TEASING THE TWITTER TIMELINE:
EXAMINING HOLLYWOOD'S INTERNAL PRE-TEASER

by

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Abstract

The endless scroll of social media complexifies today's era of film promotion, expanding and fragmenting promotional materials such as trailers and teasers that proliferate in endless abundance. The social media user frequently scrolls upon such texts unintentionally, perhaps never continuing to view their source films. Many have acknowledged the internet's liberation of movie trailers from the theatrical screen, but less considered is the new intimacy these texts find in the social media screen. The social media timeline now teems with stand-alone encounters that alter the form and function of the modern Hollywood trailer.

Foregrounding the Twitter platform and its video autoplay technology, this thesis unpacks how these conditions evoke a new convention in the Hollywood trailer text. Specifically, it connects the 2015 advent of autoplay on Twitter with the 2016 outbreak of teasers-within-the trailers, excerpts or micromontages edited *within* the opening seconds of official trailers and yet signalled as separate from the trailer with an 'Official Trailer' title card. Proposing the term *internal pre-teaser* (IPT) to account for this online phenomenon, this work maps the convention's formal parameters and historicizes its emergence, offering a timeline and arguing that key events in technology and industry contributed to this formulaic opening device.

Engaging with theories of network temporality, this work considers the centrality of immediacy and incessancy in both the conditions of the Twitter timeline and the IPT's textual strategies. Ultimately, it argues that the central significance of the internal pre-teaser is the interplay it reveals between platform and text. Exploiting the forced flow of autoplay, the internal pre-teaser deploys spectacle and speed to cause an affective *jolt* that ultimately stops the scroll. Exchanging narrative investment for an entrapment of eyeballs, the internal pre-teaser reveals a recasting of persuasive strategies in the online Hollywood trailer.

Lay Summary

Twitter's 2015 adoption of video autoplay contributed to solidifying a new convention among social media-circulated Hollywood trailers: the *internal pre-teaser* (IPT). Conspicuously edited into a film trailer's opening seconds, and yet differentiated from the trailer in tone, tempo, and an 'Official Trailer' title-card, this teaser-within-a-trailer phenomenon gained sudden popularity in 2016. Grounding its research in a collection of Hollywood trailers embedded on Twitter between 2016-2018, this thesis maps the novel convention's formal parameters and contextualizes its emergence in a timeline of events including YouTube's adoption of TrueView advertising and the MPAA's relaxing of trailer tag guidelines. Working with theories of network temporality, the IPT convention reveals an interplay between Twitter's platform, video autoplay, and the text that recasts the Hollywood film trailer's persuasive mode. Bolstered by aesthetic and structural patterns, the text absorbs and exploits the immediacy of an incessant Twitter timeline to compete for eyeballs in an attention economy.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Jemma Dashkewytch.

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IPT   Internal Pre-Teaser
MPAA Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.

Acknowledgements

For some time, I've avoided writing these acknowledgements. Not for a lack of gratitude, but because this exercise suggests completion of this work — an achievement I feel humbled and overjoyed to reach.

But now that I *am* writing this, I realize yet another unconquerable task lies ahead, in somehow finding words to communicate my profound gratitude for so many during this process.

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You are a very good girl.

Dedication

To my family

Introduction: Of Trailers and Technology

Where did you last encounter a movie trailer? In our present era of mobile phones and social media platforms, the answer is likely to be: online.[1] While the experience of the movie trailer was once centralized and singular — confined to a darkened cinema, contained to a pre-stipulated lineup — now we click and scroll through an endless online abundance. The movie trailer encounter on social media is lighter, faster, and the texts themselves have become the same. The past decade has seen a rise in shortened promotional texts, which circulate online in the form of teasers, clips, GIFs, and even branded memes. In 2016, the preeminent awards ceremony for film and television promotions, The Golden Trailer Awards, introduced a separate category to celebrate the best teaser.[2] Shorter in length and usually distributed earlier in a film's promotional campaign than a trailer, the teaser text is typically associated with tentpole movies. Teasers contribute to the cycle of anticipation and excitement surrounding big-budget films — their heightened status dictates the creation and circulation of teaser texts which in turn stoke anticipation and excitement even higher.

The Hollywood teaser text has enjoyed an especially prolific decade. The explosion of franchise installations and remakes in recent years has found an apt promotional vehicle in the teaser, which is typically simpler in structure than the trailer.[3] Whereas the movie trailer must make a longer sales pitch, the teaser operates by offering less — and herein lies its nomenclature.

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[1] Against the shuttered theatres of the COVID-19 pandemic — the backdrop of this thesis — this statement is especially true.

[2] See The Golden Trailer Awards' program book archives at https://goldentrailer.com/category/program-book/.

[3] This simplicity is well-suited to drive up anticipation about motifs (both visual and musical) that are already highly recognized. Teasers for Disney remakes such as *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *Aladdin* (2019) are exemplary of this less-is-more strategy.

Oftentimes, the teaser is constructed before or during a film's production, when little footage is available to cut together the longer trailer (Barnwell 80). Because of this, the teaser tends to be short, simple, and powerful, convincing viewers of the desirability of its highly anticipated source. In recent years, teasers dominate headlines for accumulating record-breaking views upon online release.[4] Think back to the movie trailer encounter recalled on the previous page — are you sure it was a trailer? Or was it a teaser?

At first glance, the focus of this project only confuses this distinction further. It is not the separate teaser, nor the movie trailer, that guides this inquiry. Rather, this project considers a subtype of teaser appearing *within* the parameters of the trailer text, a phenomenon that I term the *internal pre-teaser* (IPT). The following chapters detail the IPT as a recent element of the Hollywood trailer and as a convention with deep ties to social media culture and temporalities. More conclusively, it presents the IPT as a cornerstone of evolving persuasive strategies, traceable in Hollywood's online trailer texts. Through identifying, historicizing and theorizing the internal pre-teaser, this thesis traces the curves of our modern trailer encounter, one located at the intersection of the new screens of social media and the silver screens of the Hollywood dream. How does our current mode of contact with the screen — *the scroll* — shape these texts and our encounters with them?

This treatment of the Hollywood teaser explicitly foregrounds the role of technology, and this approach is indebted to Keith M. Johnston, who paves the way in his 2009 book, *Coming Soon: Film Trailers and the Selling of Hollywood Technology*. In this work, Johnston unifies the Hollywood movie trailer and the evolution of audiovisual technologies, offering by way of

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[4] Although, ironically, these headlines often use terms like "teaser" and "trailer' interchangeably, confusing distinctions and audiences. Consider the *Variety* headline following the release of the *Lion King* (2019) teaser trailer, "'The Lion King' Trailer Sets Disney record for Most Views in 24 Hours" (Nyren).

example a lens that "situates a text in its historical network of discourses and knowledge [and uses] that network to deepen our understanding and analysis of the text itself" (24).[5] Covering an impressive temporal scope and considering the movie trailer as "short films in their own right" (143), Johnston's case studies highlight distinct "moments of disruption" (24) wherein technological developments materialize in and are highlighted through movie trailer form. Johnston's final chapter opens the way for this present work, both in contextualizing the preceding history of the mobile trailer and illustrating this methodology. His exploration of the cinematic release — and, subsequent fan-driven digitization — of the *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* (1999 dir. George Lucas) teaser trailer provides a fitting starting point for this expedition.

In November 1998, the highly anticipated teaser for *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* was released in theatres. As Johnston explores in his chapter on the mobile trailer, this event quickly illustrated the significance of the internet in redefining the Hollywood trailer encounter, which in turn altered characteristics of the text itself. First shown exclusively in the cinema, the *Phantom Menace* teaser release presented an opportune moment for fans armed with recording devices. Almost immediately, bootleg copies of the teaser circulated widely online — despite YouTube's non-existence at this time.[6] LucasFilm, attempting to regain control over distribution of the teaser trailer, finally conceded to the demands of fans and eventually uploaded the text to their own website, www.starwars.com. Fans noticed immediately what production companies later learned: as ephemeral and highly anticipated texts, trailers and teasers are perfect candidates for online circulation.

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[5] Johnston credits Janet Staiger's influential piece, "Announcing Wares, Winning Patrons, Voicing Ideals: Thinking about the History and Theory of Film Advertising" (1990) which earlier called for a similar approach: the economic, cultural and historical contextualization of studies of promotional media.

[6] YouTube would not be created until 2005.

So began the distribution of movie trailers on the internet, a momentous event that reshaped trailer production practices and moulded new trailer interactions. No longer limited to theatrical conditions, the viewer of the internet trailer enjoyed new opportunities to participate with the text, rewind and pause as much as she wanted. This in turn influenced production practices, and editors "increas[ed] the pitch of editing to a point where the casual viewer might miss a piece of information. The dedicated fan could, however, discover it through downloading, pausing and re-watching the trailer text" (Johnston 137). The internet amplified possibilities to participate with the trailer, and editors rewarded this engagement by embedding 'spoilers' or unknown details in quick edits. The internet's disruptive impact on the movie trailer extended beyond the encounter and into the text itself.

Although the above considers only a single example, Johnston's entire work shows how deeply interwoven technology has always been to trailer form and function. This is a line of inquiry I advance in this project, which takes social media — specifically, Twitter — as its guiding technology. It is interesting that we can already trace in Johnston's *Star Wars* case study the precursors of social media behaviours, particularly the desire to share and connect online through movie trailers. The two decades since have witnessed a steady progression towards streamlining this impulse, through the invention of YouTube and the advent of social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook (amongst others). These events have intensified the processes through which trailers circulate and find their audiences, and proven a dozen times over the "resurgence of trailers within popular culture" (160) Johnston observed a decade ago.

While this project advances this techno-centric approach to a newer crop of Hollywood trailer texts, it is critical to situate this present work among the wider literature on movie trailers currently existing in the field. Indeed, Johnston's treatment of the trailer as a unique short film

diverges from much of trailer studies, which tend to foreground the trailer's relationship to its source film. Although Jonathan Gray's book, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers and other Media Paratexts* (2010) extends beyond the trailer alone, his application of a theory of paratextuality to film and television media embodies the coupling of promotional text with (promoted) source text rampant in trailer scholarship. Following the lead of Gérard Genette, who first outlined how literary components (such as book covers and prefaces — what he termed "paratexts") create or revise meaning and shape interpretation of their source texts (in this case, the book),[7] Gray frames promotional media such as trailers, posters and merchandise as filmic equivalents, *film paratexts*.[8] This theory of paratextuality, according to Gray, confers a heightened valuation to texts otherwise regarded as ancillary, and this framework has been taken up enthusiastically in trailer studies literature since.[9] By applying Genette's framework, scholars explore how movie trailers create meaning or shape interpretation of their respective films and story worlds.

Though limited, earlier book-length studies focusing on the movie trailer foreground similar assumptions. Vinzenz Hediger's *Verführung zum Film: der Amerikanische Kinotrailer seit 1912* (2001) and Lisa Kernan's *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers* (2004) form the groundwork in the field. Both books present a historical analysis of trailer form and rhetoric, and trace the movie trailer's central tension as "fundamentally contradictory texts" that

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[7] Genette establishes the tenets of paratext theory in his 1987 book, *Seuils* which was later translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* in 1997.

[8] Kathryn Batchelor, in her work on the paratext, clarifies that Gray was not the first to apply a theory of paratextuality to film. She lists de Mourgues (1994), Kreimeier and Stanitzek (2004) and Böhnke (2007) as preceding work that drew out similar connections. Hediger, too, directly cites Genette in terming the movie trailer a paratext (2001 27).

[9] Johnston acknowledges the popularity of Gray's application of paratext theory to promotional media scholarship in the introduction to a 2013 special issue of *Frames* dedicated to "Promotional Media".

must carefully balance their revelation of narrative information to draw audiences into theatres without giving too much of the story away (Kernan 16). Although Kernan and Hediger share an exacting focus on the movie trailer text, both fasten to their endeavours an inherent acknowledgement of the trailer's primary purpose: to sell the narrative world of the film.[10] Framing the trailer's relationship to its film as central, both emphasize the trailer's identity as a primarily persuasive text.[11]

Recent movie trailer scholarship is infused with this paratextual lens, and while this bestows a welcomed interest in the text, it also constrains how to think about movie trailers. In a recent round-table for the University of British Columbia's film journal, *Cinephile*, Keith M. Johnston joins Jesse Balzer and Erin Pearson to discuss the value of this "paratextual turn" (40) and the hierarchical organization of the text it applies.[12] While a paratextual lens entrusts value onto a trailer (or other promotional media) for its ability to create meaning for the "contingent entity" (Gray 7) that is the experience (or storyworld) of its source, this invariably yokes academic consideration of the movie trailer to another object — the film. Yet the reality of the contemporary, online encounter with the movie trailer has moved away from this intimacy between film and

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[10] Hediger writes that the film's story "represents the essence of the product" the trailer sells and is therefore central to its structure (24). Author's translation. The original line reads: "Die Story hingegen darf man nicht preisgeben, weil sie die Essenz des Produktes darstellt: Sie verleiht den einzelnen Elementen ihren Zusammenhalt und ihre Ordnung".

[11] The majority of trailer scholarship read early for this work follows this paratextual lens. For examples, see Preece, 2010; Deaville, 2014; Gamaker, 2018; Moulton, 2018 Oja, 2019. A comprehensive overview of similar applications of paratext theory in film and television scholarship can be found in "Introduction: Trailers, Titles and End Credits" written by Phil Powrie and Guido Heldt for a 2014 special issue of *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image*.

[12] Gray himself takes up this issue along with Robert Brookey in a preface titled, "Not Merely Para: Continuing Steps in Paratextual Research" (2017). Here, Gray clarifies points from his 2010 *Show Sold Separately*, specifically his position that paratexts are inseparable from their larger works (rather than positioned *against* a source text) and that hierarchies of value dictated by paratextuality are always shifting. Later in the discussion, Brookey briefly acknowledges autoplay and digital flow — concepts explored later in this thesis.

trailer. The hurried fragmentation of promotional material on social media in recent years has troubled this assumption, as Jesse Balzer highlights in the discussion,

> Gray's book sees the paratext as one of the many entry points to a larger nexus, but one of the things I keep trying to think about is all the times that you turn down a paratext, when you watch the trailer for the movie and then decide not to watch it (40).

On the timeline, where paid advertisements appear unexpectedly and one may scroll past video excerpts quickly, this divorce between trailer and film is especially pronounced. The promotional texts flowing incessantly through these spaces invariably normalize this type of stand-alone encounter — wherein the viewer does not further consider or ever view the promoted text. As productions compete in an online attention economy by intensifying the reach of their campaigns and further fragmenting their promotional media, we may today encounter more movie trailers than we do movies.[13]

How does the movie trailer's mode shift when its conditions confer this degree of separation from its promoted film? The cultural consensus of movie trailers[14] as primarily persuasive texts rests on an assumption of paratextuality, yet this framework may be ill-suited to describe the unintentional (and ephemeral) stand-alone encounter that unfolds in the timeline. The internal pre-teaser recasts our understanding of the movie trailer's persuasive aim: it does not attempt to sell the film, but sells *itself.* Constructed for the social media timeline, the IPT foregrounds the technologies in which the trailer is embedded, drawing our perspective away from

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[13]This may be especially true in terms of intent. While it is common to happen across a trailer on social media, it is less common to happen across a film, and especially a Hollywood film (usually protected by copyrights). The circumstances in which one *could* unintentionally happen across a Hollywood film are few and mostly necessitate some level of intention (either on a streaming platform or similar website, cable, or else walking by a theatre).

[14] It should be clarified that here I am referring to the consensus regarding *professional* film trailers, created and distributed by production companies to sell films. As Kathleen Williams' work on the recut trailer suggest, amateur or fan-made trailers may exist more-so to play with modes of anticipation and entertain, rather than sell a specific film (2010).

the increasingly fraught connection between trailer and film afforded by this environment.[15] Extracted from both the trailer proper and its assumptions of paratextuality, the internal pre-teaser becomes a symbol of social media(ted) persuasive strategies. Highlighting Twitter and video autoplay as a contemporary "moment of disruption" (Johnston), this thesis thinks differently about how movie trailers impact us on the Twitter timeline. It asks, how does social media provoke a renegotiation of persuasive strategies in the Hollywood trailer, wherein narrative investment is exchanged for attention-grabbing stimulation? The following chapters answer this question through a comprehensive analysis of the IPT, outlining its anatomy, emergence and most critically, its operations.

The first chapter leads the reader through the methodology and general findings of this project's primary research. Contextualizing the emergence of the IPT against a larger study of Hollywood Twitter timelines between 2012-2018, I then narrow my focus to consult a sampling of IPTs (released between 2016-2018) located through this preliminary research.[16] Analyzing this sampling, I map the convention's formal parameters and parse out its structural and aesthetic patterns. Detailing how the IPT's ephemeral duration, habitual rhythms, written text and editing patterns emphasize affect over narrative, I posit the IPT as an unparalleled distillation of Tom Gunning's influential cinema of attractions that exposes the comparative persistence of narrative in traditional trailers. Ultimately, it is within the internal pre-teaser's quintessential urgency and accelerated atmosphere that we trace the absorption of the temporal pressures of its environment,

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[15] Though these 'stand-alone' encounters come in assorted forms and various technologies (e.g. in Instagram stories or as 'pop-up' ads in mobile games) it is the experience of happening across a movie trailer on the *Twitter* timeline — and having that video begin to play automatically, due to autoplay — at the forefront of this work.

[16] The comprehensive list of Twitter-embedded IPTs (and links) included in this sampling can be found in the appendix at the end of this thesis.

and the beginnings of a novel persuasive tactic unfolding in the interplay between platform and trailer.

Chapter two extends this focus of temporality to the technological history preceding the IPT convention. Beginning with the advent of Twitter in 2006, the chapter explores the culminating effect of the technological and cultural embedding of network temporality — specifically, *incessancy* and *immediacy* — into the Twitter timeline and the IPT text itself. Following a brief exploration of Twitter's history and incremental engineering of passive consumption, I connect YouTube's 2010 adoption of TrueView advertising to the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. (MPAA)'s relaxing of online trailer tag guidelines in 2013. Illustrating through the timeline the progressive intensification of temporal pressures on movie trailers (and the subsequent creative flexibility it evoked in production practices), I point to Twitter's adoption of video autoplay in 2015 as the final stroke contributing to the outbreak of internal pre-teasers in Hollywood movie trailers in 2016. The chapter concludes in reaffirming the centrality of the Twitter platform to the internal pre-teaser, and connects these temporal pressures to an internalization of persuasion on the level of the text.

The final chapter delves deeper into issues of immediacy, incessancy, and passive consumption. Building on studies of temporality in a networked age, I theorize the troubling implications of video autoplay on viewer control unfolding in the *scrolled upon* encounter. Embedded in this interface, the Hollywood trailer's deployment of the internal pre-teaser conspires with the platform to blur persuasion with force. This interplay between text and platform is conceptualized as a singular encounter, wherein the text's strategy of speed and adrenaline aesthetics (Duffy) deliver a *jolt* that momentarily renders the viewer static, and thereby submerged into the flow of the timeline. While the harmony of Twitter's conditions and the IPT

render these operations largely undetectable, the chapter considers the capacity of this collusion to physically modify behaviour. Ultimately, the internal pre-teaser is conceptualized as a weaponization of the online Hollywood trailer competing for eyeballs in an attention economy.

These three chapters add upon one another to draw out the fundamental argument of this thesis, namely that the *interaction between platform and movie trailer* (as evidenced through the internal pre-teaser) is critical to understanding the recasting of persuasion in Hollywood's social media-circulated promotions. Rather than place our encounter with the IPT in the context of the storyworld of its film or fans, I am interested in contextualizing this viewing experience exclusively through its platform embeddedness and operations. In doing so, I call upon theorists of network temporality and new media, such as Jonathan Crary, John Tomlinson, and Carmen Leccardi (among others) to offer a fresh perspective that foregrounds Twitter and video autoplay in the Hollywood movie trailer encounter. While once predestined to the source film's orbit — beginning with its theatrical origins and now, in the paratextual turn — the movie trailer today finds a new gravitational pull in autoplay and the scroll. It is the goal of this thesis to center *this* relationship — between trailer and platform — rather than trailer and film.

