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Think of It as a Trailer . . . for a Book

Ed Vollans

Department of Media & Performing Arts, Hendon Campus, Middlesex University, The Burrows,
London NW4 4BT, UK; edwinvollans@gmail.com

Abstract: The seemingly overnight emergence of a form of promotion known as 'book trailers' shortly after the turn of the millennium suggests a shift in the marketing and promotional strategies employed within the publishing industry. This article follows the historical development of the audio-visual form known as the 'book trailer' across its history with a view to understanding the form itself. This article uses third party mediation to identify 'book trailers' within the public domain, grounding this work within a broader media and literary history. As such, this article charts the use of the term 'book trailer' and its competing nomenclature through newspaper archives and contextualises this with antecedent practices, and integrating this with the current literature on the film trailer as part of a wider understanding of the promotional trailer as a cultural entity.

Keywords: book-trailers; promotion; web 2.0; YouTube; video-sharing

1. Introduction

For centuries the publishing industry has existed, arguably taking form with the invention of the printing press and the development of distribution systems that allowed a single text to be rapidly reproduced (and delivered to customers) for profit. For the last hundred years or so, the publishing and bookselling industries have coincided with the film industry (and the emergence of the film trailer), and for a little over seventy-five years alongside broadcast television and the maturation of broadcast networks that have resulted in a culture of audio-visual promotion. Yet it is only after the turn of the millennium, specifically, that short films for promotional purposes, known as book trailers, became a recognised phenomenon, albeit one often ridiculed in and by the press.

Despite the press attention, only two scholarly articles have attempted to engage with the book trailer as a cultural phenomenon. Both the work by Kati Voigt [1] and Denise Davila [2] have attempted to understand the book trailer, but both do so without fully exploring the industrial origins and the existing theory together, treating the trailer as either a product of industrial output from one company alone, or as an extension of a book's narrative (Voigt and Davila respectively). Of the two, Voigt's work traces the origins of the book trailer to a 2002 trademark and uses press references to reinforce the emergence of the form [1] (p. 673). Forming the center point of focus in this article, Voigt develops an understanding of the book trailer as a genre, and briefly sketches an industrial history to build upon this. The work however, inadvertently presents the book trailer as an entity that emerged fully formed (albeit with aesthetic differences across the genre). As a result, and despite the volume of work already conducted, there is a need to explore the industrial history that led to the introduction and subsequent uptake of the book trailer. This article builds a tentative history of the book trailer based on references in the press and focuses on the discourse surrounding these new forms of trailer in order to chart their emergence. This history acknowledges that the term 'trailer' is malleable in its application, and that which one company or commentator may call a 'trailer' may also operate under any number of different labels. Considering how these forms of promotion came into being and are understood within popular discourse informs an understanding of the publishing industry as it adapts

to new technology and culture. By way of intervention with the dearth of literature, and Voigt's [1] initial industrial outline, this article presents a historical trajectory of the term book trailer (including its competing forms) and the factors that influence its emergence in the discourse in the 2000s; this includes a study of trailer nomenclature and the press reception of the book trailer. The industrial history presented here is not intended as a continuous historical narrative but rather a contextual discussion of the post-millennial formulation of the book trailer to pave the way for future study.

2. Materials and Methods

This article explores the history of the term 'book trailer' through broader newspaper archives. Using the LexisNexis database of English Language Newspapers, the author searched for the term 'book' and 'trailer' as well as 'book trailer', through the process of data collection several competing terms were found that have been included in this study. As such this media history should be considered an early account upon which to be built. The initial search protocol used allowed for variations in the wording within press materials, specifically distinguishing between the two search terms ranging from those next to each other (e.g., 'book trailer') to those within the same sentence (e.g., 'the book was contained within the library's trailer'). Having identified each reference, the researcher was then obliged to review each article listed for relevance; using LexisNexis' preview function and reviewing the full article where required. Relevant press references were downloaded for stability of access and are referenced throughout this article. Though this method is not intended as a systematic review of the LexisNexis press archives, nor indeed a complete list of references, this process of tracking the trailer should be considered as a broadly flexible methodological tool from which to focus and shape areas of inquiry. This initial study into the history of the book trailer helps to provide a broad context for the emergence of the term, despite being limited by the archive used; it is highly likely that instances of the book trailer exist outside the LexisNexis archive that may further illuminate this area. This method, however, risks prioritising English language terminology and marginalising any as yet unknown terminology. As such, this corpus of press references should be considered a guiding archive rather than an absolute.

