as unattainably distant. The

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trailer spells out the core relationships, but how the ingredients mix together is the enigma that we must see the film to apprehend. But we do know that the *amount* of stars in this ensemble—all "*together*"—will hyperbolically enlarge the film's appeal, since among them they have "enough secrets to make a dozen sensational dramas."

The trailer's promotion (through the rhetoric of story) of the film's narrative preoccupation with stars and ex-stars, the pedigree of its ensemble "marquee" and status as a theatrical adaptation, and the trailer's starfield graphic all contribute to an overdetermined focus on the melodramatic discourse of stardom, reinforcing the ideology of stardom as seduction and deception, as an irresistible corruptor of relationships. The titles, which evoke scandal far more than glitter (glories of the past... brink of failure... sacrifice everything... recklessly worshipping ... vanity ... tells actors the *truth* ... couldn't get enough ... bedside manner... enough secrets to make a dozen sensational dramas...) form one side of this ideological coin, cautioning audiences of stardom's pitfalls, while the imagery of a glamourous dinner party held in the depths of the Depression that audiences are assumed to wish to attend, form the other. The trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience at once longing for and disdainful of the glamour and profligacy of stardom—perhaps even of Hollywood and the medium of film itself, which likewise during this time was still considered by many as both irresistibly glamorous and corrupt. The trailer thus offers audiences a melodrama of seduction and rejection not dissimilar to that occuring between characters in the film; but one that works as promotion precisely because within the generic terms of melodrama, scandal and corruption are themselves irresistible.

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In the trailer for *History is Made at Night* (1937), a romantic shipwreck drama starring Jean Arthur and Charles Boyer, audiences are both hailed and represented as a vital component of the promotional world of Hollywood, and the downside of celebrity is nowhere to be seen. Like several others in the sample from the classical era, the trailer is split between an evocation of the narrative world of Hollywood and more familiar kinds of promotional imagery which utilize clips from the film. The first third of the trailer addresses audiences directly, taking them behind the scenes and informing them about the film's production. This has the effect of establishing the later clip portion (during which there is no narration and very few titles) as the desired and desirable product resulting from the narrative of moviemaking labors depicted in the first part, confidently offered up for audience approval, as it were, without need for further commentary. The trailer evokes equally the rhetorics of stardom and story, but it focalizes the story strongly through its star in ways which both call attention to the star system and highlight relationships within the film. Moreover, the interaction between the two sections (the promotional world of Hollywood and the promotion of star appeals within the film) creates an unusually direct interpellation of audiences, making it function as an apt "troubled trailer" for the classical era.

It opens with an establishing extreme long shot of a Hollywood landscape, the camera panning left as a title, "Hollywood, California," emerges, then zooms backwards to flop out of the picture. Although the movie was shot on sound stages that may or may not have actually been in Hollywood (United Artists had no studios of their own), the trailer locates the film's production firmly in (geographic) Hollywood, adopting the localizing rhetorical mode of a newswire or press release (familiar to classical era

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moviegoers from newsreels). We then see a newsreel-like montage of camera setups and lighting crews: a low angle medium shot and medium long shots. A narrator announces, "The crucial moment in the making of all motion pictures, the final scene. Here we see the studio crew shooting the last bit of action in Walter Wanger's production, History is Made at Night." A large camera and cameraman dolly toward us, all business. The framing of these shots positions us, the implied audience, amidst the production goings-on casually, as if we were also involved in them.

"The next move: to preview it." We see men putting film cans into a Model T with "W. Wanger Productions" and "United Artists Studios" on its side, and getting in the car. "Secretly the producer, director and cutter steal away to some outlying theater, where the film is shown to the public for the first time." The car drives away, and the trailer cuts to a low angle shot of a marquee with Charles Boyer and Jean Arthur listed, but no film title, emphasizing the centrality of star popularity as *the* draw for the preview audience. A banner reads "Major Studio Feature Preview." The narrator extols suspensefully, "Preview! The banner is raised. Preview! The crowds pour in!" We see an usher letting people into the theater. Seven men walk screen left. We see the audience (which appears to be composed primarily of men) looking at the screen, from a side angle. Narration continues, "The picture is screened. The producers await the verdict of this mighty jury. AND, ..." (the crowd applauds) "it's a hit!!" Here the audience is being addressed as if they too (along with the producers) were in suspense as to whether the movie will be accepted by the public.

Like many trailer (and narrative) representations of (actual or implied) profilmic audiences, this introductory segment makes the assumption that if audiences see other

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audiences enjoying something they're watching, they will want to see it too. In this case, the "mythic universal American" and "mighty jury" represented by the preview audience is more male than female, and overwhelmingly white. Having been let into the behind-the-scenes process, having been privy to the suspense and gratified hopes of the producers that the film is a hit, audiences then see "themselves" represented, the seated figures an extension of their own seatedness as they watch the trailer. They are hailed as a vital link in the chain—indeed flattered as the "happy ending" of the production narrative. (If they hadn't liked it, the trailer implies, the "producer, director and cutter" would have had to go back and make changes.) Seeing an audience applaud the film may have been no more convincing to audiences of the time than any other sort of hyperbolic trailer rhetoric, such as quotes of reviews or box office figures (or today's technique of interviewing spectators emerging from the theater for TV spots), but it is a clear textual example of the fact that "they think they're talking to" a social entity that is considered (--and considers itself) a vital component of the industry and of the film's success.

A star-shaped wipe then reveals the film's title, superimposed over a shot of Charles Boyer bending down to help Jean Arthur put on her shoe. The trailer cuts to a closeup of Boyer and Arthur hugging with their smiling faces towards the camera, and identificatory titles underneath. Like the marquee seen earlier, this front-and-center positioning of the two main stars signals their centrality to the promotional campaign for the film. Reviews of the film from the time validate this approach—while both *Variety* and *The New York Times* are lukewarm about the film's prospects, they do cite the film's "good names" and "extremely clever cast" as redeeming features.[5] Music swells, and we see members of the supporting cast behind the couple. A title reads, "with Leo Carrillo,"

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whom we see in a chef's hat peering over a swinging kitchen door, "and Colin Clive," whom we see seated in formal attire. A square wipe reveals a shot of Boyer taking leave of a table full of people and walking away authoritatively, with Frank Borzage's director title superimposed. The singling out of this shot of Boyer as Borzage's identification title image, linking the star to the unseen director, has the effect of reminding audiences that another level of male agency and authority besides the star's is at work in the production.

The trailer cuts to Boyer instructing ("directing"—continuing his association with production) his staff of women: "and you and Marie, don't forget, you are here to check hats, nothing else. None of this." (He gestures mock-seductively as the line of uniformed women watch.) We then cut to Boyer telling the chef "all right," and the chef says, "OK, everybody take your stations. Scram." The inclusion of this line enables the film's dialogue to contribute to the trailer's fanfare for the film: the audience is thus also instructed to "take their stations" in readiness for the film's romantic adventure, and fittingly, the shot is followed by a wipe (shaped like two hearts) to a clip from a love scene, and the transition from behind-the-scenes to "the show" is complete as we see a two-shot of Boyer and Arthur in profile, and she brings her head to touch his. "Paul, I want to forget everything that's ever happened. I want to think only of you, and us, forever." The trailer cuts to a shot of Colin Clive addressing Jean Arthur (offscreen): "Wouldn't it be wonderful, Irene, if you were a magician, and could change me into him?" We see her in medium shot, looking at herself in a mirror—two mirror images look back at her. He continues, "Just think, you two alone, right now in this room—what would you give, Irene?" The trailer returns to the shot of Clive. "Well? What would you

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give?" She whirls back to face him, and the trailer cuts to a close-up as she tearfully says, "I'd give my soul."

This clip is the trailer's emotional center, and it calls attention to the ways male and female stars are promoted in the era before films were clearly targeted to male or female audiences. The striking image of Jean Arthur looking at herself in a double mirror as Clive asks if she would like to transform him into her lover has the effect of strongly promoting audience identification with Arthur's character—the memorable image tends to reverberate throughout the rest of the trailer, which loosely presents plot elements other than the romance. The double image literalizes her apparent position as torn between two men, centering the trailer's rhetoric of stardom on Jean Arthur as a romantic/dramatic figure. Although Arthur's star persona had previously embraced the element of tragic romance (in the form of close calls with spinsterdom and unrequited love), she was primarily a comedienne.[6] This trailer's presentation of her somewhat against type contributes to her differentiation as well as potentially drawing her fans to see a film of a different genre.

On the heels of this trailer's centering of its star promotion within a behind-the-scenes narrative which strongly addresses audiences and asserts their role in the ultimate shape of the film, the questioning mirror shot makes us feel included also in the film's narrative choices, as if we have been invited to participate in Arthur's choice between the two men. And the trailer's prior positioning of Charles Boyer's character in a visual equation with the film's director (along with, of course, his star marquee positioning and romantic lead status relative to Colin Clive) gives us confidence that he will be her choice even without knowing the plot. This trailer assumes an audience that is actively engaged

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in forming opinions about what choice Jean Arthur should make just as they will be/should be active in choosing the film itself. The melodrama of stardom within which audiences are positioned is thus weighted towards *including* the audience, inviting them within the circle of the star's specialness as fellow agents of choice, and the female lead's choice is assumed to be of equal interest to men in the audience (who were previously seen flocking to the theater and choosing the film) as to women.

A diagonal wipe reveals Boyer in conversation with Carrillo at a table, in a brief comic interlude. The trailer then cuts to a dinner table with Clive in the foreground facing away from the camera, Arthur in the background, and Boyer standing to the left. Clive and Boyer have an exchange in which Clive remarks that he feels like he's seen Boyer before, while Boyer denies it. During this we see two close-ups of Arthur watching Clive, horrified. Even this somewhat enigmatic clip retains the trailer's focalization through Jean Arthur's character, heightening the melodramatic import of the scene: it's obvious that there is something at stake for her romantically in this exchange, yet in this case, the audience is excluded from knowledge of what it is, and must see the film to find out.

There is a diamond-shaped wipe to an extreme long shot of a ship in a fog, with the sound of a foghorn, followed by a closer shot of the boat's prow cutting rapidly through water. One sailor says to another on the foggy deck, "You've got three thousand people on board this ship, whose lives are more important to them than any record." We see a montage: a smokestack toots, hands operate telegraph equipment jotting out an SOS, the smokestack again, the hands again, a shot up the telegraph antenna double-exposed with another man receiving the message: "It's Princess Irene!" A sailor rings an emergency bell. Men run upstairs on the ship. A big gate closes, we see Jean Arthur get

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back on the ship from a lifeboat as Boyer shouts, "No No No! Darling please, please! This is the *last* boat! Darling, it's not worth it! We would only have a moment together!" The trailer wraps up with a generalizing long shot of a lifeboat leaving the ship, with a title superimposed: "'Brilliant! Shipwreck sequence takes rank with the famed earthquake in "San Francisco,"' says Time The Weekly Newsmagazine. / You will never forget/ the year's most outstanding entertainment." A wipe from the boat and lifeboat reveals the film's title, and "a Walter Wanger Production, released through United Artists." Typically, the trailer here announces its assumption that the film will stand out in audiences' future memories—not only will they *choose* to see it, but its images will remain permanently emblazoned ("chosen" above other memories) in their minds.

It is interesting that a shipwreck drama the likes of which would inspire *Titanic* promoters fifty years later to make a trailer almost twice the usual length in order to properly hype its enormity is here treated in a brief montage comprising a small proportion of the trailer's overall content.[7] Instead, the audience is first shown its own importance in the film's success, then is invited to weigh in on a star-centered melodramatic plot point from the female character's point of view, but ultimately, the dramatic payoff of a shipwreck and the implication of a much more serious choice the same character must make is largely withheld. In other words, the participatory hailing of the audience which includes us in Jean Arthur's focalization at one point, later excludes us teasingly from participating in her greatest choice: we must see the movie to continue our involvement with this character and star.

This trailer encourages audiences to come see *History is Made at Night* in order to be involved with its stars: specifically, to perform an activity (choosing a film) which will

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align it with the female star's melodramatic choice—inserting the audience into the melodrama. It "thinks it's talking to" an audience whose choice-making capacity is vital to the survival of the film and of the film industry just as, in the trailer's narrative of stardom, Jean Arthur's romantic choices are linked to survival choices. Audiences' role as spectators and consumers in the promotional world of Hollywood is thus constructed as a significant one, and the trailer's withholding of the character's ultimate choices contributes to audiences making the "right" consumer choice—to make their own history at night, with and through stars, in a darkened theater.

The trailer for *What a Woman* (1943), a romantic comedy pairing Rosalind Russell and Brian Aherne (their third film together), builds on the strong emphasis on the rhetoric of stardom indicated by the film's title itself. The film deals with a literary agent (Russell) who has been charged with steering one of her authors (Willard Parker) towards Hollywood to star in the film verson of his book. Aherne plays a journalist writing a magazine profile on Russell, who is highly critical of her efforts to commercially exploit the unassuming Parker. The film's status as a Rosalind Russell vehicle, noted by reviewers, is clearly indicated by the trailer's focus on its female star.[8] The trailer takes pains to emphasize her sex appeal (as someone both to be desired by men, and envied by women for the men she reels in) in equal portion with her comedic appeal. Through the rhetoric of stardom's appeal to audience interest in star quality, the trailer thus constructs a generic identity of romantic comedy for the film as well (as argued by Andrew Britton earlier, star vehicles are imbricated in the generic identities of films in the classical era). The trailer also appeals to audience interest in star relationality by promoting the film's

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complication of the Russell/Aherne pairing with the presence of the handsome Parker (leaving open the question of which man she ultimately chooses), while again offering an overdetermined emphasis on the star system and star-making through combining star appeals with the rhetoric of story. The figurations of sexual politics that result from this combination make for an intriguing "melodrama of stardom," enabling the trailer to serve as a fascinatingly "troubled" one for classical era star discourse.

The trailer opens with titles: "What a gal!/says Brian Aherne," over a shot of Aherne seated, tipping his hat and nodding. A wipe shaped vaguely like a low-cut neckline reveals a two-shot of Aherne and another man in profile laughing to each other. A title reads, "What a woman!/ agrees Willard Parker." Aherne slaps Parker on the back as he leans over laughing. By using the film's title as fake dialogue to emphasize a backslapping man-to-man appreciation of the film's star by its two co-stars, the opening seems to privilege appeals to a male audience interested in watching women on the screen. As Rosalind Russell enters the scene, a narrator (male, as virtually always—throughout the sound era) begins, "What a Woman is Rosalind Russell—and vice versa. Her ... comedy ... from the Columbia Studios, What a Woman, is the best picture she's ever made." Aherne leans his arm against the wall next to her (attempting to corner her and kiss her), and she ducks under his arm and away. On the heels of the trailer's initial evidence of male control we get Russell—who, the trailer has just told us, moreover "made" the film—capably evading male attention, thus tipping the scales of agency in her direction.

The trailer cuts to a long shot of Russell (MOS), the center of a group of five men and women, waggling a finger and making them laugh. "Filmed in the most hilarious

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tradition of the studio which has given the screen its greatest comedies, What a Woman reunites the rollicking stars of [the first version of] My Sister Eileen—Rosalind Russell and Brian Aherne, in a picture that's even gayer, funnier and merrier than The More the Merrier. And introduces the brightest star discovery of the year—Willard Parker, Hollywood's new one-man conflagration." As this narration takes place we see her with the two men, dancing with Aherne, spinning and clowning. Parker stands in a doorway. She puts a rose in her teeth, Aherne has her scarf around his backside. The trailer wipes to a long shot of Russell introducing Parker's character on a stairway to a big group at the bottom of the stairs (again, MOS). A title (the film's title) is accompanied by a fanfare, marking the trailer's shift to a description of the story.