Chapter 1: The Internal Pre-Teaser

Around 2016, Hollywood's online-circulated movie trailers began testing a new approach. The change was conspicuous, immediately noticeable — movie trailers were incorporating fast-moving montages into their opening seconds, fragmented cuts of *themselves.* Quick to comment on the burgeoning trend, journalists penned response pieces, "Why movie trailers now begin with five-second ads for themselves" (Plante), "Movie trailers have a new trick to keep you watching — and the people who make them hate it" (Guerrasio), and "2 New Movie Trailers From This Week Show How Hollywood Is Evolving the Format" (Thilk). Appearing in big-budget Hollywood trailers, the novel convention appeared to emerge abruptly, prompting spirited discourse that ranged from celebration to disdain. Diverging from long-standing formulaic traditions, the opening micro-montage caused a noticeable disruption to trailer viewing experiences. While platforms like Twitter and Facebook had long circulated movie trailers, suddenly the trailers that circulated via these avenues began to look and feel *different.*

Marked by a brief excerpt or quickened montage, written text, and a crescendoing soundscape, the opening segment constructs an urgent plea, as if aware of the fleeting attention spans on the other side of the social media screen. Hosting a dissimilar tone and tempo, the opening seconds contrast the trailer proper — even though both are contained within the same textual parameters. Critics and viewers alike recognized this separateness, offering terms like 'pre-trailer' (McLaughlin) and 'micro-teaser' (Plante) to signal the new convention that supplemented — rather than replaced — the trailer. Embodying a shift in persuasive strategy on the level of the Hollywood trailer text, this teaser prelude exposes a strategy of social media optimization, traceable in the calculated temporal, aesthetic and structural qualities best suited for the scroll.

It is these opening seconds that I propose to term the '*internal pre-teaser*' (IPT). Preceding the trailer and yet embedded within its textual limits, this term foregrounds the convention's positionality and central *teasing* mode. Borrowing audiovisual fragments from the trailer proper, — but formally segregated by a title-card — the internal pre-teaser constitutes a strangely liminal space, neither completely detached nor fully intrinsic to its trailer. My term underscores both the significance of the convention's location and this tension between separateness and coalescence.[1] Though the IPT extracts the trailer's content and operates within its textual parameters, it is marked by a different, more immediate aim.

Interrogating *how* the internal pre-teaser chases its aims necessitates a clearer understanding of its anatomy. What exactly does the internal pre-teaser look like? What does it sound like? How does it feel? The primary research outlined in this chapter offers answers. Assembled from Twitter-embedded trailers for Hollywood films, a sampling of IPTs illuminates the convention's structural and aesthetic patterns. Close readings of these attributes elucidate the IPT's primary mode, which emphasizes atmosphere and affect over narrative linearity or coherence. These findings suggest the internal pre-teaser diverges not only from the trailer itself, but from traditional conventions of Hollywood trailers which stoke comparatively greater narrative investment and interpretive functionality — two measures otherwise relegated as nugatory by the internal pre-teaser.

This curated sampling develops from practical necessity — a Google search for "movie trailer" prompts nearly two billion individual webpages. Too expansive to be conclusively surveyed, my scope narrows to review only Twitter-embedded Hollywood trailers. Through delineating the interplay between IPT convention and social media (Twitter) temporality, this

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[1] I show later the frontal positioning of the IPT to be critical to the efficacy of its operations in an immediate, autoplay environment.

limitation will be further justified. In brief, Twitter offers an explicit manifestation of *network temporality* — a concept that guides my later theorization of the IPT — and its inherent archival properties facilitate data collection. My entry to this vast field is limited to Twitter-embedded trailers, and my methodology follows a straightforward manual search process.[2]

To further hone in on Hollywood, I consider only films distributed by studio members of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) during the time period of interest (2012-2018).[3] Along with constituting the bedrock of big-budget Hollywood productions, these studios helm globally successful campaigns that in turn shape industry standards worldwide. MPAA studios are also uniquely positioned to access cutting-edge marketing research and trailer production agencies. These heavily funded promotional campaigns produce wider-reaching materials that can be more accessible or better archived than the materials of lesser funded or independent films.

Lastly, the MPAA provides extensive resources and data to the public, including an annual Market Statistics Report. Focusing only on films with accessible social media presences, I consulted the 'Top 25 Films by U.S./Canada Box Office Earnings' report (included in the annual Market Statistics Booklet published by the MPAA) for the years 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018[4] to predetermine a list of big-budget Hollywood trailers. While this report

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[2] First, the official (verified by Twitter) branded account for a promoted film was located using the Google search engine. Some films did not have individual branded accounts, and in these cases, the official studio account was reviewed. Each account provided chronological documentation of all Tweets shared that was then reviewed in its entirety. In other words, I scrolled to the end of the timeline and recorded the earliest tweet containing a movie trailer.

[3] During this period, members of the MPAA were: Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, 20th Century Fox, Universal Pictures, Walt Disney Studios and Warner Bros.

[4] I chose this time period by extending from 2016, the year during which there appeared to be a heightened discourse about the internal pre-teaser. I reviewed the top Hollywood trailers of the preceding four years in the pursuit of uncovering earlier iterations or more information about its development.

stipulated 25 individual titles per year, I surveyed roughly twice this amount (52 Top U.S./Canada box office performing, MPAA studio movie trailers) for the year 2016.[5] In the first phase of this research, I sourced and reviewed Twitter-embedded trailers for 202 Hollywood titles over a span of 7 years (2012-2018). In the second stage of research, I closely analyzed a narrowed sampling of 16 internal pre-teasers, released over just 3 years (2016-2018).

Relying heavily on the archival properties of Twitter, several limitations emerged during the first stage of research. Occasional challenges included broken links and retired or rebranded Twitter accounts. For example, while the promotional Twitter account @DisneyFrozen was created in May 2013 (in time for the November 2013 release of *Frozen*, directed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck), the timeline showed no tweets dated prior to 2019. In other words, @DisneyFrozen's timeline consisted only of tweets promoting the most recent installation of the franchise, *Frozen 2* (2019). While the Twitter account was very involved in this promotion for *Frozen 2* (2019 dir. Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck), it is difficult to say whether @DisneyFrozen actively promoted the first film on this same timeline — such tweets may have been simply deleted, or perhaps were never uploaded.[6]

This sampling of movie trailers is hardly representative of the entirety of movie trailer production. As mentioned, it is necessary to set parameters when examining such a vast field.[7]

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[5] 2016 is the year in which I locate the earliest IPT, and the year when an influx of discourse about this convention in popular culture appeared (see Plante, Guerrasio, Thilk, McLaughlin).

[6] This challenge is itself a symptom of network temporality, which brings in its immediacy an emphasis and prioritization on the 'now'. The fragmented and precarious online archive poses particular problems for historical work on movie trailers. Again, Keith M. Johnston offers ways to mediate these challenges in his recent article, "Researching Historical Promotional Materials: Towards a New Methodology" (2019).

[7] I also recognize that the sampling chosen is imbued with largely Western, American-centric practices and that it would be irresponsible to claim these findings are representative of larger global trends in trailer production.

This research approached a small and selective snapshot of top-performing Hollywood movie trailers using publicly accessible data released by the MPAA. Compiling the top U.S./Canada box office performing titles from 2012 to 2018, corresponding promotional Twitter campaigns were identified (or not found) for each title. While the internet suggests that these trailers *are* invariably accessible to a global audience, future work is required to draw any international conclusions regarding implications.

1.1 General Findings

The findings show rapid integration of Twitter in Hollywood's promotional strategies, with branded accounts spiking in popularity between 2012 and 2013. Of the 25 top U.S./Canada box office releases in 2012, only 15 (60%) had locatable promotional Twitter accounts.[8] This percentage jumped significantly in every year following, showing the percentage of films *with* publicly-archived promotional Twitter accounts rising and staying above 90% in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 (see fig. 1.1). Two of 2012's top-grossing films, *The Avengers* (dir. Joss Whedon) and *The Hunger Games* (dir. Gary Ross) had branded accounts at the time of their release, but neither timeline showed any tweets dated during this earlier time period.[9] Whereas Twitter timelines for 2013-2018 releases were largely archived and accessible, promotional branded accounts for 2012 titles were, comparatively, sparse.

Of the branded accounts that shared trailers to their timeline for 2012 and 2013 releases, 100% of these trailers were shared in the form of a link to an external website. In other words, the

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[8] I must preface that this and all other statements about the accessibility of Twitter accounts pertain to the period of time in which this research was conducted, from September 2020 to December 2020. It is unfortunately possible that some accounts were deactivated prior to this period, or that accounts will be deactivated or deleted since.

[9] Instead, the earliest dated tweet on @Avenger's timeline is dated 2014, whilst the earliest tweet shared to @TheHungerGames timeline is dated 2016. Prior to these dates, no tweets were archived on the timelines (although they may have existed).

trailer itself did not appear in the tweet, but rather, the trailer was *linked to* within the tweet. This link was most often to YouTube, but also frequently to Apple's official trailer database, trailers.apple.com. This finding is hardly surprising as Twitter had yet to officially enable users the ability to upload videos straight to the Twitter platform. While Twitter rolled out this feature for users in March of 2015, embedded movie trailers first emerged in 2014 (see fig. 1.2).[10] The earliest *embedded* trailer[11] in this sample was released on the 22nd of May, 2014 for *Lucy* (2014 dir. Luc Besson), a sci-fi action film by Universal Studios.

Of the 22 top-grossing 2014 titles with accessible Twitter accounts, only three (13.63%) shared their movie trailers as embedded video media, rather than a link. But embedding video media directly to the Twitter platform — rather than linking to external websites such as apple.trailers.com or YouTube — rapidly became the industry standard, as reflected in the uptick of embedded trailers observed in the following year. In 2015, 11 out of 24 branded Twitter accounts for the top 25 titles were embedded (45%). By 2017, this ratio jumped to 100% — *all* the top titles were uploaded directly to the Twitter platform, rather than linked. This measurement extended to 2018 as well, wherein 100% of the top-grossing films included embedded trailers in their Twitter timelines.

As a whole, these findings point to the incremental fusion of Twitter with Hollywood promotional campaigns. The ratio of 'Top 25' Hollywood releases in 2012 with branded Twitter accounts (60%) suggests the practice was still considered discretionary at this time. Yet the consistently high use of branded Twitter accounts observed in every year following (>90%)

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[10] Studios were likely the "premiere content creators" granted early access to this ability. I discuss this relationship between Hollywood promotion and Twitter updates at length in the following chapter.

[11] Embedded here is used as 'included in the body of the tweet' rather than linked to an external source.

suggests a rapid and lasting adoption of Twitter in campaign strategies. Throughout this period, Twitter became a heavier presence in top Hollywood campaigns as a prerequisite for optimal circulation of marketing materials. However, this relationship has since evolved, Twitter's role transforming from a distribution avenue to become an active agent in shaping the media it circulates. Though Hollywood campaigns first used Twitter to distribute links (thereby guiding users to trailers and promotional material on external websites) by 2014 these materials became more centralized on the Twitter platform. By 2017, Hollywood campaigns became adept at this strategy, uploading and organizing marketing materials in a way that engaged directly with the Twitter platform.

This incremental integration of marketing efforts with the Twitter platform contextualizes the sampling of 2016-2018 internal pre-teasers guiding this chapter and thesis. We may trace throughout this period shifts in trailer production practices, wherein the individual needs of platforms became more prioritized. There was a growing awareness amongst industry professionals and agencies that "platform agnostic" promotional material was becoming obsolete (Yang). To compete in hypercompetitive social media arenas, promotional materials needed to absorb the needs of their varied platforms. Bolstered by algorithmic marketing research and the "rise of the social media manager" (Yang), this increased sensitivity to divergent platform viewing experiences ushered in a new swath of Hollywood trailer practices. As LA-based trailer producer Houston Yang explains, "optimizing for platforms became a full-time job for a full team of people". Foregrounding how trailers became optimized for the Twitter platform specifically, this research considers just one outcome of these efforts: the short and fast opening device designed to immediately *hook* the scrolling viewer — the internal pre-teaser.

1.2   Anatomy of the Internal Pre-Teaser

The earliest internal pre-teaser identified in this research comes in a tweet uploaded on April 20th, 2016. The tweet promotes the upcoming action film, *Jason Bourne* (2016 dir. Paul Greengrass) and appears on the film's official promotional account, @JasonBourne. Along with the video, the tweet includes a caption: "This July, Matt Damon is #JasonBourne. WATCH the trailer now." (@JasonBourne). The entire duration of the video is 2 minutes and 29 seconds. However, the first 5 seconds, siphoned off from the full trailer by a title-card, offers a separate audiovisual experience. This prototypical internal pre-teaser demonstrates a number of key characteristics, including title cards, rhythmic editing, and a crescendoing soundscape. These elements combine to create a quintessential *atmosphere of urgency* that I argue is central to the convention.

The *Jason Bourne* IPT consists of three shots. Interspersed between them are three title cards that directly address the viewer. The non-diegetic inserts fragment the visualization of a single scene. Condensed to just five seconds, the shot-intertitle-shot pattern adopts a quickened tempo that makes its central pulse feel pressing — as if building up to something critical. The brief imagery connotes a physical confrontation that further supports this sense of urgency. Lasting less than a second, the first shot shows Jason Bourne in a medium close-up. The camera is outdoors, showing Bourne surrounded by a group of men in a rocky terrain. The shot is so ephemeral that these details may be lost on the unsuspecting viewer. Jason moves to take off his hoodie, but an intertitle interrupts the action. Luminous silver font shines against an otherwise black screen, the intertitle implicates the viewer assertively and in capitals: "YOU KNOW".

We return to Jason Bourne and the men, now framed in a medium-long shot. This shot lasts a second and a half. The bare back of an unidentified man fills the foreground and moves towards Bourne (who is also suddenly shirtless — in the previous shot a tank top was visible under his hoodie). The camera moves closer as the two men confront each other. Bourne throws a single punch, knocking out the other man who begins to fall to the ground. The camera jolts after his twisting, falling body, but cuts out suddenly before it makes impact with the earth. A second intertitle continues from the first, "HIS NAME". The final shot is briefer, lasting for merely a second. It shows a close-up of Bourne's face as he glances over his shoulder, still surrounded by men. Finally, the third title card, in the same graphic style as the first two, makes its grand announcement: "JASON BOURNE: OFFICIAL TRAILER".[12] We cut to black before transitioning to the slower-paced, official trailer.

Throughout these first five seconds, the soundscape grows louder and more dynamic, coating the pulsing shot-intertitle-shot structure with another level of rhythmic intensity. Beginning with a low rumble, the sound becomes increasingly high-pitched, layered and metallic. While the three shots of Jason Bourne are without diegetic noise, a sharp and metallic *slash* sound syncs with Bourne's single punch in the second shot. Rather than any diegetic fidelity (a punch simply does not sound like a metallic '*slash*') this sound contributes to the IPT's atmospheric rhythm. Sound displaces narrative coherence, Bourne's punch becomes abstracted from the story, transformed into a structural imperative of acceleration.

While this exercise of parsing out each shot indelibly foregrounds narrative, the condensed run-time of the IPT does not distinguish these details as clearly as I have above. Rather, the real-

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[12] Along with the film's title, copyright and ratings information is included in the lower half of the frame, as well as the logo for 20th Century Fox.

time spectatorial experience of watching the *Jason Bourne* IPT underscores its prioritization of atmosphere and affective impact. The brevity of shot lengths and interruption of the visuals by intertitles obfuscate details about the storyworld and sidestep explanation, while the rhythmic editing and crescendoing sound prioritize a *sense* of pressing urgency. In this way, the *Jason Bourne* IPT's prioritization of affect aligns with long-standing traditions of promotional media resembling Tom Gunning's "cinema of attractions" (56) wherein "direct stimulation" overtakes "narrative absorption" (58). [13] Many have recognized the suitability of the Hollywood movie trailer as a "cinema of attractions par excellence" (Kernan 17). Given this context, the IPT convention may be conceptualized as a simple reincarnation of the Hollywood trailer's traditional mode that stresses spectacle and affect to a greater degree than its source film.

But I want to move beyond comparing the trailer text with its full-length film. It is the *stand-alone event* of encountering the trailer on social media (Twitter, specifically) guiding this inquiry. Measuring the IPT against the trailer text is more productive than comparisons to the full source film — after all, it is the former (conjoined) texts constituting this stand-alone encounter. It is true that, compared to the feature film, the Hollywood trailer operates by the rules of Gunning's cinema of attractions. But shifting this lens to consider *only* the trailer and the IPT exposes how this strategy becomes *even more intensified* in the latter. The IPT's immediate and aggressive pursuit of spectacle renews appreciation of the comparative narrative integrity that persists in their longer length predecessors. While the Hollywood trailer extracts spectacle from its source text to *zhuzh* up its narrative, the internal pre-teaser begins with an affective goal and extracts from an already spectacle-laden trailer. The result is an incremental filtering out of

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[13] Gunning traces this impulse in pre-1906 cinema, which tends to "directly solicit spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle… that is of interest in itself" (58). He continues "Theatrical display dominates over narrative absorption, emphasizing the direct stimulation of shock or surprise at the expense of unfolding a story or creating a diegetic universe" (59).

narrative coherence that culminates with the internal pre-teaser offering the 'purest' hit of spectacle.

The internal pre-teaser distills this strategy because it chases more immediate aims. Unlike the traditional Hollywood trailer, it is not constructed to sell tickets. Instead, it sells the trailer itself, and it is aware of the conditions that structure its pursuit. The central motive of the internal pre-teaser is to *stop the scroll.* Its aesthetics and structure are subservient to these aims, incorporating elements with a mechanical efficiency at 'stopping thumbs'. Popular in digital marketing dialogue, the phrase *thumb-stopping power* identifies online content capable of momentarily pausing a viewer's scrolling behaviour — an aspirational aim for web and platform marketers (@LizCowie). Platform-circulated movie trailers mirror these ambitions, and this is clearly evidenced in the IPT convention, which demonstrates notable overlap between neuroscience-backed "drivers of thumb-stopping" and its formal characteristics, such as textual elements, the presence of people, and early story arcs (@LizCowie).[14] In the context of movie trailers, thumb-stopping power refers not to an audience's investment in the promoted film's narrative, but the audience's immediate entrapment in the trailer encounter itself. Online movie trailers that wish to be *thumb-stopping* deploy the IPT, whose structural and aesthetic tactics mimic thumb-stopping drivers. Ultimately, these same characteristics sacrifice narrative coherence (which requires precious time to develop) whilst optimizing atmospheric urgency and impact.

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[14] In an article titled "How to Create Video with Thumb Stopping Power on Twitter", Twitter employee Lisa Cowie (@LizCowie) reports the findings of a research study by Omnicom Media Group (OMG) that used "neuroscience to measure brain activity as selected Twitter users browsed their timelines". The study, which used a brain imaging methodology, measured "neural processing speed" and involved 127 participants aged 18-49. The findings indicated that: "An early story arc means the video is 58% more likely to be viewed past 3 seconds" (although what constitutes an "early story-arc" is not directly explained), that "emotional intensity" and "presence of people" is critical to memory-encoding and that "videos with text are 11% more likely to be viewed and generate 28% high completion rates". See https://blog.twitter.com/en_gb/a/en-gb/2017/how-to-create-video-with-thumb-stopping-power-on-twitter.html for more details.

Borrowing from social media viewing behaviour research and aware of the timeline's temporal pressures, the internal pre-teaser intensifies its strategy of spectacle and affect — contrasting (and thereby revealing) the persistence of narrative in theatrical and pre-social media Hollywood trailers. The following section details how the IPT encodes these priorities and constructs a quintessential atmosphere of urgency. By either fragmenting a single scene (likely a 'high stakes' moment of confrontation, i.e. a collision or showdown) or cutting together an energetic and eye-catching montage, the internal pre-teaser evinces divergent structural strategies. Regardless of structure, rhythm (both sonic and visual) is a central element to the IPT which foregrounds a sense of *acceleration* and, often, a pulse-like tempo. Intertitles form rhythmic contributions and engage self-reflexively with the viewer and its social media conditions. Lastly, the IPT regularly asserts its own separateness through an 'Official Trailer' title-card.

1.2.1   Structure, Narrative, and Spectacle

The reviewed internal pre-teasers exhibited two dominant structural logics, with each composition balancing narrative and affect in varying measures. The *Jason Bourne* IPT illustrates the first formation, which extracts a *single scene* from its larger narrative context. This structural strategy relies on a brief number of shots to communicate its sequence. The second dominant structure, the *micromontage*, uses a greater number of shots to visualize disparate sequences. Along with demonstrating consistent differences in formal elements such as average shot length and overall duration (see fig. 1.3), these two structures also show observable patterns in subject matter. Whilst both construct a 'thumb-stopping' experience for the viewer, the *fragmented excerpt* and *micromontage* achieve this aim through separate means — and distinct treatments of narrative.