3. Results

At the time of data collection, winter 2013, the author found 1888 references to 'book' and 'trailer' together in the database as a whole. Of these references, not all could be individually explored, owing to time constraints and source duplications. Reviewing the references year on year shows a significant increase in references to the term between 2005 and 2010. Indeed, while the calendar year 2005 lists 3 references, there were only 9 confirmed references for the period 2002–2005, and 15 confirmed results over the larger period; 1990–2005. Between 1990 and 2005 only 5 individual instances of book trailers were identified, the rest being duplications (Thomas [3], Walker [4], Business Wire [5], Waxler [6], Rush et al. [7]). Only one book trailer reference could be identified on the archive prior to this period, in 1988. The conclusions to be immediately drawn from the initial archival set are limited. Reviewing the metrics (Table 1), it can be suggested that the term book trailer expanded in use after 2005, increasing over time. Though this may be a result of duplications within the archive, it is unlikely given the rate of increase and contextual factors such as the development of the internet and video-sharing technology. The references within the years 2005–2008 have been verified as pertaining to audiovisual book promotion; after this time the number of references increases to make this impractical for the research method outlined.

Table 1. References to book trailers based on the LexisNexis archive.

Year	Press References
2005	3
2006	24
2007	27
2008	78
2009	114
2010	213
2011	279
2012	330
2013	483

It is worth noting that 2005 saw the launch of YouTube. The increase of references to trailers is perhaps then no coincidence, given the increase in videosharing that followed. When considering the propensity of contemporary trending videos to be referred to in news outlets, the chances of a particular nomenclative form being included in the press archives used is increased. As YouTube enables the categorisation of videos through its website architecture and that the use of nomenclature forms a key part of the search process, this may form a correlatory effect on the increase of the term book trailer. Within the scope of this article and its nomenclative focus however, it is impractical to quantify the total number of book trailers in circulation during this early period of development, or indeed at any other time.

4. Discussion

4.1. The Book Trailer's Competing Nomenclature

Before addressing what is meant by the book trailer itself, there is a need to address an unspoken history within the book trailer: that of competing forms. Indeed, a key limitation of this historical study is the lack of definition for a 'book trailer'. In part, such a definition needs to take into account the form, conditions of production and reception that goes beyond the scope of this article. However, reviewing what is referred to in discussions of 'book trailers' goes some way to illuminating this. In reviewing references to book trailers, as much as attitudes to what the book trailer should do, other notable terms were found: the 'vidlit', and the 'booktalk'. Following a single term ('book trailer') across its press history, this article runs the risk of overemphasising its importance, but offers the opportunity to explore the emergence of a vernacular genre, collating evidence of the emergence of a form called a 'book trailer' irrespective of the aesthetic construction therein. In addressing the emphasis on the 'book trailer' there is a need to consider the two competing terms found, each describing texts that could be considered as trailers in a broad sense. While neither the term 'vidlit' nor 'booktalk' have been applied to audiovisual texts prior to 2004, and neither are used with as much frequency as the term 'book trailer', their existence alone highlights the issue of relying on a single form of nomenclature, and suggest additional avenues for subsequent studies that may come to inform the industrial history. Indeed, just 34 references to vidlit were found via LexisNexis, while the term book talk has been used to describe the discussion held at book launches discussions and speaking events; suggesting a complex development of terms within the field.

The vidlit, an amalgamation of 'video' and 'literature' coined by Liz Dubelman in 2004, has come to describe the specific kind of promotion originating from Dubelman's production house of the same name. Registered as a United States Trademark [8] in 2004, Dubelman's term has no description of its application to audiovisual texts, and it seems in this instance that the trademark pertains to the company name rather than a specific product thereof. Dubelman's company brands itself within the industry of web marketing and avoids the term 'trailer' in its discourse. Despite this, the vidlit as a promotional form has been equated to the book trailer by press commentators, such as Scott Simon of National Public Radio, introducing the vidlit in the context of trailers;

Hollywood has movie trailers for marketing. The record business has music videos and now the publishing industry is experimenting with multimedia promotion which may be the next great way to sell books [9].

Though stopping short of calling Dubelman's output trailers, in drawing the comparison Simon illustrates how one may come to be associated with the other, muddying the waters of this media history. Chronologically, the development of the vidlit occurs after the emergence of the term book trailer but there is little evidence that the creators were attempting to appropriate a form already known to them. Despite exhaustive searches of both the LexisNexis archive and the wider internet, there is little evidence to suggest a use of the term vidlit outside direct discussions of the company, representing an offshoot of this media history that is worthy of further study in itself.