Of the three clips selected to play under the foregoing narration, two represent Russell as the center of attention of a group of people, and in the third she clowns romantically with one of the film's men, apparently for the benefit of the other, who watches. She is seen at once as commanding of attention for what she says and as the object of the (primarily male) gaze—a somewhat atypical combination for classical era trailers (in which even smart-mouthing women in screwball or sophisticated comedies often tended to be shown in more romantic situations). And Willard Parker, the gazer in one clip, is simultaneously identified as himself the subject of the implied audience's desiring gaze ("one-man conflagration"). The narrator continues, over a shot of Russell and others talking in an office, "Rosalind is a genius at managing everybody's business but her own. The smartest woman who never got kissed." The narration thus neatly and quickly recuperates the apparent anomaly of Russell's take-charge persona by assigning her (here a conflated star-character amalgam) the stereotype of the sexually-frustrated

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businesswoman. The narration's line, "The smartest woman who never got kissed" is as succinct a statement of this stereotype as they come, incorporating an enthymeme which (defying the sentence's actual grammatic meaning) implies an inevitable causal chain (the missing term: smart women never do). Yet the line sets up through the rhetoric of story the idea that the film will alter this initial state of affairs.

After the office clip, we see Russell in a romantic clinch with someone (unidentifiable), looking at the man and resisting the embrace. "She starts the world's greatest manhunt to find a new screen star, and what she digs up proves too hot to handle." We see her from behind, flanked by two men, flipping through large pictures of men. Then she is seen sitting on a sofa with two men, one of whom slaps her on the knee. Here we find out that Russell is endowed not only with personal agency, but also with cinematic agency, as a (fictive) starmaker. The star she narratively "makes" is implicitly conflated with the film's actual star, in that the man the trailer subsequently reveals to be "too hot to handle" is played by Parker—the "one-man conflagration." The trailer thus establishes a melodrama of stardom's volatility as a disruptor of business-as-usual, both narratively (in that Parker's character is thus constructed as romantically combustible) and implicitly for audiences (in that Parker as asserted as a combustible star presence for audiences).

There is a diagonal wipe to a dialogue scene. Aherne is acting out a hypothetical romantic scenario with Russell, saying, "and a woman you love is standing next to you. And your arms are around her. You pretend to want to kiss her. And you'd kiss her as you're holding her. Like this!" They embrace and kiss, and the trailer cuts to a shot of Parker seated, watching with a snifter of brandy. Music swells. The narrator returns:

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"Well, says Brian, she can dish it out all right, but can she take it?" We see another shot of their embrace, which wipes to a shot of Aherne grabbing Russell by the shoulders. We see him in medium shot: "What's your next impulse, Miss Ainslee? Why, to get into his arms, isn't it? Yes! And then what? The next, natural, compelling thing. Why this, isn't it?" Russell and Aherne fall into an embrace, she pulls away and looks at him. This segment continues the trailer's layerings of multiple dimensions of stardom, desire, and show business: Aherne's enacting of a hypothetical (thus fictional) romantic clinch with Russell—for an audience of one (the film's potential star discovery) seems to hit a nerve, the fiction appearing to drop away (creating an enigma as to the nature of Russell's feelings). And over this the narrator cements for audiences the transparency between the stars and their characters by addressing Ahern's *character* by his *star* name. The segment's layered dynamics of make-believe feelings appearing to become authentic feelings, of star becoming character, and of all this being performed for a profilmic audience, invite audiences in this trailer's melodrama of stardom to feel privy to the stars' acknowledged fictional activities paradoxically appearing true. What Russell is implied to have to "handle," or "take," is the heat of true love. The distance pole of the melodrama of stardom's closeness/distance oscillation is thus erased by this trailer's promotion of its film as a massive dropping-away of artifices and barriers leading to an implied and "authentic" happy ending to which audiences are invited.

The trailer wipes to a group scene. Parker says, "I came down here to confirm my engagement to Miss Ainslee. And it's confirmed." The trailer cuts to men approaching her at the stairway, "Congratulations Miss Ainslee!" "Miss Ainslee, you sure picked a good one!" Russell replies, "Yes, he'll be great in the pot." There is a wipe to a title:

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"Head-over-heels in laughs again!" The music swells. We see Aherne and Russell smiling at each other. The trailer continues to sustain the enigma of which man Russell will end up with, while reiterating her primary star appeal as "head over heels in laughs" over and above love. (While alluding to Russell's past comedic roles and thus serving to promote the star, the pun operates neatly within the rhetoric of genre as well, merging romance and comedy.)

The trailer wipes to a close-up of Russell on the phone, with her identificatory title superimposed, followed by another title: "Never better... never funnier." There is a wipe to a shot of Aherne (his identificatory title superimposed) seated in a hat, lighting his pipe. A title reads, "Dry ... Droll ... Delightful!" The trailer then wipes to Parker leaning over Russell on a sofa, and a title which, interestingly, seems to deliberately compare Parker to some sort of less animate advertised product (echoing cigarette or drink ads): "With Willard Parker—smooth ... and so satisfying!" Each identificatory title for the three principal stars is accompanied by a hyperbolic phrase focused on the star persona of each (rather than characterological elements). The trailer cuts to Aherne at the bottom of the staircase, and Russell walks into the frame: "Now what are *you* doing here?" "I'm the best man." A title reads: "In a gay, enchanting, exhilarating comedy." She's pulled into a room by Aherne in a dressing gown. Next we see a generalizing shot of her with four others talking as a title, "Irving Cummings' What a Woman. Columbia" is superimposed.

This finale's apparent comparison of the trailer with other types of ads, and of its male star with other types of products, serves to culminate the trailer with an unusually candid admission of the role of stars as consumables in the classical era, and goes hand-

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in-hand with this romantic comedy trailer's earlier erasures of distance between implied audiences and its stars. More than most, the trailer represents the melodrama of stardom in the classical era as an accessible commodity, a "satisfying" feast of stars (who, once "conflagrated," are "dished out," "in the pot") that audiences can readily consume for the price of a ticket. Although the trailer was made at the height of pre-targeting appeals to universal audiences (and although it strongly evidences appeals to men), in the context of the film's wartime release, it can nonetheless perhaps be considered as attempting largely to satisfy America's newly autonomous yet male-deprived female population's assumed hungers on a number of levels (for a "hot" man, for independence and autonomy, for a career, for connection to Hollywood...). As such it makes visible a specific type of audience address within the rhetoric of stardom that is present in less obvious forms in other trailers of the time.

Classical trailers often offer stars to audiences almost without needing to individualize them—even when the film being promoted isn't "about" stardom, often it is the *idea* of stars that is being promoted, with specific individuals and their conventional typages plugged into the templates. Stardom, the supposedly desirable human embodiment of the tinsel-draped world of Hollywood, is itself more often assumed to be the object of desire and identification than the gendered individuals inhabiting it. For promoters in an era in which audiences experienced unprecedented economic hardships while the movie industry experienced its apex of popularity, assumptions that audiences held contradictory attitudes towards these human embodiments of success and glamour was perhaps an effective way to forestall wholesale envy and resentment and keep people

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coming to the movies. Classical trailers reflect studio assumptions that the best ways to make audiences want stars were either to offer them outright as commodities that can be had by seeing the film (as in the *What a Woman* trailer), or more frequently, to remind audiences that they can't *really* have them. What they can have, over and over again, is an ongoing melodrama in which these stars' qualities, relationships, and/or places within a star system serve to embody the ever-changing yet enduring pulse of desire itself.

The Transitional Era: Stars Sell Individuality

Following the Paramount Consent Decrees, stars were no longer bound to single studio contracts, and by the time of the box office crisis of the 1950s, the studios were both looking for new stars and making efforts to configure new ways stars could draw audiences (lured away from moviegoing by television and the appeals of suburban life) to films. Furthermore, the period's trend away from studio formulas and toward more adult themes was complemented by changes in performance styles and an increased interest in "gritty realism," influenced by the rise of method acting and the popularity of stars like Marlon Brando and James Dean. The 1960s, in which the industry moved from the economic reliance of the Hollywood studios on their major big-budget "roadshow" films in the early years of the decade to a smaller-budget "renaissance" inspired by the success of film such as *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider* in the later '60s, demonstrated a deeper questioning of how to appeal to increasingly segmented audiences. Again, the transitional era is marked by a confusion in how to promote films and their stars: while innovations in performance and other shifts in the discourse of stardom were acknowledged in trailers' address to audiences, many characteristics of classical era trailers, such as the reliance on

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the appeal of stars based on their past performances, were still operative. However, the melodrama of stardom is now increasingly focused on the individual characteristics and ideological significance of specific stars, on whom rests a greater responsibility for a film's success than in the more heavily systematized era of the studio "stables."

The trailer for *All About Eve* (1950) was made on the cusp of the transitional era, and its address to audiences bears evidence of new appeals as well as those of classical trailers. The version I saw is a post-Academy Awards rerelease trailer which promotes the film's success at the Oscars, but like most rerelease trailers, it appears to have merely inserted the award information into the original theatrical trailer. Like the trailer for *Dinner at Eight*, it promotes an ensemble cast, and also like that trailer as well as the one for *What a Woman*, it has an overdetermined focus on stardom (promoting both its stars and stardom as the film's subject matter). And like the *History is Made at Night* trailer, it steps outside the usual clip-with-commentary mode to appeal to audience interest in going "behind the scenes" to the promotional world of Hollywood in ways that make it a "troubled trailer" (a limit case that serves to highlight contradictions present in more subtle forms in typical trailers). However, the clips selected to promote the film and its stars give evidence that the trailer "thinks it's talking to" a different audience than the earlier three trailers.

The trailer opens with a shot of a collage of *Newsweek* magazine covers with a woman on the cover, as a title fades in over it, growing until we can read: "Scoop! Bette Davis tells Newsweek Magazine *All About Eve*." Over a long shot of Davis and a man seated on a sofa, a title reads "Reporter Leonard Slater interviews famous actress on the

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set." The reporter asks, "Miss Davis, ever since I've been on the set I've heard nothing but discussion of Eve. May I have your opinion of her?" Davis responds, "The golden girl, the cover girl, the girl next door, the girl on the move. Time's been very good to Eve, life goes where she goes. She's been profiled, covered, revealed, reported. What she wears, and where and when, whom she knows, where she was, and when and where she's going. Eve has insatiable ambition and talent. An improbable person with a contempt for humanity, an inability to love or be loved." The reporter retorts, "But how can such a woman fool so many?" Davis replies, "How does *any* Eve do it?"

This specially shot scene inhabits a peculiar position in that while positioned as a behind-the-scenes vignette, with "Miss Davis" clearly represented in her own star persona rather than that of her actress character Margo Channing, the *Newsweek* interview is a fictional promotional ruse, and Davis speaks of the fictional character Eve as if she were a real person—discussing her more or less as Davis's Margo Channing would speak of her. The scene deliberately plays with the "edge" the rhetoric of stardom inhabits between fictional narrative and the promotional world of Hollywood, and it makes a clear assumption that audiences are comfortable slipping back and forth between seeing stars in character and in their star personae.[9]

Moreover, when Davis says, "She's been profiled, covered, revealed, reported," the line applies to the activity being filmed for the trailer as well, creating a reverberating commentary about stardom as it applies to both the film diegesis and the main star, Davis, herself. The desirability of such exposure and the negative consequences of ambition are assumed in this pseudo-interview to be understood to go hand-in-hand, and are linked to an inevitability that is defined as feminine by the enthymeme contained in

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Davis's final line, "How does any Eve do it?" ("Eve," this rhetoric asserts, signifies Biblical Eve, and the line implies that there are many like her. The enthymeme's missing term is that the movie's Eve, like her Edenic ancestor, is a temptress.) The line thus disavows Davis's own "Eve-ness" while asserting the ubiquity of this type of woman. The multi-layered referentiality of this scene's commentary on stardom makes the trailer—like the film itself—a limit case of Hollywood's image of its own operations, and a fitting paradigm of how transitional era studios saw audiences' interest in stars.

On the heels of this line, the trailer moves immediately into dialogue scenes, which are constructed as a series of examples to back up Davis's statements, and answer her final question, "How does any Eve do it?" The first is a clip of Davis with Gary Merrill, as she remarks, "... a girl of so many rare qualities." Merrill retorts, "So she seems." Davis continues sarcastically, "So you've pointed out, so often. So many qualities, so often... Her loyalty... and so young. So young and so fair." Davis walks away from him. A square wipe moves the trailer to a clip from a scene with Davis and George Sanders: "She's my understudy. Didn't you know?" "Of course I knew." Then the trailer cuts to Anne Baxter (Eve) and Merrill, who says to her, "What I go after I want to go after. I don't want it to come after me." Baxter looks angry. These three clips serve primarily expository functions, communicating to audiences through the rhetoric of story that Bette Davis is jealous of Eve/Anne Baxter's apparent hold on Merrill, the implication that Baxter is machinating to replace her in a role, and that Baxter's attempt to ply her feminine wiles on Merrill doesn't seem to work. At the same time, the inclusion of emotionally rich dialogue scenes featuring Davis emphatically asserts her star power by

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highlighting her performance as complex. (In the process, these clips provide evidence to back up Davis's claim in the trailer's framing structure that Eve is an "Eve.")

We next see Davis in the now-famous party scene standing at the stairway addressing Baxter as the rest watch: "And please stop acting as though I were the Queen Mother." Eve replies, "I'm sorry," and Merrill interjects, "Outside of a beehive, Margot, your behavior wouldn't be considered either queenly or motherly." Davis retorts, "You're in a beehive, pal, didn't you know? We're all busy little bees, full of sting and making honey day and night, aren't we, honey." Then, in a clip from a different scene, Celeste Holm appears to give a pseudo-critique of Davis's foregoing speech as she remarks to one of the men in a two shot in front of a fireplace, "Very touching, very Academy-of-Dramatic-Art." He responds, "That bitter cynicism of yours is something you've acquired since you left Radcliffe." Holm replies, "That cynicism you refer to, I acquired the day I discovered I was different from little boys." There is another square wipe to a shot of Davis, who says, "I admit, I've had better days, but I'm still not to be had for the price of a cocktail, like a salted peanut." Holm is next seen laughing at a dinner table where four are seated. "What's so funny?" "Nothing ... Everything. Everything's so funny."

This group of clips, arrayed one after another in a bracket syntagma (or montage of clips exemplifying a general concept non-chronologically) which displays the film's sophisticated dialogue without significant expository value, functions primarily as evidence of the intensity and fire of the film's performances. The sarcastic, "adult" flavor of the performances and dialogue glimpsed in the clips differentiates the film from classical era treatments of the subject matter (such as the dialogue excerpted in the *Dinner at Eight* trailer). If stars, as this trailer implies, no longer command audience

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loyalty by virtue of their earlier successes alone (both extratextually, because they are no longer "branded" by individual studios, and intratextually, where as the trailer demonstrates, the predicament of aging stars is an element of the plot of *All About Eve*), they do so by the virtuosity of their edgy performances. Central to this trailer, of course, is Bette Davis's multi-layered commentary on stardom. Her ultimately victorious battles with Jack Warner for the control of her acting choices inevitably reverberate in the trailer's inclusion of the "salted peanut" line. Ringing in the method-heavy fifties, the film and the trailer pave the way for new assumptions about what audiences want in their stars.

Following this series of clips, the trailer begins to wrap up: music swells as we cut to a close up of Eve Harrington's award plaque surrounded by flowers, which serves as a backdrop for summary titles. The film title is superimposed, along with "winner of 6 Academy Awards, 1950.[10] The trailer cuts to a silent shot of Davis at the dinner table, music over, as titles continue to be superimposed: "including Best Picture, Best Direction and Screenplay—Joseph L. Mankiewicz." Davis turns away a bottle offered her. The image cuts to George Sanders and a young woman against a caricatured poster of Margo Channing: "Best Supporting Actor, George Sanders. Best Costume Design. Best Sound Recording." The shot remains as the titles leave the frame, and Sanders walks the woman away from the poster. The dominance of rapidly juxtaposed graphic signifiers of stardom and success (the plaque, flowers, bottle and poster) in this summary sequence adds an element to the trailer's melodramatic flair: like the frequently piquant use of objective correlatives in the melodramas of Douglas Sirk, such markers here, on the heels of the

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trailer's intimations of the problems stardom brings, are doubly weighted as signifiers not only of the prizes of fame but its price.