The first structure, the *fragmented excerpt* illustrated by the *Jason Bourne* IPT, can be divided into two subtypes: those that offer coherent temporal and spatial relations between its shots, and those that purposely obfuscate these relations. The *Jason Bourne* IPT falls into the former camp — it is clear through editing that its three shots occur within the same space and it offers a largely linear sequence of events. Though the previous section underlined how the *Jason Bourne* IPT emphasizes affect over narrative, it should be clarified that this structural subtype resembles the traditional trailer's strategies more closely than other IPT structures. Consistently underscoring a 'high-stakes' moment (such as a fight or confrontation) the *fragmented excerpt* IPT relies on stoking — even just for a few seconds — a semblance of narrative investment.

The IPT for *Kong: Skull Island* (2016 dir. Jordan Vogt-Roberts) is prototypical of this subtype, it relies on spectacular imagery and a minimal number of shots. The *Kong* internal pre-teaser has no need for shot abundance because the scene's visual qualities are arresting enough. After an opening title-card briefly announces the film's title, the imagery shows a violent battle between King Kong and a group of dinosaurs (the frenzied motion of the camera is so quick, it is difficult to discern their exact number). Sonically, the moments of contact between Kong's body and his prehistoric assailants are emphasized, adding another layer to an already-frantic, pulsing soundscape. Chant-like vocalizations add to this crescendoing noise which ultimately culminates with Kong's mighty roar. This sound immediately fades out at the 0:05 second mark, and which time the final title card marks the end of the IPT.

The IPT for *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2016 dir. Jon Watts) uses a similar structure. Lacking a giant CGI creature showdown, the *Spiderman* IPT doubles its shot count to dynamically represent *its* moment of confrontation. The first shot circles Spiderman as he clings to the very top of a tall structure — a helicopter is revealed in the background and Spiderman turns to face it. The

second shot shows three policemen in the helicopter, one cocks a gun in Spiderman's direction. The third shot repeats the first as Spiderman jumps off the structure. The final shot follows Spiderman's body from a bird's eye angle as he hurls himself toward the helicopter. This fragmented scene cuts out at the 0:04 second mark and the title card announces 'SPIDER-MAN HOMECOMING: 7.7.17 OFFICIAL TRAILER". In terms of sound, the *Spider-Man* IPT offers a diegetic source for its crescendoing, rhythmic tempo – the whir of helicopter blades become progressively louder.[15]

Taken together, these three internal pre-teasers (for *Jason Bourne*, *Kong*, and *Spider-Man* respectively) offer a concise yet coherent narrative snapshot. The viewer may be tempted to keep watching to answer lingering narrative questions (Do the policemen shoot at Spiderman? How many dinosaurs is King Kong fighting? Why is Jason Bourne punching that man?). Though their ephemeral duration and alarming sound design stresses the affective impact of their confrontations, some narrative manipulation persists. We may understand this subtype as inverting the "two-thirds structure" observed by Vinzenz Hediger in his study of movie trailers, wherein one third of a film's story arc is concealed to stoke interest (41). Kernan notes that trailers subscribing to this rhetorical strategy, "both satisfy and withhold satisfaction of audience desire to know about a film's story" (55). In extracting a high-stakes moment — and therein sidestepping the slower build-up — the IPT somewhat embodies this tactic, however instead of offering two-thirds of a story arc it *only* teases one-third (and even that is generous). Compounding this brief narrative moment with

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[15] It should be noted that, while there is a diegetic source, the volume of the helicopter sound seems to be divorced from the spatial conditions of the shots, aligning instead with Spiderman's hearing. The second shot, which brings the camera *into* the helicopter, is not marked by an increase in the volume of the helicopter's whir. Instead, the volume gets progressively louder, culminating when Spiderman's body is above the machine in the fourth shot.

elements that intensify affect, this structural subtype is most related to traditional trailers of all IPT structures, although also diverges in important ways.

The second subtype of the fragmented excerpt structure delves further away from narrative-centric traditions. Internal pre-teasers of this latter type — see *Arrival* (2016 dir. Denis Villeneuve), *Independence Day: Resurgence* (2016 dir. Roland Emmerich), and *Split* (2016 dir. M. Night Shyamalan) — also minimally tease a climactic encounter or confrontational moment. However, this subtype obfuscates the relations between their shots. While the former IPTs maintain clear spatial or temporal links between shots (and thus offer a legible, if rushed narrative moment) the latter fragment their excerpts more aggressively. Lacking clear spatial or temporal unity between shots, these IPTs purposely deny an establishment of time or place. Instead, IPTs for *Arrival, Independence Day*, and *Split* seem to suggest through editing a culmination of disparate moments. These IPTs similarly fragment a single scene through a minimal shot count, but construct through editing the *feel* of a montage.

Consider the IPT for *Arrival*, composed of four shots bookended by two intertitles. The first shot, — an extreme long shot — captures a massive egg-like structure hovering above an immense body of water. In the second shot, a group of people dressed in hazmat-suits walk, upside down, through a tunnel. Though the second and third shots contain a match on action (an admitted spatial and temporal link as Louise Banks — played by Amy Adams — raises her hand to a glowing white wall), the relationship between the opening shots and this final moment is not clear. Only the informed viewer would recognize that the latter three shots occur *within* the massive alien structure, and that the people trudging through the tunnel are heading towards the glowing white wall. Of course, another way to elucidate these details is to continue past the internal pre-teaser, to watch the full-length trailer.

Indeed, this structural subtype — exhibited in some IPTs that fragment an excerpt — relies on the full-length trailer to expound the relationship between its seemingly unrelated shots. Viewers will not find the connection clarified in the IPT alone. The internal pre-teaser for *Split* operates similarly, intensifying this disconnection by interrupting each of its four shots with black fade-outs. Although it too illustrates a single scene, the spatial or temporal parameters of the moment are difficult to discern. It is the full-length trailer for *Split* that expands on and elucidates this disorienting treatment. The role of the trailer here diverges from the trailers following IPTs that present a coherent or straightforward single scene. Rather than provide the conclusion or outcome of a climax, trailers following this jumbled representation rescue the viewer from narrative disorientation.

Moving from a traditional strategy of concealing unknown story details to pointedly constructing narrative disorientation, the latter subtype offers the more unprecedented treatment of narrative, and I argue that this treatment is in direct response to the pressures of the social media timeline. In purposefully disorienting its viewer, this IPT subtype pushes the task of stoking narrative investment to the full-length trailer — its own involvement with narrative is one of disarrangement. It implies that contextualization and closure is achievable only through continuing onto the trailer text, which will (quite literally in the case of *Split*) close the gaps between shots. This structural subtype parrots the fragmented and decontextualized normality that already permeates throughout the timeline. In doing so, it pivots further away from selling the story and instead impacts through disorientation — this effect being compounded (as we will explore in the following section) by a rhythmic emphasis on urgency.

The second dominant structure amongst IPTs — *the micromontage* — intensifies this strategy of disorientation. This structure creates spectacle through collision — cramming together

disparate moments to construct an eye-catching culmination. Of the 16 internal pre-teasers examined in this study, nine were micromontages, making it the more dominant structure among the sampling.[16] Returning to figure 1.3, micromontage IPTs are marked by longer durations, typically consist of a greater number of shorter-length shots than their fragmented excerpt counterparts. In cramming in this brief abundance of imagery, this IPT subtype aggressively layers scenes to emphasize spectacle and stimulation through composition. Of the three structural subtypes — the coherent fragmented excerpt, the disorienting fragmented excerpt and the micromontage — it is this last iteration that most adeptly sheds narrative integrity and coherency.

An example of this structure can be found in the IPT for the action film *Inferno* (2016 dir. Ron Howard). Featuring nine shots over eight seconds (one of the lengthiest IPTs in this project's sample)[17] the imagery is arresting and action-filled. The opening shot follows a man hurling through the air, having just fallen from a high roof. Other images include a watery explosion (again) throwing a man through the air, characters running through a leafy thicket, and a helicopter hovering overtop an expansive mosque building. The impact is overwhelming and action-filled, movement is deployed to catch the eye. In addition to its lengthier duration and high number of shots, *Inferno* is prototypical of the micromontage structure in terms of subject matter. Whereas IPTs that fragment excerpts tend to visualize a singular confrontation or 'high-stakes' moment, micromontage IPTs emphasize spectacle and action, and typically deploy select explosive and violent iconography.

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[16] The micromontage and fragmented single scene structures featured throughout the sample's timeline in relatively equal numbers. Other IPTs that were not included in this sample but evince this structure can be found in the trailers for *Passengers* (2016 dir. Morten Tyldum) and *Horizon Line* (2020 dir. Mikael Marcimain).

[17] Three IPTs in my sample had longer lengths: *The Accountant*, *Kingsman* and *Mission Impossible*. All used the micromontage structure.

The micromontage is marked by several patterns when it comes to content; guns and gunfire, explosions, and car crashes are among the most popular. Every micromontage IPT in this project's sampling featured *at least* one of these three tropes (see Table 1.1).[18] These spectacle-laden seconds are visually eye-catching — quick-moving, and violent. While the aforementioned fragmented excerpt IPT emphasizes affective impact by abridging a 'high stakes' narrative moment such as a confrontation or fight, the micromontage uses iconography that abstract this theme of *impact* further. This imagery of car crashes, guns and explosions may contain the affective undertones of a climactic or combative encounter, but in this structure such visuals are more aggressively extracted from narrative.

This emphasis on spectacle *as* promotion reflects Leon Gurevitch's "cinema of transactions" (368) — a digitized extension of Gunning's cinema of attractions detailing how CGI imagery promotes not just the film or its narrative, but the technology itself. Gurevitch traces in this 'transaction' a doubling of promotion and a displacement of promotional effort onto the spectacle (and the means of the spectacle) itself. While CGI spectacle features in *all* IPT structures, the micromontage's layering of the trailer's most visually arresting shots recalls a promotion of spectacle itself.[19] Keith M. Johnston describes a similar tendency in Hollywood trailers specifically, which he terms the "special effects 'star'" (94). However, Johnston ultimately

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[18] Another possible explanation for the specificity of this iconography is the domination of specific genres amongst blockbuster Hollywood films. All may be identified as Action, Adventure, Thriller, Sci-Fi, War or — in the singular case of *Split*, Horror.

[19] This doubled promotional effort of CGI features in the fragmented excerpt structure as well, as exemplified in the single scene of *Kong: Skull Island* IPT, where Kong fights massive dinosaurs and roars into the camera. Gurevitch terms such imagery "both literally and metaphorically the money shot of the film" (376) to account for the fact that this CGI is both costly to produce, and also becomes 'the face' of a film's promotional campaigns, featuring heavily in its promotional media.

concludes that this promotion of the technological means of spectacle never fully subsumes the promotion of narrative throughout Hollywood's trailers.[20]

My argument is that spectacle *does* subsume narrative in the Hollywood Twitter trailer's internal pre-teaser — though most purely in the micromontage and less pronouncedly in the fragmented excerpts. Though gun-fire, explosions and car-crashes feature vividly in micromontage IPTs, these visuals are condensed to pure movement — no aftermath or conclusion is offered. The representation of an explosion or car-crash in a brief flash — often portions of a second — strips away narrative from the image and purifies the spectacle. The persuasion occurring at the level of the micromontage IPT is not investment but affective entrapment, wherein the imagery stimulates and transfixes through movement or violence. The condensed run-time, rapid editing and brief shot lengths solidify the micromontage IPT's suitability for affect and atmosphere, best condensed through fast spectacle than slow storytelling.

The micromontage's use of movement between shots is also constructed within the frame, wherein this structure often relies on frenetic or else highly mobile cinematography. Echoing the IPT's fast-paced editing, this adds another layer to the convention's emphasis on tempo and velocity. This characteristic further reveals an awareness of the conditions of the Twitter timeline. The micromontage IPTs for *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017) and *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* (2017) adhere to Twitter-optimized aspect ratios and feature highly mobile shots. Both tactics embed the heightened competitiveness of the timeline, the site of the scrolled-upon encounter. In an effort to catch otherwise roaming eyeballs, the movement within the frame is

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[20] Johnston is specifically speaking of trailers from the 1950s, late 1970s and early 1990s.

frenzied and hyperactive.[21] The temporal pressure and information abundance of social media culture intensifies the pursuit of spectacle in the Hollywood trailer, which must compete with other stimuli on the timeline.

1.2.2   Rhythm: Pulses and Crescendos through Editing and Sound

A specific tempo marks the internal pre-teaser. This sampling's two earliest IPTs — for *Jason Bourne* (2016) and *Independence Day* (2016) — follow a formula to achieve this pattern. Both are fragmented, single scenes represented through shot-intertitle-shot editing. Interspersing each shot with a black title card, the IPTs offer similar viewing experiences: brief snapshots of imagery interrupted by direct addresses to the audience. The intertitles force a periodic pause in the action. While I have shown how the internal pre-teaser denies the viewer narrative context or closure, the pulsing shot-intertitle-shot constructs this denial on a smaller level by refusing the satisfaction of images moving into one another. In some way, narrative contextualization depends on the closure of this gap, after all — how did Jason Bourne lose his shirt?

But other IPTs recreate this rhythmic pulse in slightly different ways. The IPT for *Split* (2016)[22] constructs a similar, albeit slightly quicker tempo. While the average shot length of the *Bourne* and *Independence Day* IPTs are 1.6 seconds and 1.5 seconds, respectively, the average shot length of the *Split* IPT is just 1 second. Instead of interrupting its shots with intertitles that directly address the viewer, the *Split* IPT inserts quick black fade-outs between its four shots. Again, this tactic disorients the viewer — the spatial and temporal relations between the shots of

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[21] Gurevitch has written about this mobility tactic as deployed in Michael Bay's *Transformers* franchise, "scopic mobility *within the frame* [is] increasingly deployed in the attention economy as a means of combating the potential mobility of viewer attention *across frames* (to other competing spectacular material)" ("The Transforming Face").

[22] Shared by the Twitter account @splitmovie on October 26, 2016.

the *Split* IPT are further obfuscated by this editing pattern. While all three of these examples fragment a singular scene, the fade-outs or title-cards can confuse viewers of this fact, particularly in the case of *Split*.

This editing pattern also features in micromontage IPTs. The internal pre-teaser for *The Accountant* (2016 dir. Gavin O'Connor), rhythmically inserts intertitles throughout its 10 shots. Rather than follow a shot-intertitle-shot editing pattern, *The Accountant* IPT offers 2-3 shots between each intertitle. This greater number of shots cuts down the duration of each visual, which on average is only shown for 0.7 seconds. In sum, both structures of IPTs — fragmented single scene and micromontage — may edit in temporal pauses via black-outs or intertitles. In addition to obscuring the relations between shots (and thus disorienting the narrative for the viewer), this tactic is used to achieve a pulse-like tempo.

More frequently used than intertitles or fade-outs, sound is a favoured technique for constructing a pulsing rhythm. The sound of a clock ticking lends a countdown-like urgency to the rhythmic editing of *The Accountant'*s IPT. The *Independence Day* version includes three loud metallic thrashes, interspersed evenly through its duration. *Inferno*'s micromontage IPT uses a lilting chime (layered with heavier 'swoosh' sounds that are synched to shots of explosions). The *Magnificent Seven* (2016 dir. Antoine Fuqua) IPT incorporates five loud 'pounds' with every beat. The IPT for *Arrival* includes a siren-like alarm that rings out periodically, as does the IPT for *Venom* (2018 dir. Ruben Fleischer). The *Kong* IPT features rhythmic chanting. The IPT for *Mission: Impossible Fallout* (2018 dir. Christopher McQuarrie) uses the iconic beats of its theme-song. The *Spider-Man* IPT uses the whir of a helicopter. Other examples, such as the IPTs for *Kingsman* (2017 dir. Matthew Vaughn) and *Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle* (2017 dir. Jake

Kasdan) simply construct a periodic booming that stands out amongst its heavily layered soundscape.

Sonic periodicity is a critical component of the internal pre-teaser's formula. Though the above examples utilize vastly different sounds to achieve this patterned tempo, the *pulse* is a sonic motif that appears throughout. We may consider this rhythmic characteristic a central component to the internal pre-teaser's quintessential atmospheric intention: *urgency* (and indeed this is most literally constructed in IPTs that use alarm sounds to achieve their pulses, such as the IPTs for *Arrival* and *Venom*) The sonic periodicity amplifies the crescendo effect — the fundamental rhythm underlying the internal pre-teaser's soundscape. A sonic pulse simply draws attention to the progression of growing intensity, the escalating volume or number of sounds that increase the IPT's sense of urgency.

The pulse and the crescendo are intertwined as central rhythmic characteristics of the internal pre-teaser. Regardless of the variance in tempo, the sonic beats are frequently overcome by an increasingly chaotic sound mix. The thrashing theme song for *Mission: Impossible* is drowned out by a rush of screeching metallic noise as Tom Cruise hurls towards an imminent car crash. A similar crescendo of sound anticipates the collision between Spiderman and the helicopter — its whir is heightened into a pounding pressure in the IPT's final microseconds. Sometimes this anticipation is intensified by music or a snippet of dialogue.[23] In the *Split* IPT, a brief exchange is layered onto a growing rumble. A creepy James McAvoy delivers the line, "Someone's coming for you…" The young female protagonist (played by Anya Taylor-Joy) responds, "Who's

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[23] Music and voice-over appear less frequently in the internal pre-teasers of this sample. Apart from *Mission: Impossible Fallout*, the only other IPT to feature music is *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk.* Voice-over is heard only in the IPTs for *Billy Lynn* and *Spider-Man*: *Homecoming*.

coming?" as the sound mix grows louder and macabre. Suddenly, a metallic screech fills the audio as Taylor-Joy's character is suddenly pulled out of frame.

Ramping up to its climax, the internal pre-teaser's heaviest sonic moment is synched to its 'Official Trailer' title-card. It is here that the intensity culminates — the title-card is the single visual offered at the end of this parade of audiovisual stimulation. The IPT has created hype for *this moment*, the beginning of the full-length trailer. The 'Official Trailer' title-card arrives with sonic gravity, dominating the mise-en-bande of the IPT. This moment produces a wall of sound that carries the same weight as the iconic BRAAAM — made famous by the *Inception* trailer, released in 2010. Indeed, if it isn't the actual BRAAAM sound effect heard when the 'Official Trailer' title card appears at the crescendo's climax (see IPTs for *Inferno* and *Kingsman*) then it is a strikingly similar iteration.

The synchronization between the sonic climax and the 'Official Trailer' title-card features consistently throughout this sample, suggesting the critical role sound plays in constructing the IPT's urgent and accelerating rhythm. This also gestures to the final anatomical element of the internal pre-teaser: written text. While the 'Official Trailer' title-card is a core ingredient of the IPT, other written text elements such as subtitles and intertitles are commonly used. The consistency of these features further demonstrates how the internal pre-teaser marks a strategy of social media optimization.

1.2.3 Written Text and Self-reflexivity

The inclusion of intertitles and subtitles exhibits a consciousness of the social media viewing experience. Recall the marketing post detailing key characteristic of *thumb-stopping* media, "Text or subtitles draw people in. Videos with text are 11% more likely to be viewed and generate 28% higher completion rates. With a sound-off strategy in mind, the use of text in video

is a very effective creative approach" (@LizCowie). Though, as we have seen, sound constitutes a critical element of the internal pre-teaser convention, there remains a risk that the viewer will be presented with a *muted* video, especially on Twitter where videos autoplay in a muted state. The internal pre-teaser mediates this risk by including title-cards and oftentimes subtitles[24] — although CC features are not present in the sample.[25] The most unvarying textual feature is the 'Official Trailer' title card.

The 'Official Trailer' title-card halts the visual and sonic experience preceding it. It clearly signals the climax of the internal pre-teaser, and announces the beginning of the trailer proper. Though there are slight variances in the wording of these announcement title-cards, they uniformly perform several functions. First, the 'Official Trailer' title card marks an abrupt shift in tone and tempo — the internal pre-teaser is marked by an acceleration and urgency that does not extend to the trailer, which prefers to begin in a slower paced way. Second, the 'Official Trailer' title card also works to reorient the viewer, who likely — as we have seen — has scrolled upon an evanescent flash of audiovisual stimulation that offers little narrative context or detail. The appearance of the 'Official Trailer' title-card ends this barrage of spectacle,[26] and implies to the viewer that the following spectatorial experience will smooth out any confusion. Lastly, this title-card solidifies a separateness between the trailer proper and the preceding seconds, it distinguishes the two persuasive strategies differentiating the IPT from the trailer.