The second term that coincides with the book trailer; the booktalk existed prior to the emergence of the book trailer, having been used to describe spoken book reports and presentations within an educational context, as well as to describe general reflections on books. The term itself was coined by Aiden Chambers, who claims that the act of booktalk comes about through discussion, the act of engagement with literature as a cycle of selection, reading and response [10] (p. 11). As such, we can consider all forms of promotional discourse as being a form of booktalk. Indeed, we can say that the very act of selecting a book for promotion and emphasising some elements of it over others is itself an act of selection and reading (through the framing of specific elements as being 'worthy of promotion'). This promotional act itself may prompt a response on the part of the consumer. However, educators, and largely those working within child and adolescent literacy have also used the term 'booktalk' to apply to an audiovisual text that functions within an educational context to promote engagement with a specific book. For them, the booktalk is an audiovisual device that promotes the act of reading, an audiovisual book report. The operation of two forms under the same term necessitates a distinction; between the act of the booktalk in a general sense as discussed by Chambers, (and later Lissa Paul [11]), and this chronologically newer, audiovisual incarnation. The overlap between audiovisual booktalks and other forms of promotion has, however, already been observed. Gunter & Kenny [12] note that within the classroom the book report has become increasingly multimodal:

More recently, supporters of [aural and written] booktalks like Nancy Keane (2004) have modernised the concept by adding mediated communication channels into the mix. She has developed an extensive booktalk Web site (http://www.nancykeane.com), in which she explains that the purpose of booktalk is to sell the book to potential readers by grabbing their attention in a shared environment using various means that include movie trailers from movies made from the books or actual scenes from the movies themselves. Others suggest videotaping the booktalks so students can share the experience on the Web (Keane, 2004) (Gunter & Kenny [12]).

Keane's description then becomes a useful tool in understanding how the label of the booktalk operates in the same space as the book trailer. Keane's multimodal approach uses a format linked with movie trailers and can be seen (just like the vidlit) as a book trailer operating under another name, within another context and for another (non-fiscal purpose). As Gunter [13] notes however, the aesthetic structure varies across the form:

it should be pointed out that the [audiovisual book talk or] book trailer concept has very specific goals and outcomes that differ greatly from those iterations by others. Some teachers, for example, merely record themselves or their students talking about the books. Others videotape students presenting written book reports. Still others create commercials about the books. The major difference with this approach is that it is based on a premise of teaching the story creation process as well as of students acting out various scenes from the book [13] (p. 142).

Gunter sees a distinction between readers talking to the camera, 'commercials' and the presentation of the written work (ibid). For Gunter then, it would appear that the dramatisation of plot and narrative are the key features of a book trailer in this context, but only in the context of conveying a book's narrative. While only one opinion, this emphasis on audiovisual representation of a book's narrative is comparable with a much wider understanding of the role of the trailer against the role of advertising: that the former should primarily convey narrative. It is unclear exactly where the boundaries exist between such a nomenclative division. While the nomenclature and context of reception may differ, the ontological relationship of the vidlit, the onscreen booktalk, and the book trailer with the book promoted remains fundamentally the same. An audiovisual text that references a book, using images and sound in addition to words from the book itself constitutes a 'supersemiotic translation'. Within such a 'translation' the channels of communication available to the translation (in this case the audiovisual text) are greater than those available to the source material, the book (Gottlieb [14]). So it is that both the onscreen booktalk and the vidlit can be considered implicitly within a wider study of the trailer for the purposes of this article. Future studies exploring these may well develop the industrial history of book promotion further along different trajectories. Complicating matters, however, the audiovisual booktalk, the vidlit, and the book trailer, all constitute a form of commentary on another text. The broader concept of the booktalk (as understood by Paul [11]) can, therefore, serve as a hypernym for all these texts.

4.2. The Book Trailer's Pre-History 1988–2001

While the development of the onscreen booktalk and the vidlit occur around 2004 with Dubelman [8] and Keane (as outlined in Gunter & Kenny [12]), the book trailer has a much longer history that precedes and overlaps these terms. The earliest reference to the book trailer occurs over a decade prior to the emergence of vidlits and audiovisual booktalks, and has a similarly complex history that forms the remaining focus of this article. Like other forms of the trailer, the history of the book trailer can be traced through its reflected use in the press. This is particularly relevant considering the absence of any early book trailers from known audiovisual archives, making any visual analysis impractical.