There is a cut to a wide shot of the star ensemble—the three couples, smiling and walking arm in arm on the studio lot. Main cast titles are superimposed: Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, George Sanders, Celeste Holm. They walk forward accompanied by music, on the unidentified and otherwise unpopulated film lot—reminding audiences of stars' new status as independent producers untethered to studios (they walk down the street like they own it). In conjunction with Bette Davis's earlier role in defining the film for audiences in the framing sequence, this shot helps create an impression of star omnipotence, of movies as the product of stars alone. Two diamond wipes then take us to a long shot of the set staircase with all seated on the stairs, the film title superimposed. Then another kind of triangle wipe reveals the four seated at the set dinner table as the music crescendos and titles are superimosed: "All About Eve is all about women... and their MEN!" In the final medium shot, we watch Celeste Holm laugh again, this time without sound.

Aside from the public relations shot of the cast, the final, dialogue-less clips in the trailer all exemplify the film's principal settings, delineating its dominant generic register of drawing-room melodrama while keeping the focus more on stars than on genre. Likewise, the final title's expository vagueness tells us that it's the stars we'll want to come see more than any specific story premise. At the same time, the trailer's offering of a film that is "all about women... and their men" implies that, through virtuoso star performances, we learn things about both stardom and human nature (and the visual coda of Celeste Holm's cynical laugh tells us that what we're going to learn won't be pretty).

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Nonetheless, having been introduced to the film by Bette Davis's own commentary on it, the trailer assumes audiences still want to venerate stars, no matter how ruthlessly the film critiques their ambitions.[11] Like the *Dinner at Eight* trailer, this one consistently appeals to a contradictory attitude towards stardom on the part of audiences. But unlike the earlier trailer, stars themselves are celebrated as participants in the making of their own performances and images, thus implying a deeper self-awareness than previously.

This trailer can be seen as a melodramatic text representing the promotional world of Hollywood as one which excites and repels audiences. Acting in front of audiences is, again, an overdetermined feature of the trailer, from the framing sequence where Bette Davis is mock-interviewed for an implied audience of *Newsweek* readers, to the clips of flamboyantly delivered dialogue that, as characters themselves remark, often seems designed for a theatrical audience even when it's ostensibly not. This self-awareness both invites and excludes audiences, attributing to them an insider's perspective on theatrical performance yet at the same time representing that world as one from which audiences might be just as happy to be excluded. The trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience who wants stars to be more than just studio stable mares, and who, more like theater audiences, craves virtuoso performances. Stars, it would seem, have more to prove to such an audience than in the classical era, and the trailer's compensatory attempts to explain the film's characters by way of a pseudo-journalistic interview would appear to be part of that effort.

The trailer for Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1963) works a strong appeal to audience interest in its stars into a trailer that is otherwise typical of the spectacle-driven promotion

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of Hollywood historical epics. As Justin Wyatt points out, the prevalence of larger scale films on the order of *Cleopatra* can be seen both as a product of the conglomeration of the film industry during the 1960s, and a reaction to the television crisis (its effect still felt by the industry in the '60s):

> After the success of an increasing number of large-scale films during the 1950s, in the early '60s, the studios began to focus on the large-scale, roadshow picture as the anchor of their distribution schedules. In many respects, the roadshow picture can be seen as another attempt to present film as different from television—or, to be more precise, as bigger, grander, and more spectacular than television. Roadshowing, with the advance, reserved seating, limited showings, and "epic" film subjects, attempted to shift the act of moviegoing into a special occasion: an event.[12]

Known primarily in hindsight as the film that almost bankrupt Twentieth Century-Fox, *Cleopatra* made headlines at the time both as the source of Hollywood's first million dollar salary for a star, and for the offscreen scandal of Elizabeth Taylor's and Richard Burton's extramarital affair on the set. Indeed, as Aida Hozic argues, by signifying "the return of sentiment into 'the business,'" ushering in the era of franchise marketing and the star/personality driven brand-name logic that comes to dominate the contemporary industry, "Taylor and Burton's love affair punctured the motion pictures' diegetic universe and brought to light an important shift in power relations within the

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American film industry."[13] The trailer, however, evidences more than anything producers' hopes that the scandal would primarily add to audience interest in watching Elizabeth Taylor express sexuality on the screen.

Like those for transitional era films in other spectacle-oriented genres (such as the science fiction films that emerged in the fifties), trailers for historical epics retained a number of conventional features of classical era trailers—but by the '60s, however, more or less endowed with a certain edge of self-awareness. There is a greater preponderance of classical era-style wipes and monumental titles than are found in early '60s trailers for most other genres, stretched out to fit the widescreen format of most Hollywood historical epics. The trailers thus tended to identify and promote the genre *per se* through the consistency of these conventions, which have the effect of branding the historical epic as a clearly mapped out territory. Moreover, the leaking of outside narratives into the film's historical narrative, such as happened during the production of *Cleopatra*, can be seen itself as characteristic of the Hollywood historical epic's "narrative construction of general historical eventfulness," as Vivian Sobchack has noted. [14] "In its elevation of elements of the film's historical narrative to yet another discursive level, the genre expands and extends the temporality of 'ordinary' textuality into an extensive and excessive temporality which literally transcends the film frame, the text, and the time of the spectator's immediate presence to the film in the theater."[15] This trailer appeals strongly to interest in the genre as well as the film's stars (particularly Elizabeth Taylor's star quality), but the interaction between the two appeals makes it an interesting "troubled trailer," one which elucidates by its excesses some of the contradictions of transitional era star promotion.

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The trailer opens with a crowd scene, and the word "NOW!" in big yellow letters emerges and zooms out, followed by another: "For all the world to see!" We hear a trumpet fanfare as about a dozen mounted trumpeters ride through the crowd in two rows. A curtain wipe opens to another crowd scene as people surround the statue of a sphinx. The pageantry of the royal procession is linked to audiences' assumed interest in the film by the trailer's significant featuring of a large pro-filmic audience (Hollywood's stereotypical "cast of thousands" who as always, mill about in historical epics), by the trumpet fanfare (reminding Fox audiences of their accustomed auditory entry into this studio's films) and by the title proclaiming "for all the world to see." A title crawl reads: "The most highly acclaimed... most widely discussed entertainment in the history of the screen! Cleopatra!" The camera pans over the scene in extreme long shot. The crawl continues, "Never before has a spectacle been more carefully, lavishly, stunningly produced.—Life Magazine." The trailer first acknowledges the film's heavy "buzz" factor, then immediately recuperates any negative connotations of the film being "widely discussed" by its inclusion of the *Life Magazine* quote.

As we see a medium shot of Elizabeth Taylor followed by various other images, the narration begins: "Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra—siren of the Nile. Her stunning beauty and notorious intrigue turned the tide of civilization." A group of men is seen, one saying, "In obtaining her objectives, Cleopatra has been known to employ torture, poison, and even her own sexual talents, which are said to be considerable." The narrator continues, "Richard Burton as Marc Antony. Brash, impetuous leader of once-invincible legions; dreaded adversary on the field of battle." We see clips of battle scenes. "But a pawn in the arms of this woman." We see them in a clinch as they kiss, then Burton says,

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"All that I shall ever want to hold or look upon or have or be is here, now, with you." In another angle, from behind, Taylor says, "Remember, remember. I don't want you to forget me, please." "Forget? I could never be more far away from you than this." They kiss again. A "siren" of "considerable sexual talents," Cleopatra, and Elizabeth Taylor along with her, are assumed to be sexual predators, with Antony/Burton merely their "pawn." (While the affair of course involved both married stars, Taylor's connection with the scandal is implied by the trailer's focus on her sexuality while Burton's is not.) The inclusion of Taylor's plea to Burton to "remember" her layers into the romantic dialogue the common trailer appeal to audiences' future memories of the films they haven't yet seen, and the trailer's equation of Taylor with sexuality and scandal has ensured that audiences will remember her and the film regardless of how it is ultimately regarded.

The narrator resumes, "Rex Harrison as Julius Caesar, who ruled half the world by sheer might." We see clips from a fire scene and a battle. "But Caesar's dream of conquest"—Caesar unrolls a rug revealing Taylor inside it, who looks up at him—"included the ambitious Cleopatra at his side." We see them together in medium long shot, and Taylor is saying, "Do as you say, literally? As if I were something you had conquered?" Harrison replies, "If I choose to regard you as such." "Am I to understand that you feel free to do with me whatever you want whenever you want?" "Yes, I want that understood." They kiss, and music swells as the film title flops over, accompanied by a credit for director Joseph Mankiewicz. Cleopatra's/Taylor's predatory abilities are countered by this series of clips implying male dominance of her, topped off by the directorial credit which underscores another level of male "conquest" of Taylor.

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The trailer cuts to a scene of Taylor with the Roman Pro-Consul, whom she tells, "You will kneel." He replies, "You dare ask the Pro-Consul of Rome..." she retorts, "I *asked* it of Julius Caesar. I *demand* it of you." We then see a clip of a scene between Taylor and Harrison, as he says, "I have no son." Taylor replies, "I will bear many children. Isis has told me. My breasts are filled with love and life." She puts his hand on one. "My hips are rounded and far apart. Such women, they say, have sons." Music swells, they kiss. Here, Cleopatra/Taylor is seen in juxtaposed clips that emphasize one moment her (public) power to rule men and the next her (private) sexual power to create them. The clinch scenes, following on the heels of demonstrations of Cleopatra/Taylor's imperiousness, seem positioned to recuperate her public persona into a private, romantic one—and as the foregoing clips have emphasized, one that *can* be dominated by men but still serves to signify the fulfillment of their desires.

Next we see several crowd scenes, including the stabbing of Julius Caesar, followed by another extreme long shot of the parade scene from early in the trailer. Titles resume as the trailer shows several brief clips (long shots emphasizing spectacular scenes) in succession, typical of the rhetoric of genre's interweaving of hyperbole and generalization: "A surpassing entertainment, one of the great epic films of our day—New York Times." We see people marching on either side of the sphinx statue. "Cleopatra's triumphal entrance into Rome!" Clips from scenes of dancing girls and dancing Africans are seen, followed by parading equestrian soldiers cheered by onlookers. "Mightiest armies of the age!" The next clip is of men massed at night. "The dreaded Roman Attack!" Then we see more female dancing in skimpy clothing. "The Festival of Bacchus!" Ships are seen at battle: one on fire, one ramming another as men jump

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overboard. "The Battle of Actium!" A golden ship is seen. "Cleopatra's fabled Golden Barge!" We then see a group of Africans assembled to greet Taylor. "The Spectacle of Spectacles!" Then we see her being borne on a float in the parade, as distant people cheer her and the film title is superimposed. A soft-edged iris shot of Taylor and Burton kissing is inset into this shot. She is on top as she kisses him. The iris shrinks out of the frame and we see the title and the cheering crowds as the trailer ends.

Clearly the event of Taylor's stardom is positioned as the film's biggest draw, in conjunction with its epic trappings. Furthermore, the trailer's plethora of kisses, clinches and sexually charged dialogue demonstrate that trailermakers assumed audiences wanted to watch Taylor behaving scandalously, and thus that audiences really wished they could witness the "real" affair. Hozic states,

> The love affair between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton that nearly destroyed 20th Century Fox ... represented an element of unscripted reality that burst into the tightly controlled environment of the Hollywood studio system. It was an act of emotional emancipation, both for the actors and for the audiences, similar in its potential effects to a character's walking out of the cinema screen and taking off his costume.[16]

The film's producers, apparently recognizing the promotional power of such an emancipation, gave audiences what they could of the flavor of the illicit in the trailer. The interpenetration of public and private discourses implied in the star romance is duplicated in the trailer's frequent juxtaposition of scenes of public, epic adoration of the queen and

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private adoration of her, with the final iris insert emphasizing the ultimate dominance of the private—scenes to which we, the film audience, and not the "casts of thousands" who throng the streets, are privy. The trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience who, less ambivalently than in the classical era, would like to break the barrier that separates stars off from them—an audience who enjoys both seeing, and being reminded by trailers that stars behave in ways that transgress their supposed positions within the (rapidly transforming) Hollywood star system. Such scandals, of course, were incorporated within the star system even earlier, in extratextual publicity, but rarely were they seen to leak into *trailers'* assumptions about what audiences wanted from stars. Like the iris shot proclaiming that Cleopatra's acts of love as a woman triumph over the pageantry of her royal stature, audiences are now assumed to want to see the "real" star more than the ballyhoo. In the 1960s, trailers' "rhetoric of authenticity" (as Richard Dyer called the star promotional dynamic) is charged to convey a more "real," or perhaps "mightier" star melodrama, commensurate with both the spectacle of the roadshow event movie and increased visibility of sexuality in the public sphere. And following 1963, aspects of stars' extratextual and "private" lives are indeed more visible, whether overtly or subtextually, in the trailer sample, such as the following (more overt) example.

The trailer for *Paper Moon* (1973) is exemplary as a Hollywood "renaissance" revisioning of classical Hollywood conventions as well as promotional conventions. The behind-the-scenes glimpses of intergenerational star rapport mirror the trailer's and film's quotational mode (common among the "movie brat" filmmakers of the '70s), enabling the familial relationship between stars Ryan O'Neal and his young daughter Tatum to

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contribute to the promotion of the film's second-generation homages to early Hollywood filmmaking. The black and white cinematography, Depression-era subject matter, and the montage of screwball comedy clips all contribute to a nostalgic trailer which strongly promotes the film's genre, while the behind-the-scenes footage of the two stars counterbalances the genre rhetoric with a star-based family narrative. The trailer's use of rapid montage and multiple "grids" foreshadows contemporary era comedy trailers, while the on-set footage follows a tradition of cinema vérité more characteristic of transitional era conventions.[17] Trailers' use of behind-the-scenes footage, as we have seen, predates the transitional era, but this trailer's incorporation of documentary conventions of its time is stylistically quite different from the earlier examples, and its sustained articulation of the film's production dynamics make it a fascinating "troubled trailer," spotlighting the contradictory impact of some of the era's innovative promotional efforts.

The trailer opens with a fade in to an establishing shot of Ryan and Tatum O'Neal driving across flat plains as she sings, "Keep your sunny side up" and he looks annoyed. A narrator's voice-over says, "Kansas, 1936," and as the trailer cuts to a long shot of Ryan O'Neal loading cases of liquor into their car, continues, "... Out of the worst days of the Depression comes the adventures of two unlikely con artists, Mose Pray and his companion, Addie Loggins." Music accompanies their getaway and police cars approach and trap them, O'Neal protesting his innocence. With this energetic introduction, the film's nostalgic *mise en scène* and its generic status (screwball buddy comedy) are immediately legible.