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[24] See IPTs for *Inferno*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, *Kong: Skull Island*.

[25] Unsurprisingly as Twitter did not roll out the ability to add closed captions in the form of .SRT subtitles until March 2019 (Dennebaum).

[26] In all the IPTs sampled, only one — the IPT for *The Accountant* — did not have such a title card. I have identified *The Accountant* as an IPT however for its inclusion of all other elements. It demonstrates the micromontage and periodic intertitles, pulsing rhythms and crescendoing tempo. The IPT ends with a prolonged fade to black, before beginning the trailer with the Warner Brothers studio logo. The blatant switch in tone and tempo that occurs during this black fade-out solidifies my interpretation of it as an IPT.

One may be tempted to identify *any* opening segment that briefly flashes a title-card (or studio logos)[27] an internal pre-teaser. However, such widely set criteria provide too loose a definition — pauses or narrative breaks in Hollywood movie trailers are common around the five or ten-second mark. The wording of "Official Trailer" is critical here because it does something different. *It is a self-reflexive admittance that the previous seconds were not, in fact, the trailer.* This is perhaps why, as we noted in the beginning of this chapter, the IPT feels jarring for so many. It is a device that does *not* seek to lull a viewer into its narrative. The 'Official Trailer' title card calls attention to its own audiovisual trap, politely offering the full trailer experience as consolation.

This self-reflexivity also arises in subtitles or intertitles that absorb the logic or language of its social media surroundings. Hashtagged phrases or '@' signs appear in the IPTs for *Arrival* (#WhyAreTheyHere), *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (@BillyLynn) and *Kong: Skull Island* (#KongisKing). While the hashtag in *Arrival*'s IPT is confined to a single opening title-card, both *Billy Lynn* and *Kong* overlay their internet-speak throughout the entirety of the IPT. After their 'Official Trailer' announcements, these texts do not appear in the full-length trailer. The 'Official Trailer' title card sifts out this written text, further differentiating the IPT from the trailer. Beyond tone, tempo and atmosphere, the written text exposes a social media strategy that is most pronounced in the trailer's opening seconds, in the internal pre-teaser.

The written captions embedded in the tweets containing these trailers are also notable. In the case of *Arrival*, the hashtagged slogan, #WhyAreTheyHere appears both in the tweet's caption

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27 See the trailer for *I, Tonya* (2017) located at https://twitter.com/ITonyaMovie/status/925739219330351104. Note how the tone and tempo carry over from the opening segment to seamlessly develop into the trailer, even though studio logos are briefly shown at 0:18 seconds.

and within the IPT itself. Transcending the boundaries between trailer and tweet, the messaging ties the interface together with the text. This collusion foreshadows the sharing of network temporalities between the platform and the IPT — mediated through autoplay, immediacy and speed.[28] In terms of tweet captions, the word "Watch" is included in the body of every tweet discussed so far,[29] an action command that feels unnecessary given a video autoplay environment. Nine tweet captions further specify this command with the word "now" in their body — again a word that feels largely extraneous in the context of autoplay, but yet reveals a desperation for immediate compliance in their viewer. The urgency of the IPT both absorbs and transcends the text, appearing not only in the conditions of the platform but also within the captions that mediate its encounter.[30]

1.3   Conclusion

The trailer for the animated comedy film, *The Grinch* (2018 dir. Yarrow Cheney and Scott Mosier) provides this sample's lone anomaly. Composed of a single shot, the image lacks visual spectacle or a rhythmic crescendo. Instead, the title character and his dog stand in front of a mirror and fix their hair before the 'Official Trailer' title-card appears. While more study of the interaction between genre and the IPT formula is needed, the *Grinch* IPT — which is also the most recently uploaded of all examples[31] — is likely a parody of the convention. Pointing to a

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[28] This I will take up in the final chapter of my thesis.

[29] Except for *The Grinch* IPT.

[30] In this way, we may draw upon Gerard Genette's *paratext*, although not in the commonly used framework made popular by Jonathan Gray in *Show Sold Separately* (2010). Rather than position the trailer text [paratext] against the film [text] we may position the trailer *as* text and the tweet and Twitter interface as varying levels of paratext that mediate this encounter.

[31] Shared to Twitter on March 8th, 2018.

possible loosening of the IPT formula since this selected period, this anomaly reiterates the need to further explore this convention's evolution in the years since 2018.

Overall, the internal pre-teaser does not just depend on its position as separate-yet-conjoined with the trailer text. It has other elements to its formula, including atmosphere, tempo and tone that diverge from the beginning of the trailer affixed to it. While the inclusion of an 'Official Title Card' designates its separateness, as we see in *The Grinch*, the title-card alone is not enough. Rather, the internal pre-teaser must comprise of elements that foreground a consciousness about its social media conditions. Specifically, it is guided by a temporal logic that absorbs the immediacy and incessancy of the Twitter timeline. Its self-proclaimed urgency is aggressive and, for many, off-putting.

The discomfort of the IPT may arise from its blatant deviation from the more narrative-centred strategies of its theatrical ancestors. Though Hollywood trailers have long balanced spectacle with story, I have argued the IPT to be more focused and assertive. Whereas traditional trailers use spectacle in combination with various rhetorical strategies that emphasize narrative,[32] the IPT sharpens and intensifies "its energy outwards towards an acknowledged spectator rather than inwards towards the character-based situations essential to classical narrative" (Gunning 59). This 'reach outward' is aggressive because the environment of *the scroll* is fiercely competitive, full of information flows that may easily overwhelm the user. The internal pre-teaser must stun to survive, to subsume the viewer into its own flow, and therefore has no choice but to sacrifice coherent narrative for more immediate stimulation. As the next chapter explores, this strategy is

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[32] Kernan provides the most comprehensive overview of such rhetorical strategies. She details how Hollywood trailers tend to use rhetoric that promotes genre, story, or stardom.

directly associated with the temporal pressures of platforms such as Twitter, as well as the movement of the scroll and viewing behaviours it normalizes.

This argument about the IPT's optimization for Twitter, especially, is bolstered by the fact that a number of trailers in this sampling were also uploaded to YouTube, where they did not feature an IPT. Of the 15 trailers uploaded concurrently to both Twitter and YouTube,[33] six did not include internal pre-teasers in their YouTube versions.[34] Apart from this omission of an IPT, the trailers were otherwise identical. This finding indicates an emphasis on platform-specific design in Hollywood's promotional campaigns, and illustrates how internal pre-teasers tend to feature more frequently in Twitter trailer iterations. As will be explored in the following chapter, this further suggests the platform's pronounced suitability for this convention. Though other players such as YouTube contributed to the emergence of the IPT convention, we may infer from the frequent coupling of IPTs and Twitter trailers specifically, the notion that the IPT is best optimized for the incessant, 'real-time' temporal conditions of the platform.

There is also the awkwardness of happening across an IPT whilst watching a trailer on YouTube — especially when one has specifically searched up the trailer to watch. Under these conditions, the obtrusive quality of the IPT is exaggerated because, frankly, it is unnecessary. It may not be surprising then that the articles decrying this device reference YouTube videos more than tweets (see Plante, Guerrasio). Some articles even gesture to disapproving YouTube comments to support their claims:

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[33] The only exception was the trailer for *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, which was uploaded onto YouTube on December 9th, 2016 after it was tweeted on December 8th.

[34] The trailers whose YouTube counterparts did *not* include IPTs are for the films *Hacksaw Ridge, Arrival, Split, Kingsman: The Golden Circle, Mission: Impossible Fallout* and *The Grinch*.
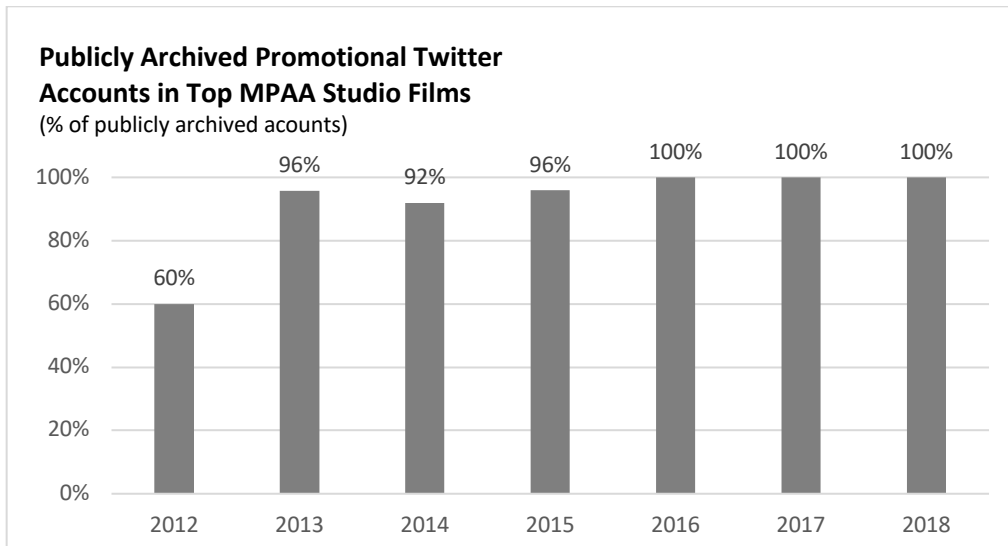
> YouTube commenters have caught it. One asked of the
> '*Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*' trailer, 'Why the hell is
> there a trailer for the trailer you're about to see? And about
> *'Inferno'* one wrote, 'First I watched an ad, then I watched
> a trailer for the trailer then I finally watched the trailer'
> (Guerrasio).

Although there is reference to a tweeted trailer, the majority of illustrations used in Guerrasio and Plante's articles come from the YouTube platform.
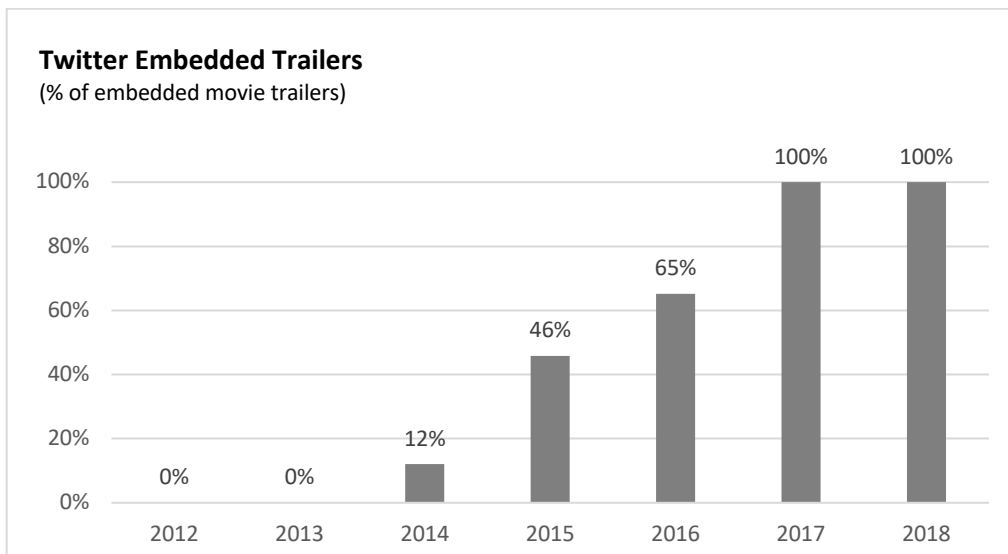
In a more observant article for Adweek, Chris Thilk connects the emergence of this trend with the conditions of *the scroll*. Whereas the YouTube encounter with the trailer text typically relies on some degree of premeditation, other platforms — such as Twitter and Facebook — use interfaces that construct an alternative viewing situation and actively deliver information to the user. As a marketing and advertising trade publication, Adweek recognizes the platform-specific intentions in the teaser-within-a-trailer trend:

> But, you may be wondering, why do we need to be
> convinced since we've already made the decision to watch
> it by clicking play or opening the link in a new tab? The
> answer comes when you stop thinking about watching it on
> YouTube and start thinking about it playing as a native
> video on Facebook or Twitter (Thilk).

While the effect of the IPT may be jarring and unnecessary on YouTube, the convention is cushioned by platforms that normalize the scroll. Though Thilk refers to both Facebook and Twitter, it is my position that the latter is uniquely suited to the internal pre-teaser convention. Infused with network temporality and vanguarding immediacy and passive consumption, the shared temporalities of Twitter and the IPT cloak its persuasive operations. Amidst the incessant information stream that the Twitter timeline provides, the internal pre-teaser's *jolt* of urgency and acceleration blends right in. It is less detectable — and by extension, most effective — in this environment.

**Publicly Archived Promotional Twitter
Accounts in Top MPAA Studio Films**
(% of publicly archived acounts)

60%	96%	92%	96%	100%	100%	100%
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Figure 1.1 Quick Rise in Publicly Archived Twitter Accounts

Twitter Embedded Trailers
(% of embedded movie trailers)

0%	0%	12%	46%	65%	100%	100%
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Figure 1.2 Rising Popularity of Embedded Trailer Videos on Promotional Twitter Timelines

Micromontage vs. Fragmented Excerpt
(# of shots / seconds)

■ micromontage
■ fragmented single scene

	average # of shots	average shot length (s)	average duration (s)
micromontage	7.44	0.73	5.05
fragmented single scene	3.33	1.56	4.75
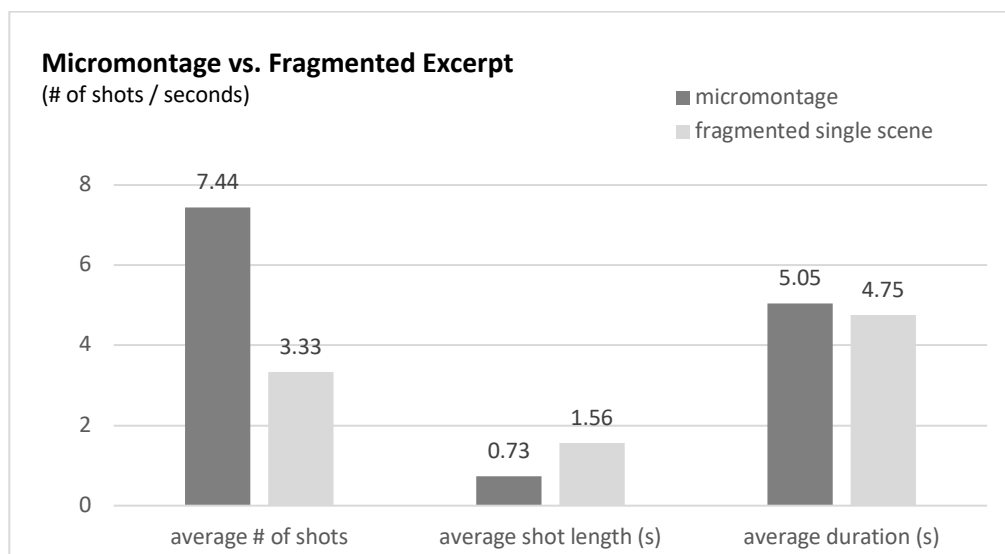
Figure 1.3 Variances in Form Between IPT's Two Structures

Title	Guns or Gunfire	Explosions	Car Crash
Inferno (2016)		✓	
Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk (2016	✓	✓	
The Accountant (2016)	✓		
The Magnificent Seven (2016)	✓		
Hacksaw Ridge (2016)	✓	✓	
Kingsman: The Golden Circle (2017)		✓	✓
Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle (2017)		✓	
Mission: Impossible Fallout (2018)	✓		✓
Venom (2018)			✓

Table 1.1 Patterns of Iconography in Micromontage IPTs

Chapter 2: Origins of the Internal Pre-Teaser

The sudden explosion of internal pre-teasers in Hollywood trailers around 2016 is demystified by considering the technological precursors leading up to this period. This chapter identifies several events spanning Twitter's evolution, online advertising formats, and subsequent industry policy changes that culminate in a distinct "moment of disruption" (Johnston 24) in recent Hollywood trailer history. These events shape the convention of the internal pre-teaser, which has since evolved and continues to appear in contemporary forms. Released during the writing of this thesis, current movie trailers still feature the structural and aesthetic characteristics outlined in the previous chapter. As descendants of the 2016-2018 internal pre-teaser, present day trailers offer key similarities and some notable differences.

For example, the Twitter-embedded movie trailer for *Horizon Line* (2020 dir. Mikael Marcimain)[1] illustrates both similarities and differences. The trailer's opening seconds feature a micromontage of action-packed visuals. Among the eleven shots: a person falling out of a plane, bloodied characters, and a plane diving lightning in a massive storm. A title-card flashes between the fourth and fifth shot, "FROM THE CREATORS OF 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE AND THE SHALLOWS". A pulsing heartbeat establishes an eerie soundscape, while a brief moment of dialogue features both sonically and visually: a man asks a woman, "Can you fly this plane?" to which she responds, "No". At this moment the rhythmic sound and editing escalate into a thrashing and metallic urgency. On the lengthier side compared to its 2016 ancestors, the 'Official Trailer' title-card halts the surge of sound and ends the IPT at 0:08 seconds. The announcement reads "HORIZON LINE TRAILER PREMIERE", evidencing a strategy of *metahype*, "a marketing

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[1] Shared to @HorizonLine's official promotional Twitter account on October 9th, 2020.

technique in which brands promote their advertisements as if they're cultural events unto themselves" (Plante). Foregrounding the event of the trailer's first release within the text (even though the text is archived and repeatable on the timeline), the *Horizon Line* IPT's tactic of metahype recalls the multimedia (GIF, videos or images) countdowns to the trailer launch that appear in earlier Twitter campaigns.[2]

The IPT continues to proliferate online in innovative forms that necessitate further study. Rather than take on this exhaustive task, this chapter moves backwards to contextualize the events leading up to the emergence of their shared ancestor — the 2016 internal pre-teaser. Arguing for the importance of several technological developments to this ongoing evolution, I outline how the internal pre-teaser came to be the first generation of movie trailers *optimized* for social media's network temporality. This chapter introduces three key players in this evolution: the propagation of network temporality and passive consumption by the Twitter platform; the invention of 'TrueView' advertising on YouTube; and the relaxing of MPAA guidelines for movie trailer formats. Following discussion of these three components, I parse out the advent of autoplay as a salient manifestation of network temporality. In conclusion, I posit Twitter's adoption of autoplay to be the culminating and critical event leading up to the internal pre-teaser.

2.1 Twitter, Network Temporality and Passive Consumption

The social media juggernaut Twitter is also one of the most salient manifestations of network temporality. The history of Twitter doubles as a discourse on the characteristics and ideals of network temporality, and it is through an analysis of this history that I identify the core temporal

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[2] Several early examples of this strategy can be found on the Twitter timeline for *Jason Bourne* (2016) and in the @ApesMovie Twitter campaign for *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* (2014 dir. Matt Reeves). Both share material counting down to the release of the trailer.

tenets that guide my inquiry: immediacy and incessancy. Embedding these values in its architecture and culture, Twitter emphasizes incessancy and immediacy, which shines light on the development of the internal pre-teaser. While most discussions of network temporality *can* extend to contemporary social media culture generally, it is Twitter specifically that most explicitly centres issues of temporality in its interface, branding and rhetoric.

Twitter was founded in 2006 by ex-Google engineers Evan Williams and Biz Stone and tech-entrepreneurs Jack Dorsey and Noah Glass. It was first launched as a microblogging site, enabling users to send simultaneous updates to large groups via a mobile SMS interface ("Twitter Launches"). Though earlier initiatives to solicit digital social networks existed — most notably Myspace (launched in 2003) and Facebook (launched in 2004) — Twitter's model of interconnectivity differed in several key ways. First, Twitter adopted terminology that put less emphasis on the social nature of the connections within their network. Rather than adopt the language used by Myspace and Facebook — i.e. 'friends' and 'friending' — Twitter's nomenclature conceptualized a less intimate breed of networking. Opting for the terms 'followers' and 'following', Twitter underscored its ability to connect users not just to one another, but to the larger bustle occurring around them.[3] Instead of promoting the who in one's network, Twitter's interface *promoted the network itself.*

Twitter also distinguished itself from other social networking platforms via its simplicity and accessibility. As Dhiraj Murphy notes, Twitter's microblogging concept borrowed heavily from already wide-spread SMS architecture, making "the learning curve for using Twitter… relatively low" (3). Twitter encouraged its users to write 'tweets' — succinct messages capped at

[3] This early branding was exemplified through Twitter's collaboration with the South by Southwest (SXSW) convention in 2007, an event during which Twitter launched as an official participatory tool (Calore).