The earliest known reference to book trailers found emerges from Canada, introducing the concept of the book trailer, the article containing the term in this instance, provides a rationale for their existence and situates them within television history, in contrast to the references to film trailers already discussed. In 1988 *The Globe and Mail* (Canada) reported that the CBC and the Book and Periodical Development Council were to work jointly on a programme to:

> Produce, promote and broadcast six 20—second "trailers" on books chosen to complement selected TV programs [...] The CBC will produce the trailers on books suggested by the National Library. The first, scheduled to begin in September with the broadcasting of the Summer Olympics, will deal with books on the Olympics and on sports generally. Other suggested areas are books on medicine and research for a TV movie based on the discovery of insulin by Drs. Frederick Banting and C. H. Best, and children's literature for an undecided family program (Kirchhoff [15]).

Kirchhoff's article here grounds the earliest known reference to the book trailer in the context of education and yet suggests a grounding in the Television industry; this contrasts with the later discourse that situates book trailers in relation to cinema. The principal driving force behind this early media engagement is a library promoting the *use* of books, rather than a bookseller promoting book *sales*, though the books included in this programme presumably may have been bought as well as borrowed. This commentary indicates an understanding of multimedia forms of engagement to promote reading that parallels the much later development of the audiovisual booktalk in the context of education; specifically the emphasis on child literacy. This connection with the booktalk, however, is not made explicit within the article. Indeed, this is only three years after the term emerged, and

decades prior to the earliest known discussion of audiovisual booktalks within education. Instead, the commentary here suggests that these book trailers are general advertising which in this instance appear on television, and that such advertising may encourage children to read. Without the original trailer, however, it is difficult to extrapolate further except to say that this (implicitly determinist) understanding perhaps stems from wider concerns about literacy, media and children in the mid-to-late 1980s. From the use of quotation marks around the term trailer, it can be further inferred that this is an established term being used in a different context, probably taken from the film industry, rather than an existing use within industries of videogaming or publishing. The other possibility is that such an audiovisual text labelled here as a 'trailer' would otherwise operate under a different name. The possibility of this kind of book promotion existing on television prior to this should not be overlooked and warrants further study, though this exceeds the scope of this article.

Prior to the turn of the millennium, the press commentary surrounding the book trailer, when not referring to a mobile repository, situates the book trailer as a concept or relations between texts rather than a specific kind of short film. This may suggest that the 1988 reference to a specific audiovisual text is atypical of the wider trend at this time. There are several articulations of the book trailer as an intertextual reference prior to the turn of the millennium, all from publications based in the UK. However, much like the application of the term booktalk, these refer to the wider intertextual referencing rather than a specific short form audiovisual text. As with Kirchoff's article, Waldemar Januszczak of the *Sunday Times* (London) writing in 1993 suggested that:

> If arts programmes are to be truly distinguishable from trailers and TV advertisements for a new book, a new exhibition, a new film, then they must be free to mount proper critical investigations and to come to properly independent conclusions (Januszczak [16]).

While it is unclear if Januszczak is making a reference to book trailers as a specific text—and indeed it is unlikely—Januszczak is articulating the concept of a trailer as being one of a relationship between two different texts. This articulation of a trailer as one of relationship rather than based on aesthetics is, however, present until the first decade of the new millennium. In 2005, a *Publishers Weekly* article observes that: 'He [Johnny Gellar, at Curtis Brown Publishing] has put together a stellar list of authors who are contributing first chapters of their next books for free to a kind of anthology of tempting book trailers' (Baker [17]). Baker's use of the term book trailer in 2005 echoes Januszczak's articulation of book trailers as primarily intertextual, suggesting a popular application of the term 'trailer' to other forms of promotion. Overlapping with this broader articulation of trailers as an intertextual relationship, the book trailer as an identifiable nomenclative entity emerged. It is not difficult to see how such a development came about, i.e., drawing on an established history from the film industry and equating a new phenomenon with an established one. Just as in 1998, the writer James Patterson interviewed on an NBC show segment alluded to the book trailer as a conceptual entity, rather than a normalised act of promotion. In doing so, Patterson provided testimony to the lack of book trailers at this time, while simultaneously illustrating how the term book trailer may have come to dominate other forms of nomenclature: 'well, I'll—I'll give you the—the—since we're television, I'll do the movie tra—there isn't a movie, yet, but here's the movie trailer—the book trailer, let's call it' (NBC Transcripts [18]).