The trailer then switches gears, presenting a medium shot of Ryan O'Neal in the car as a crew member holds a camera slate in the frame and claps it. The narrator

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continues, "Ryan O'Neal is Mose Pray." We then see a medium shot of O'Neal at a breakfast table, in deep focus, other people at tables in the background. As he fiddles with his waffle, the narrator adds jokingly, "His most challenging film role." O'Neal folds the waffle using his hands, as crew members laugh offscreen. "Keep rolling! I got it," he insists, frowning. The trailer cuts to a medium close-up of Tatum O'Neal holding a cigar box in a store doorway, as the shot is being slated. She looks up and offscreen at the crew member whose arms we see holding the slate. The narrator continues, "Tatum O'Neal, daughter of Ryan O'Neal, is Addie Loggins." The slate is removed and she shrugs. The scene returns to the breakfast table shot, as Tatum enters, smoothing down her hair, and the narrator adds, "her very first film role." She approaches Ryan with her arms outstretched in a dance-like walk, then sits and looks at him—the two are in profile—and says "howdy." Ryan responds, "howdy," and a phone rings. She starts to say something, and he says, "get the phone." Tatum cracks up, and we hear people in the background laugh, as a crew member answers the phone. Tatum puts her head down on the table, and Ryan puts his fork down and strokes her hair. The slapstick of the first clips seems to leak "backstage" as the star/family (seated at a meal—an archetypal family situation) collapses in laughter at the movie set chaos.[18]

The positioning and length of this sequence demonstrate that the producers consider the father-daughter star relationship crucial to the film's success. While the trailer's nostalgic mode and child star actor have already implicitly evoked comparisons to that other pixie of Depression-era comedy, Shirley Temple, the trailer takes pains to emphasize a different approach to child actors. Unlike Temple, whose relationship to the work of filmmaking was, as Charles Eckert put it, to censor or conceal it, Tatum's

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presence on the set inspires a recruiting of the backstage production discourse for promotional purposes; in Temple's films, Eckert argues, "both love and work are abstracted from all social and psychological realities. They have no causes; they are unmotivated. They appear in Shirley merely as prodigious innate capacities...".[19] Tatum, however, is securely anchored both to her father and to the film's production, serving not to transport a Depression audience out of economic powerlessness, but to reassure a '70s audience, by way of Depression nostalgia, about the endurance of the "authentic" father/daughter bond between the stars through the chaos of a movie set, and thus of the endurance of family values in a time of rapid social transformation.

We then see a close-up of a radio as we hear Jack Benny's voice. As the camera dollies out to a long shot of Tatum on a bed listening to the radio, the narrator explains, "This is the Peter Bogdanovich production, Paper Moon." We see Bogdanovich and the policeman slating a shot of the car, and Bogdanovich slams his fingers in the slate and mimes pain (alerting us that the efforts to construct the behind-the-scenes footage as slapstick are deliberate). A boom mike lowers into the scene. The trailer cuts to a shot of a door being knocked on, as the narrator adds, "... or, as P.T. Barnum put it, 'there's a sucker born every minute.'" The O'Neals selling Bibles is shown, interrupted at intervals by full screen titles, "The Director's Company Presents ..." as well as a title with Art Deco lettering, "A Peter Bogdanovich Production." The scene returns as the sheriff steps closer into the shot, asking, "What company you say you was from?" The trailer's juxtaposition of production footage with a clip that references P.T. Barnum and "suckers" links the con artistry of the film's protagonists to that of the production ballyhoo, overdetermining the idea of film as con job and movie stars (specifically the two

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O'Neals) as colorful liars. Unlike Shirley Temple, whose role was to intercede with and reform the proletarian con artist,[20] Tatum's character is seen excelling at these activities herself, more like the Dead End kids than Shirley—and a more effective figure to promote a film in era in which audiences are assumed to venerate road rebels, per the foregoing *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969), prime originary films of the Hollywood renaissance.

The trailer cuts to Ryan O'Neal running down a street, and cornered by a sheriff's car. We then see the two O'Neals sitting somberly in the sheriff's office. The song "Paper Moon" begins as a title saying "Ryan O'Neal in Paper Moon" is shown. We hear the song lyrics, and we see the two running down a hallway. The trailer cuts to a scene with Madeleine Kahn leaving a circus, with her identificatory title superimposed, followed by a characterization clip of the three of them in the car with her maid, who says, "Tell him about the time you almost got thrown in jail, Miss Trixie." She turns and stares at the maid. The trailer cuts back to the chase scene and we hear more of the song, followed by another clip from the breakfast table with O'Neal saying "keep rolling, I got it." Then the chase scene is back (the breakfast table behind-the-scenes footage and the chase scene serve as "grids" throughout the trailer) as they race away and the sheriff stands in the way of the car, ending up in the mud.

Interspersed with the chase "grid" is a series of clips that convey expository detail. After a brief dialogue scene between Tatum and her father, we see Tatum in medium long shot sitting up in bed smoking a cigarette, as the narrator identifies the star. The chase "grid" returns as co-star John Hillerman shoots at them from the mud, O'Neal yelling "He's shooting at us!" and Tatum replying (making obvious her character's

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leadership role in the duo), "But they're missing, keep going!" Next the two are seen seated at a meal, O'Neal's character protesting that he's not Tatum's character's father. There is more from the chase, then the two are seen at a fair with a ferris wheel in the background as O'Neal says, "You ain't got to worry, I ain't about to leave some poor little child stranded in the middle of nowhere. I got scruples too, y'know. You know what that is, scruples?" Tatum: "No I don't know what it is, but if you got 'em, you can sure bet they belong to somebody else." The chase "grid" returns, followed by a clip of Madeleine Kahn in medium shot, saying to Tatum, "You're gonna ruin it, ain'tcha?" The trailer returns to the chase "grid," as the car drives around a tractor up a hill. The use of a slapstick "grid" juxtaposed with expositional elements having to do with family dynamics keeps the tone of the trailer comic, while keeping attention focused on the star partnership as a family relationship.

At the breakfast table again, out of character, O'Neal feigns tears and looks at Tatum, "Oh, damn, I can't eat any more of this stuff!"—literally protesting the rigors of his job of creating a fictional character. We hear the crew laughing off screen and Tatum laughs too as she looks up at him in profile. The laughter overlaps into the next scene (back in the fictional world), the final one of the chase "grid," with the car zooming past a pair of cops as the cops stop and turn. Music swells and the film title, director and screenplay credits are shown over the scene. The narrator concludes, "Don't miss this one! From the maker of The Last Picture Show and What's Up, Doc." The trailer cuts to a close-up of Tatum, facing the camera, who says, "You won't be sorry!," raising her eyebrows comically à la Groucho Marx, and the trailer fades out. Tatum gets the final word, in the form of a blatant direct-address "con-job."

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While the work of film production is underlined, not concealed, by this trailer (of course, mostly the fun and charming parts), the role of the backstage "grid" is different from the promotion of the star system in classical era trailers. By incorporating the backstage segments rhythmically rather than setting them apart as instructional, newsreel-like introductions, the "plot" of Ryan O'Neal's relationship with his daughter is available to promote the film as a melodrama of stardom even within a comic trailer. The juxtaposition of the iffy fictional relationship between the two with their "real" one, an evident paragon of togetherness, creates a dynamic of distance and closeness *between* the two stars which aligns with the alternating distance from/closeness to the audience implied by the trailer's repeatedly going backstage. The alternation serves to promote the film as nostalgic for family relationships, melodramatically appealing at once to daughters who long to heal relationships with distant fathers and fathers wishing to revisit failures with their daughters.

Tatum's final appeal functions as the ultimate sales pitch for a skeptical 1972 audience—successful because of, not in spite of, the recognition that we are being hustled. The trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience more interested in breaking the barrier between stars and audiences than ever, and more interested in and savvy about filmmaking than ever (by now, for example, directors, too are visible as stars). In the Hollywood renaissance environment, the audience has proven itself a more surprising arbiter of film content than had been thought, and this trailer's experimental blending of standard fictional clips and documentary-style behind-the-scenes footage is in keeping with the spirit of the times. Yet regardless of whether audiences are included in the backstage joke, the promotional dynamics that guarantee we are viewing stars not as

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authentic persons but within a "rhetoric of authenticity" are still always at work. Tatum's final direct-address Groucho imitation may be disarming, but it's also classic P.T. Barnum puffery, and is a fitting wrap-up for a trailer that displays the new levels and types of promotional effort that went in tandem with the nostalgic tenor of the films made by Hollywood renaissance directors—some of whom were soon to dominate the blockbuster era box office.

The rhetoric of stardom, like those of genre and story, has less clearcut dimensions during the transitional era, as studios and trailermakers experiment with how to appeal to audiences' interest in stars, now playing new roles in a rapidly changing Hollywood economy. Like *All About Eve*'s trailer, many fifties trailers emphasized the stars' performances over their "type," and new performance styles were often promoted as a way to differentiate the film. The new styles were also called into service to differentiate the capacities of film in general to offer more "adult" themes than television, contributing to redefined appeals to audience interest in the star system. Like the *Cleopatra* trailer, (and whether through appeals to audience interest in star quality or relationality or both), many sixties trailers promoted stars' sexuality as a strong feature of their films' appeal for audiences, in the context of both the lessening of the hold of the Production Code and the increased visibility of sexuality in the broader cultural setting. And like the trailer for *Paper Moon*, later sixties and early seventies trailers were seen to both experiment wildly with trailer form, attempting to use stars to hold the attention of an audience perceived as unpredictable, and to innovate more integrative features (such as clips broken up into "grids") that would become dominant elements of "New

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Hollywood" promotional formulas—in this case also integrating appeals to audience interest in star quality, relationality, and the star system. Transitional trailers seem to take advantage of the fact that the star system is less visibly a system, to promote stars in new and more individualized ways as embodiments of a more adult, potentially unpredictable medium. Although this increased individuality would appear to break down some of the perceived distance between stars and audiences by allowing greater visibility of quirks and qualities that make them seem even more "like us," the transitional era also saw the promotion of the newly-emergent independent superstar in trailers—a figure whose ubiquity in popular culture more than anything exaggerates his or her unattainability and superhuman status.

The Contemporary Era: Stars Sell Multiplicity

In the contemporary era, stars seem never to exist anywhere *but* within the "house of mirrors" (as Aida Hozic calls it[21]) that is the promotional world of Hollywood—now, of course, expanded to incorporate television, websites, and other media forms. Hozic's article about Elizabeth Taylor concludes that today stars, considered as elements in a broad network of "contemporary visual attractions," do not function as potentially liberatory elements; rather, contemporary star images "are entrapments exactly because they appear liberating."[22] In other words, while stars can control their own images to a greater extent today, those images are still circumscribed—now not by studios but by the degree to which contemporary image culture is overtaken by commercial (and therefore promotional) discourses. Perhaps the reason there are so few trailers that present both film clips and a backstage or institutional Hollywood setting

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in the contemporary era is that today there *is* no backstage, and stars are always already positioned overwhelmingly as commodities within a marketplace rather than as performers playing specific roles.

Within this promotional environment, the melodrama of stardom that trailers assume will draw audiences to movies is—to perhaps an even greater extent than in earlier eras—a story that transcends the individual film the trailer promotes. In the following case studies, the melodrama of stardom no longer assumes audiences are in any way ambivalent about stardom. Trailers consistently assume stars and their celebrity are unambiguously desirable to audiences, although the *ways* they are assumed to be desired can almost always be characterized as multivalent or contradictory. Contemporary trailers are addressed to audiences who are assumed to be interested in viewing star identities no longer as hyperbolic individualities so much as embedded multiplicities. Reading these more extreme cases of multivalent assumptions of audience desires for stars in contemporary trailers contributes to an understanding of the new melodrama of stardom in trailers as a whole.

The trailer for *Caddyshack* (1980), a golf comedy starring Bill Murray wherein promotional discourses are satirized *while* serving their non-satirical purpose to hype the film, demonstrates the emergence of contemporary promotional satire, a more heavily ironic phenomenon than the tame trailer parodies of the transitional era. In this case the trailer satire relies primarily on the rhetoric of stardom (and to a degree, genre). It provides an example of the contemporary era's occasional use of a behind-the-scenes motif—by now almost always limited to comic trailers. This trailer's very crudeness

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enables its film to be adequately promoted to its audience, here a segmented one assumed to want more from members of the stars of *Saturday Night Live*, the vastly popular satirical television show first seen in 1976, two of whose "Not Ready For Prime Time Players" are in the film's ensemble cast. Like other trailers promoting star ensembles, the accumulation of personalities here implies an accumulation of reasons to see the film. This ensemble, seen primarily in special trailer footage, moreover appears to engender a "group sensibility" of zaniness that invites its target audience to "join the club" by seeing the film. The trailer also demonstrates the increasing purchase of television stars as potential cinematic draws in the contemporary era, and a corresponding influence of televisual formats (such as the sketch comedy show) on trailers, a feature that I would argue contributes to the increasingly multivalent quality of contemporary trailers' star appeals.

The trailer opens with a crest of the Bushwood Golf Country Club against a blue background. A narrator begins, "To capture the grandeur of a place like the Bushwood Country Club, to bring the dignity, power, and scope of the game of golf to the screen, it takes a special motion picture—a motion picture like—(we hear sound effects of a golf ball being hit, and a ball imprinted with the film's title bursts through the crest and into the foreground) Caddyshack!" We then see a medium shot of Ted Knight (known primarily as a television comedy star) facing the camera, a display of golf clubs and madras shirts behind him. He says, "It's the *only* funny picture that was ever made." This opening cues us to the trailer's mission (which is as much to satirize trailers as it is to promote its film) by poking fun at overblown trailer narrations, classic trailer graphics with their zooming titles, and excess hyperbole.

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A crewman sitting on a golf green, holding a styrofoam cup with a cigarette dangling from his mouth, is seen in front of a camera scaffold. We see Chevy Chase in sunglasses seated in a sand trap, who leans over the back of his director's chair so that his name can be seen and says (in a tongue-twisted John Lennon-esque satire of classic trailer alliteration), "This is a major motion sickness. It's a very sleazy, frontal, uh, comedy." The trailer cuts to a woman facing the camera in medium shot, who says, "It's great." As we see a crowd running on the golf green, the narrator resumes, "It's dramatic!" The trailer fades to a shot of Bill Murray with an explosive detonator on the golf green in boots and a camouflage bucket hat, with gopher holes all around him. He says, "It's a war story, y'know, men against gophers." As we see a shot of Murray with several women, the narrator adds, "It's romantic." One of the women says, "I didn't tell them about us, or anything like that." Murray says, "Shut up!" and the woman smiles at the camera. This segment, which presents apparently *anti*-promotional images, showing the crew as pathetic slobs and the stars as rampant womanizers, introduces an irreverence that backs up my earlier point that stars and celebrity are unambiguously desirable in the contemporary era—they can thus afford to not "look good" to a new degree in the service of promoting a comedy. By their very blatency, these references assume a sophisticated audience able to "get" the trailer's self-reflexive play on other trailers.

The narrator resumes, "It's symbolic," as we see Chevy Chase in a flowered shirt peering side to side—doing a double-take at the camera. We see Ted Knight, who says, "Not one second in it that has serious under- or overtones." He is holding and fondling two golf balls. We see another woman smile at the camera as the narrator continues, "It's got sex!" The trailer cuts to a medium long shot of Rodney Dangerfield in loud golf

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clothes with a set of clubs, an American flag seen behind him. Dangerfield is saying, "My room was right next door to a Hawaiian couple. All night long I heard the same thing: 'Lou—ow! Lou—ow!'" The narrator resumes, "It's got song." An unshaven Bill Murray, in a slightly low angle medium shot with a reflector screen behind him, sits with his shirt open, scratching behind his ear. He sings a line from a silly song, injecting snorts, raspberries and whistles. By its assumption that tasteless jokes, obvious sexual innuendoes, physical grossness and body noises are appealing to audiences—that is, as long as they're performed by popular comedy stars, this segment appears to make even clearer the film's very specific targeted demographic, the young adult male "couch potatoes" of the late '70s assumed to watch *Saturday Night Live*. At the same time, the juxtaposition of such grossness with the narration's repeated satirical repetition of the "something for everyone" variety show trailer mode ("It's got...") creates a more sophisticated satirical appeal to a larger variety of audiences, in essence congratulating them on their knowledge of classical trailer rhetoric. This trailer lacks the smoothness with which later contemporary trailers manage to target specific audiences while still casting wider nets, but it presents in sharp relief an early contemporary attempt to combine appeals to various audiences. As such it serves a valuable role as a "troubled trailer" for the rhetoric of stardom in the contemporary era.