140 characters — by providing a catchy and uncomplicated prompt on its homepage. The original prompt, "What's your status?" was later refashioned in 2009 to a more open-ended "What's Happening?" (Stone). Embracing the nebulous range of utilities it provides its users, Twitter has been described more recently as "a platform, a product, a service, a water cooler, a time square, a microphone" (Kapko 2017). Touting an accessible and open-ended interpretation of online networking, the microblogging 'gizmo' evolved into a globalized jack-of-all-trades for personal, commercial, journalistic and political means.

Twitter's foregrounding of instantaneity and liveness in both its rhetoric and interface strengthens its efficacy as a global networking tool. Consider Twitter's post-2009 homepage prompt, "What's happening?" — a quintessential embodiment of its quest to accumulate real-time information from its users. Emboldened by an accessible interface, millions offer their answers. The result is an ever-updating Twitter *time*line, an "increasingly precious resource of connectivity flowing nonstop through the site's veins" (van Dijck 81). This valuation of 'real-time' is further solidified in Twitter's brand statement, which appears throughout its website, "Twitter is what's happening in the world and what people are talking about right now" ("About Twitter's APIs"). In 2008, Twitter implemented the "trending topics" (which came with a "trending topics" sidebar) and hashtag indexing to better organize its information streams and afford connections across users. Incremental updates — such as 'Retweeting' in 2009 – were introduced regularly, designed to make it easier to navigate, find, and connect amongst this unremitting information cascade.

Twitter quickly became one of the most powerful and widespread information and communication technologies (ICTs). In 2011, then-CEO Dick Costello began describing Twitter as an "information network" — a clear departure from its origins as a microblogging service (van Dijck 79). Twitter's success was partly due to its temporal prowess, and, more specifically, its

potency as a 'real-time' tool. José van Dijck notes in 2013, "Twitter's strongest asset in the competition with other platforms is its ability to generate enormous amounts of 'live' streams of short-lived online traffic that can be minutely tracked in real time. Neither Facebook, nor Google+ nor YouTube is equipped to serve that function" (87). The temporal framework of immediacy and liveness encapsulates the ideals of a globalized networked society, and Twitter is exemplary of the technologies vanguarding these velocities.

Incessancy is a second tenet of network temporality embedded in Twitter's rhetoric — it is not just access to 'real-time' information that the app promises, but access to *constantly updating* 'real-time' information. Prototypical of the information and communication technologies that have ushered "*instantaneity, real time,* and *24/7* [into] the social and technological lexicon" (Hassan and Purser 11), Twitter and other social media sites strive to reaffirm this artificial normalcy. Yet, as Jonathan Crary argues (and rising anxiety levels corroborate), there remains a clear disconnect between network temporality and human capacity. Crary writes, "the effectiveness of 24/7 lies in the incompatibility it lays bare, in the discrepancy between a human life-world and the evocation of a switched on universe for which no off-switch exists" (30). Divorced from earthly rhythms, screen technologies haunt with endless artificial light — notifications that there is *always* something happening somewhere.

An overt illustration of this disconnect comes via Twitter's 'While You Were Away' feature, introduced on January 21st, 2015 (@ptr). The update essentially provided an information recap, curating top-performing tweets that a user may have missed when not using the site.[4] Following the user's return, Twitter presented the tweets in a brief summary under the

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[4] The same press release offers a vague explanation for how 'top tweets' are selected, informing the public that this decision is "determined by engagement and other factors" (@ptr).

inconspicuous headline, "While You Were Away…". The update made headlines as Twitter's first experimentation with a non-chronological, more algorithmic timeline (Welch) and blatantly evidences the foregrounding of *incessancy* as both a key brand characteristic and a user motive. 'While You Were Away' not only provided a pervasive reminder that its users were falling behind in the information stream, but it also communicated the fact that, in constructing a recap during the interim, Twitter itself was *always* on. Consider the rhetoric of the press release announcing the new feature, "our goal is to help you keep up — or catch up — with your world, no matter how much time you spend on Twitter" (@ptr). An inherent acknowledgement of the incompatibility between human time and Twitter's networked time, the statement's double wording ("keep up — or catch up —") betrays the paradox in its promise. Twitter depends on its users never truly catching up.

Twitter depends on its users never catching up because there is a profit to be made from every attempt. In April 2010, the site first moved to monetize its 'resource of connectivity' by introducing the first stage of its advertising model, 'Promoted Tweets'.[5] In the first phase, advertisers were limited to purchasing space on the 'search results page' for select keywords (McGee), but 'Promoted Tweets' was soon extended to individual timelines in October 2011 ("Promoted Tweets in Timeline"). Following this update, advertisers could purchase space directly on a user's timeline. Amongst millions of user-submitted tweets, 'Promoted Tweets' (advertisements) now intermixed freely. Under this revenue strategy, every minute spent scrolling the timeline translated to profit potential for advertisers. Twitter embraced its new identity as a

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[5] Shortly after, Twitter unveiled 'Promoted Trends' in June 2010, allowing advertisers to purchase space on the 'trending sidebar'. Interestingly, the first brand to utilize 'Promoted Trends' was Disney-Pixar, who bought the space to promote the release of *Toy Story 3* (2010 dir. Lee Unkrich) (Quin).

cut-throat arena in which commercial interests battled for the information age's ultimate currency: attention.

Coined by economist Herbert Simon in 1970, the attention economy describes the inversion that occurs when a society has "a wealth of information [that] creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it" (Simon 40). Twitter offers a fertile example of such an environment, wherein users must ration their attention — *and* their time — if they wish to retain control whilst navigating the site. A critical intervention comes from James Williams, who unpacks Simon's use of the term 'abundance' in his 2018 book on the attention economy. Williams argues it is not the *historical* abundance of information relative to the past that is critical to the development of an attention economy, but, "a *functional* [abundance] … whether the amount of information is above or below the threshold of what can be well processed given existing limitations (15). Similar to the discrepancy between human temporal rhythms and incessant network temporality, information overabundance lays bare human limits. Twitter, in offering endless information embedded in network temporality, makes a doubly impossible promise.

Williams locates a dangerous outcome in the dovetailing of information overabundance with network temporality — the loss of power and control. He illustrates this loss of power with a metaphor about the popular game, Tetris:

> The goal of Tetris is to rotate, stack, and clear different configurations of blocks as they rain down one by one from off screen, which they do at a constantly increasing rate of speed. The total number of bricks waiting off screen for you to stack is infinite – the game can keep going for as long as you can – but their infinitude, their abundance, is not the problem. The challenge of the game, and what ultimately does you in, is the increasing speed at which they fall. In the same way, information quantity *as such* is only important insofar as it enables

information velocity. At extreme speeds, processing fails. So the main risk information abundance poses is not that one's attention will be *occupied* or *used up* by information, as though it were some finite, quantifiable resource, but rather that one will *lose control* over one's attentional processes (15).

Through infusing its abundance of information with a *sense* of time pressure, the Twitter timeline recalls the game of Tetris. Following Williams, this climate becomes primed as a space for the negotiation and misappropriation of power.

We might trace a 'friendlier' manifestation of this struggle over control in Twitter's incremental encouraging of *passive consumption* in its users. Twitter's early major updates in 2008 and 2009 — hashtags and trending topics — helped inaugurate this standard. When Twitter first launched, users were entirely responsible for choosing who to follow and what information to consume. Each tweet in a user's timeline arrived from a known and actively chosen source. The advent of 'Trending Topics' in 2008 shifted this process by bringing topics and conversations *to the user* via a 'Trending' sidebar. Whether one clicked to see more or not, users were made aware of other information, discourse that they may have not otherwise sought out. Retweets did a similar thing: information was now able to reach the timelines of non-followers when retweeted by an account that *was* followed. The strict avenues afforded to users to opt into *'following' or 'not following'* became less enforced, and therefore less afforded. Twitter, under the guise of optimizing user experience, found new ways to inject streams of information into a user's view.

The dovetailing pressures of incessant, 'real-time' information abundance becomes therefore associated with a struggle over power. The exact environment of Twitter constructs a terrain where this battle plays out. Even further, the monetization of that terrain through a 'Promoted' (paid ad) revenue strategy intensifies the stakes. Each incremental incursion Twitter rolls out in this arms race is cleverly packaged in specific rhetoric, favouring terms like

streamlining and *optimization* that connote positive and beneficial outcomes. The updates or devices associated with these terms are more likely to satisfy the demands of the capitalist corporations heading them.[6]

This is the exact terminology used to announce Twitter's adoption of video autoplay in June 2015 — the critical provocation underlying the 2016 origination and widespread appearance of the IPT in Hollywood trailers. However, several other factors, unfolding concurrent to this evolution, play a major part in this development. The connection between Twitter, its adoption of autoplay, and the internal pre-teaser cannot be considered in isolation. We have seen how Twitter's interface updates and branding rhetoric embed network temporality and encourage passive consumption, which then demystifies the conditions and logic of the IPT's environment. The following discussion of two other major players, YouTube and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), edges us towards a more comprehensive contextualization of the origins of the internal pre-teaser.

2.2   Innovations in Advertising: YouTube's TrueView and the MPAA

As Twitter evolved from "autonomous utility promoting user connectedness into an information network exploiting user connectivity" (van Dijck 86), passive consumption played out in different ways across other social media sites experimenting with revenue models. YouTube, which was purchased by Google in 2006, was developing a multi-faceted marketing strategy aiming to "capitalize on streaming video's viral marketing potential" (van Dijck 125). This strategy included branded video channels, Promoted Videos (similar to Twitter's 'Promoted Tweets' wherein relevant Promoted Videos appear in the right-hand sidebar of the video watch

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[6] This is a point I expand on in the following chapter.

page), and in-video advertising.[7] YouTube's in-video advertising model enabled advertisers to purchase either 'pre-roll' space (before the selected video) or insert their ads within the video's runtime as a sort of micro-commercial break. This advertising stream becomes critical to the development of the internal pre-teaser with the adoption of TrueView in 2010.

The TrueView advertising format is the result of Google "investing significantly to make display advertising better for users, advertisers and publishers" (Mohan). The product of exorbitant research and development efforts, TrueView is an interactive variation of in-video advertising designed to "create opportunities for viewers to engage with your brand on a deeper level" ("About Interactive Videos"). In essence, TrueView offers viewers "the option to skip an ad if they don't want to watch, or to choose from multiple ads the one they want to watch" (Mohan). While a video advertisement plays, a countdown of 5 seconds eventually offers the viewer the option to skip directly to the desired video content, rather than watch the ad in its entirety. In addition, "advertisers are billed only if the user watches at least 30 seconds (or the complete advertisement, if it is less than 30 seconds long)" (Pashkevich et al. 451). While pre-roll video advertisements ran on YouTube prior to 2010, this update shifted the conditions of the encounter, embedding a temporal reminder through a 'countdown' that foregrounded the option to skip. Advertisers were afforded the choice — they could opt either for TrueView or the more traditional, unskippable ad format. By July 2012, 70% of in-stream advertisements had adopted the former, and TrueView became the dominant format for in-video advertising on YouTube (Pashkevich et al. 452).

The massive success of TrueView advertising is largely indebted to the apparent benefit it offered both advertisers and ad-viewers — its reputation as a "win-win" innovation in advertising

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[7] There are dozens of iterations of ad streams available on YouTube. For the purposes of this project, issues of passive consumption are best illustrated by TrueView's in-video advertising.

persists today ("TrueView"). TrueView promises that advertisers pay only for 'real' views by 'interested' viewers (viewers who had elected to *not* skip the ad) and promises viewers more agency over what advertisements they watched. Of course, this illusion of choice is nonetheless artificial, as advertisers establish the rules of the game by opting to use the TrueView format in the first place. But even so, studies claimed that skippable ads not only reduced the negative impact of advertising on users, but *empowered* them. A 2012 study by Pashkevich et al. assert, "YouTube's TrueView instream video advertisements appear to have succeeded in substantially reducing the negative user impacts of online advertising without sacrificing the value of such advertisements to advertisers. This is a substantial accomplishment" (457).[8] This study equated "watch time" (total time spent watching YouTube videos) as a proxy for negative or positive impact, finding that TrueView advertising (compared to non-skippable advertising) lengthened the time spent on YouTube (454).

Others note the inherent power imbalance that undermines this concept of 'empowering' advertisements. "The 'most empowering' menu is different than the menu that has the most choices" writes Tristan Harris, a former Design Ethicist at Google. Whether advertisers opt to utilize a TrueView format does not afford any real benefit to the viewer, who is still made to encounter the advertisement, "If you control the menu, you control the choices" (Harris). Regardless of the validity of this 'empowering' effect, even those with pro-TrueView biases acknowledge how the new format breaches a previous boundary. Pashkevich et. al continue, "giving users the choice to view (or not view) may actually increase this advertising effectiveness by engaging users in the advertising process" (457). In offering viewers a 'right to choose', TrueView implicates the viewer in the advertising transaction.

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[8] The researchers Pashkevitch et al. are all Google employees at the time this study was published in 2012.

This new format also incentivized advertisers to make their opening five seconds irresistible. Shortly after the announcement of TrueView, ThinkWithGoogle.com, Google's in-house advertising agency, targeted advertisers with articles about how to create video campaigns 'optimized' for this new, time-pressured format ("Tips for Creating Effective Video Ads"). With viewers now able to choose to opt-out of a video advertisement, the onus of holding the viewer's attention fell on the production team and the video itself. As Google helpfully reminds, "Make sure the video you create for your ad is engaging. Remember, you don't have a captive audience because viewers can skip a video after 5 seconds" ("Tips for Creating Effective Video Ads"). Advertisers faced intensified pressure to construct video advertisements that could perform, that is, to effectively transform this choice to click skip into an illusion. The invention of the TrueView advertising format escalated certain priorities of video production by concentrating the need to 'hook' the viewer, to persuade them to stay beyond the first five seconds.

It did not take long for the pressures of TrueView advertising to have an effect on long-standing and established advertising video formats that were *not* optimized for such exposition. Such was the case for online movie trailers mandated under the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) guidelines. A trade organization descended from the Hays Code,[9] the MPAA is the trade federation of America's major studios and keeps U.S. government censorship away from the industry through self-regulation. Their Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA) department reviews and rates the films and advertising material that studios voluntarily submit. The incentive encouraging studios to submit lies in securing distribution amongst large American theatre chains. In other words, "if you want to compete in the movie market, you need to have a

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[9] The MPAA began as the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA) of which William Hays — who later established the Hays Code in 1930 —was president. In 1945, Hays retired and the MPPDA was renamed the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ("G is for Golden").

rating" (Roos). Hollywood films competing for box-office success therefore depend on the approval of their advertising material by CARA, and abide by the guidelines they establish.

The MPAA's Advertising Administration reviews all advertising and publicity materials for films rated by the MPAA, and approves (or does not approve) them depending on the placement. Up until 2013, the MPAA approved theatrical movie trailers for two audiences only, either for "All Audiences" (A "G" rating, meaning unrestricted or general audiences) or "Restricted Audiences" (An "R" rating, meaning viewers under 17 must be accompanied by an adult guardian) ("2006 MPAA Advertising Handbook").[10] Use of the official MPAA rating tags, otherwise called Trailer Tags, were required to be shown on all trailers for rated films. Even teaser trailers, defined by MPAA as "a trailer issued before the motion picture has been rated" ("2006 MPAA Advertising Handbook" 24) required Trailer Tags indicating suitability for all audiences.

The MPAA further mandated the placement and location of Trailer Tags. They were to be "placed at the head of the trailer" (28) and were required to play for either 5 seconds (theatrical trailers) or 4 seconds (for television spots) (handbook page 9). This variance in placement duration speaks to an inherent acknowledgement of the different temporalities structuring theatrical or television viewing experiences. In the cinema, movie trailers had a comparatively captive audience whereas television viewers were free to change the channel. Understandably, the MPAA allowed television trailers a more ephemeral Trailer Tag placement to account for the competitiveness of the TV environment. Of course, the rapidly evolving digital environment escalated an even greater temporal pressure, one which even the four-second TV Trailer Tag was surely unequipped for.

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[10] Changes came in 2013, when the MPAA's "Advertising Administration made changes to the tag accompanying movie trailers to clearly display to audiences that "the following preview has been approved to accompany this feature," making it clear that the trailers being viewed prior to a film were suitable for the film's intended audience" ("G is for Golden").

This is precisely what unfolded in 2012 - 2013 when Warner Brothers began strategizing the promotional campaign for the 2013 superhero film, *Man of Steel* (dir. Zack Snyder). The blockbuster film — which went on to rank as the fourth top-grossing film of 2013 — was allotted an expansive marketing campaign that included paid ad placements of the *Man of Steel* movie trailer on YouTube, thereby optimizing its TrueView in-video format. In its early stages, the Warner Brothers marketing team identified the misalignment between the temporal pressures afforded by the TrueView in-video format, and the customary Trailer Tag shown in the trailer's opening five seconds (Davidson). Put differently, Warner Brothers perceptively understood that the quickness necessitated by the TrueView format rendered this five-second Trailer Tag an outdated and costly policy. This prompted discussions between Warner Brothers executives and representatives of MPAA's online marketing department, which ultimately resulted in the *Man of Steel* trailer[11] becoming the first MPAA studio trailer approved to run online as a paid ad without Trailer Tags (Davidson).

This development — the result of an intuitive "soft policy change" (Davidson) rather than rigid consultations and meetings — was soon picked up across other MPAA studios. In freeing the movie trailer from the obligation of a five-second Trailer Tag, Hollywood's trailers were better empowered to adapt to the temporal demands of TrueView and other online skippable ad formats. Interestingly, this policy change was not explicitly announced in the MPAA's 2014 advertising handbook, which mandates Trailer Tag placement in theatrical and online trailers but uses less specific wording in a section titled *Internet Advertising*.[12] Rather than completely renovate

[11] The specific trailer in question is titled, *Man of Steel - "Fate of Your Planet" Official Trailer* and has been archived on the official Warner Brothers YouTube page. It can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlOF03DUoWc (Davidson).

[12] Under this section, the MPAA advises that "The official motion picture site must include on its splash page the Full Rating Block and hyperlinks to www.mpaa.org and www.filmratings.com, as must any trailer for the motion

placement policy for online trailers, the impact of the *Man of Steel* campaign simply expanded the options. To this day, some internet-circulated MPAA trailers continue to display Trailer Tags in their opening seconds while others do not. But for movie trailer agencies and production houses eager to optimize for an environment of immediacy — in other words, anxious not to 'waste' those precious first five seconds — the decision is clear.

One might expect Hollywood's internal pre-teaser to develop shortly after this liberation of the trailer's opening seconds, and indeed the perfect match of TrueView's five-second countdown and the Trailer Tag five-second stipulation points to this. During this period, other predecessors can be found — specifically in the extended trailer for *Dead Man Down* (2013 dir. Niels Arden Oplev)[13] which offers a pretextual hybrid: an extended type of internal pre-teaser *and* a MPAA Trailer Tag feature in its opening act. The promotional YouTube account for *Dead Man Down* (@DeadManDownMovie) offers a collection of archived iterations of promotional texts, including movie trailers, TV spots and exclusive clips. The film's official trailer is its earliest archived video, shared in January 2013 and begins with the customary 5-second Trailer Tag. However, it is the second video archived on its YouTube page — titled "Extended Trailer" — that offers insight into the internal pre-teaser convention's predecessors.

This "Extended Trailer" is composed of the official trailer with the addition of a 21-second opening sequence edited in prior. While not fully liberated from the mandatory inclusion of MPAA Trailer Tags — which appear *after* this opening sequence — this early text hints at practices that

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picture exhibited on the Internet. If the motion picture has not yet been rated, the splash page shall include the "This Film Is Not Yet Rated" tag in a box in place of the Full Rating Block. The Full Rating Block shall be included on the site immediately after the motion picture has been rated. (Internet Trailer Tag examples are contained in Appendix E) (11). The wording under *Theatrical Trailers* and *Television Advertising* is more unequivocal, directly referencing the duration necessary for Trailer Tags to be displayed ("Advertising Administration Rules" 9-10).