Patterson goes on to verbally narrate a hypothetical, audiovisual interpretation of his work, complete with a 'screen [that] is shaking, as they do with movie trailers, loud noise, and whatever' [18]. Although envisioning it for descriptive and presumably (given the context of his own interview) promotional purposes, Patterson is articulating a distinct interpretation of a book trailer. This can be used to form an intellectual bridge between the textual incarnation of the trailer that followed, and the interpretation of the trailer as an intertextual relationship. There is no suggestion that Patterson's trailer here is a turning point in a wider vernacular application, but that it occurs chronologically midway between two identifiable points of development within the discourse suggests a greater flexibility in the term, perhaps as broader promotional culture develops. Patterson's book trailer has

the same function and aesthetics as the film trailer and this comparison parallels the manner in which the book trailer was later introduced, but not its dominant aesthetic form. In many ways, Patterson's hypothetical trailer can be seen as being the idealised form of the book trailer, in that it replicates the film trailer in all but source product and acts as a form of promotion. Furthermore, it suggests that the book trailer, as an *aesthetic* short form text, was largely absent throughout the period broadly identified as 1988–2000.

It is only two years after Patterson's 1998 statement of book trailers (in absentia) that the emergence of the contemporary short form book trailer occurs. Walker, in *The Washington Post*, reporting on the developments of Canadian company Blab Media Inc. (Toronto, ON, Canada), explicitly used the term trailer, but importantly provided context;

> Blab partnered with Random House recently to debut a new form of greeting card that announces new books. It resembles a movie trailer, and you can think of it as a book trailer, one you can personalise. The first e-book card promotes Anne Rice's new novel, "Merrick" [4].

The e-book card, as Walker goes on to indicate, capitalises on the mobility of viral communication as well as referencing the movie aesthetics of the existent and better known film trailer. This echoes the description offered of Patterson's hypothetical book trailer suggesting a shared use of terminology and conceptual overlap between the two. That both Blab Media and the CBC are based in Canada suggests the initial movements towards book trailers emerged out of Canada. By capitalising on the known format of the film trailer within the press release, Blab Media (just like Patterson) invokes a set of expectations: that the book trailer is mimicking the aesthetic qualities and the intertextual role of the film trailer. In positioning the book trailer in direct relation to the movie trailer Blab Media is alluding to a merging of experiential products, suggesting that *Merrick* is more than any book, it is part of a wider textual event.

The Blab Media e-card-trailer is clearly an example of a publisher capitalising on a known form of film promotion for the purposes of publicity and financial gain with respect to a multimedia text. While Walker's commentary articulates the concept of the book trailer as a form of advertising similar to established forms, it is the first time the book trailer was seriously introduced in direct comparison to movies, and the first known time a book trailer appeared on the internet. Given the subsequent trajectory of the book trailer existing almost exclusively online, Walker's article can be seen as an early indicator of a wider turning point in book marketing, at a time when, less than five years earlier, book publishers and sellers had yet to maximise their online presence [19]. The release of this e-card-trailer coincides with the emergence of the e-book as an entity and a wider development of engagement with the internet, especially as the year 2000 also saw the use of viral marketing campaign for Stephen King's Novella *Riding the Bullet* as an E-book. The parallel developments of the e-book and the emergence of the e-marketplace with this early book trailer suggests a correlation between the two that collectively suggests that the period of the late 1990s to early 2000s was one of a realisation of (and subsequent experimentation with) the internet for book promotion.

4.3. Early Trailer History 2001–2005

Tied up within this climate of change and catalysed by the internet are attempts to capitalise on the potential of internet marketing through intellectual property control. It is unclear if these are attempts to control a particular developing trend, or if these are a way of anticipating possible developments for subsequent gain. However, the documentation of a term through legal protection helps to chart significant developments in the attitudes to book trailers, as well as providing useful points of orientation in developing a media history. Within a year of Blab Media's announcement, a patent application was filed by Julia Zborovsky-Fenster for a 'method of advertising and promoting a book in a visual media, and an advertising product for advertising a book and the like in a visual media' [20]. Interestingly, the application here notes that:

It is known that books are advertised in visual media such as for example television, Internet, etc. by showing a portion of a text of the book, or reading a portion of the book. However, no additional visual information is provided which would be attractive to potential users of a book and the like [20].