The narrator adds, "It's got excitement." Bill Murray is seen driving a tractor as Chevy Chase is seen in a sand trap in the background, and the narrator continues, "The first time you'll ever really get to see Chevy Chase and Bill Murray have a fist fight." We see Murray's hands press down on the explosive detonator as the narrator continues, "It's got violence." The trailer cuts to Murray addressing the camera: "I got in a fight with this

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guy in the movie on the set—I pulled a knife on him. Turns out like he's a director or somethin', you know, big shot." This inserted special footage, which demonstrates that part of the joke of the trailer is that the actors are desperately trying to come up with examples to justify the narrator's hyperbolic claims about the film, expands on the trailer's satirical mode, the bogus "behind-the-scenes" clips now accumulating into the trailer's own anarchic narrative within the melodrama of stardom, a sort of Mickey-Mouse-Club-meets-*Mad*-Magazine vision of a movie set.

Murray, in low angle, is seen hitting a golf ball as another man looks on. He is dressed in camouflage green, wearing rubber boots and sunglasses. The narrator continues, "Spectacular costumes!" Knight is then seen, saying in a German accent, "Lots of uniforms and hitting of things!" The narrator adds: "And a musical soundtrack," as we see Murray singing, "Awww, I don't want her, you can have her, she's too fat for me." He puffs his face out and holds his hands wide. Murray's "musical soundtrack," his second tasteless childhood song, adds another level to the trailer's juvenile grossness factor (and thus to its appeal for teenage boys). The film's subsequent success demonstrates that perhaps the trailermakers' assumptions were correct: that Murray et al. could afford to alienate as many potential audience members as possible and still not deter from the large target group of young men for whom such shenanigans were assumed to constitute a refreshing irreverence in 1980.

The trailer then winds up with a series of stills, as the narrator continues, "It's also got, Chevy Chase. Rodney Dangerfield. Ted Knight. Cindy Morgan. Michael O'Keefe [seen clowning with golf balls over his mouth and eyes], and Bill Murray as Carl." We see a still of Murray in the camouflage hat, holding and looking at a scythe blade. The

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trailer cuts to blue background, and a ball with the film title printed on it zooms into the foreground as we hear sound effects of a golf ball being hit. We hear Chevy Chase's voice: "Caddyshack! Better than Caddyshack 2!" This exit line parodies at once the contemporary era's sequel-mania and, interestingly, the anticipatory temporality of trailers noted earlier. Like the trope of "you'll love to remember...," the line places the trailer's assumed audiences in a future time wherein the film—or in this case its imaginary sequel—has been seen.

The trailer's "melodrama of stardom" assumes that closeness to these stars is not something audiences desire—rather, it capitalizes on their distance. In this case it is still of course in part the celestial distance of admiring stars' "big-name" status, but even more it is a distance of excess and outrageousness, evoking the pleasures of watching stars do things that one would only enjoy seeing (if at all...) at the movies. Layered onto this kind of—neither romantically desirable nor identificatory—pleasure of stardom is this trailer's indication of the emergence of postmodern ironic registers (such as the supposedly newly "allowable"—because self-aware—bigotry) within promotional discourses. This is another kind of "distant" pleasure evoked by contemporary cinematic stargazing (and one which I would argue, at least within popular media, has been heavily influenced by *Saturday Night Live* and its forerunner, *The National Lampoon*). These stars contain a built-in multiplicity by virtue of almost never appealing to audience interest in their "authenticity." Both as sketch comics and as fundamentally cynical, or at least satirical, personae, stars such as Bill Murray demonstrate a prevalent contemporary mode of the postmodern star as shifting signifier.[23]

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Ushering in an age of cynical comic star turns that increasingly cross generic lines in the '90s (such as in the 1999 ensemble fantasy-comedy *Mystery Men*, starring such heirs to the postmodern cynical posture as Ben Stiller and Janeane Garofalo), the *Caddyshack* trailer exemplifies the contemporary era's assumptions that at least some audiences now desire not so much to "have" or "be" stars—even "at the movies"—as to be offered by stars new attitudes to life—or perhaps, to act out new attitudes assumed to be held by audiences, in excessive ways that we can't. In contemporary commodified culture, such star discourses lead the way in what trailermakers assume is a strong desire within audiences to take their increasingly complex lives less and less seriously—while spending money to learn from stars how to do so.

The trailer for *Sliver* (1993), a suspense thriller with Sharon Stone, builds on her sexy turn the previous year in *Basic Instinct* (from the same screenwriter). It follows a typical contemporary "mini-movie" format, integrating appeals to audience interest in its story and genre as well as its stars, but the centrality of Stone to the trailer's address is indicated both by its use of the *Basic Instinct* musical score and the frequency of close-ups of her—the film is clearly being promoted as a Sharon Stone vehicle. The images establish the character in her new apartment and identify the film's high concept (is she sleeping with a murderer?), with an acceleration of action in the second half that intensifies the mystery of the killer's identity.[24] The ad campaign made news as "a state-of-the-art exercise in style over substance, in teasing over pleasing,"[25] with Paramount holding back advance previews of the film until the night before it opened, probably in order to minimize bad word-of-mouth for its opening weekend (which seemed to work

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since the film ended up the weekend's top grosser, while amassing a collection of bad reviews). As such a "state-of-the-art" tease, it is an interesting "troubled trailer" for the contemporary rhetoric of stardom precisely for the way in which it attempts to expand and multiply Sharon Stone's star appeal in order to maximize its potential audience.

The trailer opens with a violin and woodwind theme (from the aforementioned *Basic Instinct* score) which begins over the Paramount logo. We see a long shot of Sharon Stone entering an empty apartment with a real estate woman, who is saying, "central air conditioning, absolutely terrific kitchen..." There is a close-up of Stone walking and looking. She says, "I love the view!" and the trailer fades to a POV shot of the view down to the ground from her balcony, with her gloved hands in the extreme foreground as she foreshadowingly removes one leather glove and drops it over the balcony. We watch it flutter down, followed by a close-up of her watching it, and then a series of clips of her moving in (and meeting William Baldwin) as the narrator tells us: "Carly Norris knew what she wanted. A prestigious address..." The opening's emphasis on Stone's entry into the empty apartment serves both to establish her character's subjectivity as the discourse's primary narrative anchor and to signify an inviting beginning for potential audiences—who are assumed to desire to enter the film just as they are assumed to like entering the spacious apartment.

The trailer cuts to a shot from outside her apartment window (we see reflections of another building) of a party she's having, as one of her (female) friends looks in a telescope, shouting, "Oh! They're doing it!" She shakes her hands out excitedly. The narrator continues, "... An incredible view." There is a close-up of Stone coming up behind to look in the telescope and smiling, "Lemme see, lemme see, lemme see." She

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looks through the telescope in extreme close-up. Tom Berenger announces to the other guests, "Would you look at her? She's a voyeur! She can't get enough!" We see William Baldwin in medium long shot as Berenger finishes the line, who looks at her, then looks down, smiling. The plethora of close-ups of Stone's face, many emphasizing her mouth, establish her image as a fetishized one both in an identificatory way and as an object of desire. The representation of her desire to watch, an appeal to (female) audiences to identify with her, is smoothly incorporated with the trailer's assumptions that (male) audiences find Stone desirable. Yet Stone's subjectivity and status as possessor of the gaze are also coopted in this clip by the juxtaposition of shots of her looking with male reactions to her look (naturalizing the perspective that her looking means she must be very sexual).

We next see a black and white extreme close-up of Stone's face, her eyes closed, in the shower, followed by shots of her in black and white on the phone with William Baldwin. Narrator: "But from the moment she moved in... Someone was watching." There is a black and white video shot of a room, then a graphically framed video image of her on the phone is superimposed, and the square enlarges to overtake the image (like a classical era wipe), and what had been a schematized image of rough black and white squares comes into focus (the effect is that the image has "zoomed in" twice). She looks at the camera. This is the first of many clips of the surveillance video graphics prevalent in the film, the inclusion of which—like classical era trailer graphics—serves to distance the trailer from the film's diegesis, calling attention to the screen surface and to the fact that the trailer is a form of packaging for the film, not the film itself.[26]

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There is a sound overlap of Tom Berenger saying, "You can tell me your secrets" as we see Stone turn apprehensively away from the telescope eyepiece (from the party scene: again she is watcher, not "watchee"). Then in close-up, she answers, "What secrets do *I* have?" Berenger, seen in close-up in a watch cap, shakes his head, smiling, "I'd never tell." The narrator continues, "Someone was waiting," as we see roving surveillance camera close-ups in black and white of her body and face in the bathtub. A neighbor is seen telling Stone that the former tenant in her apartment jumped out the window. This segment alludes at once to male fascination with Stone and to her investigative activities, continuing to position her as both object and subject. The trailer cuts to Baldwin grabbing her arm in an elevator and kissing her. The narrator interjects, "Someone..." we see Baldwin smiling in close-up, then Stone in close-up putting her finger in her mouth and sucking it as she raises her eyebrows sexily. "... who knows her fantasies." We see the pair apparently making love, and she tells Baldwin, "I don't want to get hurt." He replies, "I could never hurt you." As we see a tracking shot across a room with a bank of video monitors facing a high backed chair, the narrator continues, "... and sees her every move." One larger monitor shows her in close-up sleeping.

The editing of clips in this segment creates an enthymeme within the rhetoric of story, wherein the audience is assumed to believe Stone is lying when she claims she has no secrets. The dialogue exchange about secrets, juxtaposed with the shot of her sucking her finger as the narrator alerts us that someone knows her fantasies, all rely on a missing assumption that audiences consider sexual activity or sexual feelings as guilty secrets, and Stone is thus positioned as disingenuous and predatorial—as not-innocent. Yet in the next clip, her line "I don't want to get hurt" reverses this, positioning her as a helpless

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victim (neither predator nor empowered investigator). This story enthymeme adds complexity to the rhetoric of stardom, both by its overdetermined focus on the dialectic of performance vs. authenticity, and by underlining the film's perpetuation of Stone's star image as a sexy predator to a greater degree than it advances any sort of new image of her as a sleuth.

A brief montage follows, an extreme close-up of a key in a door, a hooded figure violently moving, a crowd outside the building (including a cop) as Baldwin tells Stone about another murder, a woman is accosted in a stairway, Berenger, in close-up, says "Four people died here in two years," and his line is overlapped with a video image of Stone in close-up, turning to look at something, followed by a low angle shot of an open door slamming shut, then her eye at a door peephole as Berenger continues in voice-over, "What does that tell you?" Here Stone has been re-invited, by another male character, into the investigative game. A brief "grid" intersperses several shots of her being questioned by press outside the building alternately with shots of a woman raising her head and screaming, Stone in the bathtub in black and white close-up, and another bath shot of her.

We see a brief segment wherein Stone tries to reach a neighbor by phone, who we see is dead. Music intensifies as rapid shots are seen of six black and white video monitor images of various apartment interiors, then a close-up of Stone and Baldwin kissing, then a slow dolly in to her eyes looking alarmed at something as the narrator identifies Stone, followed by five more apartment images, then a black and white monitor shot of Baldwin as he is identified by the narrator.

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In color again, a rapidly cut series of enigmatically-oriented action clips show Stone in apparent jeopardy at the hands of either Baldwin or Berenger, each of whom behaves in threatening ways. We then see a shot of the bank of monitors, followed by a single shot of an unknown tenant as the narrator says, "At one thirteen east thirty-eighth street ..." We see several more apartment interiors populated by tenants. The narrator continues, "... the view from the outside is nothing..." we see more interiors, then the cutting from one to the next is accelerated. "... compared to the view ..." The monitors multiply to a split screen image, then a slow tracking shot of the whole bank of monitors, over which is superimposed another shot of the monitors. Then, as the narrator speaks the final word, "... inside," we see a black and white close-up of Stone in profile, who lifts her head to look over her shoulder at the camera, followed by silence and a black screen. The title graphic appears in white on black, with a line through the word *Sliver* horizontally, followed by credits, followed by a final title, "May 21."

The video shots of Stone, and especially the final video shot of her turning to face the camera (as the narrator finishes, "the view... inside") complicate the trailer's oppositions of subjectivity vs. objectification, of inside vs. outside. She is essentially trapped by the video box, yet these are often the more "empowered" images of her (many show her confronting the camera or facing something threatening offscreen). The assumptions the trailer makes that audiences will at once root for her as hero, find her desirable, and fear for her as a potential victim, place in relief some strategies contemporary trailers use to avoid alienating substantial portions of its potential audience (i.e. women, straight men, and horror film fans, respectively). The trailer has it both ways by presenting a sexy, mysterious and vulnerable Sharon Stone yet hinting at a certain

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degree of empowered agency and an inviolable subjectivity (an "inside") even as she is threatened by an abundance of phallic objects. The film itself, however, overturns Stone's inviolability in a number of ways—demonstrating even more clearly why this campaign is a "triumph of style over substance." The trailer "thinks it's talking to" a contemporary audience who likes its stars to serve as chameleons, offering a melodrama of stardom in which the star appears to play all the parts at once (even on some level the villain—through the intertextual echoes of Stone's role in *Basic Instinct*). The trailer offers a contemporary version of the rhetoric of genre's "variety show," only this time through appeals to audience interest in a multivalent star rather than the genre per se—albeit one whose many "valences" are still very restricted. Significantly for the "post-feminist" early '90s, a time when women were gaining a greater foothold in formerly male bastions of power even as they were assuming more traditional roles within the family than they had since the '50s, that star—while heavily "multi-tasking" within the parameters of this trailer's rhetoric of stardom—figures a corporate woman.

I include the trailer for *Girl, Interrupted* (1999) as an example of the rhetoric of stardom's focus on relationality in the contemporary era in which the relationship is neither familial, romantic or adversarial, but that of female friendship forged in adversity (an infrequent but still typical "buddy" relationship within Hollywood filmmaking practice). This trailer promotes its eponymous "chick flick" to a broader audience than young women by way of the rhetoric of stardom, in conjunction with the rhetoric of story (through which it evokes *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, from 1975) and an effective use of music designed to tug both male and female baby boomers' nostalgia strings.

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Ultimately it creates its own star-centered "story" within the melodrama of stardom, positing Winona Ryder and Angelina Jolie as a pair of '60s women who liberate themselves from a stultifying '60s environment.

Like many contemporary trailers which operate both within star and story registers, it falls into narrative "acts." Following its opening, we see the film broken down to: Ryder's problem, her arrival at the mental institution, clips illustrating what it's like there and Ryder's growing alliance with inmate Jolie, deciding to escape, and the escape. The trailer's opening, which uses special footage to position the film within a larger discourse, that of the (mythological) "sixties," is its most graphics-heavy segment, setting the trailer's slickly nostalgic tone. We hear a sound overlap of the beginning of the song "For What it's Worth" by Buffalo Springfield, over the Columbia Pictures logo.[27] The first shot of the trailer is a rock concert crowd scene with someone's arms raised in the foreground. A narrator begins, "In 1969, the wild ones went to *Woodstock*," as the image fades to black and an all caps title emerges saying the same thing, on two lines, with the word Woodstock in red italics.[28] The words move laterally—the top line splitting off one way, the bottom line the other. We then see two slow motion shots of people at Woodstock which fade into each other: a medium shot of two costumed people walking, and a close-up of a man looking at the camera through a kaleidoscope. The slow motion images call attention to the song's rhythms, positioning the generalized images of Woodstock in a dreamlike past yet, for Baby Boomers, simultaneously *specifically* evoking the times by setting the images to the nostalgia-triggering strains of the popular song from 1969. Narration continues and moving titles reappear, "The unlucky ones went to *war*." (This rhetoric asserts "the Vietnam war was bad, or unsuccessful," assuming a

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present-day audience with historical hindsight who wouldn't want to repeat that kind of invasion.) Two—again, slow motion—shots of the Vietnam war fade into each other: helicopters flying, and a medium long shot of soldiers walking. The lateral splitting of the titles, in conjunction with the lateral movements of either camera or figures within the images, creates a visual motif that increases the trailer's overall sense of movement yet emphasizes it as directionless.