[13] Found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGr0vUe41vM.

may have preceded the convention's solidification. Specifically, the editing together of short teasers to the finalized, MPAA-approved trailers to offer an "extended" version (Yang). While the IPT convention involves a lack of MPAA trailer tags — and thereby does not 'extend' the text so much as supplement it, the aesthetics and structural similarities are striking. Including a car crash and gunfire, pulsing soundscape and intertitles, this sequence resembles an expanded, slower-paced version of the formula that later exploded through Hollywood trailers in 2016.[14] While autoplay would later cause this strategy to condense and congeal as the internal pre-teaser proper, the logic of "extending" that permeates through this prototype-like amalgamation differentiates from the later convention, which treats the inclusion of the IPT as a supplement for social media optimization, rather than a narrative extension.

It was not until another technological development, the invention of autoplay on Twitter, that this temporal pressure intensified enough to *streamline* this strategy. The incorporation of a 'teaser' no longer constituted an 'extension' of a trailer — as in the case of *Dead Man Down* — but became hyper-condensed, erasing any true 'extension'. The convention of an internal yet separated 3-10 second opening segment only appeared widely among MPAA studio trailers some time later. The consistent formula evidenced in this project's sample did not appear until April 2016 — three years after the 2013 release of both the *Man of Steel* and *Dead Man Down* trailers. While the MPAA's 'soft policy change' primed the big-budget Hollywood movie trailer for the structural creativity that would eventually create the internal pre-teaser, the temporal pressure of TrueView was not enough on its own. The guaranteed eyeballs promised by autoplay escalated temporal pressure for trailers. It was no longer enough to tease, but now one had to truly

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[14] The strangeness of this teaser/trailer combination in this *Dead Man Down* (2013) extended trailer is commented on by viewers. A top comment on a third-party archived copy of the extended trailer reads, "its trailerception" (LETZUPLOADIT).

hook — and *fast*. The adoption of autoplay on Twitter pushed the IPT to evolve from amorphous and accidental beginnings to become a concentrated and deliberate formula.

2.3   The Age of Autoplay

In June 2015, Twitter announced its implementation of video autoplay. It was not the first nor the only social networking site to do so — Facebook pioneered video autoplay on its mobile app in September 2013 and later extended the update to its web feed (Constantine). Since then, video autoplay has become a default feature of countless social networking platforms and websites. Most iterations of this architecture create a similar experience: users browsing a website will scroll upon (or open) a page prompting embedded videos to immediately play upon this exposure. The autoplaying videos are most often muted unless clicked upon, yet the resounding cultural response remains one of disdain. Brian X. Chen writes for the *New York Times*, "Nobody seems to like autoplay videos — not even people I've talked to in the ad industry. The indiscreet videos demand your attention while burning through your mobile data plan and sucking up your batteries. Yet they have become a necessary evil for many media publishers trying to survive in the digital age" (Chen). Yet from Facebook and Instagram to Netflix and TikTok, autoplay persists as the default condition for video media.

While autoplay is a web-wide phenomenon, its implementation on the *Twitter platform* is critical for the internal pre-teaser's emergence as a convention, less than a year later, in April 2016. Apart from the relative proximity of the two events, this connection is bolstered by a history of collaborations between Twitter interface updates and Hollywood campaigns, beginning with Disney/Pixar's purchase of the first 'Twitter Trending Topic' advertising slot to promote *Toy Story 3* (2010) (Siegler). As well as highlighting the trailer for *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015 dir. Sam Taylor-Johnson) in its 2014 press-release introducing promoted videos (@regandc), Twitter also

distributed movie trailers as embedded video media — otherwise called 'native video content' — prior to rolling out this ability to its general users, as demonstrated in the tweeted trailers for *Lucy* (2014 dir. Luc Besson) and *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* (2014 dir. Matt Reeves).[15] Twitter's implementation of autoplay meant that all native videos began playing automatically once scrolled upon, and this update — while positioned as equally beneficial to users and advertisers — prioritized commercial interests. Consider the accompanying press release, "By introducing autoplay and taking a stance on viewability, we think Twitter is now the premier platform for marketers to share and distribute the best video content in the world" (@regandc).

But the most salient impact of autoplay on Twitter lies not just with its blatant foregrounding of commercial interests, but with the intensification it brings to an already extreme temporal environment. As immediacy and incessancy are foregrounded in the platform's architecture and rhetoric, video autoplay transforms network temporality's rule into a dictatorship. Contextualized against its history of incrementally encouraging passive consumption through new architecture and updates to its interface, Twitter's video autoplay presents its most aggressive pursuit of this aim, taking away the Twitter user's ability to *not* engage with the video material. Increasingly injected into one's timeline from external sources — via Retweets, Promoted Tweets and other features — this material became streamlined in its delivery to the viewer. In other words, the Twitter user was no longer required to actively opt into receiving information *or* — in the case of video information — playing it. Video autoplay then becomes the most salient affront to user agency, and the most important ammunition in securing passive consumption.

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[15] 20th Century Fox and Universal were no doubt included as "select content publishers and verified users" (@regandc) for whom Twitter enabled this feature in 2014. The trailer for *Lucy*, shared May 22nd, 2014 can be found at https://twitter.com/ApesMovies/status/480047582777847808?s=20. While the trailer for *Apes*, shared June 20th, 2014 can be found at https://twitter.com/ApesMovies/status/480047582777847808?s=20.

The press-release announcing autoplay packages the update as "a more streamlined consumption experience" (@regandc) and this rhetoric reveals the underlying logic of the internal pre-teaser. Though the connotations of terms such as *streamline* and *optimization* are positive, connoting greater efficiency, ease and productivity, the updates attached to this language come with unwelcome intrusions. In the case of Twitter autoplay, the 'streamlined' video actively implicates the viewer, and in doing so dominates the encounter and forces a passivity in the spectator. Even if she chooses not to watch the video — and therefore scrolls onwards or else clicks the 'pause' button — autoplay necessitates her engagement, it establishes the rules of the game. The right *not* to engage becomes displaced, and this loss of agency has been met with widespread criticism (see Chen, Engst). The association between the rhetoric of 'streamlining' and the exertion of control is a theme that the following chapter expands on.

The bottom line is that the aesthetics and structure of the internal pre-teaser reveal an inherent awareness of these conditions. It subsumes the immediacy and competes with the incessancy that are the conditions of Twitter — and social media culture generally. The internal pre-teaser has been plainly attributed to social media, consider the statement from an anonymous trailer editor in a 2019 AMA Reddit thread titled, *I'm a pitch-sizzle and trailer editor for top studios, directors, and agencies. AMA!*. When asked about the update of internal pre-teasers by a Reddit user, the AMA author (@BauerBourneBond) points directly to research on online viewing behaviours, and even mentions the placement of Trailer Tags:

> It comes from YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram viewing
> behaviors. We had a company meeting on this when it first
> started to be a thing studios were asking for, and simply is
> just hard statistical facts. Greencard + Studio Logos? 75%
> drop off. Flashy 3 second intro straight into the trailer?

300% retention. It's crazy, but the numbers back it up.

(BauerBourneBond 2019)

Although the AMA author makes no mention of Twitter in this statement, the answer indicates how social media viewing behaviours are foregrounded in the production of contemporary movie trailers.

2.4   Conclusion

This chapter traces a series of online events that I have argued directly contributed to the emergence of the Hollywood internal pre-teaser. Condensed to 3-10 seconds and located at the immediate opening of an online trailer text, the internal pre-teaser subsumes the immediacy necessitated by a hypercompetitive information overabundance. While the relaxing of MPAA Trailer Tag guidelines paved the way for creative and eye-catching openings, it was the invention of autoplay that truly sparked the need for *immediacy* at the level of the text. Predestined to be viewed by autoplay, the movie trailer takes on the temporal pressure to *keep* the user watching.[16] This is why the usage of the term 'retention' by @BauerBourneBond is so important, as it connotes a continued possession or control of the viewer. The internal pre-teaser comes to reflect a text anxious about the relative agency of its viewer, it is no longer given the comfort of the darkened cinema's collective and stationary crowd. This anxiety manifests through a convention that seeks to *recreate* the bodily control of theatre-goers, who must abide by social, temporal and physical constraints. The internal pre-teaser is Hollywood's greatest weapon, not just to compete with teeming timelines but to exert the control it is no longer afforded.

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[16] It is ironic to consider how the TrueView ad format foregrounded its ability to afford choice, and yet in the years following this invention, great pains have been taken to revert this 'choice'. Herein we may trace a renewed prioritization of persuasion, in which videos scramble to make their ads videos feel 'unskippable'.

When writing this chapter, I shared the Twitter trailer for *Horizon Line* (2020) with a friend. I offered him my phone and scrolled to the tweet containing the video. He was busy and didn't want to watch the trailer at first, but I insisted. Holding the phone, he took steps to the kitchen to carry on with a task — attempting to multitask whilst dutifully obliging my request. But as the internal pre-teaser began to play, he stopped in his tracks. I watched as the small screen overtook him, and he swayed slightly in place, staring down at the phone. It was this *physical* impact of the internal pre-teaser, its ability to render the viewer into a sort of frozen stasis, that fascinated me. It was not just this effect, but the velocity with which the Hollywood trailer achieved it — mere seconds was all it took to immobilize.

The emergence of the internal pre-teaser was not unforeseen nor unexpected — although its concentrated outbreak in 2016 might have felt that way to some. Rather, the convention arises from a gradational intensification of temporal pressures structuring online viewing experience, best symbolized in autoplay and *the scroll*. This chapter designates contributing events, from Twitter and social media culture, interface technology, video advertising and industry to offer a timeline of the internal pre-teaser's origination. This retrospective lens enhances our understanding of the IPT's function; what it pursues and how. As the *Horizon Line* (2020) trailer attests, the internal pre-teaser's arrival does *not* represent an isolated moment, but a growing overlap in the tactics of Hollywood and Big Tech. Though at one time these two cultural conglomerates ruled over separate screens, their territories become one under an attention economy. It is through the internal pre-teaser we may begin to understand how Hollywood and Big Tech have joined forces to capture and retain.

Chapter 3: Implications of the Internal Pre-Teaser

Extending the logic of automation central to Twitter's autoplay feature, the internal pre-teaser constructs a spectatorial experience that is *at home in the scroll*. Its aesthetics and structure are complicit in these operations, they conspire in foregrounding network temporality. Put simply, the internal pre-teaser is optimized for embeddedness in the Twitter timeline. While the previous chapter delineated the origins of these conditions, this chapter unpacks what exactly is implied in the IPT's *optimization*. How does this collusion between text/platform produce political outcomes, wherein narrative and distance are subsumed for more immediate, sensorium aims? How does this interplay represent a shift in the site of persuasion, on the level of the Hollywood trailer text?

Only after Twitter's advent of video autoplay was the formulaic convention of the IPT solidified. Ensuring that all native[1] videos on the timeline played instantaneously once scrolled upon, video autoplay added to the temporal pressures of digital watching.[2] Meanwhile, Twitter users were increasingly subject to architecture promoting passive engagement. The internal pre-teaser arrives at this juncture, otherwise described as the attention economy. Under these conditions, *eyeballs* become the central target, and autoplay becomes "a necessary evil for many media publishers trying to survive in the digital age" (Chen). While autoplay primes the capturing of attention, the internal pre-teaser deploys an "adrenaline aesthetics" (Duffy) and calculates an *atmosphere of urgency* to impact through structure, editing and sound. By bringing this strategy to the timeline, the internal pre-teaser works to retain the dominated gaze.

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[1] Recall that 'native' is the term Twitter uses to refer to media that has been uploaded directly to the platform, otherwise, embedded media.

[2] As I point out in the previous chapter, these temporal pressures were directly normalized by the prior advent of TrueView in-video advertising, which overlaid a 5-second countdown on video advertising media.

What are the consequences of autoplay's temporal pressure? How do text and platform interact to exploit this environment? These are the primary questions addressed in this chapter, which will first parse out the concepts of immediacy and incessancy to offer a theory of autoplay. Armed with a thorough explanation of the IPT's conditions, we then move to the text itself. A close analysis of the internal pre-teaser for *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017) illustrates how formal elements reflect the tensions of the timeline, particularly in relation to speed and control. I conclude by establishing the internal pre-teaser as the weaponization of the Hollywood trailer that recasts its central mode of persuasion. Ultimately, the IPT is deployed to dominate social media viewing experiences and reinforce capitalist needs.

3.1   Speed, Immediacy and Optimization

It is difficult to dismiss the current era's pursuit of speed, and much academic discourse exists on the subject. Though it has a strong population of defectors,[3] the cultural fantasy of fast relies on a promise of ultimate efficiency. It is this fantasy that Big Tech ardently propagates, as illustrated by two current slogans for the latest products from Apple and Google: "Blast Past Fast" ("iPhone 12") and "Starts fast. Goes fast. Stays fast" ("Pixelbook Go"). The coupling of speed and productivity dates back to the beginning of industrial modernity, wherein technological advances revolutionized capitalist production, liberating many from lengthy, labour-intensive tasks. Indelibly beneficial under a capitalist society, the virtues of *speed as progress* were bolstered by a moral component — a belief shared among progressives and capitalists that human betterment depends on constant forward motion (Tomlinson 23).

Binding economic ideals of productivity and efficiency with moral connotations of improvement, the cultural narrative of speed *as* progress persuades and persists. At the core of this

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[3] Such as the Slow City and Slow Food movements (see Wajcman).

equation lies the promise of technology; John Maynard Keynes famously prophesied that increased productivity due to technology would result in a need for only three hours of work a day (Wajcman 163). The association between progress and speed extends to taint *technology itself* with connotations of progress. And while history has failed to realize this "emancipatory impact of machines," (Tomlinson 22) the pursuit of this fantasy continues. Needless to say, these are the aspirations reaffirmed and exploited by Apple and Google, among other tech conglomerates.

In her book, *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism*, Judy Wajcman argues that the co-evolution of technology with work establish "a growing sense of time pressure" (163) that feeds into a cycle of trying to alleviate this pressure through more 'smart' gadgets and devices. While Wajcman attributes our constant *sense* of being rushed to shifts in expectations around work and labour in the digital age,[4] she critiques "the extent to which speed itself has become the ultimate rationale for technical innovation" (178). Apart from promising to alleviate our temporal stress by somehow, finally, being 'fast enough', these devices rely on promotional rhetoric that extends to the economic ideals of speed: efficiency, productivity and progress. This rhetoric, as I have alluded to, features terms like *optimization* and *streamlining*. It is this exact language — and logic — that video autoplay depends on.

The first line of Twitter's press release for autoplay reads, "Today we're introducing a more streamlined consumption experience for all native videos, GIFs and Vines on Twitter" (@regandc). The connotation of this term, streamline, borrows heavily from speed's legacy of

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[4] For example, she discusses the "autonomy paradox", a term proposed by Melissa Mzmanian, Wanda Orlikowski and Joanne Yates to describe how corporate lawyers, venture capitalists and other workers who operate by implicit "anytime, anywhere" policies regard the personal email possibility of their blackberry favourably, as enhancing "flexibility, control and competence" and yet the consequences of this "compulsive connectivity" heightens expectations of work, which "reduces personal downtime and increases stress" (103).

efficiency and improvement. Recreating the emancipatory promise of industrial machinery, autoplay offers a 'time-saving solution' to the laborious process of selecting a video to watch. However, while terms like streamline and optimization conjure up the pleasures of speed — of productivity and progress, efficiency and ease — we might ask whether it is speed truly being sold. It is true that autoplay streamlines video consumption, but it does not do this by *speeding up* the process. Rather, autoplay abolishes the process completely.

We can infer from definitions of *streamline* a better understanding. Google's Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb as, "design or provide with a form that presents very little resistance to a flow of air or water, increasing speed and ease of movement" ("Streamline" [Oxford University Press]). Cambridge Dictionary offers a wider interpretation, "to change something so that it works better, esp. by making it simpler" ("Streamline" [Cambridge Dictionary]). A definition for the adjective use of the term by the Oxford English Dictionary reads, "Efficient; simplified, having inessentials removed" ("Streamlined, adj." [OED online]). While speed does appear as a single shard of its connotation, these definitions reveal a different logic at the core of 'streamline'. To streamline is to pursue structural simplicity, to actively eliminate 'inessential' resistance — clunky processes that slow down movement across distances. The temporality more suited to this rationale is *immediacy* rather than speed.

While the latter describes an acceleration of the crossing of a distance or process (between Point A and Point B, for example), the former collapses this space entirely. John Tomlinson illustrates with the metaphor of a physical journey — while mechanical speed may reduce the significance of the journey, such speed ultimately conserves "the will, the force and the effort involved in the overcoming of distance" (90). With speed, Tomlinson explains, "the gap between here and there, now and later, what we desire what we can expect to receive, was *preserved* in the

necessity of effort [and] in the application of will" (90). The aid of speed in overcoming distance does not erase human effort. This is different from immediacy, which collapses the space between Point A and Point B — as Tomlinson describes, "the culture of immediacy, by contrast, involves as its core feature the imagination that *the gap is already closed*" (90).

It is this collapse of process — this denial of a 'gap' — that is at the core of autoplay. As the unsurpassed pursuit of efficiency, immediacy regards process as 'inessential' and therefore dissolves it. The idea of 'streamline' embeds this logic of efficient simplification. In her book, *The Mantra of Efficiency*, Jennifer Karns Alexander details the history of this impulse in Western culture, beginning with the waterwheel — where we may also trace the literal beginnings of the term streamline. Alexander underscores the shared emphasis on the notion of 'flow' in terms of both efficiency and the globalization of a network economy (149). The ideology of immediacy (that undergirds this ideal of a global network) shares with efficiency a desire to stamp out interference, streamlining ultimately strengthens flow. Alexander observes that efficiency remains critical in today's world "not only because traditional manufacturing operations continue [but also as] a tool of avoiding disruption" (161). Efficiency's denial of disruption and immediacy's expulsion of interference ultimately coalesce in an application — and often, reaffirmation — of authority.

3.2 Autoplay, Control and The Detemporalized Present

"My favorite aspect of Twitter has long been the personal immediacy — seeing what's happening in my world right now" writes Jack Dorsey (who later became Twitter's CEO) in a 2008 entry on the website's blog (Dorsey). Previously, I showed how Twitter incrementally embedded *immediacy* as a guiding temporality through persuasive architecture encouraging passive consumption. Recall the adoption of 'Trending Topics — announced in 2008 in response

to the heavy usage of the search bar by Twitter users. Designed to 'streamline' this process, 'Trending Topics' did not offer a *faster* system (where users could search up their desired topics or fiddle between searches at a quicker rate) but instead made this arrival of new information immediate, reflecting the new "*telos* of consumption" (Wajcman 172) that emphasizes delivery rather than desire. The 'Trending Topics' update funnelled information directly to users through a default sidebar and in turn eschewed the 'inessential' — the actual human process of searching.

This 'Trending Topics' example underscores the collapse between desire and delivery that marks the ideology of immediacy, in which "effortful speed" becomes displaced by "effortless mediated delivery" (Tomlinson 80). We trace in this collapse the erasure of *process* and, by extension, user agency. Dorsey even acknowledges the activeness of the platform in shaping his interests, "At a glance I'm able to see what the world considers important in this moment, which lights a path to explore what matters to me" (Dorsey). Of course, the instantaneity implied in 'at a glance' erases the euphemism of 'a path' but such paradoxes seem central to the rhetoric associated with tech updates. Whereas this language touts the personal benefits of speed, what it actually sells is *immediacy*, which prioritizes the demands of capitalist consumerism.

Autoplay is an exceptional materialization of these operations. It relies on connotations of productivity but serves singularly the means of extinguishing interference. Though, as the 'Trending Topics' update illustrates, video autoplay is not the first Twitter feature to foreground immediacy, it *is* the more controversial exemplification. Although an abundance of websites and platforms have worked to normalize autoplay in recent years, the feature continues to receive considerable backlash in the press, even amongst those working in tech (Chen). This revulsion is attributable to video autoplay's blatant elimination of human interference and denial of consent.

In a piece titled "#DeathToAutoplay", technology writer Adam Engst decries Netflix's Apple TV version of the feature (specifically an iteration which auto-plays video clips as a user's mouse browses over content options). Engst introduces the topic with choice words, "...there's one trend that's so blatant, so patently offensive, so callously disrespectful of our time and attention, that we can no longer sit by and suffer. I am of course speaking of the dreaded auto-play videos". The article criticizes the lack of *process* afforded to viewers, "It's difficult even to read the show's description in that amount of time, much less reflect on whether you might want to watch the show" (Engst). Whereas autoplay's immediacy is often deployed for greater efficiency, the ironic outcome here is a *diminishment* of the Netflix viewer's efficiency — they are being constantly interrupted and distracted. The collapse in process blocks out space for decision-making and reasoning — that which Netflix's model of efficiency may regard as 'inessential'.