The application claims that it functions through 'selecting at least one portion of the book and staging a scene which represents the selected portion of the book' [20]. While the method of selection and subsequent industrial application of this process is unknown, it adds to the context that demonstrates an awareness of existing book promotion via broadcast media—specifically, the internet. In a similar manner to Zborovsky-Fenster's patent, the term 'book trailer' was trademarked in 2002 by a US based publishing group *Circle of Seven Productions* (*COS*) (Mt Sterling, KY, USA) ([21–23] Similar to Zborovsky-Fenster's patent, the term is described as 'the promotion of goods of others by preparing and creating advertisements for books in the form of videos' [24]). This legal protection, meaning both the patent and the trademark description, suggests that new ways of marketing a book were being sought in response to changes in the mediascape. In part, that the events of Blab Media, Zborovsky-Fenster's patent and COS' trademark occur in such close proximity may be due to an increased awareness of the potential of the internet in relation to book promotion from the late 1990s onwards. This attempt at legal protection and Blab Media's press release suggests that a climate or market was perceived as both existing and being conducive to the development of book trailers.

It can be suggested that both these events form part of an attempt towards industry control: as Janet Staiger notes of the early film industry, legal control and specifically litigation typified the industry and aided in its stabilisation and control [25]. The subsequent use of the term 'book trailer' by the press and the existence of other book trailer creators suggest that there has been no attempt at legal ownership through enforcement of either trademark or patent. Control, however, is possibly achieved through the very act of reification in intellectual property law rather than direct conflict resolution: the act of saying, for example, 'I trademarked it' serves a purpose for the trademarkee.

Concurrently, either as a result of lapses in the enforcement of this ownership, or more likely by the pre-existing trajectory of the trailer being equated to other forms of audiovisual promotional short, the book trailer has moved into the public domain, negating any claim to ownership. The registered intellectual property rights, in relation to the book trailer, offer *modes* of control within a competitive market, but there is no evidence of *enforcement* of such control. The lack of enforcement or any documented legal contention, despite the ultimate rise of promotional texts under the same name suggests that the industry saw a brief window in which any industrial control *could* be enforced. This lack of enforcement, coupled with the various terminology in use suggests there is no legal definition of the term outside of a single company's output. In order to protect their trademark, COS would have to take action against every use of 'book trailer' and retain market dominance since this has not happened, the trademark's legal enforcement has been weakened through popular use of the term 'trailer'.

Despite being enshrined in intellectual property law, the three-year calendar period 2002–2005 saw only five verified press references to trailers. This suggests a slow movement in the public history of the book trailer. Of these references, one is an industry commentary by Maas [26] noting the development of audiovisual book promotion within the industry. Exploring what is framed as a new phenomenon, Maas lists six 'key players' in connection with multimedia techniques used to promote books: Vidlit, Teachingbooks.net, bookstream.inc, marketorial, Clotho Advanced Media designs, and FSB Associates. Of these, Dubelman's vidlit is included while *COS* is absent.

Indeed, Mass notes of these that:

Some online marketing companies are getting closer to producing low-cost book-marketing vehicles that have the visceral impact of a studio film trailer ([26]).

What is clear from this is that a number of specialised promotional media boutiques existed in the period 2002 and 2005, suggesting the development of a market for online audiovisual book promotion.

While the phenomenon of the book trailer clearly existed, the lack of overt press references to such would suggest either a limited interest on the part of the press, or perhaps more likely limited growth in the dissemination of the trailer as a single identifiable entity. Maas does suggest, however, that the 'talking head' content is popular, and this echoes Kipling and Wilson, who note the early use of audiovisual promotional material often included 'readings from books [19] (p. 151). The companies listed in Maas' overview presumably use end-user websites for hosting their respective content, as the videosharing site Youtube.com was launched after Maas' report [26]. The companies listed clearly constitute and contribute to a climate of multimedia promotion, and it becomes clear that the book trailer emerged out of a combination of elements. As Maas goes on to note:

> As broadband makes it easier for the home Web user to download multimedia features, the line between marketing and entertainment—not to mention books and film—will continue to blur. Multimedia trailers won't all work, but the trend could help sustain readership and develop new readers. "You have to learn and invest in the technology", said [founder of Teachingbooks.net, Nick] Glass. "The more multimedia is out there, the more interactivity people can have with a book. All of us in the industry need to figure out how to create and share it" [27].

This observation fairly accurately predicts the process of development that surrounds the emergence of the book trailer. This can be seen reflected in the press commentary taken overall, particularly the parallel developments of social networking websites, video sharing, and of the mobile devices and hardware itself [28–30]. Given the technological context of Maas' report, it is likely that this period was one of experimentation, as each company sought to capitalise on new dissemination technology, not unlike the early film industry. It is also likely, given the emphasis on trailers as an intertextual form of promotion, that the term book trailer came to be applied to these animations and short form videos retrospectively, and that the term book trailer crept into the dominant discourse as part of a wider process of industrial negotiation and understanding. This process is not one of a replacement; the terms 'vidlit' and 'booktalk' are still used. Rather, this is an increased use of a particular term to discuss a selection of promotional output.