"But if you didn't know *where* you were going..." We see a long shot of a graduation podium (draped with a "Class of 1967" banner) and the backs of graduates in the foreground, as the camera tracks laterally. This is the trailer's first use of actual footage from the film, and strangely, the graduation banner contradicts the narrator: at this moment it becomes clear that the trailer has "lied" by repositioning the film's time frame from 1967 to 1969, apparently *just* in order to insert the Woodstock reference—undoubtedly the only emblem of "sixties" rebellion that trailermakers thought to be readily comprehensible to contemporary audiences. There is a sound overlap of a woman's voice, "You have the distinction of being the only senior..." the podium fades to a close-up of a teacher speaking in an office with a portrait of JFK in the background, "not going on to college." Winona Ryder, seen in close-up looking down and rocking, replies, "I don't have a plan." The trailer cuts to a shot of her mother as Ryder says, "I just don't want to end up like my mother." We next see both parents as her father shouts, "Susanna!" and another reaction close-up of Ryder. The narrator returns, "... They sent you to *Claymoore*." Interestingly, this line recuperates the trailer's attempt to historically contextualize the film, evoking the familiar pop-psychology explanation "blame Mom" to

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posit personal, familial causes as determinants for the character's malaise, in the process placing the focus more squarely on Winona Ryder's character and star appeal.

As this opening hints, the trailer is an interesting "troubled" one for the contemporary rhetoric of stardom in that it reconfigures problematic subjects for '90s promotional discourses: counterculture values, questioning authority, and mental illness are not exactly "easy sells" for a big-budget high concept film in the prosperous age of the internet. The way this trailer manages to both promote and recuperate its progressive subject matter to sell the film by hanging it on the "rebellious" star appeal of Winona Ryder constitutes a fascinating glimpse into some of the ways appeals to audience interest or belief in contemporary liberal pluralist ideology are mapped onto star multivalence and multiplicity.

There is a brief montage of moving camera shots of Ryder's arrival at Claymoore, set to a less high-profile rock song. A female authority figure is seen in close-up saying, "Welcome to Claymoore, Susanna." We see a bracket syntagma montage of a rather sedate seeming Claymoore (no "snake pit" or "cuckoo's nest," this), which winds up with a sound overlap of Ryder talking to her doctor. The trailer uses Ryder's "intake" scene as a mini-"grid" interspersed with Claymoore moments, in order to keep its images focused on close-ups of Winona Ryder, whose image is never far from the screen. These images of a tame mental institution setting and regular-seeming inmates reciting tired jokes are decidedly undramatic, and the trailer's decision to anchor its promotional rhetoric on a star who signifies "Generation-X" rebellion (one *Girl* review was entitled "Insanity Bites"[29]) works to invite contemporary audiences to identify with the film's theme of the normalcy of confusion and rebellion, and to ask why, indeed, she is there.

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The trailer shifts to slightly longer clips of Claymoore, and Ryder's fellow patients become more individualized. Angelina Jolie threatens to jam a pen "into my aorta," and we see Whoopi Goldberg, who says, "Lisa, your aorta is in your chest." A song ("Time Has Come Today" by the Chambers Brothers) on the soundtrack slows to a drum riff, as Jolie removes the pen and hands it to a nurse, widens her eyes dramatically and says, "Good to know." The clip is clearly a decisive moment in Jolie's (later Academy Award-winning) performance, and her delivery of the final line, a masterpiece of defiant yet acquiescent face-saving, cements the trailer's privileging of the rhetoric of stardom over that of story—counterposing Jolie's charisma to Ryder's passive reactivity. The music stops, then begins again, as the trailer cuts to a tray full of paper cups with various pills. A *Cuckoo's Nest*-like clip ensues, as Ryder tells a nurse she doesn't need them. We then see Jolie clowning with a kitten puppet as she shows Ryder a tongue full of unswallowed pills. Jolie has established her narrative leadership role in a gesture that demonstrates her rebellion.

There is a series of clips of Ryder being confrontational with her therapist (Vanessa Redgrave), about sex, followed by a shot of Jolie laughing. Then a montage shows the core group of girl patients that have been identified as Ryder's friends working together to break into the psychiatrist's office, led by Jolie. One girl picks the lock. In the office, they rifle through papers with flashlights. One girl reads out loud, "Highs and lows increasingly severe." Someone says, "Lisa thinks she's hot because she's a sociopath." We see a close-up of a cat hissing, followed by a low angle shot of Lisa/Jolie (from the cat's point of view) hissing back—the trailer's second linkage of Jolie with a cat (this time a live one), here signifying the threat of catlike femininity. One girl pipes

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up, "I'm a sociopath." Jolie replies as she reads, "No, you're gay."[30] Ryder reads, "Uncertainty about goals and a generally pessimistic attitude are often observed. Well, that's me." The song's drums slow again for another significant Jolie moment, as she shoots back, "That's everybody." This segment drives home in three separate dialogue lines the thematic of normalcy, along with the characters' longings to stand apart from the normal. The two principal stars are promoted in the interstices of this desire, drawing on audience identification at once with Ryder's garden-variety adolescent angst and with the snazzier, sexier and more dangerous "sociopathic" Jolie character.

The song changes (to a nondescript guitar riff) as the trailer fades to black and a title appears, "Columbia Pictures *presents*" and another montage ensues, this time sketching the influx of external forces pushing Ryder to escape: Jared Leto (Ryder's character's boyfriend) tells her, "You don't need to be here!" Leto's voice continues over clips of Ryder and Jolie being restrained by attendants: "Everything's changing." We see a television the girls are watching, which displays two shots of protestors at demonstrations. This juxtaposition continues the opening's equation between the mental illness and struggles of the patients at Claymoore and the *social* illness and struggles happening outside its walls. Leto's voice-over continues, "What do they know about bein' normal?" Ryder shouts from the bathtub, "Get me out of this place!" Goldberg looks back from the door, from Ryder's low angle POV, and says, "Get yourself out." These clips are juxtaposed in such a way that they create a "story" within the trailer (which doesn't match that of the film): in this segment, the joining of Leto's intervention with the TV scene and Ryder's angry outburst serves to motivate the clips into a narrative of "escape" from an oppressive environment, while the film itself portrays the character

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working through her confusion ultimately with the help of the hospital environment (and her therapist).

We then see a low angle out-of-focus close-up of Jolie snapping her fingers. Ryder's eyes snap open, there's a beat, Jolie says, "Let's go!" (the scene is not in the film) and the opening strains of the Band's "The Weight" burst onto the soundtrack as we watch what appears to be a mass escape à la *Cuckoo's Nest*: Girls run down a hill in the dark and a VW bus is seen in extreme long shot heading towards a city skyline (no longer the aimless lateral movement figured in the opening, but away from the camera). This segment offers the trailer's most evocative moment, particularly for Baby Boomer audiences, whose enjoyment of the Band song is tied to memories of the late '60s. The juxtaposition of TV images of protest with the voicing (by the boyfriend) of the trailer's questioning of the definition of normalcy signifies not the film's thematic of a girl's life interrupted by mental illness, but another narrative in which an outside world (representing change) "interrupts" Ryder's institutionalization, and as fingers are snapped and the Band's song begins, the trailer becomes, for a moment, a liberatory text.

It then fades to black, Ryder's identificatory title appears, and we see a slow motion close-up of her in the van as she turns her head to one side and smiles, the lyrics commencing on the soundtrack ("I pulled into Nazareth..."). The trailer fades to a shot of Jolie, who looks to the side ("...feelin' 'bout half past dead.") The "road" music, female bonding and driving footage evoke (again, for a moment) homoerotic liberation à la *Thelma and Louise* (1991). There follows a montage of the girls "enjoying their freedom," consisting mostly of a scene which—in the film—takes place on an earlier field trip from the institution, in which Jolie seductively orders a sundae from a young

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soda jerk as she licks a cherry (quickly recuperating any potential homoerotic dimension to "freedom").

The trailer fades to a title (unaccompanied by narration), as we hear the laughter and the lyrics, "Take a load off Annie," over: "Sometimes you don't know how you *fit in*..." We then see a summary montage, then the trailer fades to another title, "... until you find a way/ to ***break out***." Neatly encapsulating the trailer's contradictory appeals at once to audience desires for normalcy and rebellion, the title's linkage with the cherry scene aligns it more precisely with fitting in (to heterosexuality and consumerism) than with breaking out. The trailer's final montage of clips returns to an emphasis on the girls' relationship, offering a series of close-ups of them with a final shot of Jolie and Ryder together looking screen left. Jolie then looks away and down, and the image remains on Ryder, then fades to the film title, which is split: "Girl, Inter/rupted": the "rupted" is in red and separates from the rest. Another title reads, "Based on a true story," listing the film's website. The soundtrack wraps up, "You put the load right on me."

This trailer "thinks it's talking to" an audience for whom rebellion represents an effort to be "normal." The trailer reconfigures the film's more attenuated treatment of mental illness and recovery into a musical melodrama of escape, a caricatured quick fix for the confusion of adolescence that also, neatly, seems to solve all the film's social problems as well. The dynamic of simultaneous closeness and unattainability expressed in trailers' melodrama of stardom is again a feature of this trailer's contradictory appeals to audiences, here positioning the two women stars as emblems of two divergent expressions of the desire to be normal yet to stand apart, as the trailer witnesses Jolie performing various identities and Ryder acting as audience for her. The trailer offers a

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range of purchase points for audience desire and identification through the two stars. But ultimately, the appeal of the charismatic multiplicity of Jolie's character (now a kitten, now a hissing cat) is upheld as Ryder's "way to break out." The trailer posits this "breaking out" as more than anything a breaking in—to an appropriately gendered adulthood. "The personal is political," that feminist catchphrase from the era of the film's setting, is reconfigured within this trailer's appeals to audience interest in its stars and their multivalent identities, to mean that private life, albeit one that incorporates a range of ways to perform "rebellious" selves, overrides an interest in social justice as a definer of freedom.

Trailers appealing to audience interest in stars in the contemporary era demonstrate a return to formula in the context of a Hollywood economy dominated by high concept marketing. Star appeals are increasingly integrated with those of story and genre in high tech contemporary trailers that fluidly weave these appeals together using multiple "grids" and a sophisticated use of music, sound effects and dialogue overlaps; along with graphics and text that cue viewers to the key art of the overall campaign. Yet stars still sell movies, and as both these limit cases and the typical example suggest, marketers have found newer and subtler ways to enlist stars—who in the contemporary market are always already promoting themselves—to promote even "niche" films to a wide range of audiences. More often than not, contemporary trailers that operate primarily within the rhetoric of stardom ensure that their stars are recognized by audiences (segmented and mass ones alike) as multiplicitous entities—whether by way of a multiplicity within their primary identities as stars, multivalent relationships with other

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star/characters within the trailer, or the increasingly multivalent intertextual echoes of their presence in other films and the contemporary star system and celebrity. Such appeals to audience interest in stardom thus increase trailers' reach not only to the film being promoted, but to any number of other star texts. And by assuming audiences want multiplicity in their stars, such appeals naturalize an attitude towards identity that might be familiar to contemporary audiences accustomed to the commodification of identity for purchase within commercial discourses, as well as to their own multi-tasking, reinvention and relocation according to the needs of the corporate marketplace.

Whether from the vantage point of the classical era's more systematically "typed" stars, the transitional era's declarations of star independence, or the contemporary era's chimerical star-commodities, Hollywood sound trailers appeal to audience interest in stars primarily by acknowledging that stars provoke many contradictory feelings in audiences, but always exert fascination. Throughout the sound era, promoters have evidently aimed to maximize the potential audiences for their films by utilizing the rhetoric of stardom to express or literalize such contradictions within trailer texts. Thus within the melodramatic realm of the rhetoric of stardom, we can even read in trailers references to features of a film's star that might be considered negative or anti-promotional: we often see implications or figurations of failure, grossness, scandal, abjection, incapacitation, or the decadence or backbiting of the world of movie stardom itself. But within the promotional realm there always seems to be room for such representations to be incorporated and recuperated so that in the end the star always

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shines—endlessly available for the Hollywood film industry as sites where assumptions about the desires and identities of audiences can be made flesh.

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[1] Gledhill, Christine, "Signs of Melodrama," in Christine Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991, 208.

[2] Sklar, Robert, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies*, New York: Vintage Books, 1975, 74.

[3] *Variety*'s reviewer (August 29, 1933), and *The New York Times* review (Mordaunt Hall, August 24, 1933), respectively.

[4] *New York Times* and *Variety* reviews, respectively.

[5] *Variety*, March 31, 1937, and *The New York Times* (Frank S. Nugent), March 29, 1937, respectively.

[6] This film follows her appearance in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936). According to Ephraim Katz, it falls in the wake of the main turning point of her career, her appearance in John Ford's *The Whole Town's Talking* (1935), after which she "went on to play a succession of fetching, vivacious, often oddball, unpretentious heroines," but she had yet to reach the "peak of her popularity in Frank Capra's social comedies of the late '30s." Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia*, New York: Harper Collins, 1994, 53.

[7] The comparison highlights the difference between the promotional mandate of classical era trailers, or in Vinzenz Hediger's terms, "showing as announcing," and that of the contemporary era, "storytelling as selling."

[8] The *New York Times*'s Bosley Crowther, while panning the film, notes that it "does its particular service, which is to make Miss Russell look good"; and Kahn's *Variety* review emphasizes that "[Irving] Cummings' direction has concentrated on Miss Russell to carry the pic, and this she does with an effect that shades a number of obvious script loopholes." *New York Times*, December 3, 1943:27; *Variety*, December 8, 1943.

[9] It is interesting that such an "edge" is evoked in this trailer, which promotes Davis's first film outside her long tenure at Warner Bros., the studio with whom she had butted heads (and made headlines) in a bid for greater control of her contract.

[10] The trailer's mentions of Academy Awards won by the film designate it as a rerelease trailer, but the trailer clearly seems to follow the pattern of most post-Oscar rerelease trailers from the sample, that is, there is little if any structural change from the original trailer other than the addition of the titles.

[11] Interestingly, the trailer does not include the line of Davis's—retrospectively the most famous one in the film—which would seem to serve most aptly to invite audiences into

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the film's world—that is, if trailermakers *really* wanted audiences to know how biting the film could be: "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night."

[12] Wyatt, Justin, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, 71-2.

[13] Hozic, Aida A., "Hollywood Goes on Sale; or, What Do the Violet Eyes of Elizabeth Taylor Have to Do with the 'Cinema of Attractions'?" in David Desser and Garth S. Jowett, eds., *Hollywood Goes Shopping*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 213.

[14] Sobchack, Vivian, "'Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* 29, Winter 1990, 28.

[15] Ibid., 35.

[16] Hozic, 217.

[17] Movie-brat directors had already demonstrated a facility for this with George Lucas's 1969 documentary featurette *Filmmaker*, about the making of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Rain People*.

[18] Such scenes have become commonplace in contemporary popular culture, as numerous TV sitcoms (*Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, *Home Improvement*) and feature films (*A Bug's Life*, *Toy Story 2*) display comic flubs or staged "outtakes" over end credits. This trailer appears to have innovated the use of "gag reel" footage to promote a film, which along with the verité style of its behind-the-scenes segments, indicates it as indeed *transitional* in this specific sense, between classical and contemporary behind-the-scenes modes.

[19] Eckert, Charles, "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller," in Christine Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London and New York: Routledge, 1991,72.

[20] Ibid., 67.

[21] Hozic, 218.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Murray's crossover to dramatic roles shifts this dynamic in his particular case towards the late '90s.

[24] As one reviewer points out, this high concept is not new to screenwriter Joe Eszterhas: "His credits include *Jagged Edge* (plot: is she sleeping with the murderer?), *Basic Instinct* (plot: is she sleeping with the murderer?), and *Sliver* (plot: is she sleeping with

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the murderer?)." Kate Muir, "Steamy Stuff—You Can't See You've Been Had," *London Times*, May 26, 1993.

[25] Ratings board chairman Richard Heffner, quoted in Jeff Giles, "Someone to Watch Over You," *Newsweek*, May 31, 1993, 54.