Autoplay's offensiveness may be further attributed to video media's tendency to draw attention to the act of perception itself — and thereby, the means of that perception. Engst notes that the content of Netflix's autoplaying material is sometimes "wildly inappropriate" for children, citing a Tweet by TechCrunch reporter Sarah Perez,[5] "So I opened @netflix today and it shouted "let's fuck this party in the mouth!!" Seriously? Thank god my kid wasn't in the room. Do you even think about this stuff, Netflix?". Offending content undermines autoplay's sleight of hand by calling attention to the user's lack of agency and loss of consent. When the video itself is disagreeable or unpleasant (therein escalating an awareness of the act of viewing), these operations become more visible.

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[5] This tweet can be found at https://twitter.com/sarahintampa/status/1091734215199211522. Accessed 13 January 2021.

A tragic example comes in 2015 when a double homicide was captured in a video that was both live-streamed and uploaded afterward to Twitter and Facebook.[6] The footage was unfortunately mass-circulated online, and many unwittingly viewed the video as it autoplayed on their timelines. In an article for the *Journal of Media Ethics*, Hillary Jones explored the tweeted discourse that followed this event. Her rhetorical analysis found that, while an early minority of tweets responded directly to the content of the video's material, the discourse soon became overwhelmed by the topic of autoplay and "indignation at their own loss of consent" (135). Major news outlets such as the BBC and *The Guardian* ran pieces that foregrounded the backlash against autoplay over the event that spurred it.[7]

As these examples show, the collapse of process by immediacy extinguishes consent. Because the terrain of consent lies in the present rather than the future or the past, it follows that we arrive at a new 'present' under an ideology of immediacy. Carmen Leccardi, following Hartmut Rosa's theory of social acceleration and recalling Wajcman's increasing sense of time pressure, argues that an ideology of immediacy makes "the dominating vision of the future as an open field of possibilities … [fade] away little by little" (29). Just as the distance between Point A to Point B collapses, so does the "sensation of a lack of time" surpass the subjective future and its potentiality (29). The future folds into itself and with it the space for consent dissolves, taking with it the confidence of possibility.

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[6] Reporter Alison Parker and photographer Adam Ward were shot by Vester Flanagan while conducting a live television interview in Roanoke, Virginia on August 26th, 2015.

[7] For two online examples, see www.bbc.com/news/technology-34073206 and www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/aug/27/facebook-twitter-users-complain-virginia-shooting-videos-autoplay.

Leccardi terms this the *detemporalized present* (29) and describes it as "a *loss* of the present as a space of choice and reflexive action" (30). These are the exact circumstances of autoplay — recall #DeathToAutoplay's central lamentation of how Netflix's iteration of the feature "interrupts whatever thoughts might be going through your head" (Engst). The unprompted experience afforded by autoplay overwhelms by wielding its (detemporalized) present like a weapon. This exertion is meant to dominate, a strong-armed persuasive tactic that retracts the future onto the present and thereby erases the future as a space for choice. As we will see in the *Kingsman* IPT, this process plays out both in the function of the internal pre-teaser and on the level of its text. In forcing the future (as both the beginning of the video and the climactic content of the trailer) into its preeminent seconds, the internal pre-teaser embeds this loss of possibility and consent.

To clarify, the instantaneity of autoplay is not new — Tomlinson describes earlier "impatient media" in the form of MP3 players, digital cameras and search engines, devices that "'write out' the expectation of a gap between demand and delivery" (132). With these technologies, the user is trained to *anticipate* immediacy. The MP3 user implicitly expects that, after this song, another will play. However, the critical difference between impatient media and autoplay is that the latter dissolves the gap between demand and delivery *without first establishing the user's expectations*. In other words, many feel that there *should* be a gap. That autoplay deals in attention through video media makes this procedure especially jolting. Impatient media also offers an exchange of value and convenience that makes their collapse of process more digestible. The digital camera bestows an instant photograph in exchange for the loss of the interim. But autoplay's benefits are deeply unbalanced, blatantly prioritizing the needs of marketers. The domination of attention, which is personal and intimate, through such blatant means incites the frustration expressed in the above discourse.

3.3   Incessancy and Glare

The prevailing theme of a reduction in human capacity is compounded by the 24/7 incessancy that also structures the Twitter timeline. Incessancy, the second tenet of network temporality guiding this inquiry, exacerbates these issues. After all, the Twitter timeline not only teems with autoplaying videos, but it does so *constantly*. Just like immediacy, incessancy is foregrounded in the architecture and culture of Twitter (recall the 'While You Were Away' feature). While Wajcman explores how constant connectivity has splintered lived time into multiple "fluid" temporalities — that bring a new sense of time pressure — she ultimately attributes the resulting stress to shifting worktime expectations "that the devices magnify but do not in themselves cause" (170). Though less hopeful, my reading of incessancy aligns in acknowledging how Twitter propagates the felt obligation of incessancy, as well as how it materializes on the timeline.

This obligation may be associated with the primal drives that propagators of constant connectivity exploit. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook are especially seductive in their manipulation of the human impulse to communicate and be social. Jonathan Crary, in his book, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, describes how social media platforms feign "the semblance of a social world, but [is] actually a non-social model of machinic performance and a suspension of living that does not disclose the human cost required to sustain its effectiveness" (9). Trying to 'keep up' with algorithmic incessancy or constant connectivity has shown a wide range of ill effects, from increased stress levels to blurred boundaries between work time and leisure time, among others (Wajcman). Worse yet, even in leisure time there remains a pressure of productivity that platforms skillfully transmute into a compulsion to consume — it is for these reasons one might be unable to stop scrolling the Twitter timeline late at night, unwilling (or

unable) to surrender to sleep for fear of missing whatever irresistible factoid is up next on the feed.[8]

Crary is concerned with how 24/7 incessancy numbs our perceptual capacities. He uses the term 'glare' to describe "not a phenomenon of literal brightness, but rather of the uninterrupted harshness of monotonous stimulation in which a large range of responsive capacities are frozen or neutralized" (34). This space of non-possibility recalls Leccardi's detemporalized present — Crary himself uses the term "future-less present" (35). While Leccardi focuses on how acceleration collapses the future onto the present, Crary considers how this prioritization of the present disregards the past. He writes, "The conditions of communication and information access on an everyday level ensure the systematic erasure of the past as part of the fantasmatic construction of the present" (45). The shallow and constantly erupting present of autoplay thereby dominates both the future (what is my next step?) and the past (what was I thinking about before?). The incessancy of a 24/7 world coalesces with an ideology of immediacy to champion the present above all else. "An illuminated 24/7 world without shadows" Crary argues, "is the final capitalist mirage of post-history, of an exorcism of otherness that is the motor of historical change" (9). The present becomes detemporalized and wielded to reinforce capitalist hegemony — these are the conditions of the Twitter timeline.

3.4   Adrenaline Aesthetics

Above, I expanded on immediacy and incessancy rather grimly, theorizing how they dovetail to expunge interference and control outcomes. This gave rise to an important distinction between speed — whose 'pleasures' are promoted in the language of *optimization* and *streamlining*

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[8] Crary deals in great detail with the concept of sleep, writing "sleep is an uncompromising interruption of the theft of time from us by capitalism" (10).

— and immediacy. While immediacy is the true temporality embedded in video autoplay, it is critical to acknowledge that speed persists in the *text* of the internal pre-teaser. It is through a strategy of speed that the IPT most effectively colludes with its conditions. Here, I turn to the text to detail this partnership, positioning the internal pre-teaser's aesthetic strategy in context with glare — the viewing experience attached to the scroll's incessant abundance and autoplay's detemporalized present. The internal pre-teaser, as stated elsewhere, is optimized for the Twitter timeline — but how?

Consider the IPT for the action spy film, *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017 dir. Matthew Vaughn). Shared to the film's promotional Twitter feed on April 24th, 2017, the trailer comes in a tweet that also reads: "'I hope you're ready for what comes next.' Watch the first trailer for #Kingsman: The Golden Circle, in theaters this September." (@20thCentury). The entire length of the embedded trailer text is 2 minutes and 51 seconds. The internal pre-teaser itself lasts only five seconds, during which a total of 10 shots are squeezed in before the customary "Official Trailer" title card. The average shot length of the *Golden Circle* IPT is 0.5 seconds.

This trailer is just one constituent of a sophisticated social media campaign that distributed platform-specific texts.[9] In addition to being posted on Twitter, the *Golden Circle* trailer was simultaneously uploaded on YouTube by 20th Century Studios' official YouTube account. Though both were posted on the same day, the two trailers evince several differences. Most immediately, the Twitter version of the trailer is formatted in a 1:1 aspect ratio (1200 x 1200

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[9] A 2017 Twitter's marketing blog (authored by their in-house marketing division) identifies the *Golden Circle*'s Twitter campaign as an exemplary achievement, writing "It's no small task opening a sequel to a better domestic haul than its predecessor, but that's exactly what #Kingsman achieved over its opening weekend. "Clever" was the name of the social marketing game for the action-packed comic book comedy, with the momentum really kicking off the month prior." (Lapin et al.).

pixels), contrasting the YouTube version that has a more traditional widescreen ratio. In addition, while the Twitter iteration overlays stylized subtitles onto the full-length trailer, the YouTube version does not.[10] The most relevant variation between the two trailers is that the IPT appears only in the Twitter version — corroborating my argument that the internal pre-teaser is uniquely optimized for the Twitter platform.

The exclusive appearance of the *Golden Circle* IPT in the Twitter-embedded trailer text underscores the degree of collaboration between text and platform. Even in just its frontal positioning, the internal pre-teaser embeds an emphasis on delivery that appeases the logic of immediacy. It pushes the climactic action into the present, unprompted, to 'hook' the audience — who likely scrolled upon it unintentionally while browsing the timeline. By contrast, the YouTube version does not assume this same encounter. Whereas scroll-induced autoplay is the default on Twitter, on YouTube the user is more likely to have clicked a link or searched for the trailer. Accordingly, the YouTube trailer deploys a slower 'hook', engaging the viewer through more traditional strategies. Both iterations then foreground assumptions about the nature of the encounter, and this translates into the Twitter text's acknowledgement of autoplay and the scroll — immediacy and incessancy.

The *Golden Circle* internal pre-teaser is structured as a micromontage. It succinctly jumps through disparate scenes throughout its five-second duration, each scene extremely condensed, both in shot length and in number of shots. This brevity of frames responds to the immediacy of its conditions — it performs efficiently by crunching out pauses or breaks in its action. It is not just the movement between frames, but the movement *within* frames that bolsters this strategy —

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[10] Unfortunately, the author was denied the right to include screenshots of the *Golden Circle* trailer on YouTube and Twitter. Find them linked at https://twitter.com/20thcentury/status/856717770825715713 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Nxc-3WpMbg.

the text's explosive visuals are marked by intensified rates of motion. The camera is always moving — jittering, shaking or zooming erratically. The heightened camera mobility reveals a self-consciousness of the incessant abundance of audiovisual stimuli surrounding the timeline-embedded text, a direct appeal to the competitiveness of an attention economy (Gurevitch "The Transforming Face"). Sonically, crashing metallic sounds are punctuated by four thrashes, beats that are anchored to close-up shots of the faces of lead actors Taron Egerton, Halle Berry and Channing Tatum. The *Golden Circle* competes on the timeline by accentuating urgency and acceleration through structure, camera mobility and sound, exemplifying the IPT conventions outlined in Chapter 1.

This strategy of acceleration is further compounded by the *Golden Circle* IPT's representation of speed. It is telling that the text opens with a car chase (and eventual — or should I say immediate — crash) that is abbreviated over its first two seconds. Despite the extreme contraction, the chase/crash is communicated through four shots,[11] a large sum of its ten shots total. No other 'scene' is visualized so excessively. We open with a long shot — a man flies through the air above two cars colliding on a street as the camera follows alongside them. The second shot brings the camera inside a car, where a man — presumably the same one, although this is unclear — violently jostles with another man in the back seat. In the next shot, a car (this one has a taxi sign on its hood unlike the car in the first shot) crashes suddenly into a cement structure. The final shot of the sequences is an extreme long shot, its scope is meant to capture the dramatic magnitude of an explosion far away. Whether the explosion is caused by the car's impact is unclear but implied.

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[11] See https://twitter.com/20thcentury/status/856717770825715713.

It is only through applying a strategy of slowness to this sequence — parsing through it frame by frame — that its heavy narrative inconsistencies are apparent. The fact that the man flies above a car, and yet seems to be back inside the car in the next shot, or the obvious difference between the car in the first shot and the taxi in the third. Though the two-second duration at first appears to construct a linearity (through which we follow one car until it eventually crashes and finally explodes), this unravels upon more thorough inspection. The final image of a massive explosion makes implicit sense, but again no actual narrative connection is established. This submergence of narrative and emphasis on spectacle and speed gestures to a prioritization of affective impact above all else.

The affective impact of the *Golden Circle* IPT materializes not just through a strategy of speed, but through the iconography it (briefly) invokes. In the image of a car chase, we find a symbol of speed itself. As Enda Duffy explores in his book *The Speed Handbook, Velocity, Pleasure, Modernism*, the invention of the automobile signifies the emergence of the affective experience of speed. Duffy's central argument is that it was the automobile that first "repackaged [speed] as a sensation" (5) and brought forth a novel, individual pleasure in the form of adrenaline.[12] Film media is well-suited to both represent and embed this sensation of speed. Acknowledging how speed and the sensorium are essential to operations of both the automobile and film, Duffy joins others in regarding the car chase as "may be the most characteristic scene in film… from the beginning" (153). Working with early car chase films that recall Gunning's cinema of attractions, Duffy finds in the historical trope of the car chase a foregrounding of spectacle, wherein "the filming of speed" becomes capable of "transmut[ing] ordinary narrative suspense…

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[12] Duffy explains that he uses the term 'adrenaline' "as a code word for a new intuition of the novel emotional, psychic, and somatic possibilities raised by the conjunction of the technological prosthesis of the automobile and the human organism" (113).

into a format that induces a bodily sensation in the viewer" (153). I have already posited that the internal pre-teaser borrows from the handbook of a cinema of attractions, wherein spectacle and affect are prioritized over narrative. The central intervention of the internal pre-teaser is its ability to distill this strategy even further, sifting out narrative to manufacture a more potent and immediate affective hit, not unlike the impact of the taxi hurling into the cement structure.

The internal pre-teaser distills the image of the car chase into a flash of seconds. This abrupt and *jolt*-like delivery may depend more on the iconography of speed and the car chase, rather than an experience of the chase itself. Still, there is a foregrounding of impact, and this a point further emphasized by the act visualized — not just a car chase, but a car *crash*. We see (albeit fleetingly) in the third shot an image of the taxi car smashing head-first into a cement structure. The force of the impact causes the end of the car to lift in the air. Of course, the moment lasts a fraction of a second — the camera cuts away before any actual stasis takes hold. The IPT extracts the crash into pure movement, cutting away before any conclusion or aftermath. This iconography of the car crash (which also appears in the IPTs for *Mission: Impossible Fallout* and *Venom*) foregrounds the IPT's effort to exploit the domination of spectacle over perception. This twisted persuasive strategy is perhaps best encapsulated in the idiom, *it's like a horrible car accident, you want to look away but you just can't.*

The *Golden Circle* and other internal pre-teasers that visualize car crashes offer a literal representation of a prototypical strategy: the reliance on a sensation of speed to subsume (slow) narrative for (fast) affective impact. In this way, IPTs exemplify what Duffy terms, "adrenaline aesthetics" which refuse "critical distance and rational contemplation" and instead focus its effects on "the body and its sensorium" (9). As I have shown, rhythmic editing, crescendoing soundscape and visual spectacle emphasize the internal pre-teaser's *jolt*-like energy, even when the impact is

not visualized explicitly through a car crash. The internal pre-teaser's use of adrenaline aesthetics chase a "seizure of attentiveness" (Crary 88) resembling the perceptual stasis experienced when one unexpectedly views a car crash — or, alternatively, violence (as fights or confrontations feature are also frequent IPT iconography). Put simply, the internal pre-teaser uses these tactics to 'hook' the viewer, *to stop the scroll*. In this pursuit of immediate, physical (non) action we trace the same impulses for control and authority embodied in immediacy and incessancy.

While the immediacy of the Twitter timeline expunges process — thereby exerting a control over the encounter, the timeline's incessancy compounds this authority by wearing down the user's perceptual responsiveness. Together, these temporal pressures establish an encounter that is predisposed to create an unwitting viewing experience, at least for a brief moment. But the internal pre-teaser only needs a brief moment, its efficient deployment of spectacle, adrenaline aesthetics, iconography and speed are difficult to ignore. Its "outwards reach" (Gunning) foregrounds *impact*, it operates with a mode of urgency. Seamlessly conspiring with the Twitter timeline, the internal pre-teaser integrates the movie trailer into the scroll. These seconds demand attention, and yet stealthily it hides its operations from detection.[13]

The viewer is finally allotted space after the *jolt*'s climax — which corresponds to the reorienting function of the 'Official Trailer' announcement. The desperate efforts of the internal pre-teaser hang in suspension as the viewer finds space in the title-card's break of affective bombardment — does she stay to watch the full trailer? Or scroll on? The previous three to ten seconds constitute a significant investment in a hypercompetitive attention economy. It might be enough to trigger a rationale of sunk cost — having unwittingly invested this much already, the

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[13] Recall that internal pre-teasers on *Twitter* specifically are lacking from discourse on this convention, which more often discusses other platforms such as YouTube.

viewer is now more likely to continue the endeavour (Arkes and Blumer). This rationale offers an internalization of attention *as* capital, the conditions of the Twitter timeline and the attention economy as a whole.

Alternatively, a more narrative-centric rationale may tempt the viewer into making this larger investment. In the case of micromontage IPTs like *The Golden Circle*, which subsume narrative coherence for affective impact, the viewer may want to rectify this narrative disorientation. Those IPTs that fragment a single scene may act more traditionally, using an excerpt to tease an unknown outcome or context. But this rhetorical strategy, wherein key story details are omitted to stoke the viewer's curiosity or interest (Kernan) appears less frequently in this project's sampling. Most often, narrative is not presented to generate curiosity (which would require more pointed 'establishing' of a story world) but rather, *disorientation*. Instead of establishing a story and leaving out a few pieces, the IPT offers *only* the pieces — and does so in a speedy flash. The viewer is not so much buying the ticket to access unknown details, but continuing the trailer to clarify the details that were given.[14]

Regardless of how this decision unfolds, it is the IPT's efficacy in stopping the scroll that is of interest. I have shown how the internal pre-teaser strikes by infusing speed throughout its strategy and aesthetics. Bolstered by the immediacy and incessancy of its interface, the internal pre-teaser's form directly responds to its embeddedness. The aims are pursued by both platform and text, and this harmony veils the operations. The perceptual numbing of a 24/7 incessancy (both its subjective obligation *and* materialization in information abundance) dovetails with the

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[14] We may also trace in this exchange the impulse towards productivity, wherein the viewer may be 'hooked' by the IPT and wishes to watch the trailer to contextualize the spectacular images, even if there is an acknowledgement that the viewer will not care to watch the film itself. I connect this to the same impulse of intensified information consumption that causes individuals to fall down a 'Wikipedia rabbit hole'.

detemporalized present of immediacy, which expunges interference. The internal pre-teaser enters into this equation by afflicting Crary's 'seizure of attentiveness', constructing a *can't quite look away* spectatorial experience that borrows from the car crash and the cinema of attractions. The timeline and the text pursue ultimate efficiency and productivity, and collude so that the entirety of this procedure is *streamlined*.

3.5   Viewer as Thumb, Thumb as Cog

Plainly visible in the *Golden Circle* example, the internal pre-teaser reveals an intricate collaboration between text and platform. It is critical to acknowledge how these two objects strengthen each other and chase an efficiency that ultimately seeks the (controlled) involvement of the human body. Though the evolution of devices like the internal pre-teaser reflects the increased competition of an abundant digital arena, I'd like to briefly consider how such advances also reflect a calculated effort to glean capital. In an age where attention is the ultimate currency, the development of new media conventions may increasingly blur the boundary between these two aims. The internal pre-teaser, in its foregrounding of *a physical stopping of the scroll*, is a suitable object through which to consider these issues.