4.4. The Book Trailer: Post-2005

While it is difficult to quantify the industry's acceptance of book trailers based on press discourse alone, 2010 saw reports of a dedicated industry award ceremony: the *Moby Awards* organised by publishers *Melville House* [31–33]. Similarly, the film industry's Golden Trailer awards, a celebration of (predominantly film) promotion, holds a category 'Best Trailer for a book or novel'. The inclusion of book trailers as a category in award ceremonies reflects an industrial acknowledgement of book trailers as a part of the industries mediascape. In the case of the Moby awards, the event itself appears to have only lasted for three years, 2010, 2011, and 2012. The existence of an industry award suggests an acknowledgement of the book trailer phenomenon on the part of the organisers, but that such an event included recognition for the best and *worst* book trailers could be said to form a point of industry reflection upon the practice in general, rather than a sole form of validation and encouragement. Indeed, as the *Moby Awards* have apparently ceased to take place, it could be said that the publishing industry itself feels little need to celebrate the phenomenon of the book trailer as a distinct entity. Between 2005 and 2015, there have been relatively few changes within the discourse. While once newspapers introduced book trailers in the context of the cinema, now newspaper website architecture shows sections dedicated for book trailers. The Guardian.co.uk, for instance, hosting a section entitled 'trailer blazers' dedicated to book trailers. Book for sale on Amazon platforms have space for video materials that may include book trailers. The state of the industry after 2005 is one of broad stability based on both the discourse, and dissemination of book trailers. Given the gap between two quantifiable industry events, trademarking the term in 2001 (which would suggest a new phenomenon) and hosting awards for a (presumably established) phenomenon in 2010, it can be assumed that in the nine years

between these two points the trailer emerged as a recognisable entity for many. Without any evidence of a single catalyst for this increase it is superfluous to explore each press article in turn in order to track these developments further. It makes sense, however, within this study of discourse to turn towards defining the trailer as an entity. Much of the discourse, as well as some elements of industry reception (such as the *Moby Award* category for 'trailer least likely to sell a book'), centres on 'amateur' or author made trailers, and in doing so offers commentary that can be used to develop a definition for future study.

4.5. Conclusion Defining the 'Book Trailer'

In considering the aesthetics of the trailer there is a need to acknowledge the various nomenclative divisions, those based on the understanding of book trailer aesthetics that have crept into both the limited academic and press discourse. Without conducting an aesthetic study in comparison with the nomenclature it is impossible to unite the two areas. It must be noted that until a large scale study of audience vernacular is conducted, there is no evidence of the term's use outside the industry. In her industry overview Voigt [1] centres on nomenclature in an attempt to 'categorize the genre'. However, in attempting to categorise, Voigt fundamentally overlooks the possibility that the aesthetic diversity may be a unifying attribute of the book trailer, and that trailers may not have a single unifying aesthetic structure. Within Voigt's overview, a distinction is made between book teaser and a book trailer, suggesting that the former is:

> A simpler and more rudimentary type of the book video. The book teaser uses images, music and some form of spoken narration although the latter is not a necessary given. While sometimes also displaying video footage of persons or locations, the book teaser lacks a story line and most commonly uses voice-overs that describe the story, rather than having the actors talk themselves [1] (pp. 675–676).

Such a distinction places significant understanding on narrative comprehension (just as Gunter's [13] understanding of the educational book trailer does), as well as inadvertently prioritising indexical footage. This understanding implicitly suggests a mode of viewing based on perceived narrative continuity, for which there is no empirical evidence. Indeed, Voigt's distinction between teaser and trailer emerges out of a heavy emphasis on a list of promotional products listed on *COS'* website that appears, by Voigt's own admission, to exist based on production costs rather than stylistic differences [1] (p. 674). Given the lack of distinction between teaser and trailer, and the reliance on narrative comprehension and audience studies, it follows logically that at this stage in the discourse the two are considered the same. Indeed, the stylistic distinctions within Voigt's work appear to be unique to COS rather than found within wider discourse. Furthermore, it does not logically follow that as the length increases so too does the narrative complexity. Distinctions exist though, fundamentally at an industrial level. Voigt cites Sheila Clover English, CEO of *COS*, who claims that:

> Technically, a book trailer® is an acted-out dramatisation of a book synopsis. If you look at the trademark on this term you'll note that the term's description is very specific. Like the term "aspirin," which was once a product name, this term has been so widely used by the public that its original definition is sometimes lost. Many people use the term book trailer® for book video [34] (p. 15).