[26] It's interesting to compare these contemporary incorporations of high tech graphics in trailers with their classical era counterparts: where wipes and early title graphics contributed to a "pretty package" all wrapped up for consumers (as discussed earlier), this trailer's use of surveillance video graphics seems to assume that sophisticated video technology is in its own way a slick "packaging" that will attract audiences to this film. Spectators are assumed to enjoy the visual effects even as (or because?) they are positioned (along with the unknown murder) as spying on Sharon Stone.

[27] This song is cited by *Entertainment Weekly* as one of the more frequently used trailer song bites, appearing in trailers for *Three Kings*, *He Got Game*, and *Forrest Gump* in addition to this one. "The classic-rock track (as well as Public Enemy's sample) says *Pay attention! This is serious stuff!* 'When you hear it, you feel like it's 1968,' says Nathan Duvall, music director for The Ant Farm. 'It's relevant to anyone trying to understand the world around them.'" Laura Morgan, "Same Old Song," *Entertainment Weekly* (the "Biz" column), November 19, 1999, 29.

[28] All succeeding italicized words from the narration are in red italics on the screen.

[29] Oppenheimer, Jean, "Insanity Bites: *Girl, Interrupted* Needs to Work on Mental Hygiene," *Phoenix New Times* January 13, 2000.

[30] In the film, Jolie says "No, you're a dyke." Contemporary films often have "tamer" versions of some line deliveries ready for certain versions of the film, such as airline or network television editions. The usage here indicates that these are enlisted to tone down trailers too. The trailer's language is also toned down by simple sound editing: in the film the line "Lisa thinks she's hot" is spoken as "hot shit."

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Conclusion

These case studies of the three principal rhetorical appeals prevalent in trailers throughout the sound era point at once to commonalities within the genre of trailers across the three eras, and to varying historically specific forms of address made visible by reading trailers' assumptions about audiences in each era. We can see that as early as the '30s, classical trailers embodied many features that are considered by cultural critics as more characteristic of the postmodern cultural forms of the recent postindustrial West, such as their presentation of highly glossed, referential and quotational texts, or their hybridization of commercial and narrative discourses. We can also see the continuities between early forms of promotional cinematic address and contemporary trailers, even given their vastly different technological capabilities: today's trailers still use (reconfigured versions of) classical titles, fades, and wipes—albeit with bigger and sparser words and an emphasis on sound "wipes" over visual ones—for the same reasons earlier ones did: to make sure audiences know they aren't just watching a (very short) film, they are being told and sold *to* watch a film: they are being *addressed.*

Trailers, as a "cinema of (coming) attractions," transform the generic worlds, the narrative trajectories and the stars of their films into new kinds of cinematic signifiers. Removed from the plenitude of their films' generic environments, the conventional causality and temporal sense of their stories, and the fully available/desirable identificatory nuances of their star performances, these signifiers contribute to spatially discontinuous, narratively reconfigured, figurally schematized film texts (trailers) which are the cinematic expression *par excellence* of Gunning's thesis that "the system of attraction remains an essential part of popular filmmaking."[1] As such, they *attract*

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audiences not only to themselves (as attractions), nor even only to the attractions within the individual films they promote, but to an ever-renewed and renewable desire for visual attraction per se. As nostalgic texts which paradoxically appeal to audiences' idealized memories of films they haven't seen yet, trailers continually reinscribe a hope, not only for better films, but also—and always—for *more* films.

In this regard, trailers are unlike both other film texts and other kinds of advertising. Their unique temporal zone of a heightened present tense that also emplaces audiences in a future makes their "pull" as attractions function differently than do the various kinds of cinematic attractions Gunning (and others) have characterized. Like magnets, they attract by drawing bodies to a center, assembling their assumed audiences in a suspended state of present-tense readiness for a future that is deferred. The center to which they draw audiences—the narrative and promotional world of "Hollywood"—is all the more compelling for the degree to which its lures are repeated and reconfigured, in ever novel yet ever familiar ways, within the trailer exhibition experience (itself currently in the process of being reconfigured and renewed by the internet and a general expansion of promotional venues).

By treating trailers as persuasive and performative texts and approaching them through the lens of rhetorical analysis, I have attempted to show how they embody the ubiquitous yet elusive presence within popular culture of the film industry's assumptions about its audiences and their desires. By making such assumptions explicit, I hope I have pointed to their reductive capacity in relation to the much broader range of *actual* audience desires and identities. At best, these analyses are imperfect and partial; both

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because they are filtered through a selection process that privileges trailers that visibly appear to "talk" to audiences in one way or another, and because any selection by an individual speaks in part to that individual's own speaking position. No textual analysis of a trailer can communicate "the whole story" of where and how it sits as a promotional text and a snapshot of Hollywood's ideas about films and audiences. For that one would need to interrogate (in greater detail than is possible here) the promotional and production history of the film itself, and the institutional history of the studio that made it, the economic system in which it operated and the cultural system within which it was originally seen. Given access to industry files, for example, further work might be pursued to determine whether the actual market research that went into the campaigns for the trailers I have examined backs up these analyses. Nonetheless, the degree to which trailers incorporate rhetorical assumptions as integral components of their persuasive regimes points to their unique capacity to allow readings of the ways Hollywood sees its audiences.

The three principal rhetorical appeals found to dominate trailers throughout the sound era, appeals to audience interest in genres, stories and stars, yield a number of typical assumptions that trailers make. Trailers "produce" their own kinds of generic space(s) through conventional means such as hyperbole, generalization and equations, designed to differentiate the film within a rubric of generic similarity. Within these produced genre-spaces (which speak also to the social spaces of their historical moments), trailers assume audiences want to know things about the film's story, usually in relation to the story's characterizations, causality, enigmatic structures, or narrative worlds—they assume certain kinds of desire to know, or epistephilia, in audiences. They

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often assume as well the relative importance to audiences in each era of more general desires for knowledge beyond a film's individual story. Within these assumed parameters of audience desires for genres and stories, trailers assume things about the audience's interest in the stars who people the narratives and inhabit the generic spaces of Hollywood films. Whether through promoting a star's inherent qualities, his or her past or current relationships or capacity for relationships, or his or her position within a star system, trailers assume audiences want imaginatively to be or to possess certain kinds of people.

Trailers are also consistently contradictory in their rhetoric. They assume we want to go to known yet new cinematic spaces; while there experiencing narratives that offer at once secure, familiar story types and endless open possibilities; and doing all this through the agency of stars whose myriad promotional identities both embrace us with the intimacy of their resemblance to us and refuse us by reminding us of their celestial distance. These contradictory appeals, designed to keep us wanting more and continually coming back into the theater, enable trailers to perpetually hover in viewers' consciousnesses as incomplete, unformed "ideas" of movies rather than just samples of particular movies or merely ads for movies. For all the pat reductiveness of the ideological assumptions trailers tend to display about audiences in each era, like the sculptor's partially carved block of marble or Mallarmée's famous blank page, trailers are what we imagine—and hope—the films to become; the films they promote ever richer in the imagined interstices of the paradoxical trailer montage than they can ever be in their narrative "fullness" on the screen.[2]

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This paradox is crucial to my purpose in writing about trailers as cinematic texts that can potentially contribute to the "marriage of semiotic and commodity theories" alluded to by Barbara Klinger in her call to study the epiphenomena of commercial films.[3] Trailers are one of the more pervasive vehicles through which Hollywood has kept and keeps in the forefront of audience awareness the centrality of "the system of attraction" to its significatory practices. As such, they demonstrate that the key to sustaining the magnetic force, or *attractiveness* to the attractions that constitute popular film has been to keep as many oscillations and paradoxes in play as possible with regard to how (and whom) attractions attract. My project to explore oscillations, paradoxes and contradictions, poles, boundaries and the imaginary interstices between them within trailers has called inevitably upon the languages of both semiotic and commodity theories to treat not only the meaning-producing characteristics of trailers but their money-producing ones. My hope is that such explorations as these can point to a greater potential for the analysis of popular film to contribute to our efforts to make sense of our increasingly fragmented and contradictory lives as historical subjects in the twenty-first century.

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[1] Gunning, Tom, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle* 8, Nos. 3-4 (1986), reprinted in Thomas Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, London: BFI, 1990, 60.

[2] Jane Gaines's provocative discussion of Ernst Bloch and utopian hope in relation to the doubleness of the "dream product" of popular film sees the "mirrorings of Hollywood realism" as an imagistic realm which "cannot help but bring us more at the same time that it restricts us to less." With regard to trailers, I would add, this hopeful dimension lies in that present tense yet simultaneously future zone evoked by their unique montage structure, enabling them to be seen as quintessential expressions of Bloch's "anticipatory consciousness." Perhaps more heavily than any other kind of montage, trailers privilege the spaces *between* the excerpted images—in which audiences place their memories of and desires for Hollywood's capacity to help us "imagin[e] beyond things as they are." Jane Gaines, "Dream/Factory," in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, eds., *Reinventing Film Studies*, London: Edward Arnold, 2000, 108, 109.

[3] Klinger, Barbara, "Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture," in James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, eds., *Modernity and Mass Culture*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, 120.

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Appendix 1

Trailers Viewed

This list represents most of the trailers viewed for the purposes of the project. It does not include contemporary trailers viewed during the normal course of moviegoing, and I have omitted trailers that did not fit the scope of the project (such as non-U.S. trailers or teasers) unless they were significant for some reason. The majority of these were from the collection of the UCLA Film and Television Archive, although some were viewed on cable television, and some were viewed on laserdiscs of the films.

Silent and Classical Era (204)

1920
Shore Acres

1924
Beau Brummel
Capital Punishment

1925
Cyclone Cavalier, The
Girl Who Wouldn't Work, The
Goat Getter, The
Lost World, The
Pride of the Force, The
Re-creation of Brian Kent, The
Silent Sheldon

1926
Heart of a Coward, The
High Flyer, The
In the Tentacles of the North
Last Alarm, The
Out of the Storm
Speed Cop, The
West of the Law

1927
Jazz Singer, The
King of Kings
Scorcher, The
Show Girl, The

1929
Dangerous Woman
Marriage Playground, The
Sky Hawk, The

1930
Feet First
Hell's Angels

1931
Dirigible
Fanny Foley Herself
Forbidden Adventure
Spider, The

1932
Devil and the Deep
Movie Crazy
Night after Night
One Hour with You
Service for Ladies
Trouble in Paradise
Under-Cover Man

1933
Alice in Wonderland
Cradle Song
Dinner at Eight
Power and Glory
Sign of the Cross
Take a Chance
This Day and Age

1934
Cleopatra
Four Frightened People
High School Girl
Six of a Kind

1935
Anna Karenina
Brewster's Millions
Call of the Wild
Drunkard, The
Last Outpost, The
Mutiny on the Bounty
Ruggles of Red Gap

1936
Black Legion

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Fury
Gambling with Souls
Marihuana
Midsummer Night's Dream, A
Swing Time

1937
Alcatraz Island
Assassin of Youth
Day at the Races, A
Double or Nothing
History is Made at Night
Live and Learn
Nothing Sacred
She Married an Artist
Slaves in Bondage

1938
Alexander's Ragtime Band
Army Girl
Boys Town
City Streets
Drums
God's Stepchildren
Hold That Coed
Kidnapped
Mad About Music
Service Deluxe
Sing, You Sinners
Straight, Place, and Show
Sunny Side Up
Vivacious Lady

1939
Four Wives
Gone With the Wind
Goodbye Mr. Chips
Housekeeper's Daughter
It's a Wonderful World
King of the Turf
Made For Each Other
Man in the Iron Mask
Oklahoma Kid, The
Only Angels Have Wings
Second Fiddle
Stand Up and Sing
Wizard of Oz, The

1940
All This and Heaven, Too
Bittersweet
City for Conquest
Fighting 69th
Go West
Grapes of Wrath, The
Kit Carson
Kitty Foyle
Letter, The
Phantom Rancher
Rebecca
Secrets of a Model
Souls in Pawn
They Drive By Night

1941
Casablanca
Chocolate Soldier, The
Citizen Kane
Corsican Brothers, The
Four Mothers,
Nice Girl?
Son of Monte Cristo
Sullivan's Travels

1942
Bambi
Cat People
Devil's Harvest
Flying Tigers, The
Glass Key, The
Iceland
Kings Row
Lady for a Night
Lone Star Ranger
Reap the Wild Wind
Song of the Islands
Undercover Man
Yankee Doodle Dandy

1943
China
Coney Island
Gang's All Here, The
I Walked With a Zombie
Lady of Burlesque
Leopard Man, The
Tender Comrade
What a Woman!

1944
Cobra Woman
Double Indemnity
I'll Be Seeing You
In Society
Lifeboat
My Buddy
Show Business
Song of the Open Road

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Step Lively
Story of Dr. Wassell

1945
Big Sleep, The
Blood on the Sun
Incendiary Blonde
Isle of the Dead
Northwest Trail
Phantom Speaks, The
Picture of Dorian Gray, The
Rhapsody in Blue
Roughly Speaking
Royal Scandal
Strange Affair of Uncle Harry
Strangler of the Swamp
White Gorilla, The

1946
Caesar and Cleopatra
Canyon Passage
Devil Bat's Daughter
Devil Monster
Duel in the Sun
Humoresque
It's a Wonderful Life
I've Always Loved You
Kid From Brooklyn
Killers, The
Leave Her to Heaven
Monsieur Beaucaire
Night in Paradise
Renegades
Smoky
Wife of Monte Cristo
Yearling, The

1947
Life with Father
Ramrod
Unconquered
Voice of the Turtle

1948
Arch of Triumph
Backfire
Criss-Cross
Emperor Waltz
Force of Evil
House Across the Street, The
Key Largo
Man on Fire
Miracle in Harlem
One Touch of Venus
Paleface, The
Plunderers, The
Romance on the High Seas
Rope
Saigon
Sitting Pretty
When My Baby Smiles at Me

1949
Kiss in the Dark, A
Lady Gambles, The
Look For the Silver Lining
50 Years Before Your Eyes

Transitional Era (332)

1950
All About Eve
Backfire
Bright Leaf
Destination Moon
Father of the Bride
Jolson Sings Again
Jungle Bride
Riding High

1951
African Queen, The
American in Paris, An
Day the Earth Stood Still, The
Pandora and the Flying Dutchman
Storm Warning
When Worlds Collide

1952
High Noon
Ivanhoe
Larceny Incorporated
Never Wave at a Wac
Quiet Man, The
Singin' in the Rain

1953
Appointment in Honduras
Band Wagon, The
Knights of the Round Table
Phantom From Space
Salt of the Earth
Shane
War of the Worlds

1954
Anatahan

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Athena
Atomic Kid, The
Brigadoon
Cat Women of the Moon
Rear Window
Red Garters
River of No Return
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers
Them
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
Wild One, The

1955
Bad Day at Black Rock
Blackboard Jungle
Carousel
East of Eden
I'll Cry Tomorrow
It Came from Beneath the Sea
My Sister Eileen
Oklahoma
Rebel Without a Cause
Tarantula
This is My Story

1956
Around the World in 80 Days
Earth vs. the Flying Saucers, The
Gaby
Giant
High Society
Invasion of the Body Snatchers
Julie
Killing, The
Man Who Knew Too Much, The
Tea and Sympathy
Violent Years, The

1957
Band of Angels
Bridge on the River Kwai
Designing Woman
Interlude
Jailhouse Rock
Jet Pilot
Kettles on Old MacDonald's Farm, The
Loving You
Man of a Thousand Faces
Man on Fire
Night the World Exploded, The
Paths of Glory
Peyton Place
Silk Stockings
Three Faces of Eve
Tip on a Dead Jockey
20 Million Miles to Earth
Voodoo Woman

1958
Bell, Book and Candle
Big Country, The
Day the Sky Exploded, The
I Married a Monster from Outer Space
I Want to Live!
Man of the West
My World Dies Screaming
Screaming Skull, The
Seventh Voyage of Sinbad, The
South Pacific
Vertigo
Vikings, The
White Wilderness