The internal pre-teaser extends the automation logic of video autoplay, its central technological precursor. In collapsing interference, the immediacy of autoplay seeks to recreate the uninterrupted *flow* of visual media on-screen, a movement that reflects the ideals of a productive and forward-moving scroll. This flow may also describe the industrialization of visuality, the implication of the human body in what Jonathan Beller terms the cinematic mode of production. Beller argues that film "internalizes industrial movement and manifests it as forms of consciousness and sensuality" that is then "projected into bodies through the eye" (95) and points

to the efficacy of the montage in this process.[15] The collusion of the internal pre-teaser with its interface to cull attention is a purely economic process that extracts with machinic efficiency, *streamlining* the flows that circulate capital as image. By generating this sensual energy, the IPT exerts authority in this mode of production. The rhetoric of autoplay's press release, "a more streamlined consumption experience" (@regandc) may be better understood as the industrialization of labour processes.

I wish to consider the bodily implications of this process, how the collusion between platform and text 'reach out' to subsume the human body into a capitalist production. Terms like *thumb-stopping*, rampant in rhetoric of online attention-culling, demonstrate this attempt to procure a machinic response in the viewer. Evoking themes of *human* disembodiment, these terms reveal a desire to reduce the viewer to a limb, incapable of any true sight or critical engagement. This idea of creating visual content that might find an un-seeing subject recalls Paul Virilio's warning of a "sightless vision" (73). Virilio — whose preeminent writings on speed, technology and control irrefutably shaped the theorists engaged in this chapter — recognized a "crisis in perceptive faith" (75) in the juncture of technology's refashioning of speed and sight. It is in the interplay between IPT and autoplay, the amalgamated operation, that this crisis materializes. It is traceable in how the IPT cares less about its viewer making sense of a narrative, and instead retains labour that is the look.

Crary, too, is concerned with the sieving of thought and vision. He offers another discursive example of disembodiment, "even as a contemporary colloquialism, the term 'eyeballs' for the site of control repositions human vision as a motor activity that can be subjected to external direction

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[15] Beller argues that Eisenstein's montage "synthesizes the organization aspects of Taylorization and Pavlovian logic as cinematic practice" (120). The internal pre-teaser, I have shown, distills montage.

or stimuli' (76). Recognizing in 'motor activity' the same as Beller — an internalization of industrial processes, Crary warns that such automation may foster "a disintegration of human abilities to see, especially of an ability to join visual discriminations with social and ethical valuations" (33). One recalls the ethical displacement illustrated in the horrible case of Alison Parker and Adam Ward's live-streamed murder. While the central loss of consent associated with this automation of sight prompted a short-lived rebellion against such technologies, it is telling that this discourse shadowed the violent event itself.

It is not enough to simply say that the internal pre-teaser aims to stop the scroll — although of course this is true. Rather, it is this operation entirely, the interplay between internal pre-teaser and autoplay, that gestures towards pressing issues of control, disembodiment, and cognition — raised here by Beller, Crary and Virilio. The function of these operations, to exert an overall authority, recall our earlier discussion of immediacy and incessancy. Together, this interaction between text and platform (which I will refer to in shorthand as the IPT/autoplay encounter) works to render human sight subservient to purer, immediate labour. The rhetorical renouncement of the human (a complete and cognizant being) to a thumb (an incomplete part of something larger, incapable of thinking or seeing) underscores this logic. But what is this 'something larger' subsuming the un-thinking, and un-seeing thumb?

The *jolt* of the IPT/autoplay operation renders the viewer into this static thumb because this form is most susceptible to be overtaken by the flow — flows of the industrialization of vision or the circulation of capital. Jennifer Karns Alexander earlier connected the concept of flow to both global networks and efficiency — but it is interesting to consider the relationship between flow and mindlessness. To be *caught in the flow* is to be overtaken by external forces, to allow them to guide you through an action or process. Twitter's interface updates and autoplay are all

agents of flow that aim to guide and, ultimately, overwhelm us. It is ironic that the affective hit of the internal pre-teaser requires stasis to achieve movement — to stop the viewer from scrolling on, and then implicate them in this flow — while the traditional trailer operates inversely, by attempting to *move* the viewer so much that they ultimately arrive, static, at a theatre.

3.6   Conclusion: Optimization = Weaponization

We return to the assertion that the internal pre-teaser is *optimized* for the Twitter timeline. This notion of 'optimization' speaks to the harmony between interface and text, of how the internal pre-teaser absorbs the pressures of immediacy and incessancy. Optimization also recalls the tech industry's continued propagation of speed's virtues, of the ideals of productivity and efficiency — that are always in reach *if* you purchase the new iPhone. I have shown how autoplay exploits this rhetoric, and how words like *streamline* depend on speed's pleasures but in fact harbour an immediacy that collapses process and interference. Words like *optimization* and *streamlining* then, reveal the impulses towards control and authority present in immediacy and incessancy, and by extension, the Twitter timeline.

The IPT text itself foregrounds a strategy of speed, presenting through an adrenaline aesthetics a direct appeal to affect and spectacle. It moves quickly and aggressively, foregrounding *impact* and sacrificing narrative linearity or coherence. The internal pre-teaser creates an immediate affective *jolt* that exploits the opportunities afforded to it by autoplay. In just two seconds, the *Golden Circle* internal pre-teaser gives us a car crash, deploying — even at the level of representation — speed to momentarily induce perceptual stasis. This prioritization of scroll-stopping affect is ultimately designed to subjugate the viewer to larger forces, flows that circulate attention-capital. The viewer-as-thumb is most valuable in this efficient operation, which has less and less use for narrative. The site of the Hollywood trailer's persuasion migrates away from narrative and into this interplay of technology and affective impact.

This function of the internal pre-teaser suggests that it is a convention to be *wielded*. Designed to exert dominance in its encounter, I have shown the internal pre-teaser to be capable of impact. Together in its operations, it exerts control and hegemony, it persuades in a different way. These characteristics suggest a fresher understanding, a conceptualization of the internal pre-teaser as the *weaponization* of the Hollywood movie trailer. Consider the words of Michelle McLaughlin in a piece titled *What Movie Trailers Tell Us About Advertising's Evolution*, "the pre-trailer merely adds an extra "weapon" to the studio's arsenal, allowing their trailer to be grabbed faster, by more people" (McLaughlin). Of course, the irony here is that the 'grabbing' is not done by the viewer, but by the text itself, which is designed to be perceptually arresting and starts without the viewer's consent. The border between optimization and weaponization may not be so clear cut. Both come with an agenda that does not often serve the needs of the other in its encounter. While the quest towards further optimization may be intoxicating, we must ourselves be wary of being streamlined.

Conclusion

"To be preoccupied with the aesthetic properties of digital imagery" cautions Jonathan Crary, "is to evade the subordination of the image to a broad field of non-visual operations and requirements" (47). This thesis has tried to heed this warning, conceptualizing the internal pre-teaser as a function produced in the interplay between trailer and platform. Centering the movie trailer encounter as a stand-alone Twitter event, this work edges out from under the shadows of the trailer's source film and demonstrates a different way of thinking about the persuasive strategies of online Hollywood trailer texts. By studying the relationship between platform and trailer — rather than trailer and film — I have tried to sidestep the paratextual framework currently dominating trailer studies. This examination of the IPT shifts our focus to the *immediate* operations of the Twitter-embedded trailer text, which now must sell *itself* in the arena of the attention economy. In sum, I arrive at the internal pre-teaser as an object, operation, and entry to thinking about the present social media era of Hollywood trailers.

The internal pre-teaser is a convention of Hollywood trailers embedded in the scroll. The temporal pressures of the attention economy shape the convention's aesthetic and structural patterns, which ultimately serve the IPT's aim to *halt the scrolling thumb*. However, this impact is not achieved merely by the text's efficacy, but from the partnership it forges with its platform. This is the revelation of the internal pre-teaser — it exposes the recasting of persuasion in the online Hollywood trailer. Whereas rhetoric, spectacle and narrative once constituted the arsenal of the trailer text, now its effectiveness arises from reciprocity with co-conspirers; from the culture and rhetoric of Twitter and its architecture, to the formal properties, structure and subject matter

of the IPT.[1] Unpacking the ramifications of this interplay between social media platforms and Hollywood's online promotional texts is the heart of this project.

I began this intervention by defining the internal pre-teaser as a hallmark of social media optimization, both affixed to and yet separated from the official trailer text. Embedding an *urgent* atmosphere and foregrounding affect through its formal elements, the IPT responds to the pressures of network temporality. I detailed in the second chapter a timeline of events contributing to this pressure, tracking the rise of *immediacy* and *incessancy* throughout Twitter and YouTube advertising. Bolstered by the loosening of MPAA Trailer Tag guidelines, movie trailers joined other online video media in intensifying their persuasive strategies, the effects of which became concentrated to the video text's opening seconds when Twitter announced autoplay in 2015. It is this interplay — between platform, autoplay, and trailer text — that the internal pre-teaser symbolizes. While the timeline's immediacy and incessancy shape a passive observer, the IPT deploys a strategy of speed to transfix and stop the scroll. Herein we locate a more mechanical persuasion in the Hollywood text — where once it relied on its story, it now colludes with its technology to attract eyeballs.

Each of these three chapters adds a layer of understanding — demystifying and contextualizing the internal pre-teaser convention. Though narrative tangents surfaced briefly in close readings of aesthetics and subject matter, the fundamental intervention of this work is a theory of functionality. On the social media timeline, encounters with movie trailers are no longer destined to the presence or story worlds of their source films. Whereas traditional trailers felt more

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[1] Although findings regarding textual features may be helpful in historicizing social media-circulated trailer form. For example, the rise of muted autoplaying video on timelines such as Twitter may be moving trailers toward more text overlay, a feature that Hediger's historical analysis identified as decreasing in trailers after the 1960s (37). However, there is also the possibility that — rather than shifting *overall* trends in formal elements — the impact of social media is simply proliferating more variations of trailer texts per film, an assortment of texts that are individualized for each pattern's needs (recall the move away from "platform agnostic" material [Yang] mentioned on page 17).

intimate with their source texts, online trailers feel more intimate with their viewers. It is the social media platforms mediating this close contact that should be foregrounded in examinations of such encounters, from its architecture and interface to its culture and rhetoric.

The internal pre-teaser is a very concise text, and the sampling used for this project is similarly focused. Rather than attempt to conclusively describe the ever-growing proliferation of online movie trailers, my emphasis on Hollywood's tentpole films has helped sharpen my pursuit of IPTs. However, this sampling spans just three years (from 2016-2018) and this limited scope would greatly benefit from further concentrated research — especially work expanding beyond Hollywood. How have smaller studios produced conventions to respond to the temporal pressures of the timeline? How does this translate globally, where other social media platforms and cultures shape these encounters differently? Promotional media, which is by nature persuasive and controlling, is a critical media object to measure the effects of social media culture. In addition, even in the short time since 2018, rapid developments and new platforms have proliferated that have likely intensified these temporal pressures and shifted these encounters even further.

In terms of Hollywood trailers since 2018, it is surprising that many trailers circulating today do not include an internal pre-teaser (although I have referenced cases). One may have expected the convention to continue to expand in popularity, but it seems that the opposite might be true. We may trace one explanation for this in even the earliest timelines, wherein the internal pre-teaser circulated outside the trailer text. As early as *Jason Bourne* (2016)*,* the internal pre-teaser circulates not just inside the text, but sometimes also externally — as simply a shortened teaser. It is possible that a strategy of producing a greater number of *smaller* fragmented texts (rather than injecting a pre-teaser into the trailer text) has become a favoured technique simply due

to its increased "spreadability" (Jenkins).[2] There is only one encounter possible for the affixed IPT-trailer text, whereas dispersing several micro-teasers have a greater chance of being seen.

This theory points to interesting developments — how do the parameters of the encounter change when the teaser is no longer immediately followed by the trailer? Admittedly, this situation is (and was) more common in timelines, and perhaps this can account for the paratextual impulse rampant in recent trailer scholarship. In contrast to a singular tweet containing an IPT-trailer, two or three tweets circulating separate, shortened teaser texts may admittedly reach a wider audience. However, these encounters require the viewer to actively seek out the trailer text (or other promotional media) to learn more about the film — an action the IPT-trailer amalgamation does not require. In this case, the former's functionality must still *move* their viewers towards their source text. While I have tried to position the internal pre-teaser as a phenomenon that shifts from this encounter (wherein it only wishes to retain the viewer, to sell only the trailer itself) and therefore away from the popular lens of film and television paratextuality, we may consider how the further fragmentation and condensation of promotional texts trouble this opposition. The continued fragmentation and coalescence of promotional texts on the timeline — and its resulting spectrum of encounters and functions — demand further examination.

There is more to be understood about the internal pre-teaser through engagement with industry, who are at the forefront of the ongoing "interaction of trailers and technological change" (Johnston 125). The relative failure of the internal pre-teaser to find prevailing popularity since 2018 is elucidated in an interview with LA-based trailer producer Houston Yang. Yang attributes the decision to move away from the IPT to the personal tastes of executives and producers, those

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[2] Jenkins defines the term "Spreadability" as "the potential—both technical and cultural—for audiences to share content for their own purposes, sometimes with the permission of rights holders, sometimes against their wishes" (3). Spreadability depends more on maximizing circulation than retaining an audience, and so the further fragmentation of individual ephemeral teasers would be better suited to this model.

who ultimately approve and finalize promotional texts. Similar to how YouTube's viewing experiences necessitate intentionality— unlike the flow of the scroll — that makes the IPT convention feel inappropriate and unnecessary, such executive meetings (where trailers are preliminarily screened and evaluated) likely prime encounters otherwise ill-suited for the IPT (Yang). As discussed, specific viewing conditions help cloak the IPT's operations from detection. In the context of a concentrated and deliberate appraisal, its *jolt* function may appear pronounced and obtrusive. It is understandable, then, that the IPT may not always pass the test.

The treasured opportunity to engage with industry professionals in this research has conferred this and other productive insights in this project.[3] As we become further enveloped in a social media culture wherein the texts themselves find partnerships in the platforms, it follows that academia and industry should continue to forge their own collaborations.[4] While this academic treatment of the internal pre-teaser conceptualized a powerful text capable of *physically* influencing its viewer (stopping the thumb), it is striking to compare this view with the reputation of this convention in the industry, where the role of editing the internal pre-teaser was often viewed as secondary, a "last-minute addition to the editing process" (Yang). Corroborating how the IPT extracts its content exclusively from the trailer text, this finding is surprising given the frontal positioning and potency of this convention.

While this study expounds the implications of the internal pre-teaser — and thereby attributes to it a significant capacity to influence — it is important not to overstate its perceived status in the trailer production culture. This is especially true when considering the industry's

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[3] Particularly, the discussion of MPAA Trailer Tag policy changes and the identification of the *Man of Steel* (2013) as the first approved online ad to run without trailer tags (Davidson).

[4] I acknowledge some excellent endeavours into this exact goal, specifically Paul Grainge and Catherine Johnson's *Promotional Screen Industries* (2015).

attitudes about the internal pre-teaser, "We'd give [the editing task] to junior editors and say, want to cut a whole trailer? Let's start with 10 seconds and see how you do" (Yang). Relegated to a skill-testing exercise, this role of editing the internal pre-teaser was considered a menial task, attributed largely to junior editors who were required to cut the opening seconds from the final trailer text (Yang). This is surprising, given the intensified importance of these opening seconds in the scroll's immediate and incessant environment. Perhaps, as temporal pressures become even more intensified, the task of constructing micro-edits will gravitate back to experienced editors. However, without more collaboration with academia and industry, the nuances of these decisions and their implications on form and function will continue to be only speculative.

In sum, this project wishes to understand how a social media-driven logic of *optimization* and *streamlining* has infused the Hollywood movie trailer with new forms and functions. Today's tech-propagated values of immediacy and efficiency not only shape avenues of distribution — most quintessentially in the advent of video autoplay — but also the production and development of the texts within these avenues. Combining analog research with algorithmic data, the market research of new trailer forms sharpens modern trailer texts down to the very beat (Yang). Just as social media platforms use scientific methods to compile data in interface design, eye-tracking and cognitive neuroscience, so has this research been applied to movie trailers.[5] As Jonathan Crary suggests, "passively and often voluntarily, one now collaborates in one's own surveillance and data-mining. This inevitably spirals into more fine-grained procedures for intervention in both individual and collective behavior" (48). Accordingly, the internal pre-teaser shows these processes bleeding into Hollywood trailers, and our continued engagement with these texts only furthers our involvement in these processes.

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[5] See Oh, Chung and Han (2014), Liu et al. (2016), and Christoforou et al. (2017) for a few examples.

Writing on impatient media[6] in 2007, John Tomlinson hesitates to attribute to technology the capability of shaping human actions and behaviours,

> I don't mean to suggest, applying some version of technological determinism, that these technologies have the power directly to produce or shape behaviour… I *do* mean to say that … technologies do have distinct and discernible inherent properties, and that these… *invite us* to respond to them in particular ways (131).

While this may have been true then, it is critical to grasp that today such technology *is* capable of directly shaping behaviours — and it is wielded as such.[7] Social media platforms have been especially proficient in this aim. As our attitudes, behaviours and rhythms become more ingrained with the flows of a social media(ted) world, it is critical to consider how the texts themselves absorb and reaffirm the values and temporalities of a networked time. This culture shapes the platform's interface and usage, which in turn alters the texts that proliferate through them. Somewhere within this incessant, streamlined flow, our encounters with these texts double as our encounter with this culture itself.

Every 'optimization' update fine-tunes algorithms that better engulf these components — interface and platform, text and trailer, audience — into controlled flows. The capitalist hegemony of the Hollywood trailer endures. The timelines we scroll through cannot be viewed as empty vehicles for circulation and connectivity, the texts travelling through these spaces do not make the journey unchanged. As the internal pre-teaser shows us, platform-circulated Hollywood trailers absorb the conditions of their environment and, in doing so, sharpen their strategies. Fully

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[6] Recall Tomlinson describes impatient media as devices that "'write out' the expectation of a gap between demand and delivery" (132) and offers examples in MP3 devices, digital cameras and search engines.

[7] A bill was introduced (though not yet backed) to the US Senate in 2019 that identifies autoplay and infinite scroll specifically as addictive devices to be banned. Titled the *Social Media Addiction Reduction Technology Act,* aims to "prohibit social media companies from using practices that exploit human psychology or brain physiology to substantially impede freedom of choice [and] require social media companies to take measures to mitigate the risks of internet addiction and psychological exploitation..." ("United States, Congress").

comprehending the curves of this modern, scrolled upon encounter demands an approach that extends beyond the text and or its content. It is with a wider awareness we must consider the dovetailing components constituting the flow that overwhelms us. In the end, we must pay more attention to those encounters that grab our attention in the first place.

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Appendix: Sampling of IPTs in Hollywood's Twitter Trailers

Title, Year	Date Shared	Twitter Link
Jason Bourne (2016)	April 20 2016	https://twitter.com/jasonbourne/status/722998369535184896
Independence Day (2016)	April 22 2016	https://twitter.com/IndependenceDay/status/723406326961860608
Inferno (2016)	May 9 2016	https://twitter.com/infernothemovie/status/729672319849799682
Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk (2016)	May 12 2016	https://twitter.com/billylynnmovie/status/730744467196514308
The Accountant (2016)	May 12 2016	https://twitter.com/accountantmovie/status/730918014703411200
The Magnificent Seven (2016)	July 18 2016	https://twitter.com/mag7movie/status/755024405563006976
Hacksaw Ridge (2016)	July 28 2016	https://twitter.com/HacksawRidge/status/758655882607538176
Arrival (2016)	August 16 2016	https://twitter.com/arrivalmovie/status/765547431916281856
Split (2016)	October 26 2016	https://twitter.com/splitmovie/status/791293327912022017
Spider-Man: Homecoming (2017)	December 8 2016	https://twitter.com/Marvel/status/807086004628758528
Kong: Skull Island (2017)	February 27 2017	https://twitter.com/kongskullisland/status/836259635430490113
Kingsman: The Golden Circle (2017)	April 24 2017	https://twitter.com/20thcentury/status/856717770825715713
Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle (2017)	June 29 2017	https://twitter.com/jumanjimovie/status/880410555219034112
Mission: Impossible - Fallout (2018)	February 4 2018	https://twitter.com/MissionFilm/status/960306465067081728
Venom (2018)	February 8 2018	https://twitter.com/VenomMovie/status/961600525090275329
The Grinch (2018)	March 8 2018	https://twitter.com/grinchmovie/status/971777581740634112