Given the issues of ownership and brand competition, it is likely Clover English's statement serves not as a reflection of a trend based on analysis of industry output, but a way of asserting marketplace differentiation for her company. Lacking within Voigt's discussion then is a clear distinction between COS 'book trailers' and book trailers as they appear within popular discourse. Following Clover English's logic further, no trailer can exist for a product that does not inherently have a narrative: non-fiction reference books for instance. Despite Clover English's assertion of specificity, the trademarked term 'book trailer' as listed by the USPTO is distinctly broad; there is no evidence

that the trademarked term solely applies to indexical film for promotional purposes. That such a nomenclative division between book 'trailers' and 'videos' is offered by those with a vested interest in the use of specific terminology raises significant questions over its impartiality and accuracy. Yet this becomes the starting point, and the basis for Voigt's overview of trailer aesthetics, to which Voigt adds terminology of 'book animation' rather than interrogating that which exists [1] (p. 675). Of the nomenclature, Circle of Seven Productions themselves distinguish on their official webpage between seven different types of book videos, ranging from various 'teasers' to 'publisher advantage', from 'author interviews' to the actual 'book trailer' [1] (p. 674).

These categories are unique to *COS*, with no evidence that these terms are adopted within the discourse. Similarly, Voigt's addition to the nomenclature is made redundant if these terms exist only within the logic of one academic article.

The nomenclature of the academic discourse suffers from the absence of widescale audience studies, the next logical step in the field and outside the scope of this article. However, one study has considered the audience in relation to the book trailer, that of Davila's foray into the field [1]. The study, however, is limited in its scope, and requires verification and elaboration. Writing in 2010, Davila considers book trailers (again, demonstrating the dominance of one term) as anticipatory stories. Comparing them with film trailers, Davila draws on the film trailer-focused work of Lisa Kernan [35]. Davila offers a somewhat reductionist approach to trailers, within a corpus of only six trailers, and it is unclear by what process this corpus was created. Within the work, Davila identifies two types of book trailer: a montage of still or animated images with voice-over narration, and one that 'most resembles a movie trailer' [2] (p. 34). While following within a trend of discourse outline previously, in terms of the aesthetic structure Davila goes little beyond this comparison, noting the shared characteristics of title, author, and book cover. Davila's key intervention, however, lies in the consideration of audience response in relation to the trailer. The methods employed for this and the conclusions drawn lack the ability to be readily verified and are rooted in an understanding of the trailer as persuasive advertising and a passive audience, which is a frequent criticism of Kernan's work. Indeed, Davila noted that due to the methodology, the results (that the book trailers can both positively and negatively affect readers' expectations) are not widely applicable [2] (p. 39). Largely these conclusions reiterate the work of Stephen Heath in 1977 [36], and later Nick Couldry in 2000 [37] who collectively suggest the notion of the text as one of a wider network of experiences. Considering the discourse, and its history, the book trailer can indeed be considered a part of a network of texts, the span of which is unclear. In addition to charting its emergence, the early discourse has shown an emphasis on intertextuality from the outset. Indeed, that this cultural phenomenon emerged online, on what can be considered a living intertextual network in which the individual components reference each other as part of the architecture reinforces the role intertextuality plays. In terms of definition, however, it is unclear based on the discourse used for this article alone how trailers are different from (or similar to) each other, and other forms of trailer such as those for film. In terms of future development for this field then, there exist two significant areas of study both working towards defining the trailer. Within the current academic progression of study, the definition of the trailer needs to remain that of a broad working definition until such time as the conditions of production and reception can be addressed. Fully understanding the creators and audience for book trailers would go further toward collating kinds of book trailers on offer, and charting any aesthetic changes therein. With such an aesthetic study in mind, it would be interesting to conduct a comparison between the vidlit, the booktalk and the book trailer. Working within aesthetic studies, however, there is a strong need to consider the role of audience reception within the aesthetic structures at work; are some forms of book trailer considered to be more mainstream than others, or rejected by either the industry or consumer? Overall, the book trailer has emerged alongside the internet, and the relationship with this medium is key to understanding this phenomenon. As the work cited throughout this article shows, the book trailer as a cultural phenomenon interacts with both the film and television industries. In keeping with this, a much wider series of studies exploring the book trailers' conditions of production and the collective aesthetics are needed.

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