1959
Ben Hur
Big Fisherman
Missile to the Moon
Mouse That Roared, The
Mummy, The
North By Northwest
Pillow Talk
Plan Nine from Outer Space
Porgy and Bess
Some Like it Hot
That Kind of Woman
Warlock

1960
Amazing Transparent Man, The
Atom Age Vampire
Can-Can
Cinderfella
Elmer Gantry
Entertainer, The
Flaming Star
Let's Make Love
Millionairess, The
North to Alaska
Pollyanna
Psycho
Sex Kittens Go to College
Spartacus

1961
Absent-Minded Professor, The
Blood and Roses
Breakfast at Tiffany's
Burn, Witch, Burn

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Cape Fear
El Cid
Guns of Navarone
Misfits, The
One-Eyed Jacks
Phaedra
Two Rode Together
West Side Story

1962
Day Mars Invaded Earth, The
Days of Wine and Roses
Dr. No
Geronimo
Hands of a Stranger
Hatari
Horizontal Lieutenant, The
Hud
Kid Galahad
L-Shaped Room, The
Lawrence of Arabia
Lion, The
Lolita
Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, The
Miracle Worker, The
My Six Loves
Night Creatures
Premature Burial, The

1963
Captain Newman, M.D.
Carpetbaggers, The
Cleopatra
Diamond Head
55 Days at Peking
From Russia With Love
Gidget Goes to Rome
Great Escape, The
I Could Go On Singing
Irma La Douce
Jason and the Argonauts
Just For Fun
Marilyn
Mary, Mary
Mouse on the Moon, The
Move Over, Darling
Never On Sunday
Robe, The
Three Lives of Thomasina, The
Thrill of it All, The
Tom Jones
Under the Yum Yum Tree
Wheeler-Dealers, The
Wild and Wonderful

1964
Affair at the Villa Fiorita
Barbarella
Becket
Curse of the Mummy's Tomb
Dead Ringer
Dr. Strangelove
Father Goose
Fistful of Dollars, A
Goldfinger
Good Neighbor Sam
Gorgon, The
Hard Day's Night, A
Long Ships, The
Mary Poppins
Robin and the Seven Hoods
Seven Faces of Dr. Lao
Sex and the Single Girl
Shot in the Dark, A
What a Way to Go
World of Henry Orient, The
Years of Lightning, Day of Drums

1965
Art of Love, The
Go Go Mania
Greatest Story Ever Told, The
Hallelujah Trail, The
Help!
Lord Jim
None But the Brave
Pawnbroker, The
Psychopath
Rounders, The
Satan Bug, The
Sound of Music, The

1966
After the Fox
Destination Inner Space
Dimension 5
Dr. Zhivago
Follow Me, Boys
Frankenstein Created Woman
Georgy Girl
Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, The
Poppy is Also a Flower, The
That Man in Istanbul
This Property is Condemned
Treasure of Matecumbe

1967
Africa--Texas Style!

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Camelot
Destructors, The
Don't Look Back
Graduate, The
Happening, The
Hour of the Wolf
More than a Miracle
Point Blank
Riot on Sunset Strip
Rough Night in Jericho
She Freak
Valley of the Dolls
Vengeance of She, The
Wild in the Streets

1968
Candy
Funny Girl
Guns for San Sebastian
Lion in Winter, The
Night of the Living Dead
Oliver!
Pretty Poison
Psych-Out
Rosemary's Baby
Skidoo

1969
Act of the Heart
Dear Heart
Dream of Kings, A
Easy Rider
Gay Deceivers
Goodbye Mr. Chips
Marooned
Viva Max
Wild Bunch, The
Women in Love
Zabriskie Point

1970
Airport
Babymaker, The
Borsalino
Boys in the Band, The
Catch 22
Diary of a Mad Housewife
First Love
Hawaiians, The
Kremlin Letter, The
Song of Norway
Twelve Chairs, The

1971
$
Banana Monster
Billy Jack (teaser and trailer)
Black Beauty
Clockwork Orange, A
Duck, You Sucker
Fiddler on the Roof
Fritz the Cat
Hospital, The
Last Picture Show, The
Le Mans
Summer of '42, The
Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Trojan Women, The

1972
Cabaret
Candidate, The
Cesar and Rosalie
Deliverance
King of Marvin Gardens
Lady Sings the Blues
Legend of Boggy Creek
Magnificent Seven Ride, The
Man, The
Oh, Calcutta!
Play It Again, Sam
Poseidon Adventure, The
Pulp
1776
What's Up, Doc
Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?

1973
American Graffiti
Arena, The
Bang the Drum Slowly
Black Caesar
Blazing Saddles
Class of '44
Day of the Jackal
Extreme Close-Up
Golden Voyage of Sinbad, The
Magnum Force
Mean Streets
Paper Moon
Papillon
Scarecrow
Serpico
Seven-Ups, The
Spook Who Sat by the Door, The
Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams
Thief Who Came to Dinner, The

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1974
Chinatown
Claudine
Conversation, The
Godfather II, The
Harry and Tonto
Ladies and Gentlemen, The Rolling Stones
Lenny
Lepke
Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo, The
Queen Boxer, The
Rape Squad
Reincarnation of Peter Proud, The
Sugarland Express
Taking of Pelham 123
That's Entertainment
They Call Her One-Eye
Three Musketeers, The
Thunderbolt and Lightfoot
Towering Inferno, The
Where the Lilies Bloom
Yakuza, The
Young Frankenstein

Contemporary Era (234)

1975
Aloha Bobby and Rose
Barry Lyndon
Bite the Bullet
Death Race 2000
Derzu Uzala
Devil is a Woman, The
Eiger Sanction
Gambler, The
Hennessy
Jaws
Killer Elite, The
Killer Force
Monty Python and the Holy Grail
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Rollerball
Royal Flash
Sheba Baby

1976
Bound For Glory
Car Wash
Casanova
Chatterbox
Crash
Embryo
Futureworld
Leadbelly
Logan's Run
Mansion of the Doomed
Nickelodeon
Rocky
Sky Riders
Song Remains the Same, The
St. Ives
Star is Born, A
Stay Hungry
Two-Minute Warning

1977
Cassandra Crossing, The
Coma
Demon Seed
Greatest, The
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden
Julia
Mr. Billion
Murder By Death
New York, New York
Rollercoaster
Saturday Night Fever
Sorcerer
Star Wars
Trip, The
Young Lady Chatterley

1978
Days of Heaven
F.I.S.T.
Girl Friends
Goin' Coconuts
Same Time Next Year
Slow Dancing in the Big City
Warriors, The

1979
Apocalypse Now
Foxes
Rocky II
Running
Ten
Used Cars
Wanderers, The
Yanks

1980
Bronco Billy
Caddyshack
Dressed To Kill
Friday the 13th
Idolmaker, The

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Incredible Shrinking Woman, The
Nine to Five
Scanners
Smoky and the Bandit Part II
Sphinx
Stardust Memories
Superman 2
Times Square
Xanadu

1981
Arthur
Body Heat
Escape From New York
Excalibur
Eye for An Eye, An
Eyewitness
For Your Eyes Only
Four Seasons
Fox and the Hound, The
Friday the 13th Part 2
Heavy Metal
Night Crossing
Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia, The
Pennies From Heaven
Prince of the City
Rollover
Sharky's Machine
So Fine
This is Elvis
True Confessions

1982
Blade Runner
Deathtrap
Firefox
Great White
Hanky Panky
Night Shift
Officer and a Gentleman, An
One From the Heart
Paradise
Pink Floyd The Wall
Return of the Soldier, The
Split Image
Tag
Tempest
Tron
Victor/Victoria
World According to Garp, The
Zapped!

1983
Big Chill, The
Breathless
El Norte
Man With Two Brains, The
Night in Heaven, A
Return of the Jedi
Scarface
Staying Alive

1984
Blood Simple
City Heat
Cotton Club, The
Dune
Ghostbusters
Mrs. Soffel
Once Upon a Time in America
Places in the Heart
Pope of Greenwich Village

1985
Creator, The
Fletch
Invasion, U.S.A.
Lost in America
Man with One Red Shoe, The
Mask
Runaway Train
Silverado

1986
Big Trouble in Little China
Crocodile Dundee
Flight of the Navigator
Great Mouse Detective, The
Heartbreak Ridge
Karate Kid Part II, The
Manhattan Project, The
Money Pit, The
Mosquito Coast, The
Never Too Young to Die
Off Beat
Out of Bounds
Raw Deal
Ruthless People
Tough Guys

1989
Adventures of Baron Munchausen

1992
Alive
Army of Darkness
Bodyguard, The
Crying Game, The

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Dracula
Dragon
Incident at Oglala
Last of the Mohicans
League of Their Own
Malcolm X
Power of One, The
Raising Cain
Rapid Fire
Reservoir Dogs
Single White Female
Thunderheart
Toys
Unlawful Entry
White Men Can't Jump
Young Soul Rebels

1993
Amos and Andrew
Calendar Girl
Hard Target
Mrs. Doubtfire
Sliver

1995
Crossing Guard, The

1996
Twister
Independence Day

1997
Air Force One
Austin Powers
Batman and Robin
Contact
Copland
Face/Off
Gods and Monsters
How to Be a Player
Men in Black
Mimic
My Best Friend's Wedding
Paradise Road
She's So Lovely
Speed 2
Titanic
Wild America

1998
Babe: Pig in the City
Home Fries
Jack Frost
Meet Joe Black
Patch Adams
Prince of Egypt
Psycho
Shakespeare in Love
Stepmom
Siege, The
You've Got Mail

1999
American Pie
Any Given Sunday
Astronaut's Wife, The
Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me
Bowfinger
Cider House Rules
Deuce Bigalow
Drop Dead Gorgeous
Eyes Wide Shut
Girl, Interrupted
Green Mile, The
Hurricane, The
Ideal Husband, An
Lake Placid
Man on the Moon
Mystery Men
Outside Providence
Red Violin, The
Snow Falling on Cedars
Stuart Little
Talented Mr. Ripley, The
Wild, Wild West

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Appendix 2

Chronology of National Screen Service and Hollywood Trailer Production

Courtesy of Vinzenz Hediger, excerpted from his dissertation and an article currently in submission entitled "The Company That No One Really Knows: National Screen Service and the History of American Film Advertising."

1916	September: Paramount offers first trailers, though only on certain major productions.
1916-1919	Minor New York trailer suppliers offer trailers without scenes from films; producers occasionally shoot and edit their own trailers.
1919	August: Paramount launches trailer program. On every production, a trailer with excerpts from film will be available at a small cost.
1919	Fall: Three New York advertising men, Joe Pollack, Akiba Winberg and Tony Gruen, form National Screen Service. Starting January, 1920, they intend to offer a full trailer service on all productions to subscribing exhibitors. All important producers enter into contract with NSS, guaranteeing the new firm exclusive access to excerpts from their films for trailer purposes.
1922	January: Herman Robbins, general sales manager for William Fox, joins National Screen and immediately starts building a national distribution network. This network, in combination with the exclusive contracts, guarantees NSS a virtual monopoly on trailer production and distribution for the next 45 years.
1928	Warner Bros. opens its own trailer department at the studio lot in Burbank. NSS continues to produce and distribute its own trailers on Warner Bros. productions. These, however, do not contain excerpts from the films themselves.
	Herman Robbins is elected to the post of president of NSS.
1932	NSS opens production set-up in Los Angeles.
1933	NSS opens a distribution unit in London.
1934	Spring: almost simultaneously, Warner Bros. and MGM announce they will produce and distribute their own trailers. Both studios cancel their respective contracts and bar NSS from further producing trailers on MGM and

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	WB productions. NSS continues to do so, however, which incurs a $1 Mio. lawsuit from WB, later settled out of court.
1936	March: NSS takes over American Display Co., a poster firm, and enters the field of accessories (lobby cards, posters, standees etc.). National Screen Accessories, a subsidiary to NSS, offers accessories on all productions to subscribing exhibitors, under a contract analogous to the NSS trailer service subscriptions.
1937	Spring: NSS relocates its trailer production to the west coast. Trailer producers, who used to work out of New York, are now assigned to the studios still under contract with NSS (Universal, Columbia, TCF, UA, RKO). These "unit men" build in-house trailer operations similar to those at MGM and WB, though run by NSS.
	Summer: rather than taking on a unit man, Paramount opens its own trailer department, an extension of the short film department. Distribution and most of the trailer production continues to be handled by NSS, however.
1939	May: Paramount announces it will produce all of its trailers in-house on its own account, per January 1940. NSS will continue to handle distribution.
	December: Paramount turns over its accessory business to National Screen Accessories.
1940	January through September: NSS/NSA take over accessories from RKO, Pathé and Columbia.
	NSS enters into contract with WB and gets formal permission to produce and distribute trailers and accessories for the studio's productions.
	NSS now includes production facilities in New York and Los Angeles, runs 28 regional exchanges, has 1,700 employees on its payroll and 13,000 movie theaters under contract.
1942	February: NSS produces and distributes all accessories for MGM.
1945	NSS produces and distributes all accessories for WB.
1946	NSS produces and distributes all accessories for UA.
1948	NSS distributes advertising films for use in movie theaters.

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1949	NSS starts production of television spots, enhances its made-to-order trailer service for exhibitors.
1953	For the first time, NSS distributes a feature film, an imported biopic about Martin Luther.
1955	NSS opens a British production unit in London.
1957	NSS takes over trailer distribution for MGM and distribution as well as production for Allied Artists.
	Shrinking production and closing of theaters threaten NSS' prosperity.
1958	NSS takes over Telemat, an advertising film production company.
1960	Columbia breaks away and opens its own trailer production facilities. NSS continues to produce trailers on Columbia pictures, though without excerpts from the films.
	NSS considers further expansion in Europe.
1961	NSS takes over National Film Service, a film shipping company. The move allows NSS to reduce its network of exchanges from 40 to 26 outlets.
1963	Due to financial strain, NSS raises its subscription fees by 20% across the board.
1965	NSS opens a graphic arts department in New York.
1966	NSS takes over all trailer production and distribution from WB per January 1967.
1968	Andrew Kuehn, formerly head of trailer production at MGM, and Steve Panama, form Kaleidoscope, a company specialized in producing trailers. Other former studio employees or NSS unit men like Jack Atlas of Columbia or Max Weinberg of NSS/UA follow suit and open their own trailer boutiques. More and more producers commission their trailers from those independent firms. Other studios, like Universal and TCF, take over the unit men from NSS and put them on their own payroll.
1973	Due to longer runs, shrinking production and competition from independents, NSS's financial situation deteriorates. For only the second time in its 55-year history, the company is in the red.
1975	NSS sells all its technical outlets and focuses on

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trailer distribution. Even that part of business suffers, however: NSS has to close half of its remaining exchanges and lay off 80 people.

Universal starts its own trailer distribution.

1976 Whereas NSS made $13.7 million in sales in 1946, the company makes only $10.7 million in 1976. Adjusted for inflation, this is significantly less than half.

1982 NSS has to change its exhibitor contracts, in place for the last 63 years. Trailers and accessories are no longer distributed under a subscription agreement, but on order. The new distribution system fails miserably, however, and NSS tries to revert to the old system, with limited success.

1985 Paramount and Warner Bros. handle all of their trailers and accessories on their own. In a marketplace of blockbuster movies where all depends on what film your trailer is shown with, studios are no longer prepared to rely on an outside distributor like NSS to bring their trailers to theaters. Furthermore, most studios do no longer rent trailers to exhibitors but give them away for free.

1986 Trying to avoid bankruptcy, NSS auctions off its company headquarters at 1600 Broadway in New York, which belonged to the company since the early thirties. The firm itself eventually is sold to a New Jersey movie theater supply company. It has been handling some of the trailer distribution for major studios with the exception of Paramount and WB for the last thirteen years.

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